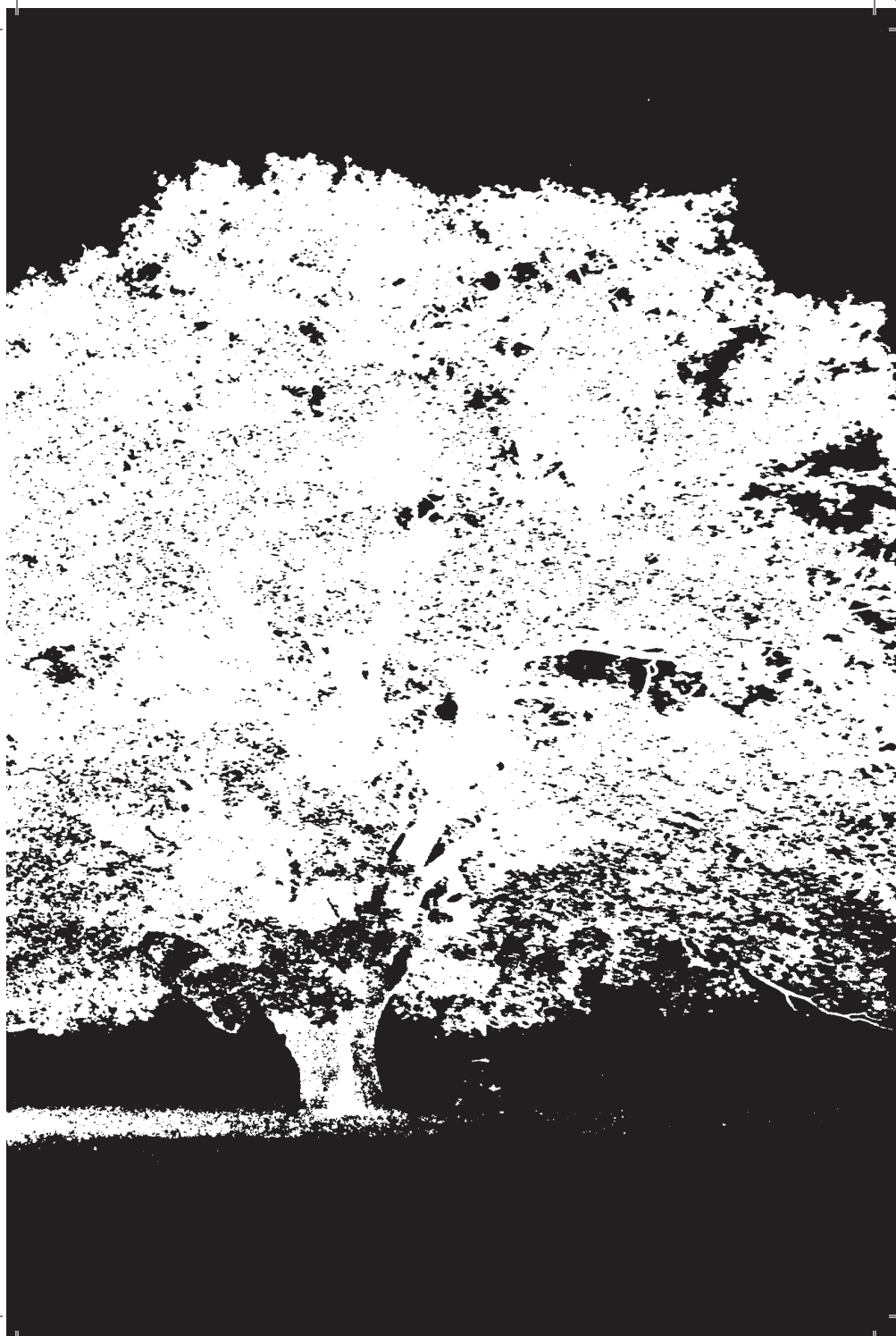



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FOR YOUTH  
IN DETENTION, OR  
IN THE COMMUNITY  
WHO ARE WHAT THEY SAY, AND  
BECOME WHAT THEY DREAM

...

INFORMATION

---

WRITERS IN RESIDENCE  
FALL 2025  
CASE WESTERN RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY COHORT

PRINTED IN CLEVELAND, OH  
Outlandish Press

BOOK AND COVER DESIGN  
Angelo Maneage  
*angelomaneagethewebsite.com*

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WRITERS IN RESIDENCE IS...

REENTRY MENTORSHIP INITIATIVE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## **MISSION**

---

We teach creative writing to youth who are incarcerated to empower their voices and assist in their re-entry into society.

## **VISION**

---

We strive to reduce the recidivism rates of our residents and participate in the transformation of the juvenile justice system.

## VALUES

---

**JUSTICE.** We believe in creating an environment where justice becomes visible, where restoration from wrong is possible, where people are seen as more than their worst moments, where people can create a future not doomed to repeat the past.

---

**EMPOWERMENT.** We believe that our residents can build their self-esteem, resilience, and power through working on their writing, their reflection, their communication, through the creative writing workshop experience.

