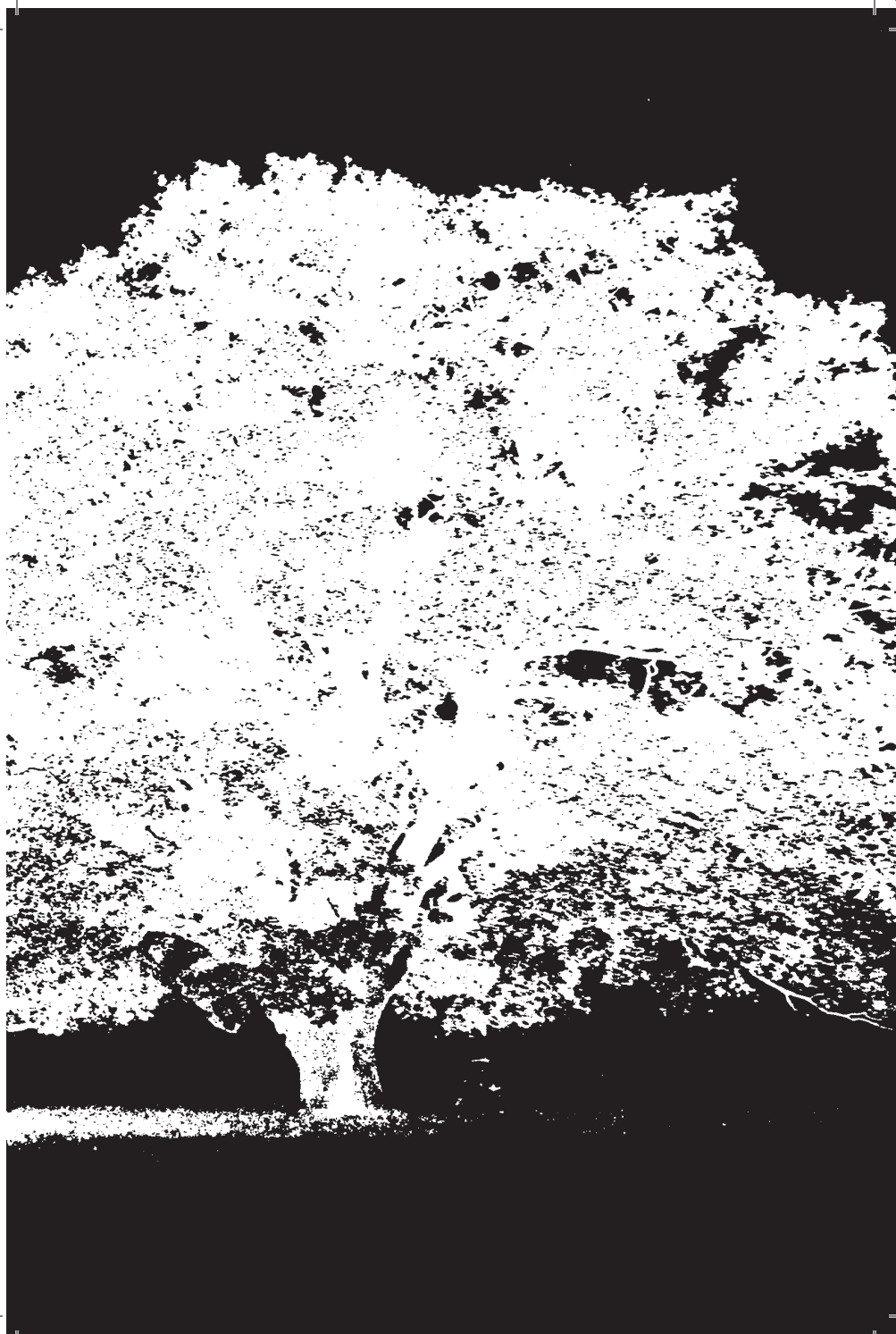



X \_\_\_\_\_





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

...

INFORMATION

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WRITERS IN RESIDENCE  
FALL 2025  
OBERLIN COLLEGE COHORT

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Angelo Maneage  
*angelomaneagethewebsite.com*

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REENTRY MENTORSHIP INITIATIVE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## **MISSION**

