

Odyssey Oracle

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Year 8 #7 November 17, 2010

Women with the Courage to Write

*Odyssey students responded to poems and stories
by and about women writers who
ignored those who told them*

*“Literature cannot be the business of a woman’s life”
(Robert Southey, 1837).*



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Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise"

*You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.*

*Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.*

*Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.*

*Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.*

*Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.*

*You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.*

*Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?*

*Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.*

The author of this poem has risen! She no longer needs approval to speak or needs acceptance from anyone to be appreciated. She has triumphantly overcome the trials and tribulations that many women have had to face throughout history. The valleys are not obstacles any more but stairwells to her destiny. This poem gives power to women. We will not be discriminated against, held back, or ostracized anymore! We are not just being seen; we are being heard. (**Helen Montgomery**)



Sometimes beaten all the way to the ground, I rise. Being uneducated, a young mother at 16, with no education past 8th grade, getting welfare on my own, going to Job Corps to become a CNA, still I rise. Rape, addiction, mental illness, victimizing myself, still I rise.



Starting a new life with new dreams and a career at age 51, still I rise.

Still I rise.

Now God blessed me in Odyssey.

Still I rise

I rise

I rise

There is no stopping me now. (**Edwina Robinson**)

When I read "I rise," I felt the main idea was that no matter what life throws at you, never give up. Always keep pushing forward, no matter the hurt and pain and no matter what people say or do. Don't give up. I can relate to this poem because I feel that the world is against me. It seems as if no matter what path I take, it is filled



with pot holes. But being part of this program has taught me that I can rise. When I read, I rise. It gives me the strength to keep moving ahead. No matter what, keep pushing and rising.

(Marvin Pratt)



Some want to see us broken in defeat, continuing to suffer from Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, but we won't. My ancestors survived the hatred of the slaveholder and the shame and pain of the past. I am here to tell of their strength. I am the product of these beautiful, strong, powerful

people. I refuse to allow hatred to control who I am and beat me down. As broke as I can be financially sometimes, I am RICH in spirit, truth, relationships, and my heart. Therefore "I rise."

(Bonita Greer)



This poem is by an outstanding, outspoken woman who is telling everybody that, yes, she is a beautiful woman. She is saying that she is strong, and that no matter what is thrown her way she will "still rise," whether it's through hardships, fear, and the days of slavery! She is

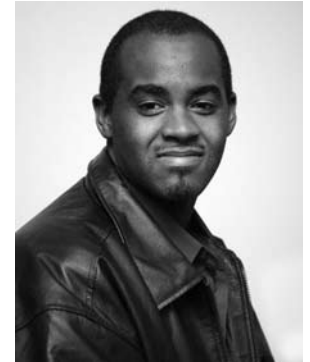
saying that she will be around through her words even when her soul is long put to rest.

This poem reminds me of myself a lot. It takes me to a place of comfort and makes me think of the people who used to make fun of me. I remember as a child not thinking that I was pretty or being scared to talk to people because of the gap in my smile. I now can look at myself and say that I have risen to the knowledge that I am a beautiful black woman. No matter the "bitter, twisted lies" that people may tell about me, I will always believe that I am "Beauty," my nickname. **(Precious LaShore)**

I like the poem "I Rise" because it basically means no matter how you put me down or talk me down or hurt me, I will pick myself up from it. I will rise, making it into a positive cause. I won't let you bring me down. **(Diance Lor)**



This poem gives me strength, hope, and determination to help me understand I can overcome immeasurable odds. Still I rise, a rebel without a cause, inspirational, glowing like a candle, where my focus is essential. Still I rise in this world



filled with illusion, never losing, ready for God's revolution. Free the mind, heal the body, talking evolution, still I rise, like metal where poetry and I come together, magnetize the ghetto, to escape from the devil, we must seek a peaceful level. Still I rise in this recession, it's been a mess, depression, steady stressing, learning life's lessons, grateful for all my blessings, we become slaves to our possessions, creed's a dangerous weapon, deception miscues your conception. Still I rise to ease the mind and analyze between the lines that I vandalize with rhymes in a unique poetic design that's carefully been mastered with time. Still I rise. **(Marseills McKenzie)**

Kate Chopin's "Story of an Hour"

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death...

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her...

And yet she had loved him--sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this

possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering...



This story was about a woman who just found out the news of her husband's death. Her family members (and readers) assume she's sad and heartbroken, but she's not. She sits and thinks for awhile and becomes deep in emotion. When she leaves the room, she is different because of

the loss, not because she's sad but because she feels free. Then she sees her husband, who was thought to have died, and she dies of a heart attack.

This story shows women have a deeper sense of self that can exist without a man. Life without a man doesn't evoke sad, depressing emotions. It surprised the reader and made me think deeper than the words written, which is something I love in writing. (**Takeyla Benton**)



This story was refreshing and surprising, not at all plain or predictable. The very first sentence got my attention and had me in anticipation. After that I wanted, no needed, to continue. Kate Chopin's description put me in the room with Mrs. Mallard, watching her every move

and feeling her emotions. I like the plot twist where she went from grieving to giddy. When the love of her husband had come to an end [when she was told he had died], she was open to love and live for herself. I loved the ironic ending. Even though she died, she first had expressed to herself her happiness of being free. (**Eleita Florence**)

Nila NorthSun's "the way and the way things are"

*but gramma
you told your daughters
marry white men
told them they would have
nicer houses
fancy cars
pretty clothes
could live in the city*

*gramma your daughters did
they couldn't speak Indian anymore
how could we grandchildren learn
there are no rabbits to skin
in the city
we have no gramma there to
teach us the ways*

This poem is the story of one culture giving up its way of life to conform to another culture's standards, but in the process losing everything—their language and values. Now those of the older generation are gone and there's no more to learn.



I can totally relate to this poem. I feel as if all races and cultures end up having to conform to the ways of Western civilization. It's sad. Our parents and elders are constantly in pursuit of the American dream and keeping up with the Joneses (i.e. marrying white men/women, having nicer houses, fancy cars, pretty clothes, city life) and then press that upon their children. You can't blame them. We have to keep pushing on to preserve our ideals. (**Eric Rodgers**)

A Shoshone-Chippewan Native American woman speaks of lost traditions because the world has become more about material things. She says how can we learn the ways of our people by letting go of tradition and the love of Native American spirituality.