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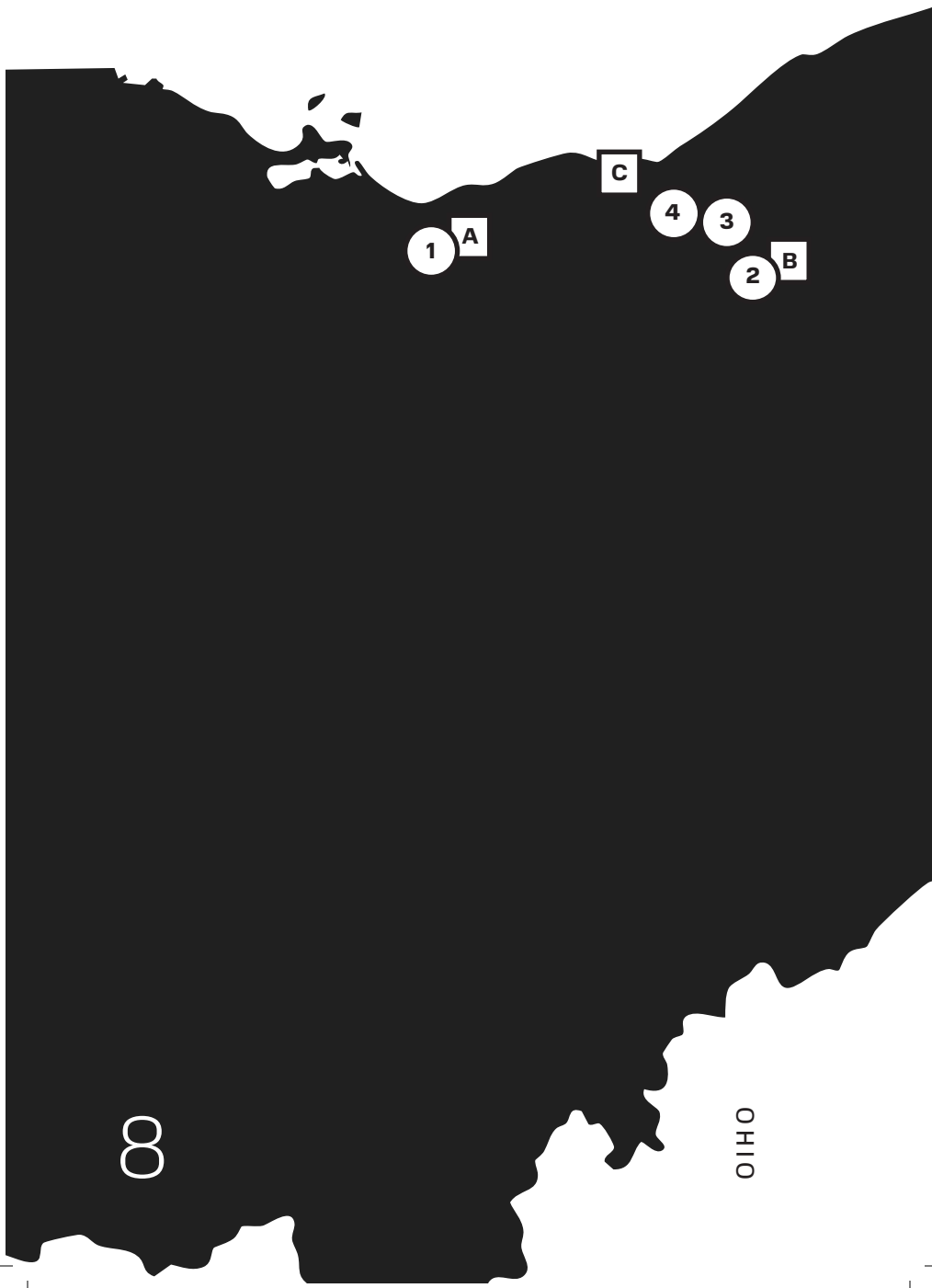
**RELATIONSHIP.** We believe in fostering genuine, strong, and long-lasting relationships as well as walking with our residents as they navigate the path to re-entry.

---

**DIGNITY.** We believe that our residents deserve to discover and recognize their own dignity and self-worth through our creative writing workshops. We also believe that if we respect ourselves, our residents, and our student volunteers then we successfully lead by example.

---

**COMMUNITY.** We believe in the power of community. We continually welcome and accept our residents into our communities to promote individuality and empowerment, especially upon re-entry. We also believe in the creation of a collaborative atmosphere that amplifies all voices together in a spirit of mutuality and kindness.



1

A

C

4

3

2

B

8

OHIO





# SCHOOLS AND FACILITIES

---



- 
- <sup>1</sup> OBERLIN COLLEGE
  - <sup>2</sup> HIRAM COLLEGE
  - <sup>3</sup> JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY
  - <sup>4</sup> CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY



- 
- <sup>A</sup> LORAIN COUNTY JDH
  - <sup>B</sup> PORTAGE COUNTY JDC
  - <sup>C</sup> CUYAHOGA COUNTY JDC

## IMPACT

---

We determined the graphic elements and creative writing artifacts in advance to place this chapbook in the hands of every resident published by the final workshop.

As a result, the outputs *only* highlight a portion of the cohort's and the organization's impact from this program season.

The residents also complete surveys before and after every creative writing workshop, providing us with quantitative and qualitative data so we can evaluate our outcomes and ensure a high-quality program experience.

