

RESISTING BULLYING A POEM AT A TIME:
A COLLECTION OF POEMS TO DEFEAT BULLYING

HONORS THESIS

Presented to the Honors College of
Texas State University
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements

for Graduation in the Honors College

by

Julissa Angelique Adams

San Marcos, Texas
December 2017

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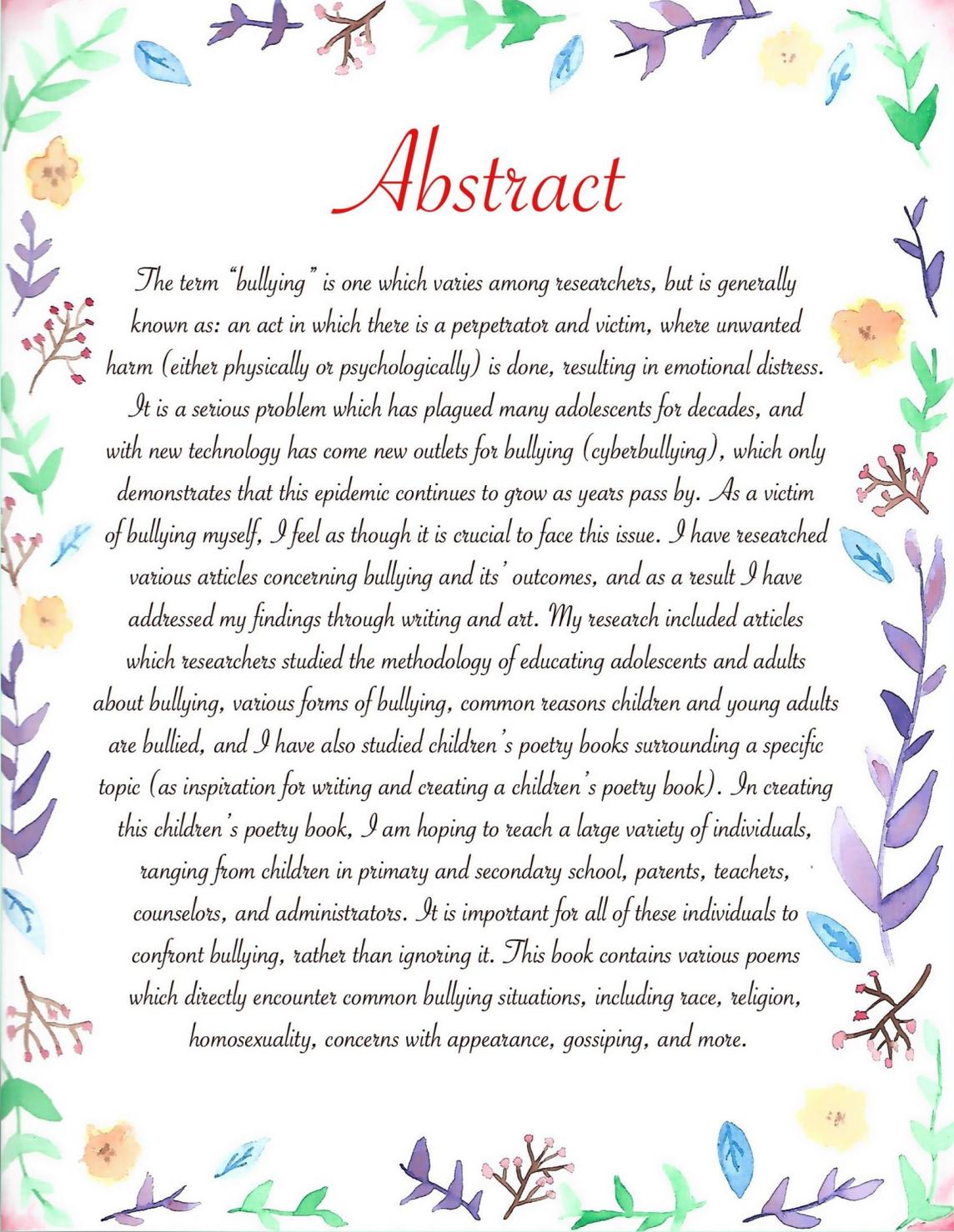
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Abstract