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

## **VISION**

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

## VALUES

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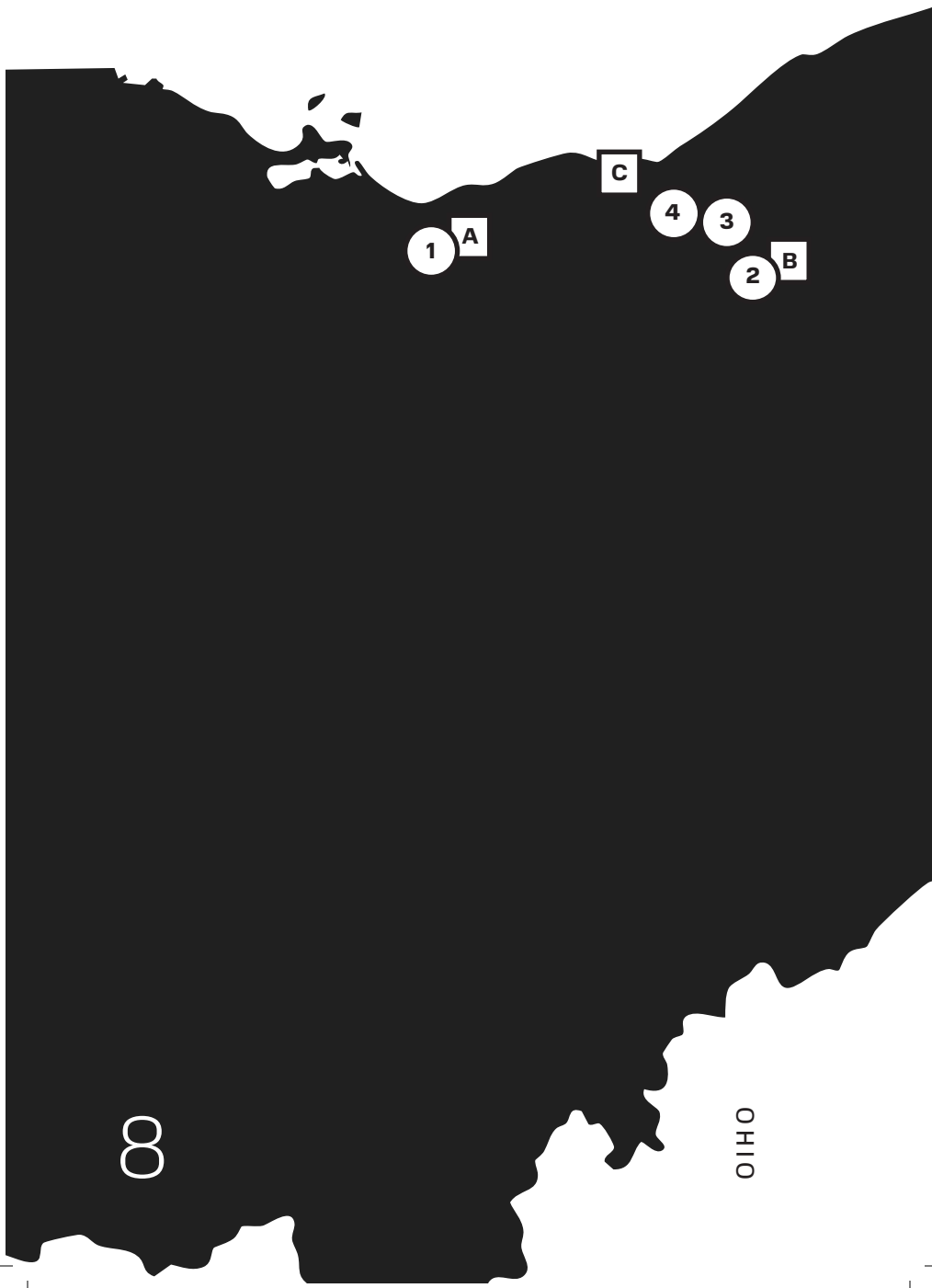
**RELATIONSHIP.** We believe in fostering genuine, strong, and long-lasting relationships as well as walking with our residents as they navigate the path to re-entry.

---

**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

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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)

---



## Oberlin College Cohort, Fall 2025

Chapbook	1
Residents (direct contact)	255
Residential Participants	94
Residents Published	60
Teaching Artists	2
Student Volunteers	10
Hours	45
Artifacts (pieces generated)	123
Workshops	10
Fiscal Valuation	\$3,900

## 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,

Workshops create a space for student volunteers and residents to express themselves creatively, connect over writing, and collaborate in the continuous act of healing. Feelings of instability and anxiety can be prevalent in carceral environments, and writing allows the young people participating in our workshops to process these complex emotions with support and guidance from student volunteers. On the other side of the table, we as volunteers highly value the conversations and writing shared in workshops. We feel honored to witness residents' vulnerability in expressing their authentic feelings, aspirations (including dream careers!), and frustrations.

We want you to know that residents experience structured schedules, limited autonomy within the facility, and sometimes must deal with altercations or conflicts. Some of the residents whose work appears in this chapbook spent time in solitary confinement this semester. Due to scheduling logistics, we held only four generative sessions before residents edited their work for publication. This context further illuminates the beauty, honesty, and humor that always shines through the residents' work—we are extremely proud of this semester's chapbook! As they read the pieces within, we urge readers to understand the context of juvenile detention, but also to recognize that the residents are not their situation. In the words of one student volunteer: "They are authors, poets, musicians, and so much more."

We are grateful for the residents for their time and for sharing their thoughts and dreams, their experiences and reflections, their prides and pains. One student volunteer noted that they are reminded each week of how young the residents are, and how far they yet will go: "I am hopeful that I can, in some small way, be part of making that bright future feel more solid and attainable."

**“WE FEEL HONORED TO WITNESS  
RESIDENTS’ VULNERABILITY IN  
EXPRESSING THEIR AUTHENTIC  
FEELINGS...”**

...