---

TO LEARN MORE, VIST

[writersnresidence.org](http://writersnresidence.org)

---



Case Western Reserve Univ. Cohort, Fall 2025

Chapbook	1
Residents (direct contact)	152
Residential Participants	57
Residents Published	38
Teaching Artists	2
Student Volunteers	9
Hours	148
Artifacts (pieces generated)	73
Workshops	11
Fiscal Valuation	\$4,050

## FOREWORD

---

Dear reader,

At the intersection of literary arts, higher education and the juvenile justice system, you will find Writers in Residence: the only organization in Ohio that transforms the lives of justice-involved youth through creative writing and mentorship. Since 2017, we have seen those transformations at juvenile facilities throughout Ohio.

Our Creative Writing Workshops (CWWs) are weekly, in-person engagements during the spring and fall for nine to 11 weeks. We contract with local writers to teach 10 to 15 residents—most of whom are between 13 and 18 years of age - in each workshop. Our teaching artists use the work of writers who represent their color, cultures and creeds, creating prompts that explore universal human experiences.

We also engage five to 10 undergraduate volunteers from nearby schools to participate in each workshop, becoming positive peer mentors and helping us to:

- Increase residents' literacy levels and writing disposition;
- Build their self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-awareness;
- Publish their creative writing;
- Advocate for them.

---

Our work includes a passionate and committed staff, teaching artists and college cohorts who believe in our mission and in the promise of the young people we serve. Our board of directors is equally devoted to honoring our mission, vision and values.

There are challenges that come with our work—for example, the brief periods of time our residents have to write original pieces; institutional delays and other interruptions to the proper editing of their work. Many residents would further revise their poetry and prose if given the chance.

We take those challenges in stride as we empower residents through creativity and community. In *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1951), one-time Cleveland resident Langston Hughes wrote,

*Go home and write  
A page tonight.  
And let that page come out of you—  
Then, it will be true.*

Thank you for reading these truths from our Writers in Residence.

---

LORI ASHYK

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## LETTER FROM THE COHORT

---

Dear reader,

Each session has its own special moments and experiences, and some sessions prompt rawer feelings even days afterwards.

Collective laughter and creative breakthroughs come to mind, but the most pride we personally feel is definitely when residents start writing and don't stop until they think their work is their best, or when they come back telling us they decided to write on their own between sessions. This semester, we also found ourselves humbled by the residents' willingness to contribute to discussions about small and large things. Some participated with no hesitation, while others took weeks to feel comfortable opening up; either way, the respect cultivated between everyone in the classroom was powerful and rewarding.

Readers should know that all information is presented voluntarily by residents; we do not press any participant about what led them to the facility nor for any information about their lives outside of the center. Each prompt and each workshop is meant to organically prompt self-reflection through sixty to ninety minutes of discussion, the lines residents write, and the bonds they build with each other and the volunteers and teaching artists. We would like readers to practice empathy and respect the hard work that has gone into the residents' creative writing. There is vulnerability evident in this writing and readers must work to understand that vulnerability; exposing and exploring one's inner workings with strangers is difficult for anyone, so one can imagine the magnitude of this difficulty for adolescents involved with the repressive American carceral system.

**“THERE IS VULNERABILITY  
EVIDENT IN THIS WRITING  
AND READERS MUST WORK  
TO UNDERSTAND THAT  
VULNERABILITY”**

...





Service with Writers in Residence is easily a highlight of the week, every week. We are grateful for the connections and memories made at the center; as volunteers, we always leave smiling. We are even more grateful for our teaching artists Kisha and Calil for their mentorship of the volunteers and residents, as well as each resident from pods 1-B and 3-D for their presence and contributions. Each individual worked towards the catharsis that reading and writing with peers calls for, whether or not they spoke about their feelings aloud and whether or not they ultimately published the thoughts they shared in the classroom.

Thank you,

**THE CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY COHORT**



# + HAIKU

(Spring 2025)

## S U M M A R Y

This creative writing workshop revolved around the form of poetry called haiku demonstrated by Sonia Sanchez's poem "14 haiku," about Emmett Louis Till, who was a 14-year old African American boy who was abducted and lynched in 1955 after being falsely accused of offending a white woman.

## P R O M P T

Write 5 haiku about a single event or multiple moments.

Include images that appeal to the five senses: taste, touch, sight, smell, and hearing.



Passing, making shots  
I feel happy when I play.  
Passes time in here.

Lil Durk and Q50  
Their music makes me feel good.  
Every song is good.

## LAID EYES

---

ZG

### Taste

Shrimp and fried ribs are  
very delicious to me  
with crab legs on top

### Touch

If I lose someone  
else I don't think  
I will love the same.

### Sight

When I first laid eyes  
on you I knew you were right  
for me forever

### Hearing

I fell in love with  
someone very special to  
me; I might lose them.

Jail is a hell cave  
I'm not leaving any time.  
I will go home soon.

Ms. C is fun.  
I learn things I don't know yet.  
Faith can move mountains.

My hair is spikey.  
My hair is black and curly.  
My hair is quite thick.

Root beer is delicious.  
It goes good in my ice cream.  
It gives me flavor.

I like rap music.  
Walk Down Global is the best.  
Get da Point is good.

## LONG LIVE JAIL

---

RA

They call me A,  
but I can't pronounce gyro.  
I want to go home.



I turn the door knob  
I open my door to  
light blue living room.

I turn right to the  
staircase that leads to my room.  
I lay in my bed.

Surrounded by red  
all I feel is springs below  
bouncing against me.

