

CHRISTINE ADEYEMI (8th Grade: Worthington, Worthingway Middle School)
Level II Third Place Winner

Letter to Kathy J. Parenteau concerning her poem, "Remember Me"

Dear Ms. Parenteau:

My older cousin T.J. was a fun, loving, bright and happy person who always made you laugh and gave you piggy-back rides. In fact, one of the only things that I remember about him is the piggy-back rides he would give. I remember the scenery around me blurring as he ran with me and the way I couldn't help but giggle at least a little bit when he would spin me around in circles. I also remember the insistent pleading T.J.'s sister made as the doctor took T.J. off the life support system keeping him alive and the shining tears that ran down my aunt's cheeks as he died. Your poem Remember Me changed my life for the better by helping me realize that tomorrow is not promised to any of us and that the way I want my loved ones to remember me is how I should live my life.

Merriam-Webster describes a legacy as "something that happens in the past or that comes from someone in the past." Although T.J. is not famous or well-known, his legacy lives on in my family and will forever. In the corner of my cousins' living room is T.J.'s piano. Whenever I would go to their house I would wonder why they keep it, when it will only remind them of the pain and grief of the loss of T.J., but now I guess I know. It is a way of remembering him not as how he was in the hospital, looking pale and sick, but as the bright twenty-year-old who would play the piano for friends and family and the congregation at church. It is something that cannot be thrown away because it is part of him and we want to try our best to keep him with us and not forget him.

Some may say that T.J. died too young, that twenty years old is too early. Although he did not get to fill out the life that he may have dreamt for himself, like playing the piano professionally or becoming a doctor, those twenty years left his love ones with so much to remember him by. And I want people to remember him in that way, too. To think back and not just remember me for the breakthroughs I made for the world or the diseases I helped find the cure to, but the lives that I changed because I had a big and loving heart and cared more for about others than I did myself. I want my legacy to be so special to them that they won't remember the bad things I did, but only the good. Because, as you said in your poem, there are no second chances once God says we need to go. So it's important that we make our only chance count and thank God for every precious minute we have until the very moment we're gone.

Sincerely,

Christine Adeyemi