Thank you also to our teaching artists Eryn and Sadie, and to Lori and Spencer for their valued leadership at Writers in Residence.

**THE OBERLIN COLLEGE COHORT**



# + SCREENWRITING

(Spring 2025)

## S U M M A R Y

This creative writing workshop invites the residents to analyze and perform a scene from Ryan Coogler and Joe Robert Cole's "Black Panther," starring Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan, and Lupita Nyong'o, whose characters navigate legacy, leadership, and justice.

## P R O M P T

Use the following prompts to write a scene with dialogue.

- 1.** A character with superpowers has their abilities discovered by a family member or close friend. How do the characters react? Are they supportive or scared?
- 2.** A character visits the afterlife in search of someone. What do they find? Can they return to reality?
- 3.** A character seeks revenge. Do they follow through with their actions or do they forgive them instead? Are they satisfied with their decision?
- 4.** A character asks someone they look up to for advice. What do they say? Do they listen to their counsel?



One day in a small city, there was a boy named Cain. He was a good child at the age of 15 through his childhood. But, when he moved to the city people tried to bully him. He was never heard by his parents or siblings and felt alone. His brother was an athlete and always won awards and was always being treated superior among his brother, Cain. Cain was never heard. After years his heart was filled with hostility and frustration. He started having bad thoughts about what he wanted to do to his brother. One day, he felt lost like always and ended up getting into a fight with bullies. He got beat up and his pride was hurt. One day prior to the fight, he found a gun in an alleyway he was wandering. After he got beat, he used the gun and it was at a moment a priest was walking with groceries out of the store to his car. He saw what was going on and told Cain, "Son, this is not the way." Cain was crying with the gun in his hand as he still raised it. The priest said to Cain, "Come with me." Cain dropped the gun in the priest's hand. He went with Cain to a gym. He taught Cain to box and the way of the Lord. Cain learned after months. He learned to forgive and how to fight with gloves in the ring and learned through the priest who took him in, and after years passed, he became a champion, and when he retired, he became a priest and had children and taught them the right way.

## JACKBOY'S REVENGE

---

ED

There was a boy named Jackboy, and this boy named Tony took his bike, so he wanted revenge but was scared. He wanted the bike because his dad bought it before he died. He grabbed his brother's baseball bat and hit Tony with the bat. And afterwards Jackboy felt bad because he broke Tony's funnybone. He goes to church and asks god for forgiveness, but when he left church the police were there to take him away. The End!

A man named John Wick is just released after doing 10 years in prison for murder and robbery.

He is home now living life, eating good, and everything seems alright.

But, what people don't know is John's first few months home have been rough. He's struggling with rent and can't find any jobs because he is a felon.

He has been thinking about his old ways and plans a bank robbery. He turns to his father for help, and it doesn't seem to work. "Think about the time you did," his father says.

But, John couldn't stop himself and went forward with the robbery. Now he's doing 30 plus years in federal prison.

## LYING WIFE

AS'1 AND JC

Anthony: My brotha, what are you doing here?

Timothy: I came to get some eggs for breakfast.

A: You have food at home.

T: My kids stole mine to egg somebody's house.

A: Why didn't you call me and tell me that chu was coming.

T: Because your wife told me I could. Men I called your house phone.

A: Where is my wife?

T: She said she was going to work.

A: Let me call my wife.

\*ring, ring, ring\*

A: I thought you told me my wife went to work.

T: She told me she was.

A: So she lied to you.

T: She lied to us.

A: Let me go find my wife. My wife, who is this?

T: That's Jim from next door!

A: Let me go grab my spear.

T: Yeah, you do that. I'm just here for eggs.

Love is an amazing thing. I love seeing other people in love, and I love being in love. Love is a very big feeling to feel towards someone. Love makes you crazy. There are so many feeling that come along with love - jealousy, sadness, happiness, and so much more. Being in love isn't always so great though. For example if you're in a relationship and get cheated on or broken up with, it hurts your heart. It's maybe one of the worst feelings to know that the person you love loves someone else or doesn't love you anymore. You think about that person you love 24/8. Love is defining. There are different types of love. Like the love you have for a boyfriend or girlfriend is different from the love you have for family. Love can make life better. If you're in love, it's so perfect. Being with the person you love can feel so amazing. It could make everything else in the world disappear. Love makes the world easy.



One day I asked my teacher some advice for help on a project about dogs. He said to write about their traits and characteristics and how easy they are to train. I took that advice and trained my own dog.