Television on  
sounds of gaming fill my ear  
and I am at peace.

The only place that  
I get to feel relaxed in  
feel good in my room.

# + PHOTOGRAPHY AND EKPHRASIS

---

## S U M M A R Y

This creative writing workshop combines visual art and literary art through a poetic form called ekphrasis thanks to Mickalene Thomas' and Lorna Simpson's inspiring photography about race, gender, and identity.

---

## P R O M P T

Take a portrait and still life with an instant camera.

If you chose to write about your portrait, then reflect and respond to these questions: What's something you want more people to know about you? What do you want to keep for yourself?

## OR

If you chose to write about your still life, then reflect and respond to these questions: What significance do you want others to acknowledge and appreciate about this object? What does this object represent to you?



## MOTION

---

KM

1. Calm and chill
2. Slow motion and serene
3. Magic and perfect

## ALL ABOUT ME

---

JR

Something people might not know about is I'm a real life UFC fighter. On the inside I'm not as bad on the out. My picture expresses how I am a cool and collected guy. I wish people knew I was unique. I wish people knew that I had changed.

Ion go for nothing and I'ma be back sooner than

The picture makes me think about brotherhood how we  
all have ups and downs but still fight for each other.  
I wouldn't want people to know how it feel to  
be in here. I feel like an animal being in here.



## UNTITLED

---

JL

I'm not aggressive  
Dat I'm in jail  
I can rap  
play sports  
and I'm  
funny

## WHEN PEOPLE SEE ME

---

PM

When people see me, they see a kid. They see me as a killer. I wish they would know I'm not a killer. I go to school, and I want to get a job.

## MY LIFE IN SIX WORDS IN SIX WAYS

---

RL

1. I had a very good day.
2. I eat a lot of food.
3. I love to play the game.
4. I love to watch good movies.
5. I love to do school work.
6. I love to do art projects.



3 young men incarcerated not letting their environment  
control their situation.

# + SONGWRITING

## S U M M A R Y

This creative writing workshop starts a conversation around music through contemporary songs that demonstrate these songwriting elements:

**Analogies:** comparison between two or more things to clarify meaning.

**Rhyme:** repetition of similar sounding words.

**Wordplay:** clever use of words to create deeper meanings, puns, or 2x/3x entendres.

## P R O M P T

Write song lyrics about anything you want. Include analogies (metaphors or similes), rhymes, and wordplay.



## THE FLOW

---

RH

my flow is to hot I coms stratight  
out the pot Im made for the top my sis  
said Ima Jock I can nevea stop

I seen people changing. Ion see the love in they faces, don't feel it in they hugs or embraces. Feelings I replaced, it's been all love from the basement. I'm scared my thugs a make a statement. Always been a leader. My mama told me I was gifted. I been mixing lean with jock. They say it's bad for my kidneys. Remember I was broke and starving in them trenches. Yeah I broke her heart, but I can't give my heart to females. Let me make this clear, I wanna slide, but y'all ain't never slid.

# +AFFIRMATIONS

(Fall 2025)

---

## S U M M A R Y

This creative writing workshop reminded the residents to love themselves and affirm the parts that make them who they are through Markus Amaker's poem "Give Yourself Some Flowers."

---

## P R O M P T

Imagine you're looking at yourself in the mirror. Write (10) affirmations to yourself, about yourself, for yourself.

Make them positive, present, and personal statements. Use traits, attributes, and qualities you love about yourself.

Start with: "Where I am isn't who I am..." Then repeat every sentence with: "I am..." End with: "I am capable of [fill in the blank]."



Where I am isn't who I am,  
I am great! I am a king.  
These walls can't hold me.  
I have a dream!  
of being successful, and wealthy,  
and loved and Godly.  
I am capable of changing  
the way I live!  
I am GREAT!



Where I am isn't who I am.  
I am good at basketball.  
I am good at math.  
I am handsome.  
I am kind and respectful.  
I am a Kyrie Irving fan.  
I am a child of god.  
I am a loving person.  
I am a funny guy.  
I am looking forward to going home.  
I am capable of making it to the NBA.

Where I am isn't who I am, but this place isn't who I am.  
I am calm.  
I am moving forward.  
I am kind.  
I am trying to stay out of trouble.  
I am great.  
I am fun.  
I am self worthy.  
I am a spray hitter.  
I am fashionable.  
I am capable of loving others.

## I STATEMENTS

---

ZG

Where I am isn't who I am.  
I am very handsome.  
I am very respectful.  
I am very annoying.  
I am very smart and intelligent.  
I am very loving.  
I am very thoughtful.  
I am very good at running and basketball.  
I am very self-aware.  
I am very protective.  
I am very talkative and I can express my  
feelings.  
I am capable of ignoring ignorant behavior.

## FREE ME LONG LIVE MY COUSIN

---

RH

Where I am is not where I am  
but now I am in where I am but  
not where I wanna be I wanna be  
where I wanna be is a good places.

Im am capable of fixing my life  
and Painting a good picture which is  
Like painting your life Mines is with  
the people I Love. Long Live my peoples

I am athletic.  
I am different.  
I am handsome.  
I am cool.  
I am funny.  
I am smart.  
I am a fast learner.  
I am a good kid.  
I am a good gamer.  
I am confident.  
I am thoughtful.  
I am grateful.  
I am the third child.  
I am a football player.  
I am fantastic.  
I am terrific.  
I am motivated.  
I am good at a lot.  
I am nice.