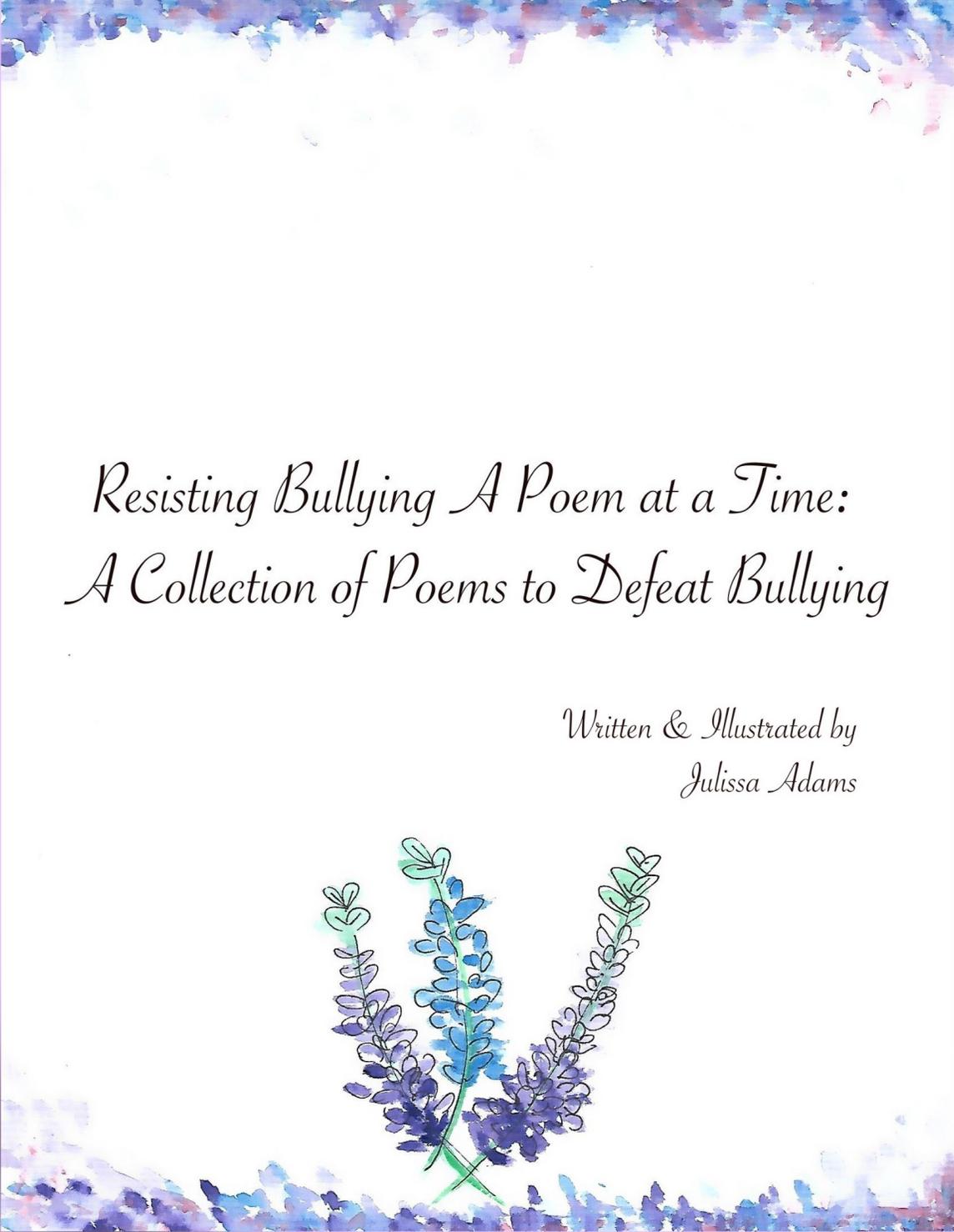
The term “bullying” is one which varies among researchers, but is generally known as: an act in which there is a perpetrator and victim, where unwanted harm (either physically or psychologically) is done, resulting in emotional distress.

