

Kentucky English Bulletin

Volume 71
Number 1 *Winter 2022*

Article 4

1-1-2022

Why Do I Cry?

Synthia Shelby
Jefferson County Public Schools

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.bellarmino.edu/keb>

Recommended Citation

Shelby, Synthia (2022) "Why Do I Cry?," *Kentucky English Bulletin*: Vol. 71: No. 1, Article 4.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.bellarmino.edu/keb/vol71/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@Bellarmine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Kentucky English Bulletin by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@Bellarmine. For more information, please contact jstemmer@bellarmine.edu, kpeers@bellarmine.edu.

Why Do I Cry? *Synthia Shelby*

It's cold this morning
Time to work out
Time to walk
The neighborhood
Or maybe the park
I reach for my hoodie
And FREEZE.
My usual routine
Has now turned to
Anxiety, fear, trepidation,
Concern, doubt, frustration,
Anger, and rage.

Why should I go through
All of these feelings
Just because I want to
Enjoy the rising sun,
Bask in the day's beauty,
Simply BREATHE.
Why should I experience
The Trauma of my race
Day after day
Why should I worry
If I or people
Who look like me
Make it back home
From a walk, a run,
Or trip to the grocery store?
Why should I be concerned
About sleeping in my bed
Or attempting to enter
My home?

It is due to
The fragility
Of Beckys and Karens
Fearing for their lives.
Of others who say
I fit the description.
Of the countless
Cases of rogue cops
Who go free

After they
Assassinate me.
Our lifeless
Bodies swinging
From trees,
Of justice denied
And no racial equality.
Instead my
Heart bleeds.
Others fear ME
Because of my
Beautiful melanin

I cry today
For myself and others
As I lace up my shoes
And put on my hood.
On top of that anxiety
I may even put on
My mask when someone
Approaches trying
To protect them from this
Unknown, killer – COVID19
But, it's ME they see
As a thug,
As a killer,
As a threat,
A terrorist,
As something
To be eliminated.

I don't have the
Option to opt out.
This is my reality.
This is my life.
If you don't live
In my skin
Don't tell me
How I feel within.
Even when I
Turn the TV off
There's still a heavy
Weight on my soul.
I'm just plain tired
Tired, EXHAUSTED,
Of people NOT

Listening to our
Collective Truth!

Why do I talk
About it?
Why do I cry?
Because I need
You to know
To really listen
And DO something!
YOUR silence
Is deafening.
Because I'm
Burdened by
Carrying this weight
Every single day.
Everywhere I go.

I'm trying to
Keep my sisters
And brothers
From going through
Death's door due
To hatred, fear,
Unnecessary force,
Systemic racism,
Desensitized hearts
And others turning a
Blind eye to the issues.
I'm trying to remind myself
And others that our lives,
Our voices, and our history
Have value.

So, in spite of all this
I lace up my shoes
I put on my hood
I pray and I go
To greet the sun,
Laying fear down
For a moment.
I pick up
The audacity
Of Hope,
The voice

Of Courage and
A Warrior's Boldness.

I won't let
Prejudice,
Hate,
Bullying,
Racism,
Or
Fear
Turn me around.
Today
Is a good day
To let those that
Try to erase us
Know that they
Will never ever win.

Synthia Shelby loves to share her trials and triumphs through her writing. She tells her journey through her words and actions. Cynthia motivates, inspires, and empowers others so they can press towards their dreams. She serves her community as an educational leader, author, spoken word artist, and workshop facilitator.



Advocating for Trauma Victims Through Young Adult Literature ***Zoe Mihalicz, Breea Hornback, Bethany Womack, Klaire Compton***

*The summer before my junior year of high school, I was sexually assaulted. This experience changed my life forever. I lost friends. I went from making good grades to barely passing. And I slipped into severe depression. But one day, in my junior year advanced English class, my teacher took us to the library to pick out a novel. I never cared for reading until I found *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson. The novel's protagonist, Melinda Sordina, was sexually assaulted at a party—a situation almost identical to mine. Reading about an adolescent going through a similar experience helped me to understand that I was not alone as a sexual assault victim in high school. *Speak* taught me how to heal and how to advocate for myself and for my peers, who may be dealing with similar experiences.*

Discussing traumatic incidents may feel uncomfortable for teachers and students. It may feel safer to keep these topics silenced and internalized in order to avoid difficult conversations. Yet, each day, students walk into classrooms carrying the physical and emotional burdens from these life-changing experiences, necessitating these conversations within and outside of the classroom. In a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) survey conducted in 2019, 23.9% of Kentucky high school students experienced in-school bullying, and 8.6% reported sexual violence (“Adolescent and School Health”). Resources like media blogs and platforms, as well as school counselors and school