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**LEARNING EXCHANGE PROTOCOL**

**Personal Narrative**

**This Is Not a Small Voice**

Sonia Sanchez

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JxMXZVafKk> (Sonia Sanchez talking about learning to become a poet.)

This is not a small voice  
you hear               this is a large  
voice coming out of these cities.  
This is the voice of LaTanya.  
Kadesha. Shaniqua. This  
is the voice of Antoine.  
Darryl. Shaquille.  
Running over waters  
navigating the hallways  
of our schools spilling out  
on the corners of our cities and  
no epitaphs spill out of their river mouths.

This is not a small love  
you hear               this is a large  
love, a passion for kissing learning  
on its face.  
This is a love that crowns the feet with hands  
that nourishes, conceives, feels the water sails  
mends the children,  
folds them inside our history where they  
toast more than the flesh  
where they suck the bones of the alphabet  
and spit out closed vowels.  
This is a love colored with iron and lace.  
This is a love initialed Black Genius.

This is not a small voice  
you hear.

While the poem speaks mainly to African American young people, you can substitute any student’s name for the person in the poem.

Think of a young person whose story you carry with you, who has touched you in a special way, whose voice is not a small voice inside your head whenever you need encouragement or a reminder of why you are who you are doing what you do.

What is about the young person that stays with you and motivates you to do work on behalf of all young people?

Discuss this with your EC-NIC group. Put that young person’s name on your poster.

When you are finished, turn back to the group; each person will call the young person’s name into the space. All will answer PRESENTE.