It is a serious problem which has plagued many adolescents for decades, and with new technology has come new outlets for bullying (cyberbullying), which only demonstrates that this epidemic continues to grow as years pass by. As a victim of bullying myself, I feel as though it is crucial to face this issue. I have researched various articles concerning bullying and its’ outcomes, and as a result I have addressed my findings through writing and art. My research included articles which researchers studied the methodology of educating adolescents and adults about bullying, various forms of bullying, common reasons children and young adults are bullied, and I have also studied children’s poetry books surrounding a specific topic (as inspiration for writing and creating a children’s poetry book). In creating this children’s poetry book, I am hoping to reach a large variety of individuals, ranging from children in primary and secondary school, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators. It is important for all of these individuals to confront bullying, rather than ignoring it. This book contains various poems which directly encounter common bullying situations, including race, religion, homosexuality, concerns with appearance, gossiping, and more.



*Dedicated to Dr. Teya Rosenberg & Dr. Roger Jones
for assisting me throughout the making of this book
and
Dr. Paul Mencke for showing me the power of poetry
amongst adolescents*

*You all have given me so much encouragement
during my undergraduate studies, and I believe that
I will be a better English teacher because of you all.
You all believed in me, and caused me to believe in myself.
Thank you.*



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A Collection of Poems to Defeat Bullying*

*Written & Illustrated by
Julissa Adams*

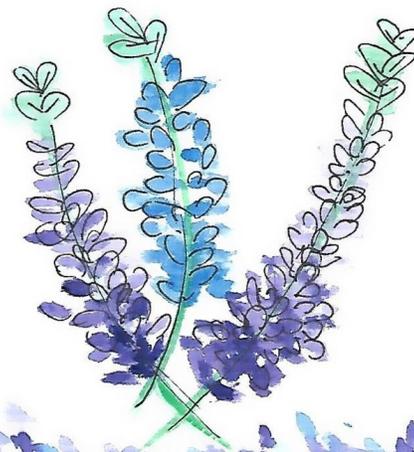




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Curves

1

"Fatty, Fatty, 2 by 4,"
the words, they echo.
"Can't get through the kitchen door,"
another low blow.

Each day I can expect
to be teased about my size.
Each day, I feel upset,
holding back tears in my eyes.

Only, the tears are running out;
the river running dry.
My body's in a drought.
I will no longer cry.

There's extra meat on my bones,
but please don't tell me that
I can't wear certain clothes
because I'm "too fat."

Don't try to bring me shame
from the number on the scale
because I'll gladly take "blame"
for being a sweet, curvaceous female.



Four Eyes

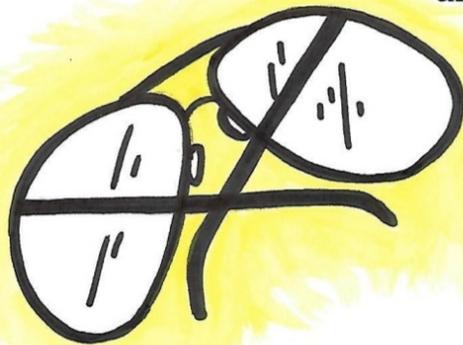
My glasses are quite large.
Yes, this is true,
but it is simply so that I can
see as well as you.

The other kids think it's funny
to make fun of me,
and I would like to ask right now
for a sincere apology.



You see it is not my fault
to need glasses such as these,
and for as long as I can remember,
I struggled greatly to see.

