

# Best Integrated Writing

---

Volume 6

Article 7

---

2024

## The Journey Within: My Travel Journal

Devonique Jones

Follow this and additional works at: <https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/biw>



Part of the [American Literature Commons](#), [Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture Commons](#), [Applied Behavior Analysis Commons](#), [Business Commons](#), [Classical Archaeology and Art History Commons](#), [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), [International and Area Studies Commons](#), [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#), [Modern Literature Commons](#), [Nutrition Commons](#), [Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons](#), [Religion Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Jones, D. (2024). The Journey Within: My Travel Journal, *Best Integrated Writing*, 6.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Best Integrated Writing by an authorized editor of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact [library-corescholar@wright.edu](mailto:library-corescholar@wright.edu).

# **THE JOURNEY WITHIN: MY TRAVEL JOURNAL**

**DEVONIQUE JONES**

**ENGLISH 3560: Writing Workshop, Fall 2023**

**Nominated by Dr. Angie Beumer Johnson**

## **Author Notes:**

This project is a multigenre research exploration that delves into my personal journey of self-discovery and growth during my first solo trip. On this trip, I not only learned about myself and my capabilities, but I also learned about the hospitable town of Asheville, North Carolina and the rich history intertwined there. This project was produced over the course of months, highlighting themes of anxiety, resilience, and the transformative power of solitude. Each genre of this piece serves as a unique lens that depicts my emotional experience, ultimately forming a cohesive narrative that bridges the past with the present and the future.

## **Faculty Notes:**

I recall Devonique speaking with me about topics for the multigenre research project assignment and the passion she portrayed for the growth she experienced on her first solo trip. The project integrates peer-reviewed research, interview data, and creative pieces that blend genres. Devonique's work spans emotions, history, and philosophy—a treasure to read and learn from.



# THE JOURNEY WITHIN: MY TRAVEL JOURNAL

PROPERTY OF: DEVONIQUE JONES

## Table of Contents

<u>Title</u>	<u>Genre</u>	<u>Author</u>
Dear Reader	Letter	Devonique Jones
Within the Space of Solitude	Free-Verse Poem	Devonique Jones
Welcome to Asheville!	Travel Brochure	Devonique Jones
Brushstrokes Throughout Time	Short-Story: Parallel Storytelling	Devonique Jones
Lyricaly Yours, Devonique	Top 10 Songs in Post-cards	Devonique Jones
Whispers to my Wrist	Letter	Devonique Jones
Works Cited		

## Dear Reader,

First, let me start by saying thank you so much for taking an interest in my journey and the project I created!

When initially hearing about the multigenre research project, I never heard of anything like it before. The pure creative control, the overall concept of individuality within each piece, a project that was composed of multiple pieces/genres in the first place were all things that I never heard of before starting on this project. To say the least, the process for me was very jumbled with every feeling you could ever imagine: anxiety, confusion, which then transformed into understanding, following contentment and then, finally, landing on appreciativeness and self-satisfaction. Originally, I was going to write my project on my high school marching band experience of becoming a section leader, but I realized that the topic I explored in this project is one that genuinely connected with me deeper within my soul. Composing this project contained a lot of trial and error; a lot of scrapped ideas that seemed to make sense at the time but later seemed trivial and surface level, and I realized that's perfectly okay. Being okay with trusting the process is one of the most important skills I learned while working on this project. While I felt every emotion writing this, I loved every second I spent on creating it.

For some background context pertaining to my project, I felt it necessary to dive into my childhood briefly. From a young age, anxiety is something that has lived beside me, like an old friend. Growing up, my mom Deidre and my little brother Delaney were my



constants; they were truly my foundation throughout every change I endured. Being that my mom was a single mother raising two children on her own with miniscule help, that feeling of anxiety that came to her with being alone and the obliterating fear of mistakes that she clung to constantly became mine. Because my mom and Delaney were my constants, when they weren't present, I would feel an immense amount of anxiousness, which developed into separation anxiety. This continued to grow all the way to high school, when it morphed into me just being afraid of being alone. Any chance I had where I could be consumed in someone else's world, I jumped at the opportunity because being on my own was incredibly debilitating. It wasn't until I, thankfully, discovered meditation at the start of 2021 where I started to observe my anxiety and discover where these feelings originated. I wanted to dive into my inner world and understand these emotions of anxiety even more; I wanted to befriend it, so I did.