Osiris drops from the sky into an unknown world in search of her brother Carson who was dragged down into the underworld. Osiris wakes up to see a wasteland of dust and debris. Her head is pounding from the drop, but she doesn't lose sight of why she's there. She rushes to her feet and cries out for her brother, "Carson, where are you?" Says Osiris. She doesn't know where she is, but she does see a trail of blood on the ground. Desperate to find her brother, she follows it. She feels as if she's been walking for hours. She's parched, head still pounding. She has no hope that she's anywhere near her brother. Until she sees this medieval castle. Just out in the open. She hadn't seen it before until now. She has hope again. She runs to the building. Swinging the doors open, seeing the trail of blood getting heavier and heavier. Then she sees it, a pool of blood leading down into the cellar. In a deep panic, something horrible might have happened to Carson. She tries opening the cellar doors, but they won't budge. She looks around to see if there is any key or anything to open it. Surprisingly, there was a key sitting right on the table next to the cellar. Without thinking anything about it, she immediately grabs the key and tries it on the door. It works on the first try. Shaking in fear, she opens the door. A gust of cold air hits her as she is stepping down the cellar stairs. She doesn't see a thing. What felt like a long time heading, she finally hits the bottom. She almost slips in some slippery liquid. She tries to find some type of light. Something so that she can see in this pitch black room.

She's starting to give up again. Until she sees a light. "What is that?" says Osiris. She starts walking towards it. It's as if it is pulling her in. She starts hearing the cries of Carson. She starts picking up her pace. Towards the light, she knows her brother is there. "Carson, Carson, is that you? I'm coming." yells Osiris. She reaches the end of the hall where she heard Carson. "A door?" says Osiris. She swings it open hearing Carson's yells and cries engraving into her head. She stood in complete shock . . . It wasn't her brother who is in front of her, but a creature who is impersonating her brother. She is screaming in the sight of blood and what she has seen, but never was heard.

# +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.



Not too long ago Maybe 4 years ago everyone's out side  
crop tops, wife Beaters low shorts maybe even swimming  
trunks on speaking of swimming public pools used to  
be so packed You'll Be lucky to even get in the Pool can't  
get in? It's fine If youre Bold enough you can go to the  
quarry's jump of a 70 foot cliff Into a 300 foot deep old  
mining area remember Hearing me and my brothers  
and my friends mouth about How dangerous It was. It  
was a lot of dangerous things we did which Brings me to  
parties. Parties can be fun right? Well Yea, dangerous? ofc  
maybe wanting to get out do something different parents  
nagging still complaining that some parties not worth  
going to might just Be your night let alone any one elses.  
Hanging around wrong crowds might change your life or  
my brothers . . . Why didn't we listen? now It feels like my  
brother and every one else went missing . . .

## WAY WAY BACK

---

ANONYMOUS

Back in the day, like 2021, I remember I was a kid on the game all day nonstop until one day mom told me to get up and go do some. That's when I realized I had to grow up. Then my sixth grade year, I met my old friend. We came close more. Then we was a group in a heartbeat. Me, my brother, my kuz, and my blood. Beach Ave was the block we ran and that Hoe frr, then one day some s\*\*\* had happened. How I got jail time over my head, got locked up came out everything changed. N\*\*\*\*s not even my man's no more and that hurt me. I was with y'all n\*\*\*\*s every day. Then ever since my life's been going downhill. The end.



JJ' UNTITLED



I realized I was becoming an adult when I was 13 and when my mistake happend I really didn't know what to think at the time I was just like this is it but it isn't I know that how im finna slide fasho imma be on a box for some time fasho but it's cool at lease imma go home.

New Year's Day I broke into a house  
with my friends, wasn't really  
thinking. I could've been  
in jail for murder, but I'm not.  
Sometimes I need to think  
smarter. If I had a time  
machine, I would've never  
broke into that house. I could've  
never put a bullet in  
that gun. I just wasn't thinking,  
but for now on I gotta think  
about my  
actions. I could've killed  
someone. I just really wasn't  
thinking. I have to learn  
from my mistakes. Once I leave  
from being detained, I'm gonna do  
better. Sitting in a cell, starting  
to lose it, missing my loved ones.  
Court got pushed back to May.  
Gonna be five months, hoping to  
get out of here and get back to getting  
to da money.

## TIME FLIES

---

IY

I miss the times when I used to go to my house after school with a big group of my friends, then go uptown and cause a little bit of trouble, not too much though. My house used to be our little chill spot. We were always there planning on what our next move will be. We ran from the cops a few times. That was kind of fun. Every year on the last day of school we would walk uptown from school with a lot of people. It's the most people we have downtown on the last day of school. But usually we don't get into any trouble. We just have fun. I hope I can do this again this year.

