

Monika Lynch  
"Celebrating my Career Dreams" Poetry Contest  
Due: November 17, 2010

"My Counselor, My Mentor, My Friend"  
by Monika Lynch

I had no home.  
I have stared at the stark walls of nine different foster homes,  
not one of them my own.  
I've been a stranger passing through the empty walls of nine different high schools.  
I've been invisible.  
I didn't even see me.

It's not my fault.  
In life you don't get the chance to choose.  
I didn't choose for my father to leave.  
I didn't choose for my mother to be stung out, to quit her job, to give up on life,  
to give up on me.  
I never asked for this.

And then she came along.  
She knew my name among the loud crowd of raucous teens.  
She actually spoke to me—she saw past my brokenness.  
She saw me not for where I had been, for where I might go.  
"I don't need counseling," I muttered, sobbing in the safety of her office.  
At least that's what I thought.

But before counseling—before her—I was lost.  
I was a no one, with no place to go.  
I needed someone to help fill me up, and she did that for me.  
My counselor, my mentor, my friend.  
She built on my strengths, gave me confidence again,  
and painted color onto the frail and wilted canvas that had become my life.

Suddenly I wasn't a no one with no place to go.  
Suddenly even I could have dreams, even I could become someone.  
And as I reflect from within the prevailing and powerful walls of the university library,  
my university, my library,  
I am thankful for the nine different foster homes and six different schools that led me to her.  
My counselor, my mentor, my friend.