I loved this poem the most because it really raises



questions for me. First off, I have no Native American blood in my body, but I still have lost the heritage and traditions of my people. Why? I suppose I'll never really know exactly how my great-grandmothers were, but I wish that I did. (Leah LaShore)

Emily Dickinson

*A word is dead
When it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.*



Emily Dickinson's "A word is dead" poem is simply about words. Words can have little meaning to some people, but to others they can have a meaning so deep it lets their imagination run wild. I think you can take just one word and play with it so many ways. Creativity and imagination are the

keys. (Shardetra Ofori-Anim)



Emily Dickinson is an amazingly talented, inspirational, beautiful writer. She had true freedom in her own uncomplicated space where she spent much of her time being the freest to feel her imagination and creativity. She had much love and respect for nature

and natural beauty. By reading and writing, one can "escape" the sometimes harsh realities of life. We all need at times our own space to feel "outside" of ourselves. (Ray Migizi Hopp)

Anne Bradstreet's "The Author to Her Book"

*Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain,
Who after birth did by my side remain,
Till snatched from thence by friends, less wise than true*

*Who thee abroad, exposed to public view;
Made thee in rags, halting to the press to trudge,
Where errors were not lessened (all may judge)
At thy return my blushing was not small
My rambling brat (in print) should mother call,
I cast thee by as one unfit for light,
Thy Visage was so irksome in my sight;
Yet being mine own, at length affection would
Thy blemishes amend, if so I could:
I washed thy face, but more defects I saw,
And rubbing off a spot, still made a flaw,
I stretched thy joints to make thee even feet,
Yet still thou run more hobbling than is meet,
In better dress to trim thee was my mind,
But nought but home-spun Cloth in the house I find.
In this array, among Vulgars may thou roam,
In Critics' hands, beware thou does not come;
And take thy way where yet thou art not known,
If for thy Father asked, say, thou had none:
And for thy Mother, she alas is poor,
Which caused her thus to send thee out of door.*

This poem was extraordinary to me. Anne Bradstreet's description of her book left me breathless. She talked of her book as a child she birthed. She actually made me feel she breathed life into her book. She nurtured and clothed it. Despite the problems that were obvious, she still held fast and wanted the message of her story to be known. (Eleita Florence)



Sharon Olds's "35/10"

*Brushing out my daughter's dark
silken hair before the mirror
I see the grey gleaming on my head,
the silver-haired servant behind her. Why is it
just as we begin to go
they begin to arrive, the fold in my neck*

clarifying as the fine bones of her hips sharpen? As my skin shows its dry pitting, she opens like a small pale flower on the tip of a cactus; as my last chances to bear a child are falling through my body, the duds among them, her full purse of eggs, round and firm as hard-boiled yolks, is about to snap its clasp. I brush her tangled fragrant hair at bedtime. It's an old story—the oldest we have on our planet—the story of replacement.



Sharon Olds compares her age and physical being to that of her 10-year-old daughter. Her hair is silver because of aging and some would say wisdom. Her daughter's hair is silky black. She basically sees in her daughter herself in her younger years.

I understand where she is coming from. I'm 33 years old and when I see the teenage girls at my son's high school, I always start to reminisce about how my breasts were up and perky and how I used to have no belly. I was young and vibrant just like them. However, I do know that life is like a clock and everything must repeat itself. My mom, grandmother, and great-grandmother felt the same way as I do—the same way Sharon Olds writes about in her poem. (Tracy Cunnigan)

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz

*In persecuting me, World, what is your intention?
How do I offend you, when all I desire
Is to place beauty in my mind
Instead of focusing my mind on worldly beauty?
I esteem neither treasures nor riches,
And thus, I am always more content
To put riches into my thoughts
Than to waste my thoughts on riches.
I esteem not that beauty which, vanquished,
Is the ravaged prey of passing years,
Nor do false riches please me:
For I prize more to consume
The vanities of life with my truths
Than to have my life consumed by vanity.*

This poem stood out to me for some reason. I think it was her bluntness. Considering the time it was written, this would have been extremely subversive, especially coming from a woman. The poem foreshadows the m.o. that feminists would adopt in a couple of centuries. It takes the language typically associated with masculinity and uses it to make a point with men to demand equality. However, the author retains her femininity while shedding the stereotypes and stigmas that women faced.



(Dalonte Nobles)

Alice Walker's "Women"

*They were women then
My mamma's generation
Husky of voice—Stout of Step
With fists as well as Hands
How they battered down Doors
And ironed Starched white Shirts
How they led Armies
Headragged Generals
Across mined Fields
Booby-trapped Ditches
To discover books Desks
A place for us
How they knew what we Must know
Without knowing a page Of it
Themselves.*

Women hold life together. Women are the ones that ironed for and fed mankind Since day one, women have provided. The poem also tells you that women/



mothers might not know some things, as in reading or writing, but they know that you need to know it. I really like this poem. It says everything that I think about when I think of powerful women. Women are the backbones of society, and they should be treated that way.

(Kiara Hill)

The Brontë Sisters

"It is in vain to say that human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility; they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer."

(from *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë)



Emily Auerbach's article in *Highlights* was about three sisters: Anne, Emily, and Charlotte Brontë. They grew up in England with their brother and father. As children, the four of them spent time writing stories, poems, and plays. The hope was that their brother would become

successful and support the family, but that did not happen. They worked at different jobs but wanted to live at home together. They decided to try to get a book published, and to do so changed their names to the names of men. They did all go on to have novels published and became very famous authors.

I enjoyed this story as I read it to my seven-year-old daughter. I don't think that there would be anything in the way of my daughters or myself following our true calling. When I read this, it reminded me of how far we have come. It made me very grateful that we live in a time when we can choose as women what path we will walk in life.

(Danielle Rosales)

The Brontë family's lives were filled with tragic events, loneliness, and separation from having their mother die when they were so young. They were a talented and gifted family with tons of creativity.

The three Brontë sisters pretended they were someone else [men] in order to be heard and taken seriously. These young ladies were determined to prove that women were just as smart as men, that we too are creative beings, that we women are not here for just sex, babies, cooking, cleaning and sewing. The Brontë sisters' writings and books have been an enjoyment for many. I wish the sisters had not died so young and could have lived to see their achievements.

(Marie Hill)

The Brontë sisters article was about three young, shy sisters who loved to read, write, and create stories. Back in the 1800s women were expected to cook, clean, and be quiet. In this article it tells a story of how these three young sisters schemed their way into the poetry world so that their voices would be heard all around the world.