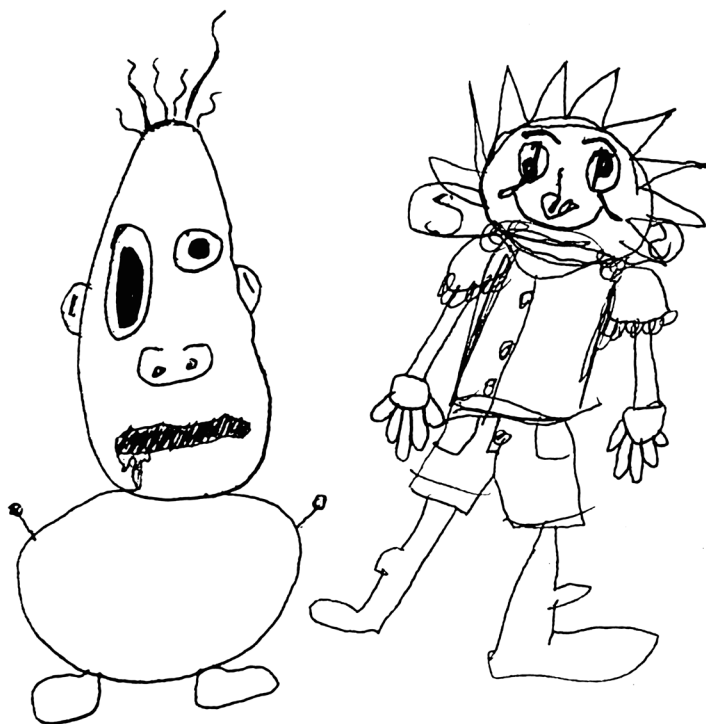
## OUTSIDE IN THE SUMMER

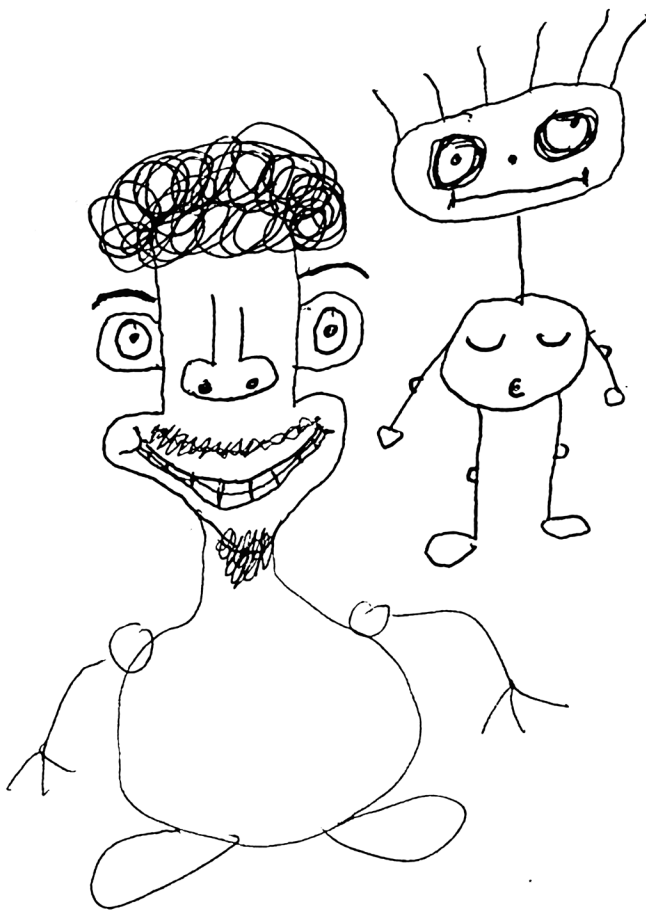
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JR

I remember when I was outside last summer. I was playing basketball, with some grown man, and I was flipping in the air, and this summer I'ma be outside with my friends playing basketball and playing football. I'ma be a Junior this year. I'm prollly going to miss it. I hope I don't. I miss it. I wanna see my brothers this year. I haven't seen my brothers in a long time. I hope they let me out here this summer. And, I'll go to East Pool this summer.

I remember how much I used to hang out with friends in the summer. I cant wait to be around the people I love, for this summer. We gon have a lot of fun messin around in stores, going to parties, sports and other s\*\*\*. I could hear us laughing, smell the food, see us smiling, tast the food, touch my girl body.





It's the summer of 2019, we're out of school sitting in the projects, laughing, playing and maybe smoking.

Me and my older cousins were outside everyday. They were always smoking. I was too young, but they still let me do it. We were always caught up in bs, throwing eggs at moving cars and running around Walmart, eating food we didn't pay for.

It was fun for the most part, but we're all older now, going to work and stuff.

The moment I was becoming an adult  
was when I got locked up. It definitely  
made me realize what being mature meant.  
Being around an older audience, they  
made me feel like I was maturing  
and also growing up as a person.  
Not in a bad way, but in a good way.  
I always thought that being around  
older kids was bad, but it taught  
me something and that was to  
be yourself and not tolerate any bs  
AT ALL, LOL. That's all.

As I sat on the bathroom floor sobbing, I realized that it was pointless. No matter what, I would still be that lonely, hopeless, big girl. I knew they were right. I wipe my face and stand up to look in the mirror. My face beat red and lined with tears. Tears that I couldn't control, but somehow everyone else could. I turn on the water and begin splashing water on my face when I hear a knock at the door. "Heaven, are you okay? You've been in there for a while." I clear my throat and begin to say, "Yes, mom. I-I'm okay." It's silent for a moment when I hear, "Okay, honey, dinner is almost ready. Be out soon." I hear her walk away, and I leave the bathroom and head upstairs. I lay in bed and close my eyes, hoping to fall asleep. "Beep-beep-beep" I wake up, and it's 6:05 am. I don't remember falling asleep, but I get up and get ready anyway. When I'm alone getting ready, I head off to the bus, but before I leave, my mom says, "Have a good day. Here's your lunch. Make sure you eat." I take a deep breath and head out the door. When the bus comes, I get on and sit on the first seat. I set my bookbag down next to me when all of a sudden a paper ball hits my head. "Score," S says dabbing up J. J then yells, "Nice short on the boulder, but it's hard to miss that." Everyone starts laughing while I look down.