At the age of 22, I took myself on my first solo trip. This adventure was not an ordinary trip for me; it consisted of 8 hours driving alone in my old trusty 2015 Nissan to an unfamiliar town — Asheville, North Carolina. My primary goal was to challenge myself, to put every single ounce of trust I've built over the years into the woman I've been becoming. This was the biggest chance I've ever taken on myself so far, and I'm so thankful for every second I spent in Asheville.

Making that transition from always needing someone by my side to embarking on a journey that involved spending a weekend alone in a new area surrounded by no familiar faces was the greatest form of love and trust I could have shown myself. Throughout the

trip, I discovered more about myself and God with each passing minute in that lovely town. I truly left that town transformed into a completely different woman, and I am incredibly grateful.

Working on this multi genre research project made me realize how deeply I connect with this idea for teaching and how much I want to implement it within my classroom. Introducing a research project this complex, while simultaneously allowing students to express their creativity, will allow them to be more engaged and willing to put in the effort. As Nancy Mack puts it, "Because innovative publishing ideas motivate students to take pride in their projects, students are interested in proofreading and polishing their writing" (Mack 4).<sup>1</sup> Having a safe creative outlet within the classroom to explore a personal topic of choice will give students the space to feel more connected to the content they create.

Upon working on this project, I also learned how important it is to bridge the gap between home and school cultures when it comes to writing projects or writing in general. Mack further explains this by noting, "Part of the disconnect between home and school cultures stems from the belief that some home cultures are deficient and therefore they are positioned as being in opposition to school" (Mack 11).<sup>2</sup> Encouraging children to bring in their home culture, including their dialectic language, stories, experiences, etc., will allow students to feel more solace entering the classroom and in turn, will give them the space to show up authentically. A way that Mack mentions integrating home culture within the school environment in regard to the multigenre research project is by

---

<sup>1</sup> Mack 4

<sup>2</sup> Mack 11

implementing their vernacular language within the project; she states, "[h]aving students use their vernacular language creatively in narrative genres helps to combat the stigma of language differences and affirms home cultures'' (Mack, 38).<sup>3</sup> This gives students the ability to feel as though their culture is accepted in every way within the classroom, not just when it "benefits" the teacher or on specific holidays celebrated in school.

Lastly, I just wanted to say thank you to my mom, Delaney, and other family and friends that have been with me throughout my journey. The experience of creating this project took a lot of vulnerability from me, but I'm grateful for giving this part of me to you, in hopes that it inspires someone who may be experiencing a similar anxiety to what I was feeling throughout my life. I also wanted to thank Angie tremendously for all her help throughout this project and for encouraging vulnerability; it made it so much less intimidating to do so. And lastly, I wanted to thank myself, for going through every trial and tribulation you have, still choosing to embrace the love within each person, and for taking the chance on yourself, when it seemed impossible. I love you.

Thank you so much for reading this, and I truly hope you gain from it as much as I put into it!

---

<sup>3</sup> Mack 38





This is an image of me when I was getting closer to Asheville and decided to stop at a Lowe's in Virginia. It was truly starting to hit me that I was alone.

## Within the Space of Solitude

Alone

I begin to creep between the crevices of her veins,

Gripping her heart at the very thought of this new space,

Unknown territory or a single familiar face.

I cause her palms to produce a similar wetness that could come from the rains

Of the sky and expeditiously fall on the lanes and create a space meant to erase

Any sign of her from the space that holds all the people she's ever loved like a bookcase.