My parents wear glasses too.
I suppose we're the same.
Just a few poor-sighted souls,
but I don't think we're "lame."





I am actually quite happy,
having glasses of my own.
I mean, after all,
it's all I've ever known.

So go ahead, call me four-eyes,
my feelings won't be hurt.
I will not let these silly names
make me an introvert.

I guess you can say that I'm proud,
and also quite carefree.
So please just accept my lenses.
They are a part of me.

The Things that Some Say

I cannot comprehend
the things that some say.
Even to their own "friend,"
derogatory terms of today.

The Whites are called "crackers,"
the Blacks are called "monkeys,"
the Hispanics are "beaners,"
and this is supposed to be funny?

Are we supposed to identify
one by the color of their skin?
It cannot be justified -
This conundrum we are in:

We demonstrate anger
towards outsider's racial remarks,
and accuse them of danger,
from fury in our hearts.

But within our social circle,
these remarks are okay?
Our society seems most certain
of this, each and every day.

Regardless of intentions,
these comments must go.
For in a world full of tension,
we cannot thrive and grow.

I pray that one day
my skin color will not matter.
That I will not be weighted
by biased, prejudiced chatter.

Our first impressions unaffected
by the color of our skin.
Our character, respected.
Judged by what's within.

These Holes Tell a Story



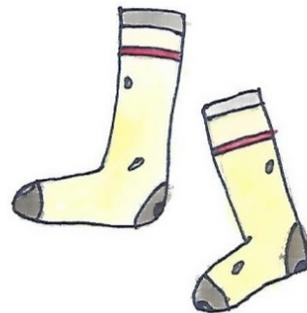
The other kids make fun
of things that I wear.
It seems as though everyone
doesn't seem to care...

I haven't many shirts
or pants or shoes,
and after my growth spurt,
I got nothing new.

My parents have little money
for all my siblings and I,
and kids find it funny
when my clothes are the wrong size.

My shirts have many holes,
and my jeans, many rips.
My shoes have loose soles.
Even my socks - worn, at the tips.

I don't know what's "in style,"
or the latest trends,
and it's been a while
since I had a close friend.





Until one day, I met
this young girl named Meg,
and she made me forget
the mean things kids said.

“These holes tell a story.
Tell me how you got this one!
Was it in your laboratory?
Or when you touched the sun?”

We laughed and made up ways
in which my clothes got worn.
The time I was lion’s prey,
or when I rode a unicorn.

Meg made me realize
my clothes didn’t make me,
and that I shouldn’t idealize
a closet full of things.

A child cannot help
whether their things are old or new.
But things do not make oneself.
Rather, character & ideals do.

Love is Love

*I'm constantly hearing
what others have to say
about the "indecenty"
of me being gay.*

*I keep to myself,
trying to avoid the rancor,
but others feel compelled
to express their anger.*

*I've heard so many names
for others who are like me;
trying to bring us shame
"queer," "dyke," and "pansy."*



*But I have some news:
I refuse to keep feeling hurt
by these close-minded views;
by the lack of support.*

*Because times are changing,
and Love is Love.
There's no use in complaining -
A battle, which can't be won.*



feeling weak.



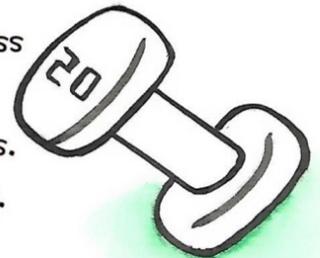
It was a few months ago
when some boys came to me.
They skipped the “hello,”
and promptly began to tease.

I’ve always had a small frame,
not typical of a boy.
For this, I felt shame.
Things — hard to enjoy.

In gym class I was weak—
not strong enough to lift weights,
and others teased my physique—
something I’d always anticipate.



The biggest guys in the class
would always say the most.
They’d sit there and harass.
In their jokes, they’d boast.



FINISH

I decided to start training,
every day I'd go and run,
and though my muscles weren't growing,
I found this activity fun.

