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## The Bravest Woman I Know

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# The Bravest Woman I Know

## Abstract

**On Friday, April 20, 2018, Gettysburg College students organized a campus-wide walkout to protest all forms of gun violence as part of Gettysburg College's first annual Peace and Justice Week. Over the next several days, SURGE published the poems and personal testimonies of the student speakers who participated in the event.**

Just imagine witnessing your best friend's boyfriend beating her, beating their children.

What would you do?

My sister is the bravest woman I know. She came in between the blows to her best friend's face and his fists. My sister is scared of nothing and of no one, which is admirable, but also a curse. He threatened my sister because in some twisted way she emaculated him but she didn't back down. Her best friend stayed with him, and my sister did not stop defending her. [*excerpt*]

## Keywords

Gettysburg College, gun control, gun violence, domestic violence, race, police

## Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement

## Comments

Surge is a student blog at Gettysburg College where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](https://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com) Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

# SURGE

[ VERB ] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

## THE BRAVEST WOMAN I KNOW

April 26, 2018

***Editor's Note: Last Friday, April 20, 2018, Gettysburg College students organized a campus-wide walkout to protest all forms of gun violence as part of Gettysburg College's first annual Peace and Justice Week. Over the next several days, SURGE will be publishing the poems and personal testimonies of the student speakers who participated in the event.***

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My sister is the bravest woman I know. She came in between the blows to her best friend's face and his fists. My sister is scared of nothing and of no one, which is admirable, but also a curse. He threatened my sister because in some twisted way she emsaculated him but she didn't back down. Her best friend stayed with him, and my sister did not stop defending her.

At two a.m. on July 4th, 2004, my sister wakes up to loud smashing and yelling that she thought was outside of her house, but when she opened her bedroom door, she saw the unimaginable. She saw her best friend's boyfriend and his friends destroying her home. Smashing her tv, her dishes, graffitng her walls, verbally threatening her security. She locked herself in the bathroom and called the one person who she could depend on and who she knew would protect her: our cousin Raymond.

My sister and my cousin Raymond grew up together, they were more like brother and sister.

My cousin showed up in his car as soon as they ran out of her house, and his ending was already written for him. He pulled out his gun, shot one of the men who invaded my sisters house, and in a split second, a man from behind shot my cousin five times: three times in his thigh, once through his heart and another in the back of the head, but the bullet went all the way through. My cousin was murdered on "Independence Day" defending my sister. I was 8.

At my cousin's funeral, I did not understand what was going on; the only thing I understood was that my older cousin was lying still in a casket, cold as could be. I saw his son, my second cousin, crying over his body, begging to see the head wound that pierced my cousin's brain. I saw my grandmother, sitting on a

couch, one second numb, and the other being restrained during her hysterical episode because she could not bear the pain of losing her grandson.

My cousin's murder pulled my family apart more than anyone would be able to understand. My sister was blamed for his murder, and was prohibited from attending the funeral. Of course, in our human nature, my family needed to find someone to blame. Not the person who shot him, but my sister, who was shunned from my family for over 10 years. The only people who would talk to her were my mother and I. And because of my association with my sister, I was shunned; I was unable to grow up with my cousins, or have big family dinners for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

So many families are destroyed by gun violence, torn apart, always missing a piece. My experiences are only a piece of the gun violence story. The full story of gun violence is not told.

I do not fear the gang member down the hall from my apartment building. I do not fear the next school shooter. I don't even fear the man who shot my cousin.

I fear...the police.

The police who target black and brown bodies. The police who have blood on their hands, and are never held accountable for their racist actions. I fear that the black and brown bodies who have been abused and murdered by police will be forgotten and overlooked, and to most of our country, they do not matter. I have a list of black men who have been killed by police. The majority of these cases did not receive nation wide attention, I never heard many of their names. There are cases we still do not know about.

**Hear the names, and know that their families are not whole without them, but because of the color of their skin, they are not supposed to matter:**

**Dontre Hamilton**  
**John Crawford III**  
**Michael Brown**  
**Ezell Ford**  
**Dante Parker**  
**Akai Gurley**  
**Tamir Rice**  
**Rumain Brisbon**  
**Jeraime Reid**  
**Tony Robinson**  
**Eric Harris**  
**Walter Scott**  
**Freddie Gray**  
**Sean Bell**  
**Oscar Grant**  
**Alton Sterling**  
**Philando Castile**  
**Gregory Gunn**

**Samuel DuBose**  
**Brendon Glenn**  
**Christian Taylor**  
**Laquan McDonald**  
**Jamar Clark**  
**Ramarley Graham**  
**Manuel Loggins**  
**Ronald Madison**  
**Amadou Diallo**

**They matter...**

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