I've seen more than a girl at 16 growing up should've. I've seen violence. I've seen death. I've seen drugs. I wasn't proud, but as it all comes together, it made me who I was today. Good or bad, nevertheless it's who I am. Growing up the eyes of a child was exposed to things only adults should see or do.

Being aware of people around me was easy coming. I knew when someone wasn't right. I knew when they weren't real to me, but I never listened. I started hanging around the wrong people. They got into my head, ground out the good in me. They had me trapped . . . A repeat of bad, a neverending cycle. Everything they did I had to do, or it was a "why not," or a "come on it would be fun." It was never fun. It tore me apart limb by limb. My head spinning. I got into trouble with the system. Who was there for me? Not the one who got me here.

My first time getting locked up  
doing stuff like I'm grown  
and then having to be far away from home  
fighting for my freedom  
it should never have had to have been that way  
acted like I was tough  
then get myself in some serious stuff  
had to realize I ain't a kid no more  
leaving those squishy feelings at the door  
had to plead  
take accountability  
do what was right or be locked up for life  
it's been three years since I've first got locked up  
but I'm done putting myself in that stupid stuff  
I want to be grown, "better start acting like it," momma  
always said  
turns out I just wanna stay in bed  
be a kid while I'm still young  
and always remembers to have fun.

## FAMILY IS EVERYTHING

---

MB

The grass is green, playing games outside like football, basketball, and baseball, playing with friends. Being at home playing the game, eating ice cream from the ice cream place or doing stuff you think that is fun.

I got pretty upset when my grandpa passed away while I was locked up and put away for this long. I missed the funeral, and I couldn't say Bye.

I feel I left him, and he died thinking I was a failure or something like that, but that's how I feel about the summer days.

## I WISH I COULD . . . . .

---

JW<sup>3</sup>

I wish I could go back to playing GTA  
on my old PS4 before I started playing IRL

I wish I could go back to making rap  
songs before I started living what I  
write

I wish I could go back to when I didn't  
have to go to Mars to feel okay

I wish I could go back to when my  
brotha died before it was too late

## I USED TO

---

JW<sup>2</sup>

I used to get water bottles and put them in my tires to make it sound like a motorcycle. It was summer around July, and I was 10-13. It sounded great. It sounds like there was an engine inside it. My bike was black. Then I fell off my bike and scraped my knee.

## THE YOUNGER BABY BRO

---

JW<sup>1</sup>

When I was 12 I didn't want to hang around people my age anymore. In the summertime, I was hanging with the older kids trying to fit in, going to parties and hanging with the wrong crowd. I wish I could go back to the days I was 12. I remember my first time driving a car by myself. It was fun and also scary. I remember they days I was acting a fool when the females was around.

## LIFE

---

JN

I realized I was becoming an adult when  
I had to start taking care of myself and  
others. When I started taking care my  
brother and sister because my mom couldn't.

## THE LIFE OF C

---

CW

Being with my friends makes me have good thoughts  
and makes me feel better than what I be feeling.  
And the community to me and my friends  
and hood meals and stay out the way of others  
and help the community out.

## UNTITLED

---

JD<sup>1</sup>

#long live da guys  
#Free da guys  
#Moe world

## THE EXPECTATIONS

---

AL

I realized I was becoming an adult when  
the consequences weren't a slap on the wrist,  
when the anxiety of exams started to make my stomach twist,  
when the crushing weight of expectations made cuts  
on my wrist; on my arm.  
All the therapy and coping skills, but the expectations still  
racking up kills.  
"I don't wanna self harm,"  
but with everything they say  
alienating me for being gay  
It's all just too much, and I don't wanna stay.  
Not here nor there, not anywhere

## 10 BLOCK SHI

LS

When I first hit 250 push ups and started growing hair when  
I started getting in trouble with the cops.

## ME

JJ <sup>2</sup>

When I was 10 I was playin ball wit  
my boyz n family.



## HOW A BECAME A GROWN MAN

---

AB<sup>1</sup>

When my mother had first got cancer and I had to take care of her. When my dad had to work extra hard to pay the bills bc my mother couldn't work, seeing my mother on her death bed I had to give her shot's so I had to shoot my shot at being grown and throw away my lil kid's stuff.

## BECOMING AN ADULT

---

KM

When I realized I was becoming an adult is when I took matters into my own hands and when I realized I had a kid and got a job on my own, started making my own money, buyin my own stuff. I love my grandma.

## SUMMER DAYS

ZA

My summer days in the community with my friends are hanging out, going to parks, getting food together, going to water parks, and swimming and camping and just all having a good time together.