Finally, on field day
I could show them all
that I could win the race,
regardless of being small.

And as I crossed the finish line,
by far in the lead,
I watched my tormenters resign
from their bullying.

You see, as it turns out,
my size is perfect for the sport,
and I don't worry about
lack of other's support.

And now my bullies know:
my size is no disadvantage.
One, which weeks ago,
I had taken for granted.

Quality in All Values

I know other kids stare,
and like to make fun
while I'm saying a prayer
before eating my lunch.

To me, they have questioned:
"What's that around your neck?"
The Cross, my closest possession;
closely, always kept.

"God isn't real."
"You can't believe these things."
Not caring how I feel...
disregarding my beliefs.

I am not asking others to change,
or to follow my chosen faith.
I simply wish to explain
that I should not be debased.

There is quality in all values,
and we all have freedom to choose,
so do not let others' views
keep you from being you.



Tomboy

I've always been teased
for the games of my choosing.
My mother displeased...
this "girl" thing's confusing!

I'm not into dress-up,
or playing with dolls.
Save money on make-up,
I'd rather have a football.

I prefer wearing shorts,
and T-shirts & hats,
and playing lots of sports.
Using gloves, balls, & bats.

The boys are annoyed
when I try to play,
and girls just avoid
as I walk their way.

They call me mean names:
"He-she" and "tomboy."
Because I'm not the same?
Because I like different toys?

So what if my hair's short,
and I always wear sneakers?
I just want support.
I'm just uniquer.





Please, don't call me "boy,"
or tease 'bout what I wear.
Don't try to annoy,
and make jokes 'bout my hair

Yes, I'm a girl.
Yes, this is true.
And yes, I adore
the "boy" color blue.

And that is okay,
I refuse to be sad
from the rude things you say,
trying to make me feel bad.

So, as you can see,
not all girls are the same.
Some are like me,
and we, have no shame.



considering All

Have you ever looked around and noticed,
Noticed a world in which some may struggle?
Struggle with things we may take for granted.

Looking ahead, and seeing nothing but stairs...
Stare, wondering how some will manage,
Manage to get around this obstacle.

A paper lying before them, covered.
covered in a text too small to read.
Read the look upon their face.

These impediments are only a few.
Few seem to think about these things,
Things which weigh heavy on others' minds.

We must open our eyes to the world around us,
open our minds to the challenges others encounter,
open our hearts, accepting all, embracing all, considering all.

Confession about Aggression

I have a confession,
one I'm afraid to say.
These acts of aggression
just won't go away.

It started a week ago,
I began being attacked,
and I thought you should know
it's had a strong impact.

At first I was shoved,
then punched, then kicked.
My aggressor stood above,
as I laid down, being hit.

The other kids would cheer,
encouraging the nightmare,
while I was full of fear,
but they didn't seem to care.

○
I'm too scared to tell my mom,
too embarrassed to show my face.
Don't want to drop the bomb
that at school, I don't feel safe.

○
But today a teacher saw me,
Saw the bruises on my arms.
When others saw what she could see,
they knew I had been harmed.

I told them all that occurred.
Although, I was kinda scared,
but I felt much less hurt
knowing someone else cared.

○
My bully got in trouble:
suspended for a week.
And I felt much more comfortable;
No longer do I feel weak.

PROFILE · FOLLOW · CHAT · FRIEND · LIKE · COMMENT · SHARE · REPLY ·

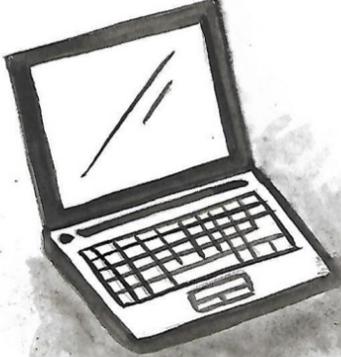
Power Behind Keys

Like. Comment. Share.
Posting without a care.
Quote. Reply. Retweet.
A cycle on repeat.



