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“I Noticed”

By Jason D. DeHart

I Noticed

your voice almost concealed
among the din of a classroom
cacophony, the sounds of adolescents
pushing the boundaries of the space,

an epileptic’s journey told
in vivid colors, a song from outskirts
of the dominant group,

a young woman’s history that would not be
pressed down, a narrative that defies
traditional binary definitions, or else

a tale of taking refuge from one
political boundary to another, an
echo that called for notice,

a survivor’s story.

In your scribbles and doodles
I noticed patterns that give lines
to a rich portrait. I learned

your true name.

Not the many labels and relabels

that have been stapled on you,
like the last-ditch object at a discount
store, but new names:

Promise, Power, Possibility,
Talent, Growing.

Reader.
Writer.

Did you know you had this
voice on our first day, in your
introductory letter to me?

In the curls of your pencil
penmanship did you know there
were embers kindling?

I can take no more credit
than the person who first saw
lightning, but I take courage

in a pause and notice,
and I will remember your real
name.



Jason D. DeHart is an assistant professor of reading education at Appalachian State University. DeHart's research interests include multimodal literacy, including film and graphic novels, and literacy instruction with adolescents. His work has recently appeared in *SIGNAL Journal*, *English Journal*, and *The Social Studies*.