I believe I connected with this article because the women remind me of myself. They were so strong and determined to have their voices be heard in a male-dominant world, even if they had to change their names. They put their heads together, came up with a plan, and sacrificed to be able to provide a better life for themselves and their family no matter what. I personally do whatever I need to provide a better life for my boys, whether it's working longer hours or working two jobs. I also felt the Brontë sisters never gave up on what they believed in. I too am the same way. If you don't believe in yourself, who else will?

(Catina McAlister)



Frederick Douglass' Paper

DEVISED BY THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN SLAVES, WITHOUT DIFFERENCE OF COLOR, (1842) 40-41123

VOL. X NO. 34

ROCHESTER, N.Y.

NOVEMBER 17, 1852

Odyssey students were asked to imagine that they were Frederick Douglass seven years after he published his Narrative of his escape from slavery. It is 1852, and slavery still exists. Douglass opens the Southern Quarterly Review to find this outrageous editorial:

"The negro, left to himself, does not dream of liberty. He cannot indeed grasp a conception which belongs so naturally to the white man. It is a cruel task to disturb him in the enjoyment of that life—slavery—to which God has destined him. He basks in the sunshine and is happy. Christian slavery, free from interference, is the brightest sunbeam which Omniscience has destined for his existence."

Here is the response of "Frederick Douglass":

Dear Editor:

How could you say that I and other slaves do not dream of Liberty? Liberty to a slave is like bloody meat to a shark! God destined for me to be a man! A husband! A father! A worker! A provider! Just as you do, I bleed rivers of blood. I sweat under the same sun; I laugh and I cry just like the white man. God destined for us all to be equal and treated as such! I spent days in the scorching sun, skin burning; and I spent days in the cold with icicles on my eyebrows. How in Heaven's name can you say I am happy under these living conditions? **(Michelle Bozeman)**

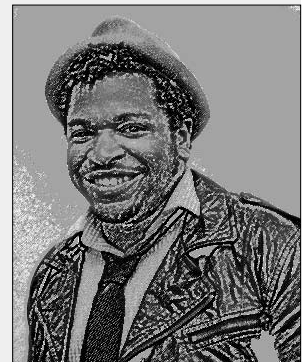
How can you think we were happy with the life of getting beaten by brutes until we were bloody, starved, and raped, taken away from our families at early ages and traded without a moment's notice? How could you say that we cannot grasp the



conception of liberty because it belongs to the white man? For I am a man, am I not? Do I not bleed the same as you if I were pricked on my finger? If you were a slave for one day, I guarantee that you would spend every moment of every second of every day dreaming of liberty. **(Catina McAlister)**

You write of the slave, "He basks in the sunshine and is happy." Would he not appear that way when the mere unveiling of any other emotion would warrant the whips and cudgels, when the only means of survival is to make appearances, when the insurance of life is dependent on the subjugation of an honest expression? Take a step to the outside and listen to the words of the slaves. You will notice the irony of the music, how the jovial juxtaposes the unjust, how the stories of the sorrow and the themes of the lyrics portray the universal longing for freedom. God must truly be benevolent for he has given the slave the options of being lashed, forced into work, or being sold like household tools. It is not the slavery that is used as a tool, but the tools that use slavery that keep this abominable institution alive.

(Dalonte Nobles)





Sir, what is your fear of emancipating the Negro slave? This is 1852, and slavery has not yet been abolished!... You believe that slavery was a blessed favor by the creed of the almighty GOD! I believe your greatest fear lies in the fact that if Negroes

are freed, especially the educated Negroes, your question would then be, "Whatever shall we do with them?" I am not a savage or brute, as you proclaim in your article, but a black, educated, judicious, amicable man. **(Helen Montgomery)**



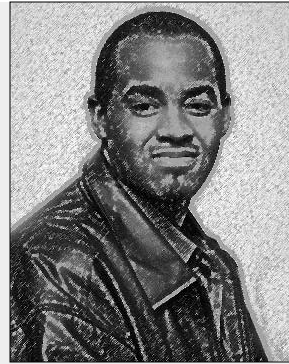
Try stepping out of this cave you're in and put yourself in my shoes. If you were a slave, how do you think you would feel? Would you be comfortable with me, an African American, whipping you and making you pick cotton from dawn to dusk? Slave owners are

legal killers with no good intentions. Let me prosper or let me die, much as Patrick Henry said "Give me liberty, or give me death." Slavery is unfair and unjust. We will be set free, even if it kills me. Let my people out of these chains and give us a chance to know how it feels to be FREE. **(Dwayne Ellis)**



What Christian denies another food, clothes, and freedom? What Christian commits adultery by raping women? What Christian beats on women and children? What Christian kills another for wanting to be free? No true Christian exists in slaveholder's

Christianity. I am a very strong and honorable Christian—and a free slave. **(Tracy Cunnigan)**



We want a land of liberty and opportunity inhabited by fellow men and women of all shades of color able to enjoy their lives by the almighty grace of God. There will be struggle. Those who profess to favor freedom yet deprecate agitation are men and

women who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful treacherous roar of the waters. We must breathe free and cast off the oppression heaped on us—by labor, by suffering, by sacrificing our lives and the lives of others. **(Marseills McKenzie)**



I am appalled and disgusted by your editorial! For you to imply that Negroes don't dream of being free is absurd! I spend all hours, waking and asleep, dreaming of my freedom that I so rightfully deserve. I spend days working, wanting,

withering in this captive state of existence. At times I would rather die if my freedom is unattainable. I have been trying to taste freedom ever since I knew what it was. Like a wild animal stalking and capturing its prey, I would catch it. To live as a slave is to live with a broken spirit, a broken back, and a broken pride. To be free is to open one's heart to the goodness of the offerings of life. **(Danielle Rosales)**



You sell us, beat us, kill us, rape our women, and you want me to believe you're justified in God's eyes? You hate me, disgrace me, yet say you love God? You remind me of the

Pharisees and Scribes. They judged, beat, had men killed, and knew the law. They thought God was only for them; everyone else was nothing. You think because we are not white we deserve to be treated as an animal. May God have mercy on your soul! The Bible says "Love thy neighbor as thyself." **(Edwina Robinson)**

I implore you to lend me your ears or lend me your hearts. Slavery is nothing short of harmful, hateful, and hellish. Living without breath, talking without voice, and walking without feet is comparable to life as a slave. It is simply false that any person who was taken by force, placed in chains, and sold as merchandise can come to accept that nothing more exists. Imagine, if you can, someone or anyone being joyous at the dismay of being sold and bought, and bought to be sold! Even as I sit here writing with the task of making it painfully obvious that slavery must cease and desist, I am racked with irons and chains of knowledge my ancestors never knew and my brethren will never know. I can earnestly say with great knowledge that no human, whatever the circumstances, should ever be owned by another man! **(Eleita Florence)**

