These two stories were inspired by chapter four of *Because of Winn Dixie*. Both fourth grade writers wrote a story that centered on the sharing of a ten-item list. Each writer used her list a bit differently. Look over both these well-written stories, then talk to a neighbor or friend about where you see the strongest evidence of *voice* in each story.

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**Ten Things**
by Emily, fourth grade writer

I was sitting on the couch and I heard my wife moan, “I don’t feel well.” I asked her what was wrong. She said, “Call 911! I feel really sick!” So I called 911 and they came right away. They rushed her to the hospital, and I followed them in my car.

When I got there, they had bad news… she was dying. I stayed the night and I could hardly sleep. In the morning the doctors had worse news. She was dead.

When I got home, I wept the whole night. The next day I went to her funeral. She had been 79 when she died. My neighbor, Emily, came over today. She asked me to tell her 10 special things about my wife. This is what I told her:

1. She believed that when she worked with flowers it helped her enjoy nature more.
2. She loved playing the piano and knew that practice made her very good.
3. She believed giving people cards on their birthday would make them happier.
4. She believed supporting kids when they played sports would help them win.
5. She adopted seven dogs, seven cats, four rabbits, three birds, and believed it would make more people give homes to stray animals.
6. She was really funny and could make anybody laugh.
7. She cared about children and she adopted three children.
8. She believed that everybody should be loved.
9. She believed if everyone got along the world would be a lot better.
10. She could take something broken and fix it.

By the time I said number 10, I was crying, and Emily said that my wife was a wonderful person. I agreed.

When Emily left I was happy she had asked about my wife because it made me think about her and remember what a special gift she had been to my life. When I went to bed that night I thought about my wife. I would always love her and remember her in my mind and heart.
Dad's Favorite Things
by Caitlyn, fourth grade writer

It was a rainy Saturday afternoon. My dad was working on his truck in the barn. I wanted to help him, but Mom said that I needed to have my homework done first. I went to my room and I did my homework in fifteen minutes. Mom checked it over and said it looked very nice. I asked my Mom if I could go help my dad in the barn now.

Dad called on the intercom and said he was polishing his truck. He asked me if I would like to help him polish.

Yes! I love to polish rims! I asked Dad if I should dress in warm clothes, and he said, “No, I have a heater in my barn.”

At 4:00 p.m., I’d been helping my dad for several hours. We had not even gotten to the rims yet. When we started on the rims, I asked Dad to tell me ten things about himself and what means the most to him.

He started by saying, "I love your mom, sister and you very much. Two, I have the best and most loving family in the world. Three," he continued, "I'll always have somebody by my side, and that is you, Caitlyn."

"Dad, I think I love big trucks almost as much as you do," I said.
"Almost?" Dad asked.
"No, Dad, more," I laughed. "So, what is number four?"
"I have gout and arthritis in my big toe, and I have to watch what I eat," he said.
"Does it hurt?" I asked.
"Oh yes, it feels like it is on fire," he said. "Five, I have a 1954 John Deere tractor that was my Grandfather's." He said, "It means a lot to me because he gave it to me."
"Wow Dad, I didn't know it was a 1954 model," I told him.
"Six, I have a Mack Superliner truck that is not made anymore," he said. "Seven, I can back-up my Mack CL713 dump truck with a diamond bed on it better than my pick up truck," Daddy said.
"That's right, Dad!" I said.
"Eight, I believe there should be a hammer lane for people who are in a hurry to drive in," Dad chuckled.

"I can see it now. The speed limit in the hammer lane is 75 miles per hour and you are driving in it all the time!" I joked.
"Very funny, Cait," he said.
"Nine, someday I would like to go on the Ice Road Trucker show because I know a lot about trucks," he said.

"I would not want you to go to Canada," I told him. "You would be gone for about three months and I would be afraid that you could fall through the ice," I said.

Dad said, "Yes, it is dangerous but the pay is good. Ten, I love to be outside," he said.
"Just like me," I said.
"Just like you, Caitlyn," Dad said.
"Father, thank you so much for telling me those ten things about yourself. I'm done polishing the rims on my side of the truck, are you done with yours?" I asked.

"Yep, just finishing up," he said.

I said, "Dad, look at the time. We need to clean up. It is almost supper time."

Just then Mom called us on the intercom and said it was time to eat. As Dad and I walked in from the barn, he kissed me and said, "Thank you, Caity, for all your help."

"You're welcome, Daddy," I said.

Dad looked at me and said, "Now let's get some yummies in our tummies!"