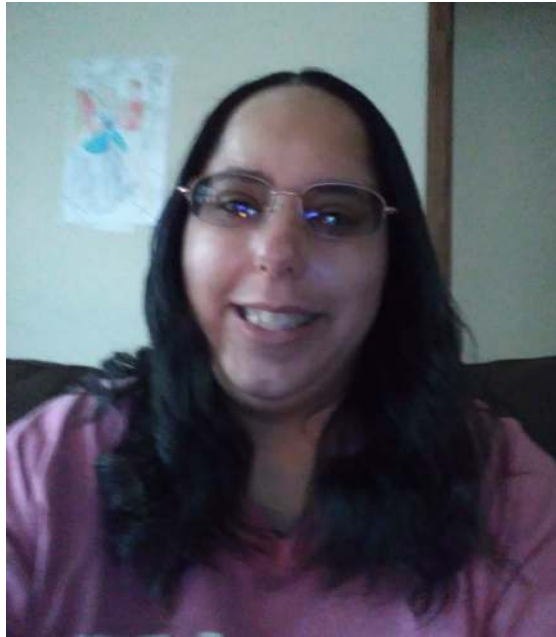


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*Brittany Wilson, the Poetic Athlete*

My name is Brittany Wilson. I'm a self-advocate and poet from Milwaukee. I've been interested in poetry since I was 10 years old. My teacher started talking about Maya Angelou and I never looked back from poetry! I immediately went to my older sister and looked at her English book and found Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost. The first poem I ever heard from Maya Angelou was "Still I Rise" and it's been my favorite poem ever since. My favorite things about poetry are how you can feel the rhythm and when the words fit together perfectly it's like a love song without the music. I've been using poetry to express myself since before I started sharing on social media. Not only does poetry help me express myself but it also helps me work through complicated things happening in my life. My hope is that if someone reads my poetry it might help them in a similar way, even if they interpret it in a different way.

Poem 1: "Kimberly (reprise)" this reprisal poem is dedicated to my mom who passed away in

2007

She was 43 years old & stood 5 feet tall. She had brownish red ear-length hair & a petite build at the time of her passing. She had really pretty bright brown eyes, too. I have a favorable share of her features & she's the one who planted my religious roots when I was 13. She was loving & kind to everybody she met, which is why she was so loved by all the neighbors. I'll admit, she had her moments when she would be under the weather, but that didn't stop her from doing her job as St. Paul's Neighborhood Minister from 2003 until she passed away in 2007. Saying, "I don't ever think about her at all" would be a blasphemous lie. I think about her all the time, especially whenever I talk about her ministry. She would walk around our neighborhood to see if neighbors needed anything from materialistic items to love & comfort. Her situation/sickness didn't matter, the neighborhood did. Why do you think she was known as "Mama Kim" or "Ms. Kim"? Here we are 13 years later: I'm 31 years old, about to turn 32 in 2 ½ months, I faithfully visit her gravesite whenever it's possible, & I help keep her legacy alive by spreading her story & participating in her ministry called Kim's Closet.

Poem 2: "My Grandma" this poem is dedicated to my grandma I was super close to that passed

away in 2017

She became my grandma the day I was born & every time I went to chop my hair off, she brought up me being bald until age 3. When my niece Azaria was born, she brought up me being bald until age 3 because Azaria was pretty much bald for the first year of her life. The older we got, the more of an A1-Day1 she became. We talked about everything above and beyond the sun from our faith to our houses, to our doctors & our appointments, to our health, to her job, down to her boyfriend Rob Haswell (our inside joke), especially him. Rob Haswell this, Rob Haswell that, Rob Haswell everything (until I was all Rob Haswell'ed out). Either way, at the end of the day, she was 1 of my many cheerleading support systems and my second A1-Day1 to pass away within a 10-year span. I love you to the moon & back and then some until eternity Grandma!