

Being On The Choo Choo Train

My name is Tahirah Karim and I have been on this train for twelve years. My first stop was Jefferson Hospital. October 19, 1993, was when it all started. I can remember it just like it was yesterday.

Choo Choo is the sound I hear. Next stop Pennypacker, the train operator says. I wonder what he means, but then I say I'll see. I arrive at this huge school full of children and it was the first day of school. I made friends and I keep them forever no matter what.

STUDENT. WRITER. PEDIATRICIAN. AUTOBIOGRAPHER.*

After the first day of school I got on the train. I end up falling asleep for a while and awaken to a fifth grade class. I can barely remember those years that passed. Time flies when you're on a train like this one. Soon as I know it, I am leaving and getting ready for middle school next year.

Choo Choo. Next stop, Goals To Achieve. I am in my room envisioning my life. I want to become a pediatrician, marry a famous person, and have a big house with two children.

I'm on that train again and I hear next stop, Losing Family and Moving On. I'm at my home again and this time I hear my step-mom has breast cancer and is in the hospital and isn't going to last very long. A few days later I found out she died and I felt speechless that day. That night I prayed for every one of my family members that passed away. And now I am moving into the seventh grade hoping the next stop will be straight As and Bs.

– Tahirah Karim



* THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY PROJECT

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin is the most widely published autobiography of all time. In honor of Franklin's 300th birthday, the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and *One Book, One Philadelphia* invited today's Philadelphians to submit memoirs of their own, using no more than 300 words. At the end of the project – May 17, 2006 – a panel of judges selected twenty autobiographies to appear on bus shelters throughout the city. Visit www.theautobiographyproject.com for more information about the project, and to read more Philadelphia stories.

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary is a non-profit organization established to mark the 300-year anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth. *One Book, One Philadelphia* is a project of the Mayor's Office and the Free Library of Philadelphia.



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