I slither my way into her eardrums, causing buzzing crescendos and chaotic strains,

Initiating thoughts of doubt and caution within a place,  
That tends to be safe when surrounded and held together by others like a shoelace.  
I begin to tightly clutch her lungs, breathless as this question remains,  
"Can I handle it?", the thought rapidly coursing through every corner of her soul like it was  
a race

Chasing to see who would rise victorious: I or a place where Peace and Wonder can  
embrace.

Alone

I begin to whisk between the crevices of her veins,  
Opening her eyes to the endless beauty and excitement that's seeped within this new  
space,  
Unknown territory or a single familiar face.

Her palms, bathed in the glow of my gentle grace, unveils the boundless gratitude that lies  
in the rains

Of the sky that fall on lanes nurtured and protected by Love and Trust, that erase  
Any doubts living in her mind, allowing space for my presence to be displayed like a  
bookcase.

I gently brush across her eardrums, crafting harmonious and tranquil strains,  
Inspiring liberating thoughts of curiosity and gratitude within a place,  
That tends to be safe when surrounded and held together by others like a shoelace.  
I gracefully unfold the breath within her, opening her world as this question remains,

"Can I handle it?", the thought slowly drifting across her mind and her heart like it was an easy race,

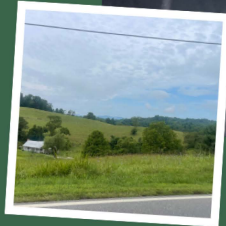
Knowing wholeheartedly the space between all emotions will always rise victorious, like a loving embrace.

Alone



This is the first image I took when I finally made it to my Airbnb after the 8 hour drive to Asheville. I finally made it!

Welcome to Asheville!



## BEST RESTING PLACE

Stay at 35 Evelake Drive! In this beautiful and relaxing Airbnb experience, it doesn't hurt the pockets AND it's less than 5 minutes from Downtown Asheville! Talk about a deal! Quiet atmosphere that allows you to be immersed in the city life, but also provides you with a calm country feel!

Explore

# ASHEVILLE NORTH CAROLINA

## ABOUT US

Asheville: Where art, coziness and adventure await! Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, this city offers incredible vibrant arts, windy cozy streets, and immaculate diverse dining. Asheville has it all in one perfect destination!





## THE ULTIMATE DINING EXPERIENCE

Come into Hemingway's Cuba in Downtown Asheville for a casual and relaxed atmosphere with a rooftop view! Serving Cuban cuisine and has incredibly affordable options! You just can't beat it!

Experience a retro and casual atmosphere at Rocky's Hot Chicken Shack! With a counter-serve style, your hot fresh Tennessee-style chicken comes to you in minutes!



## MUST-SEE EXPERIENCES

Experience a life-changing mind, soul, and body journey with Dawn Sagonias! In this Sound Healing Meditation experience, you will transcend into an energetic state of relaxation! You won't be the same after this!



Stop by Noir Collective, a beautifully designed black owned boutique, located in the vibrant historic neighborhood called "The Block"! Filled with crafts and art creations from local African American artists, it furthers the history of the street this store is placed on.

