

# Lift Off: From the Classroom to the Stars

By Donovan Livingston

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**An inspirational rallying call about education, race, and the true nature of equality—the Harvard Graduate School of Education convocation speech praised as “powerful” by Hillary Rodham Clinton in *Teen Vogue* and “inspired” by Justin Timberlake**


In emotionally charged spoken-word poetry, Livingston shares a message of hope and hard truths, declaring that education can become an equalizer only if we first acknowledge the inequality and racial divides holding back America’s future. Livingston is dedicated to helping young people reach their celestial potential, and in his galvanizing commencement address, now adapted for the first time to the page, he calls on us to raise our voices on behalf of all children, as their brighter futures can light up our own. Together, we can lift off!

### Praise for Donovan Livingston

“Donovan Livingston gave a powerful speech at the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s convocation. In a spoken-word poem, he shared his struggles in life and urged his fellow graduates to fight inequality and inspire students. . . . Donovan’s message hit home. . . . [He is] part of a rising generation that’s . . . standing up to some of the biggest challenges in the world today.”—**Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Teen Vogue***

“These are the words, and Donovan Livingston’s voice and spirit are the music, but in any form, this rare graduation speech tells us that learning is full of bias yet can lead us to the stars.”—**Gloria Steinem**

“Donovan Livingston’s *Lift Off* is our youth’s gift to us. In this joyous young man’s voice is the promise of tomorrow.”—**James McBride**

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## Editorial Review

Review

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About the Author

**Donovan Livingston** is an award-winning educator and public speaker whose convocation address for the Harvard Graduate School of Education went viral, reaching more than thirteen million views. Livingston and his speech have been featured on CNN, NPR, BBC, and in outlets across Europe, Australia, India, and South Africa. He holds master’s degrees from Columbia and Harvard universities and has now returned to his home state as a doctoral candidate studying education at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro.

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