When people stare at me
between steel train walls,
tall pride
turns to giant fear.
Curls sour
palms pulse
but I can’t stop being me.
Can’t shrink
can’t
no
won’t

punish me for me,
or boldness,
for truth.
So I craft poems in my head,
tapping out beats
to each word
and soon
curls bounce
pride sweetens
and eventually
people fade.

SUBWAY MIND by Isabel Golightly

"Am I bold? I considered my experiences when I was most vulnerable—riding the train—and I realized in that moment I was bold."

Meet Isabel Golightly, Mentee
High School Senior, Brooklyn, NY

"I remember the first time I was able to share my inner voice with Daryl through my poems. I knew then what it was to be a writer, to take pride in something created by me. Joining Girls Write Now has helped me be a better writer and a better me."

Meet Daryl Chen, Mentor
Ideas Editor, TED

"I’ve been writing and editing for a long time, and I’ve definitely fallen into certain habits. Isabel’s willingness to try new, risky things in her work has inspired a welcome freshness in my own creativity."

Girls Write Now serves more than 5,000 girls/gender non-conforming youth in every district of New York City through our partnerships and programs.

Girls Write Now IMPACT
As the first writing and mentoring organization for girls, Girls Write Now has been a nationally respected leader in arts education for over 20 years. We break down the barriers of gender, race, and poverty, pairing underserved young women and gender non-conforming youth with professional women writers and digital media makers—building skills, networks, and life-long relationships that open doors and change lives. The organization has been distinguished three times by the White House as one of the nation’s top youth programs, twice by the Nonprofit Excellence Awards as one of New York’s top ten nonprofits, and ranks in the top 4% of programs nationwide for outstanding performance in driving growth in social-emotional outcomes for young people.
100% of Girls Write Now seniors go on to college—armed with portfolios, awards and scholarships.

Mentees are 90% girls of color, 70% immigrant or first generation, and 25% LGBTQ or gender non-conforming, and more than 90% high need.

We help mentees publish in The New York Times, Newsweek, Teen Vogue, and Buzzfeed—elevating the voices of girls who are not heard—or worse, silenced.