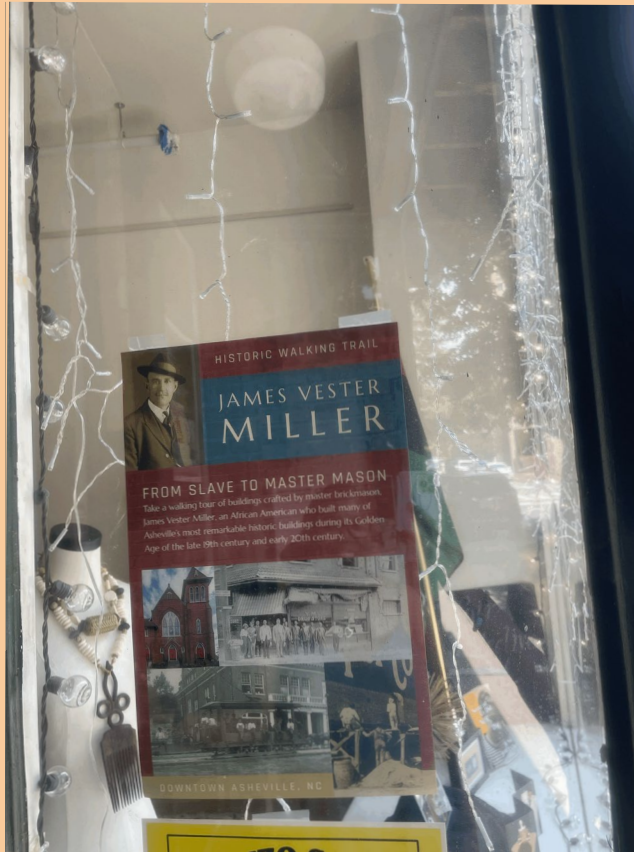
## DID YOU SAY "MORE DINING"?

Try authentic dumplings and other Chinese staples at Shanghai Dumpling House! In this relaxing and warm atmosphere, you're immediately immersed with the beautiful smell of noodles and dumplings!

Experience outdoor dining at the luxurious Sunset Terrace! Dive into some of the finest cuisine while basking in the vibrant yet relaxing view of the sunset!







When visiting "The Block" for the first time, I met a lovely woman at a shop called Noir Collective, who told me all about a historic walking trail in Asheville. It's about an African American man named James Vester Miller who was a former slave. She informed me that he owned buildings in the East End of Asheville, one of the oldest black neighborhoods, similar to "The Block".

## Brushstrokes Throughout Time

On a scorching yet pleasantly breezy day in the town of Asheville, I found myself unexpectedly immersed in a neighborhood known as "The Block". The



neighborhood's fresh, yet aged, aura drew me in, as if it were urging me to explore. Originally when embarking on this solo trip to Asheville, the intention of mine was to explore not only my creativity, but my soul, seeking to discover who I was deep within. Little did I know this journey would become an unforgettable expedition of mine that would do just that for me and more.

I let my wonder take the driver's seat, as I began to look at all the architecture that surrounded me. As my eyes swept over the weathered buildings and the neglected streets beneath my feet, I couldn't help but to sense an air of dilapidation. "Ya know, it didn't used to look like this," a voice stated softly from the left of me. I immediately turned my head in the direction of the voice. I would soon realize that this voice belonged to Julia McDowell, an elderly African American woman with beautifully speckled gray hair and skin as rich as the history she studied. Despite her short stature, her presence commanded attention that wasn't reflected through her physical frame, but rather through her energy.

"Oh, really?" I questioned, as my eyes wandered to observe the dark crimson buildings surrounding us and the tattered street signs. "Something tells me this place used to be rich in culture." She closed her eyes and gave off a nostalgia-filled grin.

"No doubt about it, baby. This place was crawlin' with youngstas and oldies who would do nothin' but hound ya in the best kind of ways. Hustlas up the street, barbers willin' to style our lil' boys' hair whenever we damn well please! My family and I would hang here all the time on Friday nights, drinkin' and playin' cards. We had everythin' just here on the streets of Eagle and Market. We called it "The Block".<sup>4</sup> I couldn't help but ask the question that immediately popped into my mind:

"So, what happened to it since then?"

"Well, gentrification baby, that's what happened." She scoffed and continued. "Commercial businesses came in and decided the barber shops wasn't makin' enough money, so they decided apartments and restaurants was a betta' fit."<sup>5</sup> That's why it's been my mission for the last decade to bring that culture back to this area. I want it more than anythin'. That's why we started painting this mural."

We rotated to our left; directly above the grass of a small area, known as Triangle Park, was the mural in question. The mural was a quarter of the way finished, but the history depicted on it was so profound. It projected radiant images of boundless black women with their beautifully styled afros throughout time, paintings of playful vivacious African American children with smiles plastered on their faces. This mural exuded the pure energy of community.