## I AM A GOAT

ANONYMOUS

---

I am fun.  
I am youthful.  
I am cool.  
I am careful.  
I am a little nice.  
I am childish.  
I am curious.  
I am motivational to myself.  
I am amazing.  
I am a photographer.  
I am athletic.  
I am a gamer.  
I am smart.  
I am strong.  
I am independent.  
I am a bodybuilder.  
I am playful.  
I am a drummer.  
I am creative.  
I am a magician.  
I am capable of playing basketball.

Where I am isn't who I am . . .

I am me.

I am a good person.

I am the best.

I am nice.

I am fly.

I am a law abiding citizen.

I am athletic.

I am clean.

I am brave.

I am smart.

I am capable of having a good future.

I am a mechanic  
I am marksman  
I am athletic  
I am pharmacist  
I am strategic  
I am good w/ my hands  
I am rapper  
I am leader  
I am big back  
I am Nascar driver  
I am interior designer  
I am trustworthy  
I am capable of controlling my anger



I will always be attractive.  
I am strong.  
I am fly.  
I am loyal.  
I am talented at basketball.  
I am genuine.  
I am friends with M.  
I am a leader.  
I am always going to put myself first.  
I am full of potential.

Where I am isn't who I am.  
I am creative.  
I am a young intelligent man.  
I am a hustler.  
I am going to be rich.  
I am a woman's man.  
I am going to make the basketball team this year.  
I am going to make my momma proud.  
I am going to make better decisions.  
I am going to be successful.  
I am going to go to college.  
I am going to have my own clothing brand.

Roses are red, violets are blue. I get money. How  
about you? Chase the paper. 100s are blue. Never  
let anything get in yo way from making blues.  
Stay out the way. Watch who you hang with. Yo  
closest friends will be the ones to snake you  
out.

## OBLIVION

---

LR

Roses are red.  
Violets are blue.  
im chasin pape  
What about you.  
I know my life will end in success when it's over.  
I'm thankful to myself that I've got a good  
head on my shoulders.

## THINGS I LIKE

---

ANONYMOUS

I like my interest in music such as rap and  
R/B. I like the way it calm me and make  
me feel better. I also like the fact that  
I like real estate which mean I can maybe  
help someone find a home.

## GIVE YOURSELF SOME TIME

TS<sup>2</sup>

I know a lot that I did not know I knew. A lot of people care. I just don't know it yet. There is a bunch of love in the world, so save some for yourself.

## GRASS IN GREENER

DM

Treat  
your  
body  
how  
you  
will  
treat  
yourself  
Mind

Your  
blood  
stops  
when  
you  
give  
up

The  
sun  
is  
farther  
than  
you  
think

Clock  
stop  
when  
you  
do

I'm a caring kid. I like to help my people.

I'm loving to my family.

I'm a cool kid.

I'm a funny kid.

I'm a smart kid.

I'm nice.

I'm a grown man.

I'm handsome.

Where I am isn't who I am. I am confident. I am funny.

I am a caring person. I am a cool person. I am not a criminal.

I am an athletic person. I am better than others. I am strong.

I am an outstanding person. I am a good cook. I am capable of helping other people when needed.

## ME, MYSELF, AND I

---

AS

Where I am isn't who I am.  
I'm loyal.  
I'm cheerful.  
I'm generous.  
I'm good at basketball.  
I'm good at video games like COD.  
I'm myself.  
I'm unique.  
I'm peaceful.  
I'm strong.  
I'm good at 2K23 with the dunk meter.

## FREE L

---

MJ

Where I am isn't who I am.  
I am a good person that helps others.  
I am a supreme cook, that will cook  
up  
anything.  
I am the GOAT.  
I am capable of EVERYTHING

## FREE ONE OF THEM ONES

---

BG

I am the one.  
I am better.  
I am smart.  
I am handsome.  
I am one of dem one.  
I am sob.  
I am loving.  
I am a big lying to get far.  
I am not going for nothing.  
I am B



Where I am isn't who I am . . .

I am a leader.

I am a great rapper.

I am smart.

I am understanding.

I am athletic.

I am confident.

I am a good friend.

I am funny.

I am a go-getter.

I am courageous.

I am capable of anything.

# +SIX-WORD MEMOIRS

## S U M M A R Y

Typically, this is the resident's first session, introducing them to our creative writing workshops. They explored who they are, who they were, and who they want to become through six-word memoirs.

## P R O M P T

Write (1) six-word memoir from each of these categories:

- 1.** I am / I'm...
- 2.** Life
- 3.** Love
- 4.** Food
- 5.** Advice
- 6.** Questions
- 7.** I will be / I'll be...



## LOVE IS NOT PERFECT

---

DM

Stay true to yourself always.  
Life is precious so pay attention.  
People are temporary. Love is permanent.  
I eat Santa cookies without milk.  
Love life while you're still here.  
Are they your friend or foe?  
I'll be a better version of myself.

## UNTITLED

---

JMW

1. i am a graduate
2. i am very worthy
3. i will be home very soon
4. i will do better
5. i can do it right?
6. i love myself a lot!

