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Haiku:

From bottom to top
Moving towards excellence
My day will soon come

Spoken Word Poem: What Will Become of Me?

I was told there would be days like these

Wondering what will my story be.

So I asked myself, what will become of me?

As a child I always aspired to be more than the average

My parents told me I had to be better than they were.

We came from a Third World country to this First World country mainly for me to have the life they couldn't.

Even in this First World country there are still "Third World" issues I face.

What will become of me?

It's not enough to be among the average.

I must strive to be above the rest.

I must Ace this test.

I have three strikes against me.

I am Black.

I am an Immigrant.

I am a Woman.

What will become of me?

Education is my only way out of poverty.

Education is my only access.

Education is my only route on this journey.

Education is my only option.

So, what will become of me?

High school was a bit of an eye opener.

I became aware of my differences.

I was different from those who had parents who went to college.

I was different from those who could afford to do as they please.

Unlike me, who had to keep a job to assist the household.

I was different from those who already knew what they would become.

I was different from my own family members because more was always expected of me.

I was different from those who just had to think about themselves.

I carry my family on my shoulders.

My success is their success.

My accomplishments are a sign that they did a good job.

So I ask myself, what will become of me?

I have conquered the first battle...I've made it to college.

I will win the next battle when I graduate.

I will break down the barriers of inferiority complex.

I will continue the job of those who came before me.

I will become a legislator breaking down the barriers for those who will come after.

That's what will become of me.

Educational Autobiography: My Journey from a Dull Yesterday to a Bright Tomorrow.

Education has always been an important aspect of my life. Since birth my parents always stressed the importance of it. A good education could prove what I was truly capable of. It would open doors for me. It could set me apart from the rest. Education meant access. No matter what my family's financial situation was they always made sure that I had all access to whatever materials I needed for school. Living in a Third World country access to education was made available to only those who could afford it. Unlike the United States of America, a First World country which my family moved to when I was twelve, taxes did not go to education. Everyone who went to school was only there because their family could afford it. The higher one went up the education ladder the more expensive it became. This was one of the reasons my parents made the decision to migrate to the United States. There my educational journey continued.

When I first migrated to the U.S from Jamaica I felt out of place. My family moved to Miami. I was enrolled in a school that was dominated with Caucasians and Hispanics. My accent stood out and I unsuccessfully tried to fit in. I stayed at Hammocks Middle School for only two months then we moved to Fort Lauderdale. In Fort Lauderdale I felt normal. I did not need to change anything about myself to fit in because Fort Lauderdale had a lot of immigrants from the

Caribbean. I met quite a few people who came from Jamaica. We would share our experiences and to my surprise, several of them lived only a few miles away from me. Surrounded by people I could culturally identify with made me feel at home away from home.

When I first enrolled in Lauderdale Lakes Middle School my dad made sure to remind me of my purpose. It was to do the best I could and make use of the opportunity he never got. With that in mind, I made sure I made the Honor Roll every quarter. Several times I even made the Principal's Honor Roll. I was proud of myself. My dad always struggled with showing his emotions but when it came to my academics it always made me feel good about myself when he would brag to his friends about how well I was doing in school. When he spoke to me he would tell me that getting good grades in school was my responsibility. One day I made the mistake of telling him about the guy in my class whose parents paid him fifty dollars for every "A" he got. Of course Calvin was never the straight "A" student but whenever he got an "A" everyone would know about it. When I told my dad about Calvin he assumed I was asking for the same treatment. He reminded me that I was in America but I am still Jamaican. I was always reminded not to become too "Americanized".

I learned more about myself in high school. I enrolled in Fort Lauderdale High School's Pre-Law Magnet Program. I always wanted to be lawyer. The exposure I got from being enrolled in the Magnet Program made me change my mind about becoming a lawyer. I still had a passion for the law. I just wanted to get involved differently. I realized that I wanted to be a legislator. I figured this way I can truly make an impact. My freshman year I signed up for a debate class. I had no idea what I was signing up for. I joined the debate team my freshman year and it was then I really changed my mind about being a lawyer. Being a part of the debate family exposed me to different people of numerous backgrounds and cultures. It also made me pay more attention to

what was going on around me. I became more interested in national and international affairs. I became more interested in every aspect of government and bureaucracy.

I work toward achieving my goals every day. Education is the only possible route for me to accomplish my goals of surpassing the average and becoming a legislator. I chose this career because I feel it is a way I can make a difference. The job of a legislator is important because legislators make the laws of the land. Legislators are in charge of making decisions for society. As a legislator I hope to make laws that will create a more equal and just society. I value equality, justice, service and to some extent financial success. Carol Moseley Braun, the first African-American woman U.S. Senator, is one of my role models. Braun joined the Senate in 1993. When I learned about her I was in the ninth grade. I figured if she could make it, I could too. If this does not work out I will still want a career in government. For this reason I also would like to join the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps will give me a firsthand experience with a different country as well as exposure to different cultures. I became interested in the Peace Corp my sophomore year at a debate tournament. Later on that year I met W. Hodding Carter, author of a book I read in tenth grade, "Off the Deep End". He was also a member of the Peace Corp; Carter affirmed the purpose of joining the Peace Corps and assured me of the benefits.

Being a minority makes my educational journey more difficult. My parents never stop to reiterate this fact. I was always to make sure I could keep up with my white counterparts. This came especially from my dad who was being exploited at his workplace but said nothing because the job paid the bills. My experiences thus far are the reason I seek higher education. College was not an option. I needed to go to college in order to achieve my goal. I am always reminded that, "African-American women have the added dimension of racism to deal with." (Coker, 657) I am always being reminded of my difference in my identity and my lack of privilege whether it be

class, race or gender. I call the aforementioned my “three strikes”. This is not an excuse for failure instead my “three strikes” serves as motivation to achieve my goals.

Work Cited

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Coker, Angela D. "African American Female Adult Learners: Motivations, Challenges, and Coping Strategies." *Journal of Black Studies* 33.5 (2003): 654-74. Print.

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