---

<sup>4</sup>McDowell stated that in the 80's, she was in her 20's. During this time, "The Block" was substantially thriving. She stated that her dad was a hustler in that neighborhood; the atmosphere of the area was pure love, culture and joy.

<sup>5</sup>McDowell

I began to touch the mural in awe. Suddenly, as my fingertips collided with the mural, my vision blackened. In an unexpected turn of events, I uncovered a way to bridge the gap between the past and the present. The mural, though a quarter of the way complete, held such vibrant history within its brushstrokes that it became a portal through time.

Upon looking around, I immediately noticed the tension within the air; it was almost like it held a sense of yearning, like something was absent. Disoriented and lost, I still felt a sense of familiarity I couldn't shake. In looking around, I noticed the scenery was quite similar to "The Block" but frozen in a pastime that I would soon realize was 1893 Asheville. During my time here, I was able to talk to Edward Stephens, a visionary from the past who worked on "The Block". He held in his heart a true dedication for the education and culture of all African Americans, which was something I found to be quite inspiring.

When I asked Edward about the current state of "The Block" and Asheville's connection with African Americans, in general, he chuckled begrudgingly before saying, "There is a determination to 'run out' all persons, white or black, who try to better the condition of the Negroes, to help them build manly, self-reliant, Christian Character".<sup>6</sup> I scoffed, angrily bewildered at the audacity that people have at being oppressive in such a way. Suddenly, a brilliant idea found its way into

---

<sup>6</sup>Waters 313

my mind. Both Edward and Julia dealt with similar instances of discrimination against African Americans and the erasure of the culture even across different timelines. Because of the strong connection and similarity between the two, I decided to ask Edward if he wanted to join me in the present to work on the mural with both Julia and me. Combining Edward's historical perspective with Julia's consistent dedication to preserving African American culture would allow the mural to represent something bigger than just the culture; it would breathe life and vibrancy into "The Block" again.

Edward happily agreed to collaborate on the mural with Julia and me. As we joined together and poured our hearts, souls and experiences all within the mural, it truly began to transform. It became a vibrant

narration weaving the stories of the old jazz bars and barber shops, with tales of community get-togethers and joyous laughs. Each brushstroke was a thread that connected the past, the present, and the future, bridging all the culture we endured throughout our time periods together into one living story.

As I looked around the spirited streets of "The Block" and the mural I helped create, I realized that I not only unraveled the intricate layers of my

Devonique Jones



identity, but I also rediscovered my roots. Embarking on this journey made me realize my life's purpose: to always cultivate and celebrate love in every facet of its existence.<sup>7</sup> The culture that is enriched within African American lives is timeless, and the mural we created and the journey I embarked on demonstrated just that.



Devonique Jones and Julia  
McDowell

---

<sup>7</sup> Hamid et al. 9



This is an image of a pianist I saw one night in Asheville after eating dinner at this beautiful place called Sunset Terrace. When I look back on this moment, it makes me truly appreciate music and what it can do for us emotionally.



# Lyricaly Yours, Devonique

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

Thank you so much for always knowing  
how to make me feel solace and peace.

While driving to Asheville and  
attempting to ignore the knots within  
my stomach, I stopped and noticed the  
abundance of vibrant trees surrounding  
me on my left and right. At that

moment, "I Gotta Find Peace of Mind" by  
Ms. Lauryn Hill emerged from the  
speakers of my car and I never felt such  
comfort; it was like you hugged me from  
the inside. You're the absolute best.