## CHANGES CAN MAKE DIFFERENCES

---

JS

Life won't change unless I do.  
My daughter changed my entire life.  
Losing my friends caused big changes.  
Making wrong choices can change life.  
Meeting new people can change life.  
Why do we live to die?  
Why do the people you love go away forever?  
Why are the people in the world so cold hearted?  
I don't understand why people surround themselves with evil.  
Why do life feel unreal?  
Never let anyone tell you that you can't do it when you can.  
Surround yourself with good and you will receive good.

## UNTITLED

---

DJ

I'm truly me forever.  
I'm in a different lane.  
Love comes very unexpectedly.  
Food feels like freedom.  
Don't change for others.  
Do you truly love?  
I'll be better tomorrow.

## LIFESTYLE

---

JH

I'm a real tweaker but smart.  
Hard times don't last, be patient.  
Females come and go, get'em all.  
In jail, still eating so good.  
The smartest thinker can beat odds.  
Why do people fake their intentions?  
I'll be rich, successful, and great.

## WHY ME?

---

LR

1. I'm in chains right now but, I will be free.
2. Lifes hard and skeptical, but i know it will be better soon or later.
3. Love is like a roller coaster, everything will be up's and downs.
4. Food is food, it will always be food.
5. Always go with your gut, Everything will be okay.
6. Why me?
7. I will be rich, succesful, married, A owner of fast cars, and I will be living a good life.

## I WILL BE TAKING CARE OF MY FAMILY

---

SR

I will be successful in 6 years. I will be taking care of my family in 6 years. I'm running, nobody is stopping me. I love talking to my girlfriend. Don't hang with the wrong people. Fried chicken is best with hot sauce.

## UNTITLED

---

AF

I'm A. I'm helpful, productive, and funny.  
I love my life, my dogs, my family, and being helpful to the community.  
I love food, big dogs, and weapons, and games.  
I love Wendy's and Coney Island Mount Pleasant.



## MY LIKES AND LOVES

---

AS

I love Call of Duty because it's fun.  
The graphics are better and more real.  
I like basketball because the dunks.  
I like 2K23 because the dunkmeter.  
I like the superi 46 because movement.  
I love pizza because it's tasty.  
I love video games because it's entertaining.  
I like rap because the rhymes.

## MY BEST FOODS

---

NF

Nothing hit like spicy chicken wings.  
You can never go wrong with jellybeans.

## FAKE WORLD

---

WM

Why does the world look fake? Bright colors, clouds, and  
green grass. Open fields, lots of laughs. Ocean seas, trees,  
and bees. Birds fly to seed to seed.

Life  
Its hard living in this world.  
Life is worth living no matter what.  
You live and you learn.

As long as your alive do what you think is  
right.

In this life knowledge is key.

Your L's aren't Losses they  
are Learning experiences.

## MY NOT RICK

---

IR

1. i am a very strong man
2. my life is horrible for now
3. I love sushi and the fish
4. I can cook rice and chicken
5. My mistake will never be permanent.
6. mi es cuando voy a salir te aqui  
“when am I going to leave here?”

I always like to be funny.

They call me B.

I'm a good friend because I like it.

I'm cool because they be say chill kids.

B got game.

# +INSPIRATION

## S U M M A R Y

This creative writing workshop asked the residents to consider what inspires them and who they inspire through Damien McClendon's poem "What moves me," which includes rich images, metaphors and similes, and an anaphora.

## P R O M P T

Start writing with: "What moves me? It must be..."

Repeat the phrase "it must be" 6x to introduce a new idea. This writing technique is called an anaphora.

## OR

Write about being an inspiration to someone in your life. Explain why and how you will inspire them.

70

WRITERS IN RESIDENCE  
FALL 2025  
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY COHORT



## MOVES ME FREE THE GANG

---

JH

What moves me? It must be the  
females. It must be the red eyes from the clouds that take  
away the pain.  
It must be the desire to be great,  
It must be the raps. It must  
be the money. It must be me.

## MY 10 IT MUST BE

---

AS

What moves me

1. It must be how I play BO6.
2. It must be how God is on my side.
3. It must be the good food I eat back home.
4. It must be the way I love to play basketball.
5. It must be the way I look in the future.
6. It must be how I love my mom.
7. It must be how I love my fashion.
8. It must be how I love to swim.
9. It must be how I love Columbus rap.
10. It must be how I love to stay busy.



## ONE OF THEM ONES 2X

---

BG

What moves me? It must be the homies.  
It must be the shorties.  
It must be the money.  
It must be nice clothes.  
It must be the cars, the SRT.  
It must be social media. It must be texting my homies.  
It must be playing Xbox at home.

## IT MUST BE

---

OG

It must be doing good.  
It must be the garden in Ohio.  
It must be family, gotta be some of nephews  
sisters. It must be myself.  
It must be God.

It must be stupidity to think that  
I can only live the good life when  
I die. It must be stupidity to  
believe all these lies. Slavery  
wasn't that bad. Colonialism was  
good for you heathens that didn't  
know God. It must be my  
destiny to let you profit &  
steal from me. It must be  
Ok for Anglo Saxons to  
Have it good on Earth & in  
Heavens . . that's Fair . . . Right?