White men brazenly quote Bible verses in attempts to justify the injustices they pass off as kindness to their property. We shall not be divided or destroyed—we are not your wenches or your boys. No race of people was put on earth to serve another. God's goal is for us to love one another. **(Takeyla Benton)**

It amazes me that slavery is taken so lightly. Why shouldn't I, a human being just as you are, have the same rights as a white man? I walk, think, and breathe as you do, but for some reason you find me undeserving because my skin is different from yours. How dare you say I don't dream of liberty! **(Shardetra Ofori-Anim)**

You say it is a cruel task to disturb the slave in the enjoyment of that life—slavery—to which God has destined him. It was not God's doing but the hands of evil devils like yourself and so many others that captured, bound, and enslaved men, women, and children for your own sadistic, self-gratifying, and evil purposes! The blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery that I witnessed in the spring of 1825, was horrifying. My beloved Aunt Hester was savagely whipped till her flesh ripped from her shoulders and back. And you, Editor, say that God has destined this and that it is enjoyable? **(Marie Hill)**

What an outrage to speak of slavery in such an erroneous manner! You speak of slaves as though they enjoy their imprisonment. Have you no sagacity? Such words to use, Mr. Editor! If I do not dream of liberty, what, sir, do I dream of?

I had a mistress whose benevolent heart was open to all. She began to teach me my ABCs and at first treated me as an equal. She wanted me to



learn and be educated just as any other white child should be. However, my mistress was soon shown the destructive, disgusting, and disturbing ways of slavery. Her once benevolent heart was instead replaced with an icy, cold glare that still haunts me in my dreams.

The God that I have read about has preached nothing but love and kindness onto others! Whipping a slave in the name of God is not only offensive, but the man doing the whipping shall be sent to the depths of perdition. **(Leah LaBarre)**



You say that a Negro left to himself does not dream of liberty. Are not all men created equal? Any man born of a woman falls into that category! Liberty is a Negro's dream. You say it is a cruel task to disturb a Negro in his enjoyment of slavery, but isn't it cruel to

enslave mankind in the first place? As a young child I was torn from my mother's arms as she was sold like an animal to another slave owner. I lacked the mother's touch and affection that you had as a child, yet you call this enjoyment? A Negro basks in the sunshine and is happy? No, a Negro is worked like cattle, beaten, and scarred and scorched in the sunshine of the South.

(Kiara Hill)

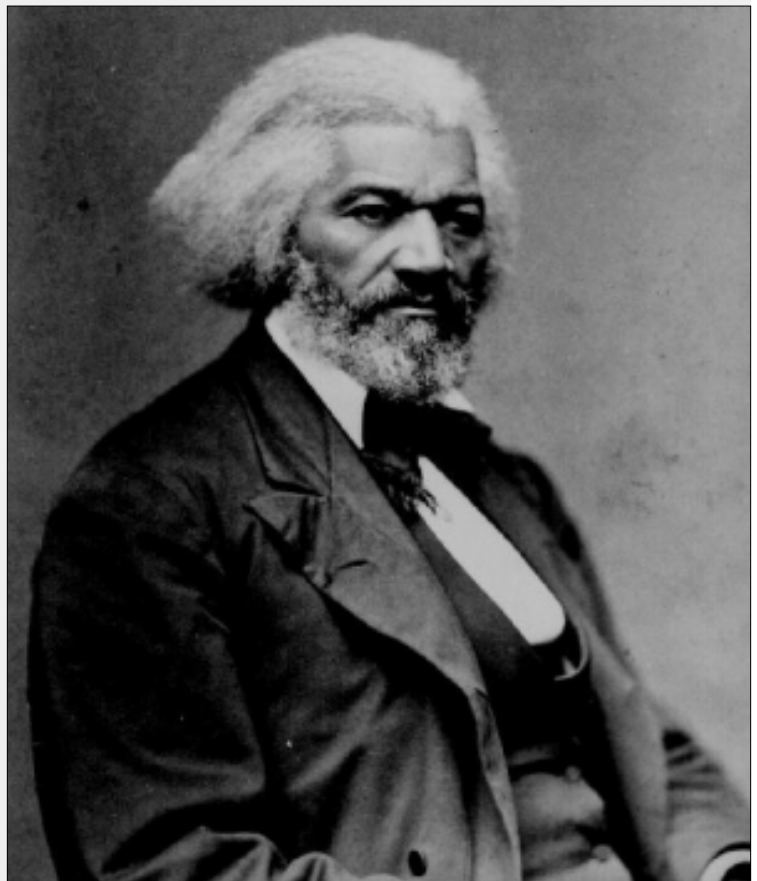


The Bible clearly states in Genesis, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." It is your desire to Deceive, Detest, Disgrace, and

Dehumanize the Negro. But the Facts are as such. We are HUMAN! We are here due to kidnap and rape. Did you think it pleasing for

a woman of noble reserve to be made to lie with her master or with a stranger from another plantation for the purpose of creating more slaves to work her master's land? I am perplexed at the thought of you accepting these Hideous, Horrendous, Horrible acts as Happiness. How can I obtain happiness in the brutal sun from the time of its rising to the moment its setting, in the field working the land, as the sun beats, burns, and breaks my will to endure its brutality? Imagine the emotions a mother must feel as her child is snatched from her bosom and sold to another farm, only to be replaced with her mistress's newborn child to suckle her breast milk. Murder should be a crime to be persecuted in the court of law, and respectable Christians know that Deuteronomy states "Thou shall not KILL," but the crime of murder upon a slave or any person of color goes undocumented. Now, my fellow Christian educated men, to continue in these behaviors is to be filled with Hypocrisy, Self Hatred, and Inhumanity. You have to have some Human Decency, Dignity, and Devotion! Slavery must be abolished!

(Bonita Greer)



Letters to the Descendants of Henrietta Lacks

I am writing in regards to the book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. First, I'd like to offer my condolences as well as my admiration to you all. My condolences are not only for Henrietta's death but also for what you have endured over the years. My admiration speaks to your experiences—how you all handled your situation and stuck together as a family.