Ready to attack;
the screen used as a mask.
Such power behind keys,
a cowardly disease

If it cannot be said in real life,
then why, through a device?



DIRECT MESSAGE · PROFILE · FOLLOW · CHAT · FRIEND · LIKE · COMMENT ·

LIKE · COMMENT · SHARE · REPLY · QUOTE · RETWEET · POST · CLICK · DOUBLE TAP · SNAP ·

SHARE · REPLY · QUOTE · RETWEET · POST · CLICK · DOUBLE TAP · SNAP · DIRECT MESSAGE ·

Gossip

18

A few weeks ago
I heard something untrue
But I couldn't prove it,
so only I really knew.

A girl named Charlotte told others
a rumor about me.
I heard one version, then another,
but both were very mean.

Sent
1:30

So I went and asked Charlotte
why she made it up.
"You were an easy target," she said,
"It had to be someone."

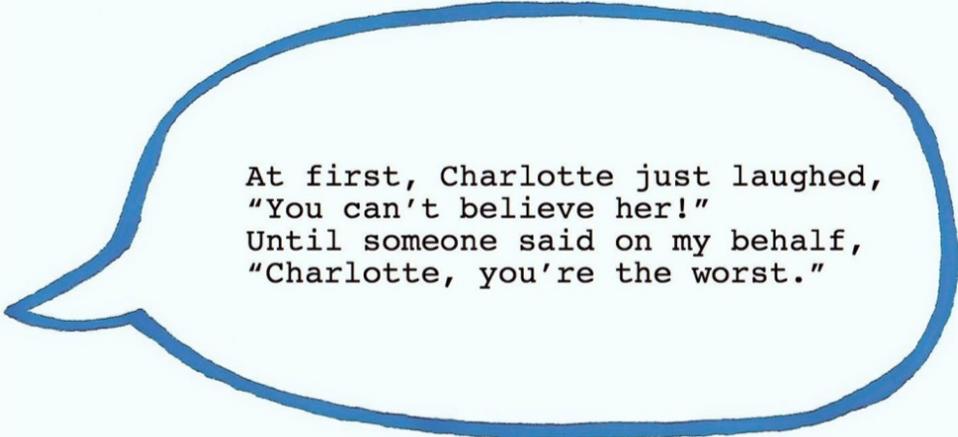
I looked at her, confused,
wondering what I had done wrong,
but she appeared amused,
and I was left in awe.

Sent
1:32

The worst part of the rumors
was how they'd always change,
and while others had found humor,
I only felt enraged.

Until finally I had enough.
I could not handle the gossip.
I told everyone I was fed up
of the lies told of me, quite often.

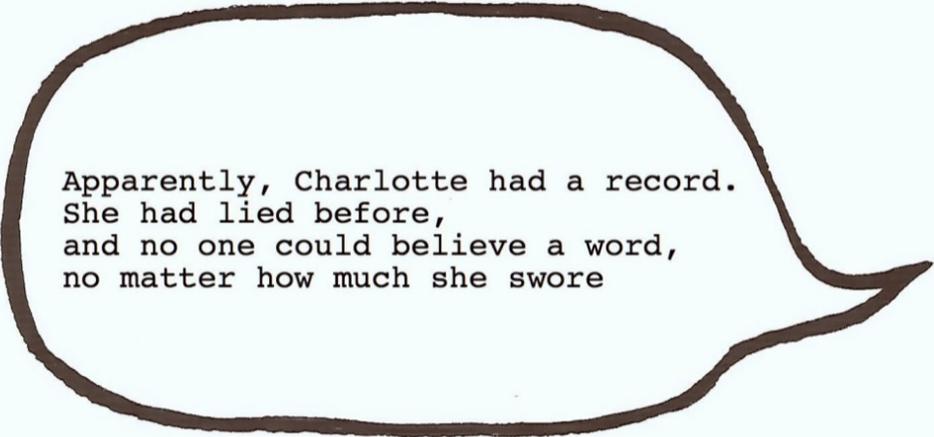
Sent
1:40



At first, Charlotte just laughed,
"You can't believe her!"
Until someone said on my behalf,
"Charlotte, you're the worst."