It must be. It must be the  
bible I should follow it blindly

It must be all people of color  
should suffer and cry &  
never ask for more in Life,  
Dignity, respect will be taken  
from those from PINK toes  
to thin Lips & Long cracked  
Nose

## UNTITLED

---

DD

What moves me? It must be waking up  
What moves me? It must be having a car  
What moves me? It must be my siblings  
What moves me? It must be

## HOW IT FEELS

---

TS<sup>2</sup>

It must be the way my eyes adjust when I watch.  
It must be how hungry I get while I wait.  
It must be the sweat on my hand.

## IT MUST BE

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JP

It must be my mood. It must be food that  
moves me. It must be a healthy relationship  
for me to get into. It must be  
why I was ignored. For me  
I need the respect. It  
must have trust for it to be a healthy relationship.

## GREATER COMINGS

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LR

What moves me? . . .  
it must be the money  
it must be the hard times  
it must be the times i realize my flaws  
it must be when she points out my selfish ways  
it must be the sit-downs  
it must be the soon to be greater comings

## FAMILY TIES

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DM

family, love, respect, being me, kinda  
I'm gonna be a role model to the ones I love, like nieces/  
nephews, younger cousins.

# +ADULTHOOD

## S U M M A R Y

This creative writing workshop asked the residents to reflect on the moment when they were becoming an adult through Stephanie Ginese's prose poem "32nd Street," which also remembers the good times and grieves those who passed away.

## P R O M P T

Write about the moment when you realized that you were becoming an adult. Include specific, concrete details that appeal to the senses.

### **OR**

Write about your summer days, in your community, with your friends, being young and free.

Include specific, concrete details that appeal to the senses.



I say take me back when we did dumb s\*\*\* a weekend  
on 123. I mean, take me back with the guys  
in the hood, with my people having fun. We  
was just kids on porches, chilling with guys  
and being all the dead guys. Back to the ghetto.  
I want to say take me back to before my mom  
passaway, and I want to talk to her more. I  
think my life would have been better.  
I mean, why everybody I love gotta be  
so good at becoming ghosts. I mean  
if I could just stand on the corner  
of this poem forever I would.



## FREE MY HOOD

---

BG

East 30th is a block with whatever you're looking for. If you wanna run, go to 30th. When I was young, the park was so safe that a newborn baby could sit there all night if it wanted to. Your dog could sit there on the leash. A new TV could sit at the park.

## 116TH STREET

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JJ

It is the early 2000s and we aint have no problems and this is what I mean when I say heaven on earth the days before we ever knew about hard time we can play as kids do kid s\*\*\* at grandma's house way before J Left way before L left Auntie R left them summer night and days if I could go back I would "I mean ever body love actually went ghost"

## A DAY IN THE HOOD

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SR

My summer Days in my community i was Lit  
we was going to partys, playing the game going to see some girls  
having sleep overs [REDACTED] until we can't No More,  
posting up on the Block, East 30th.

## MAINESKI9300

---

ANONYMOUS

Start on 90th and take it down to 93rd this street got history  
but it started at Thurgood playing football in 2015 walking in  
C-Town with tha guyz it was special Skip 6 years later B was  
gone now we all raise HELL losing a brother is like losing a  
brain cell Everytime i close my eyes i see 5 boys playing at the  
playground, playing football doing everything together. Now  
i sit in a cell all alone depressed crying about the pain i've  
giving behind you

## 36TH STREET

---

DR

Take me back to 2022 where people I loved were still alive, where the kids still spent the night at Granny's house, when we used to play football in the front yard. Our favorite thing was making fruit salads, cooking in general, and pranking people. Life was easier. Going to the same school as my cousins, having fights with my cousins. Why did she have to go so soon? Why did she have to go so soon? Why did she have to go so soon?

## SUMMER DAYZ

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JH

Summer days, me and my brothers. Riding on the handlebars of my brother's bike. Coming home with my own bike. 2 mans, 3 mans, a real female chaser. Sun out, shirts off, jumping in the pool. Riding in cars, listening to music and freestyling, high with the bros. Late nights sleeping on my friend's floor after stealing snacks out the store. My friends know my struggles so they don't mind. Riding with me late nights are fun. Take me back to summer days. Riding with me late nights are fun. Riding with me late nights singing songs. Riding with me not thinking about wrongs. Beefing with me though would be wrong.

## REALIZATION

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LR

The moment i realized i was becoming grown when i refused to depend on my family members for supplying my wants and needs, mainly my father, More so my life experiences and things i did alone and overcame alone.

## DEEP THOUGHTS

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DM

Being with my dad about living with my family, not having to worry and now as you get older, then more problem when you get older, miss the way everything just want to go back to time when I just no worry.

## UNTITLED

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JP

I went to North Carolina in March. It was very hot, but I enjoyed it. I also went to Cedar Point.

Take me back when I played  
AAU basketball for hard work and went  
to Vegas and met Shaq for winning the tournament.  
Also cooking eggs and bacon for siblings  
and learning how to make BuLid clothing  
Brand.

Take me back to when I was at my  
grandma's house on Kinsmen Rd, when  
she was cooking Hamburger Helper and  
I would watch TV on the couch.

## WRITERS IN RESIDENCE IS...

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...where **encouragement** and **empowerment** meet.

That was the case for these juvenile facility staff members who wrote their youth letters.