Lyricaly Yours,  
Devonique



To: Inner Self

---

---

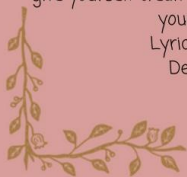
---

---

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

Would you believe me if I told you that we're  
about to cross the border of Tennessee to  
enter into North Carolina?! All alone with  
nobody, but yourself and Nissy?! Girl, I am so  
incredibly proud of you! And because I'm so  
proud of you and I want you to remember  
this moment forever, I couldn't help but put on  
"Welcome to Forever" by Logic. I know how  
much that song will forever mean to you and  
I, always. Always believe in yourself and your  
capabilities because you're stronger than you  
give yourself credit for. You're stronger than

your anxiety.  
Lyricaly Yours,  
Devonique



To: 20 Year Old Devonique

---

---

---

---

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

Hi buddy. I talked about you today when I first got to Asheville. My therapist wanted me to talk about your presence in my life; there is nothing more I'd rather do even though it hurts me in places so deep I never knew they were there. Thinking back on when we were young, impressionable, dreamy-eyed 14 year olds, I remember us sitting in the back of the afterschool program and you played me "Little Lion Man" by Mumford and Sons. That song will always remind me of you and every memory I shared of ours with my therapist on this trip. Thank you for existing and holding me internally when I didn't know I needed it.

Lyricaly Yours,  
Devonique



To: Louis<sup>8</sup>

8

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

Today, I'm writing to you four stories above ground, sitting at a restaurant called Hemingway's Cuba; watching the beautiful and rustic dark, yet vibrant buildings emerging in Downtown Asheville, all in solitude. I just got done ordering an authentic Cuban sandwich and I swear every time my waiter passes, I believe to have wafted a smell of the food! Sitting here alone, feelings of anxiousness are setting in because this is my first time ever eating at a restaurant alone (I know right, who would've thought?). I started humming "The Less I Know the Better" by Tame Impala, the beginning bass line always bringing me peace. It reminds me of when you were so nervous to be alone, even just showering was nerve-wracking, so much so that you would do so with the door open and play this song on repeat for comfort! Look at how far you've come, love. I gotta go, I think they're coming with my food now! Finally!

Lyricaly Yours,  
Devonique



To: Teenage Devonique

9

<sup>8</sup> Louis was my old best friend in middle school who recently passed away in July of 2023 from a fentanyl overdose. We were incredibly inseparable and because of the nature of our relationship, my online therapist felt it necessary to expand on my feelings regarding my loss of him so suddenly, which was incredibly hard for me to do, yet necessary.

<sup>9</sup> Moore; During my interview with my mom, she reminded me of my love for "The Less I Know the Better" by Tame Impala, and how frequently I used to play it as a teenager when I was alone upstairs showering. Additionally, she reminded me that I used to make everyone keep their doors open when I would shower upstairs, in fear of being "left alone".

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

Thank you for everything you've ever given me. Every memory from my young wonder-filled years in California, my first experience with pure romantic love at 18 years old, the pain of losing my first childhood friend, for the nights spent smiling and belly-laughing with Delaney,<sup>10</sup> for the constant fights I had with Delaney and my mom, for allowing me to feel everything, all the time. I just came back from a sound healing meditation and in the 40 minute process, I have never felt such transcendence and gratitude for every tear shed and every laugh exuded. As I was leaving my sound healer's home, I turned on 'Nights' by Frank Ocean. What a perfect day.

Lyricaly Yours,  
Devonique



To: Universe

---

---

---

---

10

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

Guess where I'm at right now? A bookstore (shocker)! I was walking around the windy yet still hallways filled with thousands of bookcases that are loaded with stories to tell and I thought of you immediately. Remember when we would read Junie B Jones books together and you would always finish the books days ahead of me? That same feeling of nostalgia and whimsicality I felt then reminds me of a song called "Once in a Lifetime" by One Direction. I swear I used to play this song so much as a child, belting it everywhere. The light sound of the guitar in the beginning still rings in my head.

