This I Believe (aka Personal Narrative Essay)

Create your own “This I Believe” essay in the form of a personal narrative. Tell the story of when a belief you hold dearly was formed or re-enforced.

Required Elements (final draft):

- 450-500 words
- Be honest and specific
- Focus on a single, personal belief
- Focus on “I”
- Frame the piece in positive terms
- Typed and stapled
- MLA format and style
- Grade sheet on top

What this piece is:

- A chance to clarify and articulate what core principle “guides your life”, “underlies you actions” (TIB II p.1)
- A snapshot of a single conviction which has held true throughout your life (TIB II p.2)

What this piece isn’t:

- A response to other writing
- An opportunity to criticize
- An argument
- A chance to persuade

What to Avoid:

- Self-promotion or congratulation (i.e. “no one can dance as well as I can . . .”)
- Instruction/didacticism (i.e. “everyone should . . .”)
- Focusing on what you do not believe
- Accusation, judgment (i.e. “it’s the media’s fault that . . .” or “the Goth trend is stupid because . . .”)
- Restatement of dogma or doctrine (i.e. invoking political positions or religious teachings)

(TIB I pgs. 3, 5, 273)