To come about the information that you did in the way you did would devastate even the most

knowledgeable individual. I, myself, don't believe I would have been able to handle it well. I think that you all did your very best to understand. All the information had to be overwhelming. The scientific jargon alone would confuse most people. The trust issues that your family had were certainly valid. After all, this all started with an act of dishonesty—taking HeLa cells without consent. The time period when this all started was also a big factor in the way the family handled things.

All of you held together in spite of what was going on around you. I applaud you all for being so strong. I am truly sorry that Deborah did not live to see the book come into existence. She would be proud. You all deserve to have recognition and accolades for your struggle. God bless you all.

(Eleita Florence)

Let me start by saying I'm so thankful to be a part of learning about you and your family. My name is Edwina Robinson. I've learned about your family in the UW Odyssey class. I was amazed to learn who Henrietta Lacks was. I was touched by knowing that a woman, especially a black woman, had been used to touch many lives.

As I read the book, I could see that your family could be me. This made me sad, happy, and angry at the same time.

I felt your anger and pain knowing your mother's cells were alive, without her consent. I look at this, and it was downplayed as though she donated them to science. But it was stealing to me how they kept this hidden for twenty years. Wow.

But I noticed that in Henrietta Lacks' day, blacks had no say-so over what happened to them or their care. Sometimes they couldn't read and were asked to sign a paper thinking one thing but it being another.

I noticed Deborah's response when she found out—glad about everything positive, but her own children didn't have health care. I see how this would make one sick. But then all she wanted to know was her mother and who she was.

I can truly relate to this matter of losing one's mother to cervical cancer. My mother died in 1967. She was in her 30s and I was seven years old. I was



Henrietta and David Lacks

a twin without proper care—no health insurance and no after care treatment.

My mother left seven children behind. There was a great effect on my family. I too wanted to know my mother and who she was. There is not much change. I'm 51, with no health care, but today I'm working on it. This story brought about many feelings for me.

Wow, I wonder what might have happened to my mother's cells.

Thank God, as I read that there may be health care for the rest of the grandchildren. Thank God for Rebecca Skloot never giving up. She was sent to do this.

Your mother, Henrietta Lacks, is a great woman. Deborah said it best when she told Rebecca her mother's soul was in the cells. "See how they have spoken already. But I wish they would have asked the family first. We would have said yes." May Deborah's soul rest in peace. I know she will be proud. My encouragement is keep looking up. God is doing what you can't do.

(Edwina Robinson)

I just completed reading the book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. This book completely opened up my eyes in so many ways. I have gone through such a great range of emotions including anger, excitement, awe, and deep heartache. What a journey this has been for all of you. I hope you feel this book gives Henrietta and your family some peace and healing. She was a truly strong woman in life, and in death had the power to change the world.

I can't begin to express my deepest sympathy for all the lies and pain your family has been subjected to. Henrietta Lacks is a hero because her cells have made so many others' lives better. Then my heart breaks, though, because she couldn't make the lives of her children better. You needed her love, guidance, and protection so desperately, and she was gone. I am sorry for all the pain and suffering you endured as children and adults due to the lack of your mother. I hope you are able to see these cycles of abuse and the lifetime scars they leave on humans and work to stop these cycles in your own lives.

At many times in this book I felt that the medical

and scientific community is so corrupt and wasteful. It seemed that much of their findings were later changed or proven wrong including the diagnosis and treatment of Henrietta. On the bright side, they were able to learn a lot from their mistakes, and many lives were saved due to the ultimate sacrifice that Henrietta made. I hope this letter finds you at a more contented place in your lives after the truth has finally been spelled out in what is in my opinion a fine book.

(Danielle Rosales)

Reading the book about your mother's journey and your family's pain, I am left with great admiration and despair. I admire your family's strength and conviction in efforts to understand it all, but I also feel despair for the pain you all must feel.

Exploitation is only the beginning of your long list of painful emotions, but you all should also feel a great sense of pride. Your mother, in her own special, individual, God-given way, has helped countless people in inconceivable ways. Her curse of cancer indeed up being the one special thing in human existence that would help unlock so many ideas and help develop so many different medicines that will help out all of human kind. Although what was done to her was unkind and unfair, her lasting gift to the world will never be forgotten—so be proud for that.

I wish you all the best and hope your lives are filled with love, happiness, and lots of money. I believe every descendant of your mother is owed at least a comfortable financial compensation for the use of your mother and sister's blessing to the medical world. Thank you. **(Takeyla Benton)**

I am writing you to encourage you to continue educating your minds because education is empowerment. The story of Mrs. Lacks made me think of the power of the afterlife. As I read the book, I could identify with some of the struggles of your family. I also found myself reminded of the strength of humanity. I was very proud of the growth that Deborah and the Lacks brothers experienced during the writing of the book. This book is truly an important part of History and Science.

I was excited to learn that HeLa came from a woman of African descent such as myself. I do realize that almost every important contribution to this America, from History to Science etc., comes from people of African descent. I know you know how vitally important cells are to American society in the past and today. So I'll just share with you my experiences while reading the book. I cried when I read about Henrietta's death. The children's experiences of abuse because she was gone were heart breaking, and the fact that there were no finances to help you all was hard for me to understand.

The light for me was going to see Rebecca Skloot at the Kohl Center in Madison, Wisconsin. She spoke so eloquently about your family. I saw her connection to you guys, especially Deborah, as she spoke. I was so glad to learn that so many of Deborah's hopes were coming to life. By the way, the Lacks women (Deborah, Henrietta, Elsie) are all beautiful.

I can't wait to see the movie. I'm equally excited about donating to the Foundation. I'm sharing my experience with this book with many others, friends and family. They are all interested in reading it. God bless you, Lacks family. Thank you for sharing.
(Bonita Greer)

My name is Helen Montgomery, and my classmates and I just finished the wonderfully written book by Rebecca Skloot regarding the life of Henrietta. As she was while she was alive, Henrietta is still blessing and saving lives, and that should make your family very proud.

After reading the book, I felt as if I've known your family very well. We all have gone through some tragedies in our families and have overcome triumphantly. With love we overcome a lot of pain.

I pray that you all go on knowing that Henrietta is a Medical & Scientific miracle and is saving the lives of so many. Continue to be strong for one another.

(Helen Montgomery)

I am writing to tell you that I thank God for your mother and your family. Your mother truly was a great woman and mother wanting to keep all of her children together and so badly wanting you all to

be taken care of and done right by. As she battled cancer, she held her head up with such grace. I say she was definitely a phenomenal woman! Your mother's cells help countless people all over the world and made medical breakthroughs.