Sent

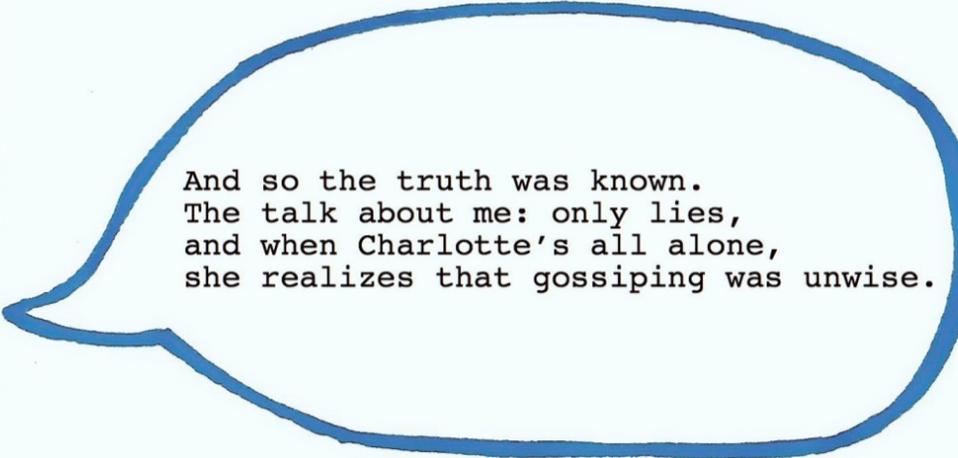
1:45



Apparently, Charlotte had a record.
She had lied before,
and no one could believe a word,
no matter how much she swore

Sent

2:00



And so the truth was known.
The talk about me: only lies,
and when Charlotte's all alone,
she realizes that gossiping was unwise.

Read

2:03

A Note From the Author

This project was completed as an Honors Thesis project (a graduation requirement amongst Honors students at Texas State University). I have felt very passionate about the topic of Bullying for many years, as I witnessed my peers being bullied, and I, myself, was bullied as well. During my research for this project I found many shocking facts, such as almost 25% of children in the public schooling system (within the United States) have reported being victims of bullying. Note that this does not account for individuals who failed to report being bullied. Throughout my research of various articles, some things consistently reappeared: 1) Bullying is a very serious issue amongst adolescents, and as technology develops, more and more children are finding themselves to be victims, and 2) Having a strong support system which educates children on the components of bullying is extremely important and consists of parents, teachers, school counselors, administrators, and any other individuals which may have a strong influence on the growth of the child.

I hope that this children's book can serve to educate children about the various ways they can be bullied, in addition to various reasons children are bullied. It can be used not only within schools, but within the home of the child as well. I also hope that it can spark interest in victims of bullying by giving them the idea to write down their own thoughts and feelings about past (or present) situations they have been in. Perhaps if children do not come up with this writing prompt themselves, parents or teachers could suggest it, allowing it to serve as an outlet to cope with being bullied. I have gained a sense of empowerment after writing these poems, as I have been able to reflect on past situations and realized that I was, and am, able to overcome these acts of hate.

About the Author



Hi! My name is Julissa Adams. I am currently a senior at Texas State University. My degree will be a Major in English and a Minor in Secondary Education. I am married to my wonderful husband Dylan, and we have an amazing daughter named Cadence. We also have a fur baby named Cooper (a Boston Terrier) whom we love so much! My hobbies include reading, writing, arts & crafts, and spending time with my family. I hope one day to make a difference to my students by teaching them that you can learn so much more in school than solely textbook material; you can also learn valuable life lessons.



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