

**First period, English IV, Fall 2012**

*For Kaaylon, April 4, 1995 to October 7, 2012*

I don't understand until it's months later  
and K'ren won't sit at the desk

There are no assigned seats by then

That's probably a lie -  
I like control

But I don't think I told him to sit there

I think he walked over to say Hi to a friend

And then looked at the desk

Said quietly, "No one sits there anymore"

And then I remember who did

And the look on Dieterich's face  
when I told him who got shot

Yes, him  
This weekend  
I'm sorry

I don't remember anything I said  
Except Good morning  
To DaQuan  
I remember that Good morning

I remember that he was already crying

But not  
And he didn't last long  
Let him out to see a counselor -  
told him it was OK  
I think

I hate saying that

I remember Dieterich asking to speak

Sitting in front of the class and telling stories

none of us had ever heard

I'm 19

I've messed up a lot

There's a baby

In Texas

There used to be a lot of drugs

I'm here

I know you don't know me

But I've messed up a lot and I'm here

(for you if you need me)

And I want you to know that -

I remember he was always so friendly

Came into class and shook his friends' hands

Found Dieterich in the parking lot at graduation

January

-Same one where Damion cried and said Thank you-

I heard your mother died - I was worried

Grandmother, sweetheart

Still bad, but not that

Oh OK - I heard you missed school -

I was gonna come visit

Went home for the funeral

It's OK

What are your plans?

Robert was the writer

I gave everyone notecards that morning

Told them they didn't have to

share if they didn't want to

Knew he would

Told him to talk to Jackie

I know your Creative Writing class will do something

We're collecting poems

If you want to help, let me know

I remember him talking that morning

Old stories

Growing up stories

Kevin too

Saved my life - as always

Only reason I was OK is I knew he'd be there first period

Don't remember much of what he said

Except it was articulate

And heart-felt

And about growing up

He was doing better

He'd made so much progress

I started shaking in the library before school

Went in to see Lisa

Not sure if I really needed anything

Just a routine

Started shaking

In the middle of a conversation

About something else

She walked me back to class

Kaaylon was one of mine

First period

I was on the couch when I got the email

So was he

Didn't want to talk to him

Knew he didn't get it

Only wanted to talk to Jackie

Emailed back and forth about lesson plans

Bell ringers / warmups / is there a plan yet?

What do we say?

Do we say it every period?

I think I slept that night

Mostly I remember Jhonny

Not that day

All the other days

The "I'm sorry" "I know"  
"I'll get it together" days

The lip sync battle day

The someone is always smiling in the morning days

And I remember DaQuan at football

The year after

Didn't want to bother you, just wanted to say Hi

    You're not bothering me

    It's good to see you - what are you up to?

Something about work

    That's good - you thinking about school?

Gonna work for awhile