I am sorry for all the wrong that was done to your mother and to you as a family. Deborah and the brothers all sacrificed so much with their mother leaving here at such a young age. What she wanted was to be here raising you all and watching you guys grow up. Your family has endured great pain and hardships and has grieved and is still grieving. I want you to know that I am praying for you all and wishing for the best for your family. I pray that you all receive healing in all aspects and areas of your life. I pray that the Lord bless your family with happiness, peace, abundant monetary supplements. I wish and hope I can some day meet you!

I also thank God for Ms. Rebecca Skloot for all she has done to help your family and also bring awareness and acknowledgment about your mother, Mrs. Henrietta Lacks, and her life and contributions to this world. She was a beautiful African American woman, a woman who suffered pain and despair but had grace and dignity. I say I am thankful to Ms. Rebecca Skloot for just the mere fact of wanting to know about your mother and your family and wanting to write this book! It is absolutely amazing and intriguing. I don't know you per se but I love you! God bless you all, Lacks family.
(Marie Hill)

Wow, after reading this book I'm wondering how everyone in your family is coping, learning about the HeLa cells? How did everyone cope with not getting health insurance? How is everyone feeling after reading this book? How did everyone move on emotionally? How is everyone doing without getting paid any money from the cells? What positive things is everyone doing now? Will you ever have a case with Henrietta's cells? How does it feel knowing that Henrietta's cells help save lives? How does it feel knowing that her cells are still growing? I'm sorry this happened to everyone.
(Kian Cunningham)

Hello, how are you doing today? I am fine, thank

you, just resting and relaxing on this rainy Sunday afternoon. You may not know me, but my name is Marseills McKenzie, a 26-year-old young vibrant black male who's just trying to make and find himself in the world. My class of the UW Odyssey Project read the remarkable story of your mother—*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. I was sadly and deeply moved from the story about what your family has endured over the years before and after the birth of the HeLa cells that were named after your mom or grandmom. It wasn't right how you all were treated and not informed about any of the wrongdoings that had taken place with Hopkins. It's quite unfortunate that your family was not taken care of in any way from the contributions of HeLa. Life goes on, and Jehovah will continue to keep blessing us. So keep on living and staying positive, being proud of how those cells have saved many lives and will continue to improve medicine and science, taking it to even higher heights we haven't seen yet.

I was born with cerebral palsy. I will forever have this condition until researchers someday find a cure for it. That's why I want to thank you for what

Henrietta has done for all of us, making so much possible for all of us. In due time, things will get better for us all. Keep on believing and having faith in God. Good things are going to happen. Hopefully real soon we will be able to have a suitable and affordable health care plan set in place. I wish your family all the best in the future. Take care, and may God bless you.

(Marseills McKenzie)

It was only the second week of the Odyssey Program when I took a seat and noticed the bright orange hardcover book where last week sat the textbooks and class materials, as well as the autobiography of Frederick Douglass and Plato's Trial of Socrates. Admittedly I thought this class has good taste, but damn was I going to dread reading this much heavy material back to back. I glanced at the inside liner and noticed the words "HeLa cells." I thought to myself, where had I heard this? At the end of class I remembered seeing it as a blog entry for Radiolab, an audio podcast from New York Public Radio, a while back. This put the notion in my mind that this book should definitely



The Lacks Family, 2009

be interesting, and I was excited to start it. What I hadn't known was how much this story would upset, disturb, and bother me.

I cannot begin to fully comprehend the emotions that could possibly arise from finding out that the cells, the very buildup of a person's physical body, of a long since passed relative have been kept alive for 50+ years postmortem. In a grotesque way, this is poetic and describes how we've reduced the essence of a person to a commodity. This represents exploitation at its absolute worst and shows the further dehumanization of scientific research in a society that views each of its unwilling participants as an abstraction, not the individual physical beings that we all are.

One could argue that without these cells, a lot of the things we know now wouldn't have been possible to find out otherwise, or that some of the accidental results, e.g. the discovery of the chromosome count in human beings, had been so beneficial that it trumps any of its inhumanities. However, when you think about how they began injecting the cells into rats to see if tumors developed, it brings it into much grayer territory. On an even creepier note, when Southam would

inject the malignant cancer cells into patients without consent or at the least providing them with a straightforward explanation that it was a risky experimental procedure, that was superbly unjust. Comparing this to Nazi scientists during the second world war was absolutely spot on.

To some degree it is true these cells were quite possibly the most important thing to come to science in the 20th century with its contributions to the human genome research, cancer research, disease research, biochemistry and the effect of radiation on cellular makeup; this is all impressive considering this is the century that gave us nuclear fission, Einstein's theory of relativity and the standard model for quantum physics; however, it is an inescapable truth that while these benefits did occur it does not change the fact that this family has seen none of the credit nor compensation for their contribution, not just to science but humanity itself. One must ask themselves the obvious question: is this because they're black, because the family is poor, or because the family is rural? All three are unfortunately true.

I found it disturbing to find out that slave

masters had used the religious traditions of African slaves' belief in spirits influencing wellness to exploit them in scientific/medical experiments by dressing in white sheets and hoods (which fascinatingly became the basis of the aesthetic for Ku Klux Klan) to, in my opinion, mock their culture to prove a superiority as well



Deborah and her family circa 1980

as denigrate their humanity all for the use of kidnapping and selling people to science. To think that not much had changed a century and a half later!

This isn't entirely a race thing but rather a class thing. I find myself comparing this to a documentary I saw about the author's inspiration for "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," which described a seedy underworld of postmortem bodies (mostly poor individuals) being sold illegally to "mad" doctors and scientists performing experiments on the bodies without the consent of anyone whatsoever and merely for their own fame and profit. This brings the problem further into clarity, that a lot of this injustice comes from a disconnect from the validity of living organisms that allows for the assertion of control. It's the cold dispassionate experimentation on life forms, it's the calculated forced ideologies, it's the reckless regard for environmental impacts, and it's the separation man creates for himself and nature that create a false sense of power and control.

Overall, I would like to let you know that I'm trying to sympathize with you. I know that I can't possibly know what you feel, but I can only tell you how this would make me feel if I were to realize that this was a part of my family history. To have suddenly found out my ancestor's body was used as the basis for so much that has changed the world in the past century, that my family had struggled while others had used her body essentially to make a living, how we had no share in its use or even say in what it was used for would sadden me. I hope you keep up the fight. For a lack of better choices in wording, you deserve reparations.

