

On November 22 of last year

This wreath was placed on my head as my wildest dreams became true

I was chosen to be the 4th poet laureate for the City of Barrie,

given a prestigious title to hold for 4 years

And as I happily accepted, on the inside my heart felt as if it was about to burst into tears

For years I was depressed and hated myself, but I wrote through my pains and learned to love myself

I choose to write as a way to release the emotions and pain that lived inside of me

I was able to heal, by the powers of poetry

As I healed, I learned that my past should not be a concern

Because I was blessed with the ability to write, and with each word I could give up or I could fight

I could focus on past mistakes, or embrace the lessons learned

I could use my poetry, to display the strength I had earned

And now as I stand here today, it's important that I take a second and acknowledge this historical moment being made

My ancestors are proud and smiling in their graves

I can hear them cheering and clapping and laughing, shouting hooray!

I am the first Black Poet Laureate to represent the city of Barrie

Also the first mother, I understand that without my sisters and brothers surviving and thriving in this community

Standing here right now may not have been an option for me

I sincerely Thank you all for gathering here today, to celebrate the national month of poetry

A style of writing that displays strength while displaying vulnerability

As the poet laureate, it is my duty to be an ambassador of the arts, not just poetry

Which I way I have been creating opportunities for artists of all kinds to participate in open mics

While also creating events that highlight rap and hip-hop culture in a brighter light and its relation to spoken word poetry.

I vowed to be the "people's poet" and I've only just begun to honour this by ensuring my actions always show it.

It's only been about 5 months since I was given this crown, but as you can tell I am one who does not play around

I take this role seriously, because being a poetry leader in this community means the world to me

Through creative writing I found my place in life, so I encourage you all pick up a pen and paper and write

Write through your heartbreaks, write through your struggles

Write through your tear-filled nights, write through all your obstacles in life.

Write down your biggest dreams, write down what you wish you could loudly scream

Write whatever your heart desires,

Because I promise you,

When you look back, at that pen and paper it will not appear the same

Because when you write from your heart, you are releasing the pain, choosing to gain everything that you deserve

A pen in hand is more dangerous than a knife

And a powerful poem lives on after its writer's life

Poetry saves lives, I know this statement to be true

So, I ask you again, to pick up that pen and paper

And see how poetry can heal you too.

Thank you