

**Amber Green (10<sup>th</sup> Grade: Cleveland, Ohio)**

**Level III Semifinalist**

**Letter to Traci Jones concerning her book, *Standing Against the Wind***

Dear Traci L. Jones:

Your book *Standing Against the Wind* really spoke to me. It did so, not only for its content and plot, but because I can really relate to the character of Patricia. As peculiar as this might sound, I was Patricia. When younger, my appearance and mannerisms were similar; I was shy with tons of hair and always had a nose in a book. I loved to learn and I always got excellent grade in school. But, for that reason, I was bullied—a problem that only became worse when I moved to a new city.

After my family and I moved, I was known as the new kid. I was in a new school district with new types of people. Initially, with the help of my positive attitude and love for learning, I grew less nervous and more comfortable in my new surroundings. However, when word got out that I was a 4.0 student, I began to be bullied—both verbally and physically—on a daily basis. Day by day, my love of learning drained and I counted down the minutes until it was time to go home. I dealt with fear for a long time until one day I switched out of that school into another one that had an honors program. Finally, I saw my hard work pay off and I began to make lifelong friends.

I wrote to say that your book really touched me because it taught me one very important life lesson: keep moving forward. That what I believe *Standing Against the Wind* means. It symbolizes the many obstacles we face in life. Although life may try and knock us down, it may try to hurt us and make us cry we must never give up and lose sight of what's really important. Whether the obstacles are personal family issues or a group of rude boys who insist on teasing people, it is important to persevere. That is what Patricia does. Your story showed me how life can work in mysterious ways. Throughout all the bullying that she endured, Patricia never retaliated, never tried to get revenge; instead, she continued to work hard and it all paid off.

*Standing Against the Wind* will forever be one of my favorite books. You have helped me to learn not to let people's words defeat me. I commend you, Mrs. Jones, and I thank you for not only writing a novel that speaks to teenage African-American girls but to all girls, everywhere.

Sincerely,

**Amber Green**