## INNER SPEECH

MG

I remember when I was young, when I was  
dumb and dull to the nails that dug and  
anchored me to the memories. I'd tried to  
hide under my rug, the feelings I'd dug under  
my tongue that taste of eerie. I never outdug,  
I remember it all now from the last undug  
the chilling of each printed in my head like  
a stuck TV burned deep within my brain  
feelings I'd never quite changed and wish  
to unmaintain the movies of memories  
that click in my dome unlike chrome or a  
stick and stone, none quite like a tone,  
a break, a twist, nor splash of glow if I could  
I'd let it all go I'd let it flow through an empty  
back road.

The moment I realized I was becoming an adult was when my mom told me she was getting me a car for my 16th birthday, and she told me I was gonna have to put money on my car. I was so heartbroken. Not only that but realizing in high school that my grades really matter now and are getting me into college. Also I learned to take accountability as I got older, and I don't know if that has anything to do with becoming an adult . . . but yea.

Me and Z had a great summer we went camping, got hotels  
man . . . we had a time last NIGHT  
Hearing the Ocean, mosquitos and crickets watching the  
lightning bugs, catching them I LOVE YOU Z!!  
ex nonchalant dreadhead

## UNTITLED

JM<sup>3</sup>

When I wake up I do 100 push ups  
then I feel up  
then I go to the kitchen and I cook up  
then I hop on fortnite and I warm up  
then I 1v1 my friend and I box him up  
then I get on da phone and I rizz up  
and when I get out of jail im finna be up  
and have my feet up  
no cap

## WHEN I WAS A KID

JM<sup>2</sup>

When I was a kid, I wanted to be older, but now that I'm  
older, I want to be little again. I wish I could go back in time  
and be little.

## ME BEFORE I WAS BETTER

---

CW

In the mornings I start my day by brushing my teeth,  
praying, and getting ready for school and the day, and before  
the day ends, I work out on my body.

## LUV GMA

---

JM<sup>3</sup>

I love my grandma

# + HAIKU

## 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.



## FAMILY

---

JD<sup>1</sup>

I Love my mother

I Love my family

I Love my sister

I Love my grandma

I like making lot's of money

I can't wait to leave

## SORRY CHICKEN

---

AP

Chicken so greasy

It tastes so good in my mouth

sorry young chicken.



## SINCERELY ME

---

AP

I'm big, but I'm young.  
Say anything you want, please do.  
Please don't hold your tongue.

## BEING YOUNG AND HAVING FUN

---

JJ<sup>1</sup>

Going to the mall  
Watching tv until ten  
Hooping in the jets

## UNTITLED

---

CS

Early in the day  
thinking ways  
I can get pape

## UNTITLED

---

JC

Fear is god He is one  
god's plan is to come back to this world  
Home is a very good place to be.  
Don't never come back to the DH.

## UNTITLED

---

ED

The food here is bad  
I hate the detention home  
I can't wait to leave.

I'm the best in here.  
Basketball is beautiful.  
321 swish game.

## UNTITLED

---

JR

I miss being home, with my grandpa and going to my room,  
school, and I miss my friends, and I miss talking to my  
brothers and sisters,  
I can't wait to go home, so I can sleep on my bed and watch  
TV and play my game  
I wanna miss my football season this year  
free me home soon RBNC #freedguys, can't wait to get on  
some lil hola

## UNTITLED

IY

The creek flows past the rocks.  
The water splashes down into the river flow.  
The creek does not smell good.

## UNTITLED

ANONYMOUS

The DH is a place where I have been different since I have been here. My mindset is better because I'm getting my life together. I'm not happy I'm here, but I'm getting better with my anger and my problem. I'm going to change my life around and do better.

## UNTITLED

---

IC

you were not perfect but my love will  
never end so i grow older im seeing you  
in myself . . . longlivemyfather

Drawing like a flow  
calming like a summer breeze  
pen to my paper

Drawing day and night  
a passion that shouldn't leave  
but gone way too soon

Stopped by the dumbness  
blinded by something that's not  
mixed or the breeze with daze

Missed the drawing me  
build me back up brick by brick  
starting to be me

Sparks have come alive  
old days coming back to me  
beauty in the work

## MY LITTLE DREAM

---

JB<sup>1</sup>

Walking through the woods  
smelling the crisp cold air breeze  
not one single care

All alone myself  
wondering, heaven or hell?  
Should I cry for help?

Pulled down on the ground  
trying not to make a sound  
got hurt can't get up

Can't see, feel dizzy  
head is spinning like crazy  
then remember sleep

Wake up on the ground  
can't make out the right sounds  
just a dream set free

The loudness like a  
school lunchroom Entering a  
waterpark filled up

you cant swim so you  
stand in the shallow end where  
the waves in the pool

Z and I had fun  
at Kalahari with fam  
to more memories



I fell in love with him at the age of 14. His eyes sparkled with love. His warmth softened my heart. His hugs made me more in love with him. His touch, his smell, his comfort, but he was my best friend. I couldn't feel this way about my best friend, a guy at that, but I love him. I want to be with him. I never felt this way about anyone before. But his love for me was different. He cared about me. He loved me as his own. Held me like I was his, but I wasn't. I wasn't his, but I wanted to be his, all his, just his. Madly in love with a guy who probably didn't even love me back, but he was there. Although we're not as close, I miss that connection. I miss all of him, his touch, his love, his warmth. EVERYTHING about him.