Lyricaly Yours,  
Devonique



To: Asia<sup>11</sup>

---

---

---

---

11

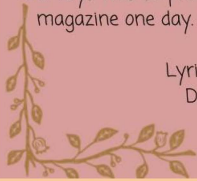
<sup>10</sup> Delaney is my younger brother. Growing up, he was my best friend and brother all in one, considering he was the only sibling I grew up with. However, because we are so close in age (2 years apart), as we were growing up, we had a lot of disagreements. Now, our relationship is more solid than ever.

<sup>11</sup> Asia is my older sister. Growing up, I lived in California and my sister resided in Ohio, so when Asia would visit or vice versa, we would have read-off challenges and see who could read books like Junie B. Jones or Goosebumps, faster. Without fail, she would always beat me.

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

I have to apologize for the simple fact that I never got your name, but I'd be doing you and I a disservice if I didn't tell you about how talented you were tonight! I was walking out of Sunset Terrace after eating dinner, fully intending on leaving to go back to my Airbnb, when my ears were suddenly blessed with the sounds of your piano and voice combining to create a beautifully slow version of "I Don't Miss a Thing" by Aerosmith. The raw emotion embedded in your voice and the love that I could tell you had for the keys was so profound. I hope to see you in a magazine one day. Or perhaps on a Grammy stage.

Lyrically Yours,  
Devonique



To: Pianist at Sunset Terrace

---

---

---

---

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

Everything that you stood for and currently are standing for has surrounded every single crevice of my life since I was born. When I looked in the mirror and recognized that my skin was the darkest of brown, I felt a familiar hug from within. I visited you today and met the most lovely woman named Julia. What a home-y and lovely area. Thank you for still standing strong today and reminding the world that we are eclectic. "DNA" by Kendrick Lamar just came on shuffle and it sparked me to write this to you. It truly reminds me of you and the community you have gathered in your presence. No one can ever take away what you stand for; no matter how hard they try to erase the culture, culture stays and culture thrives.

Lyrically Yours,  
Devonique



To: "The Block"

---

---

---

---

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

I thought of you guys today. Today is my last night in Asheville and I drove to the Speedway up the street for some gas for the long day that I have ahead of me tomorrow. It's 8:35 pm and looking up at the sunset, I can't help but feel like you guys are watching over me at this moment. I see you in the blue, Uncle Goldstien and the pink in you, Gram. "Small Worlds" by Mac Miller is playing softly and I gently cry as I am reminded of how vast this life is; how vast you guys' lives were. I would do anything for another conversation with you guys. You'd be so proud of me.

Lyricaly Yours,  
Devonique



To: Gram and Uncle Goldstien<sup>12</sup>

---

---

---

---

12

Devonique Jones  
35 Evelake Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28806

Always trust yourself. In everything and anything you decide to do. I just stopped at a nearby rustic souvenir shop in Kentucky on the way back home from my first solo trip; a trip that numerous people told me to reject. In my heart, I knew I was destined to drive the roads that led me from Ohio to North Carolina, and trusting in myself to complete this trek is the greatest form of love I could've ever shown myself. Never forget that you will always be your biggest supporter and the person that loves you at the greatest capacity known to man. Don't be afraid of silence or being within the presence of yourself; that's where God lives and I learned that. And if you ever doubt yourself in any way in the days, months, or years that follow, just put on "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" by Ms. Lauryn Hill. It helps me every time. I will always love you.

Lyricaly Yours,  
Devonique



To: Future Descendants

---

---

---

---

<sup>12</sup> Gram was a nickname I used when referring to my grandma on my mom's side who passed away when I was 5 and Uncle Goldstien was my closest uncle who passed away in 2018. I always have felt the presence of them since their passing, and tend to feel them even more in moments of stillness.





This is an image of my bracelet that I bought from a woman named Dawn, a sound healer in Asheville, who actually gave me my first sound healing meditation. What a beautiful experience.

