

Curve

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Out in Front



Award-Winning Obsession

Imagine writing a radio piece about your obsession with a female classmate, capturing the moment you came out to your father as bisexual on tape *and* winning journalism's prestigious Peabody Award. Now imagine doing all this before you are even old enough to drive a car. That's what **Catalina Puente**, now 16, did just last year.

She wrote *Obsession* in 2005 as a member of the Radio Rookies, WNYC's youth journalism program dedicated to providing opportunities to teens in underserved areas of New York. The program provides a voice for worlds rarely represented authentically in the media, and Rookies' stories have the reputation of being brave, provocative and real. Puente's is all three as she chronicles, through a combination of narration and conversation with her sister and father, the joys and frustrations accompanying her infatuation with a classmate, "K-licious." Praised for its

courage, *Obsession* was honored with a 2005 Peabody Award for journalism excellence and aired nationally on *This American Life*.

It was difficult, Puente says, to tell her father about her feelings for K-licious. "I thought he was going to see me differently and I don't like things to change. What if we're not as close as we used to be? But ... it was the complete opposite. He was like 'OK, all right, I still love you.'"

Puente performs in local poetry and spoken word events and, aside from plans to continue writing, aspires to be an actor, clothing designer, model and club owner. At first shy about public performance, she says, "Sometimes you just have to take risks because that's what helps you find out more about yourself." She's motivated to continue performing because of "the way the audience responded to my work. They loved it a lot, and I just loved that feeling."

Listen to *Obsession* at wnyc.org/radiorookies.
— Janel M. Lynch