(Dalonte Nobles)

Henrietta Lacks is a very important person in the

world! She was an African American woman who has helped us understand cells and cancer. . . . I personally would like to thank your mother and at the same time say sorry that they had to steal cells and not compensate you all. Your mother's cells have helped us develop lots of cures and understanding of things we would never have known about. Thank you!

(Michael Lozano)

First and foremost, let me give you my deepest sympathies for all of the trials and tribulations your family went through and losing your grandmother. It is definitely a horrible tragedy. I know that things were rough not knowing the real cause of her death and no answers to back it up, but I have to admit, you all were stronger than I could ever imagine being.

I know that you all were too young and may not have even been born at the time to know and learn the extent of Mrs. Lacks' illness, but I have to give you tons of credit. You all really fought hard to learn about what was going on. You asked questions, read on the topics, and learned how to use technology to gain more information. This is amazing and you all are too. Be proud of yourselves.

I read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot and I have to say I am still in total shock about those doctors and scientists stealing your mother's cells. I guess the positive side is that she still lives on and is helping save others' lives. It was wrong that your family wasn't informed nor were you even compensated for your loss and troubles. In my eyes, God sent Ms. Rebecca to your family for a reason. I feel that she helped with the recognition of who the identity was behind the most popular HeLa cells; something they didn't want to reveal because she was a black woman. Ms. Rebecca had no idea what she was about to uncover nor did you for that matter. I still cannot understand for the life of me how people could've been that cruel to a grieving family.

What moved me the most about the Lacks is that your family never gave up on answers. Deborah Lacks kept pushing even when her high blood pressure and hives tried to intervene; she held her ground and wasn't going to stop until she found



out EVERYTHING! She was one of the most courageous women ever. She found out about things that were hidden. I know that was hard for her siblings as well as the other family members, but they overcame that obstacle.

I want you to know that you all have my full respect. I hope that your family can finally continue to live the legacy of Henrietta Lacks throughout all generations.

(Michelle Bozeman)

It wasn't until I went to see Ms. Skloot speak at the Kohl Center in Madison, Wisconsin, that I realized that the one I wanted to have a conversation with was Deborah. I would like to know why she decided to let Rebecca Skloot tell your family's story instead of doing it herself. I would have liked to know her thoughts on not having her mother present, mostly because I myself did not have the opportunity to know my parents and wanted to know if Deborah and I asked the same kinds of questions. I would have liked to talk to her about her relationship choices and where she found the strength to leave an abusive relationship. I am currently working with the Wisconsin Coalition against Domestic Violence as an advocate for those with disabilities, and I feel that her voice would have been a great asset to the work we do.

I would have liked to have known Deborah, and in many ways I feel like I do. I know that she was a woman of courage and strength. I know that she valued education and the freedom gained through information. I respect that she fought so hard to get the truth about her mother and her cells because I know the hell I'm raising to put the pieces of my past together.

Though I would have liked to hear your family's story in your own words, I applaud you for allowing Rebecca Skloot to put your story on the page. I just wonder how you feel about the allocation of the funds from the book and the subsequent movie. I mean, are you comfortable with the fact that somebody else is profiting from your family's trials and tribulations? I am not sure I would be comfortable with that, which is why I am so determined to tell my own story.

Thank you for letting the world see your family's triumphs and sorrows. Thank you for speaking for

those who could not speak for themselves. Thank you for telling the truth about the black community and the conditions there.

(Stephanie Pamperin)

I have just finished reading the book about your ancestor, Mrs. Henrietta Lacks. I was very surprised that I enjoyed this book as much as I did! I say this because science is not something I have ever been interested in, so the thought of reading a book about cells was not on my list of things to do. But I am very happy that I had the opportunity to learn about your family and its history. Being an African American person, I have obviously had racism present in my life, but the level of racism that Day and Henrietta endured I could never fathom. . . . Henrietta had to be living in her own personal hell those final days. I know as a mother one of my biggest fears is that something could happen to me and leave my kids without their mother. That is a scary thought because no one can or will love a child completely like the mother. . . .

I have always been told that African American women were strong, resilient, and determined creatures; now I just have another example of that in Henrietta Lacks. One thing that made me angry in the book is the fact that all these white men made money off HeLa while her family struggled and suffered in poverty. Here Day is working so hard to make ends meet he doesn't even realize the hell his children are going through. Ethel, who was any mother's worst nightmare, was killing any spirit left in the kids, and what she didn't kill off, she beat out of them. Deborah was being sexually and physically abused by a family member while all these doctors and scientists were getting millions and not even acknowledging Henrietta Lacks.

Even if your family got a percentage of the profits, that would not have made the pain from the loss of your loved one any easier. I want to end by saying thank you. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Out of your family's loss we all have gained so much. Without Mrs. Henrietta Lacks and her family's loss, sacrifice, and pain, most of us wouldn't be here today. For that I say thank you.

(Morgan Chichester)

Letters to Rebecca Skloot

Well first off let me start off by commending you for writing this book. I feel privileged to have read such an important piece of history. It makes me proud to learn of an African American Woman whose cells were used for the greater good of science.

I have so many questions for you, like what made you so interested in Henrietta's story? Why her out of all people you could have written a story on? When you first heard about what the doctors had done to her, how did that make you feel as a woman? If you could place yourself in Henrietta's shoes for one day, what would you have done differently on that day of January 29, 1951 when she received her exam?

It takes a brave soul to deal with all the things you had to deal with such as racism, being bullied in a sense amongst other things. What would you say were some of the barriers and challenges you faced besides the family not wanting to talk to you at first? What were your honest impressions of Henrietta's children? What is your thought of what really happened to Elsie?

In the end it seemed as if you and Deborah had a really special yet dysfunctional relationship. How did you take the news that she had passed away?
(Catina McAlister)

My name is Eric Rodgers and currently I'm a student of the UW Madison Odyssey Program, a humanities course based here in Madison, Wisconsin. For the last few weeks we have been assigned to read your nationally acclaimed book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. It has allowed me to gain more perspective and a bit of insight on my own life from looking deeper into the lives of others. I believe you do a wonderful job of providing that insight for the readers of the book by portraying Henrietta Lacks's life and the lives of her relatives.

One of the things that stands out most to me is the ambition and the courage you displayed in pursuing this story and getting involved in their lives so heavily. I know you mentioned that your own father's situation is what compelled you to pursue Henrietta's life, coupled by the fact that your teacher opened your eyes to this lady. I would like to know did you ever think you would be so deeply entangled in the craziness that came with the job? Why did you stay with it so long? Did you grow attached to the family? It seemed as if Deborah welcomed you with open arms—maybe not initially but eventually. Or do you think divine intervention had a hand in it? I know you also mentioned you never really thought much about God, but I can

see a kind of unseen force guiding you along the path throughout the whole book. I think that's why you mentioned the Lacks family changed your beliefs.