### Whispers to My Wrist

Dear My Beloved Reminder,

I had just finished my first ever experience with sound healing meditation with a lovely woman I met named Dawn. During this experience, my life was shifted completely in a way I never knew could be possible. She placed me gently on piled-up blankets in a burnt-orange, dimly lit room that embodied the energy of warmth. After settling in with my eyes closed and my breath steady, I began to hear the loud yet soothing sounds of gongs all around me, as well as the sound of the ocean through an instrument called the ocean drum. I shifted into a transcendental state and began to see my younger self frolicking around on a



beach in California with the brightest smile on her face, with simply no care in the world.<sup>13</sup> Unbeknownst to me and the emotions this memory seemed to carry, I began to feel wetness under my eyes. Shortly after that memory subsided, a new vision unfolded: one that told a beautiful story of my older self. I vividly remember seeing me in my thirties, frolicking just the same as the memory before. However, this time, my younger self was dancing alongside her, reassuring my older self that she forgives her for every decision she made throughout her life because she knew every single one was made to protect her. The dance of forgiveness and love was transcending between different versions of myself, and it's safe to say that this vision made me extremely emotional and teary-eyed, as well.

I remember the first encounter I had with you like the back of my hand. After my emotional session, I gravitated towards Dawn's table that she had in her basement, and there you were: plastered up on a white holder, covered in rustic and vibrant colors, filled with history I never even knew at the time. Dawn, then, informed me that some children from Guatemala crafted you beautifully and thoughtfully, and all proceeds went to help those children. At that moment, I'd never bought something so quickly. You were placed on my wrist within seconds.

---

<sup>13</sup> When I was five years old, my mom moved my younger brother and I to California because of severe recurring issues she had with my dad. Even though my mom was never the biggest swimmer, she always took us to the beach, as it was one of our places of comfort and solace. If we couldn't go with her, she would allow us to go with our friends and their families.

I desired something that would remind me of my inexplicably transformative experience I had with Dawn; the feelings that arose, the lessons I learned, all in that short yet lengthy forty-minute experience. However, you grew to represent so much more than that. Throughout my experience in Asheville, I grew so much closer to not only myself, but to the world and everyone that inhabits it. I learned so much about strength, love and resilience, more than I knew previously when initially crossing the beautiful borders of North Carolina. Every day I spent in this town, I learned more about the hearts of everyone, as well as myself, and I packed my bags feeling more complete than I ever felt in my life. You became that reminder of everything I learned on that 3-day trip. You resemble the strength, trust and love embedded deep in my body that I never knew I had. Each intricate coffee brown bead and every vibrant speck of aqua-blue wound into one seems to encapsulate a profound moment of my self-discovery. Your carved patterns are truly a visual representation of the intricate paths I found myself navigating internally during my days in Asheville.

Thank you for being so much more than a crafted beauty; you are a living testament to the lessons etched into my soul during my journey. You've truly become a companion, a silent confidant, who's presence is always with me throughout every moment of time from that day forward. I carry you everywhere

with me. With you on my wrist, I carry a piece of my own history - a beautiful link to the person I was, the person I became, and the person I am currently growing into. Thank you for reminding me of the beauty I have always carried within.

Love always,

Devonique

## Works Cited

Hamid, Sheeba et al. "Solo Travel and Well-Being Amongst Women: An Exploratory Study."

*Indonesian Journal of Tourism and Leisure*, vol. 2, no. 1, Apr. 2021, pp. 1–13.

EBSCOhost, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/10.36256/ijtl.v2i1.125>.

Mack, Nancy. *Engaging Writers with Multigenre Research Projects*. Teachers College Press, 2015.

McDowell, Julia. Interview. Conducted by Devonique Jones. 24 September 2023.

Moore, Deidre. Interview. Conducted by Devonique Jones. 20 September 2023.

Waters, Darin J. "Philanthropic Experimentation: George Vanderbilt, the YMI, and Racial Uplift

Ideology in Asheville, North Carolina, 1892-1906." *The North Carolina Historical*

*Review*, vol. 95, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 313–39. EBSCOhost,

<https://doi-org.ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/10.2307/45184943>.