### Dear Boys,

I understand it's hard to be stuck, to have your mind withhold motivation. It's okay to be angry, to be sad, or to not know. Every path in life has a stop sign, you must choose when to move ahead and choose which way to go in life. The most important things to remember in life are you can never go backwards and you always have someone to help you along the way. You're not alone, believe in more than what you're going through now. Right now isn't forever and forever isn't far away. Your ways are your choices, and your choices determine your life. I hope and believe the light stays on you and your blessings are fulfilled.

Sincerely,

**T**





## Dear Girls,

Growing up on the east side of Cleveland, I tended to want to hang with my cousins all the time until the day they kicked my Nanna house in on Barlette. I wasn't there, however my cousin was. My mother was a strict mother of four. I never understood why until I encountered situations only God could pull me out of. Seeing the pain and embarrassment my family went through broke my heart. My Nanna and Papa worked hard to become one of the first African American homeowners on that street. Watching my Nanna cry day in and night wondering what she did wrong when it came to my cousin. While my mother cracked down extra hard on me.

Many times in life, we as adults forget we was kids as well. Even though I wasn't promiscuous, I was disobedient in many ways that disappointed not just my parents, God as well. Every day we breathe, God grants us with new mercy and grace. Who am I not to see growth in you ladies just because you're in here. I see passion. Passion shows that once the door close, and it's quiet, the strength you ladies use gives you all passion again. I see growth. When your back is against the wall, at times you guys fight. We all have made mistakes. We all have fell short. However, we don't have to fail at life. Continue to go hard for your dreams. Every second, minute, hour and day is another chance to conquer your dream and goals. Life is you and you're in control of your life.

Love,  
**Ms. C**

## REENTRY MENTORSHIP INITIATIVE

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At Writers in Residence, we intend to support our youth from the moment we meet them. As they explore their voice in our CWWs, we also assist them while they prepare for their reentry process.

We launched the Reentry Mentorship Initiative (RMI) in 2022 to help our residents navigate the intricacies of reentry while building their self-esteem and helping them build valuable life skills. Each week during the CWWs, we inform our youth about the RMI, emphasizing that they have the opportunity to engage in a program that meets their needs. For residents who express an interest, we coordinate with the juvenile facilities to contact their guardians and then connect them with a mentor or group.

**The RMI has evolved to include three different programs to fit the needs of our mentees.** We offer Long-Term Individual Mentoring for young people who know they will be approaching reentry from the juvenile justice system, Short-Term Facility Based Mentoring for those who are likely to be sent to the adult justice system for an extended period of time, and Group Mentoring focused on life skills development for select facilities.

### **LONG-TERM INDIVIDUAL MENTORING**

Long-Term Individual Mentoring has the youth and their guardians create target goals to pursue over 12-18 months, while working alongside an adult mentor from in or around their home community. **We have helped residents with school work, acquiring GEDs, practicing driving, applying for and securing jobs, continuing their exploration of writing, and persevering through the challenges of reentry.** We believe that a mentor consistently shows up for our residents, walks alongside them, and empowers them to reach goals they want to achieve, and to help them feel confident throughout their reentry process.

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### **SHORT-TERM FACILITY BASED MENTORING**

Just because we encounter someone who is facing significant time in the adult system does not mean we don't want to support them as they navigate the transition from the juvenile justice system. Short-Term Facility Based Mentoring allows a resident to be matched with a mentor who will meet with them on a regular basis to help them accomplish goals related to the rest of their time in the juvenile justice system. Our mentors encourage their mentees to complete school, maintain strong positive relationships with their peers and the staff at the facility, as well as to see a reduction in behavioral incidents.

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### **GROUP MENTORING**

Group Mentoring takes place across a ten week period, where we partner with local businesses, institutions, and agencies to provide basic introductions to life skills, as well as valuable linkages to the community, so our mentees know where they can go to find support for specific needs. We provide a laid back and welcoming environment for our mentees to learn about and practice life skills that will help them as they navigate young adulthood.

## To our readers,

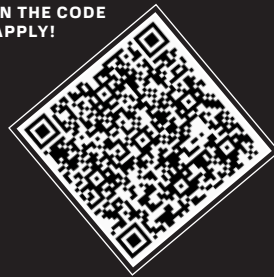
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the stories that appear in this chapbook from our residents are powerful, and as they continue to grow and head back home, those stories don't end. We are always looking for adult volunteers who are passionate about mentoring one of our youth to thrive in their home community or to provide support to a mentoring group.

### INVOLVEMENT

- o Meeting for 2-4 hours every month with a mentee.
- o Reporting on engagements and accomplishments with a mentee.
- o Cultivating a relationship with a mentee for 12-18 months.
- o Participate in facilitating group mentoring for 10 sessions in the spring or summer

.....  
**SCAN THE CODE  
TO APPLY!**



## To our **former residents,**

---

we want to hear from you and pair you with a mentor who will assist you with whatever services and resources you need through our RMI. We know that the reentry process is difficult and uncertain at times. Mentoring places a trusted and reliable adult in your life so you can become the best version of yourself. A mentor will listen to your perspective, encourage you to discover your voice, figure out your future path, and then work with you to find the tools to achieve your version of success.

---

REACH OUT TO US AT  
**INFO@WRITERSNRESIDENCE.ORG,**  
**WRITERSNRESIDENCE.ORG,**  
OR ANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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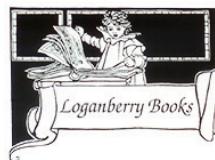
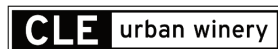
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