

Mercy's Poet-Baccalaureate

*On building confidence one step,
and one word, at a time.*

Carina Lamont '21 delivered a stirring poem during Mercy's virtual commencement ceremony in May 2021, and hopes it is just the beginning of her writing career. "My dream is to write for TV, and if I can't do that, I would love to work in books, in the publishing world. I've always been inspired by Toni Morrison — how she weaved her words together and how her story came to fruition."

Lamont is 23, from Far Rockaway, Queens, and graduated from Mercy with her bachelor's degree in Media Studies. The high point of her college experience has been her participation in both Divas Have Mercy Step Team and DiverCity Dance Team. "When I came out of my comfort zone and realized I could be on both of these teams which I loved so much, I saw how much I was capable of. That was definitely the high point. That's when I saw that I was at my best physically."

Another high point, she says, was a writing class with Assistant Professor of English Isabel Grayson. It was fall of 2020, when the COVID pandemic required students to take their classes exclusively online. "Professor Grayson had a very personal connection with all of us," Lamont says, "and we felt like more than just students. When we transferred to all online learning, it could have felt very impersonal, but I didn't feel that, and I was grateful for it."

"She cried and told me how proud she was of me. And I was proud of myself too; I never thought I would get out of my bubble to put myself out there."

Poetry speaks to her in a special way. "It is very freeform. I tend to overthink so writing poetry cleared things up for me as a writer, cleared up the confusion, and allowed me to find something valuable in that confusion."



Lamont made several contributions to the most recent issue of Red Hyacinth, the literary magazine published by Mercy's School of Liberal Arts, including an essay on surviving the pandemic entitled "Quarantine Chronicles." And she sat with her mom — a school principal who she says has always nurtured her creative dreams — as she delivered the commencement poem pre-recorded on Zoom. "She cried and told me how proud she was of me. And I was proud of myself too; I never thought I would get out of my bubble to put myself out there. I'm normally so conscious of my words and how they'll be received, but I thought if you really want your work out there, this is the first step."

To listen to Lamont's reading at the virtual commencement ceremony, visit:
www.mercy.edu/magazine/poet