I think it's beautiful how much you became a part of all the Lacks family. Here you are, an educated



white woman from the East Coast who's a reporter going into uncharted territory by trying to pry into the lives of poor, uneducated black folks from the south. Of course, they didn't trust you but you just stayed persistent. I believe in God heavily. The way the story is constructed allowed me to see how many miracles were in progress. On one hand, you helped to get the story of Henrietta Lacks and her impact on cancer and cancer research and all the other things she's done for the medical arena. You provided a lot of history behind her not only for her family but for the experts, other people, and African American people. For me personally, it inspires me to make more of a contribution to society and for my people. You also helped Deborah and her family to find closure about what happened to their sister Elsie. I thought it was also important that the story showed how blacks and whites can set aside differences and come together towards something important.

Last but not least, I wanted you to know I support your effort for the Henrietta Lacks Foundation. I plan on sending money towards it as soon as I'm able. It's important that you just didn't make the book, profit from it, and forget about them. Like Deborah said, "At least the descendants of the Lackses can reap the benefits of their mother's accomplishments." I appreciate everything you've done for the Lacks family and also in helping to raise awareness not only in the scientific and medical community but also the African American community. I look forward to your future work and plan on attending any conferences you may get involved in.

(Eric Rodgers)

I have been reading your book titled *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and I would just like to say that I LOVE the book! It is so information filled, and everything you talked about is so real. Henrietta Lacks was first of all a mother of five children, which is a lot for anybody to handle. Living in Baltimore in the time that she was living was also a hard time, I could imagine. I could relate to Henrietta having a "painful knot" in her womb. My father has pains in his pancreatic area (he is now in the hospital's intensive care). She was then devastated by news of cervical cancer and told

nobody. Johns Hopkins was the charity hospital for blacks, the only one in the area. Doctors at Hopkins took samples of her tissue (cancerous and healthy) without her permission and gave it to George Gey. Her cells were called HeLa and were then tested for many things. Her cells surprisingly led to the understanding of normal human cells.

I think it's crazy how many people got ahold of her cells without even her knowing. She was making history and answering questions not even the scientists could begin to answer.

It's also extraordinary that HeLa cells are still being used today with an estimated 50 million metric tons of HeLa cells still being used! I think it's because Henrietta's cells grow relentlessly in culture which is substantially rare for cervical cancer cells in particular.

I think because Henrietta helped in so many ways, her family should have been notified LONG before they were. Deborah even commented that since her mother's cells did so much that she didn't understand how come her family couldn't afford to see one doctor.

I admire the fact that you put so much time and effort into Henrietta by getting the smallest bit of information and elaborating how you did. You met family members and researched for YEARS! I think your book should get all kinds of awards because it really showed a well-crafted investigation of a social wrong committed by the medical field, as well as the scientific and medical miracles it led to. Your book and research can honestly be one of the first steps toward justice for those who are victims of this same kind of treatment, healing for the Lacks family, and also recognition to Henrietta Lacks for the miracles that she has made in history.

(Precious LaShore)

My name is Tracy Cunnigan. I have had the pleasure of reading *Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. This book was heartbreaking and joyful all in one. I think the Lackses are a magnificent family. You are a devoted woman to know you were about to try to conquer what a lot before attempted: the life of HeLa. You also are a very remarkable woman that throughout the book demonstrated a lot of courage. You had to deal with scientists, doctors, and other people. You did have Deborah, who was a

very strong woman, the backbone of her family and your assistant in this book.

You kept it up until you finished. That was very determined, honorable, and courageous of you. Thank you for a truly good book. I am your biggest fan.

(Tracy Cunnigan)

I am an Odyssey student who has recently had the pleasure of reading your very inspiring book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. This book was more than inspiring; it was touching and relevant. Just this past year my mother has been in and out of the hospital and has had to deal with a million different doctors due to a bad knee that later became badly infected. I can guarantee that I will be drawing from the experience of reading this book in the future. I wish you all the luck with any other books you write that others can learn from.

(Shardetra Ofori-Anim)

What a powerful book you wrote. If Henrietta Lacks was so important to medicine, why is her existence so underground, and why didn't her family know anything about these cells until 20 years after her death? Why didn't her children have

health insurance if these cells were so important to the medical field?

(Dwayne Ellis)

Reading *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* was not at all what I expected it to be. I thought that it was going to be another cell book full of unidentifiable science words that really just wouldn't be able to hold my attention. But after reading this truly inspiring story, I know to never judge a book by its cover!

I felt awed by how you put this book together. I think switching between the lives of Henrietta's family and the science behind the cells is really what kept me so engrossed in this story. Interviewing the whole Lacks family must have felt intimidating. I also think that it probably took a lot of patience to deal with Deborah's constantly changing moods.

With all the challenges thrown your way, I'm impressed with your commitment to not just the research but to the Lacks family. I hope one day the Lackses will be reimbursed for all their hardships. Thank you for all the love and devotion you put into this book.

(Leah LaBarre)

I really enjoyed your book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. I love the way you wrote it. You gave a lot of specific examples of what went on with the HeLa cells and the Lacks family. What made you get interested in Henrietta Lacks? Why did you put ten years into this book?

I really like the way you started the book out with her walking into the hospital. You made me feel like I was there and had seen everything. I felt like it's my family. This book is a page turner, and I really don't like to read non-fiction books. Thank you for putting so much time and love into this book. Her story needed to be told.

(Kiara Hill)



Chancellor Arrested by Student Talent

UW Chancellor Biddy Martin led a discussion of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, the campus Go Big Read selection, for Odyssey students on October 27.

Various alumni dropped in to join the conversation, including Officers Anthony Ward ('04) and Corey Saffold ('06).



Catina McAlister, Morgan Chichester, Professor Emily Auerbach, Chancellor Biddy Martin



Edwina Robinson and Anthony Ward ('04)



Precious LaShore, Tracy Cunnigan, Corey Saffold ('06), and Naomi Kharrazihassani Lathrop ('08)



Mary Wells ('07), Juanita Wilson ('07), Chancellor Biddy Martin, Naomi Kharrazihassani Lathrop ('08), Danielle Rosales, Diance Lor