Until we meet again,  
My love always.

# + COMEDY WRITING

## S U M M A R Y

This creative writing workshop introduces everyone to comedy writing thanks to the instruction and assistance from TJ Maclin.

## P R O M P T

[You know what's **ATTITUDE** about...] + [**TOPIC**]? + [Your answer].

*Example: You know what's weird about bullies? They hate you, but they give you so much attention. I don't interact with people that I hate. So which is it?*

**Question (Attitude + Topic)**  
**Answer (Premise)**

Write at least 2 jokes for a 1-minute set by...

- 1.** Choose a question and answer like the format above.
- 2.** Add an act-out or action to the joke, extending the laughs.



## LORAIN HIGH FIGHT

---

JR

One thing I remember when It was a Big fight in lorain high  
It was like They was Trowing food and stuff, It was like a lot  
of Peopil was fighting

## HATCHING CHICKENS AT HOME

---

ET

Do you know what's crazy about having siblings? My sister  
thought she could hatch chickens at home because she saw  
people hatching them on Youtube by throwing raw eggs.  
My sister threw a dozen eggs all over the house in hopes of  
hatching chicks.

## UNTITLED

ANONYMOUS

You know what's stupid about school in jail? We learn about the same stuff every day. I was here last spring, came back, and we still learning about Harriet Tubman.

## STAY AWAY FROM AMHERST

ANONYMOUS

One time at a park, it was me and Z and a few other friends, and there was this guy with a whip, and he was trying to whip us, and my friend Z takes the whip and started chasing us around trying to whip us.

Growing up in a ghetto family is terrifying. When you get in trouble, they'll find anything in the world to whoop you with. One day at a family gathering, I was acting up. My granny kept telling me time after time to stop moving around so much, so I end up doing a backflip and knocking the grill over. Tell me why my grandma took her prosthetic leg and threw it at me. And at that point, she was standing on one leg, and grandma was 49. She was strong for 49, and that's why I love her because she's strong, but I'm terrified of her.

## UNTITLED

---

CS

You know what's stupid about jail? We sit in the classroom all day. We do something wrong. They try to lock us up. How can you lock us up? We already locked up.

## UNTITLED

---

AP

You know what's weird about schools? A teacher will tell you "If you want to fail, by all means fail," then say, "you're wanted in the office." You go to the office. Your heart's ready to jump out. Principal "J" is a detective and the teacher told on you cause she didn't feel like doing her job. Now I'd be wrong if I told on you Miss "A". . .

## UNTITLED

ANONYMOUS

---

You know what's stupid about jail? They treat you like you're a dog. You gotta sit down when they tell you to sit down. If you don't do as they say, you get put in a cage.

## THOSE IN BLUE

ANONYMOUS

---

You know what's funny about police officers?  
They think they own the world with that badge on, but  
without it they're just another citizen.



His  
Eyes, they glistened with love.  
They sparkled with passion. I love being  
in love. His lips, so soft, with every  
passionate kiss, every passionate touch  
his love warmed my  
heart with every touch. It was all  
mine. Every kiss was all mine.  
His touch on my skin was feeling like I  
was floating, his soft words telling me “It’ll  
be okay” While kisses me when I was  
crying. I loved him. He was all mine.  
His love was all mine. His kisses were all  
mine and so were his words.  
So then I say, “I do.”

**BALLY**

---

BK

Wanna know something about dating a bad b\*\*\*\*?  
They not gone hold you down in Jail . . .  
I hate my ex

**UNTITLED**

---

YG

You know what's hard about dating a boy?  
It's like a baby. You feed it and feed it, then they throw it all up.

A doctor had to rush through work one day. Rushing to get to his patient before his last breath. He finally hit the door, his foot colliding with the ground. The last words of the old man being, "I curse you to never be there." Then his last breath was taken away. Doctor Zoe stood there staring at the lifeless shell of Juan Shack who had now cursed him. He had now began to walk to his car. He began to drive home. He came home to see his kid, but his son wasn't there, so he went to go see his wife, but she wasn't there either. No one was there. No one was ever going to be there. Ever again. They were all gone. He tried searching, but they were all gone. Every. Single. One. Of. Them. That was the last and final curse.

# +SIX-WORD MEMOIRS

(Fall 2025)

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## 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...



## UNTITLED

ANONYMOUS

---

I am an amazing kid.  
I will be a clothing designer when I grow up.  
Love will get you hurt. Trust will get you killed. Watch who  
you call your homie.  
Be a kid for the longest you can. Always trust God. Mother is  
your first love.  
Hard times don't last. Real people do. Your future is what  
you make it. Life gets hard. You go harder.

## REALISTIC THINKING

AL

---

I am different.  
Life keeps moving, even if you stand still.  
Love: Isn't always what it ought to be.  
  
I will be better than them.

## ALL ABOUT ME

---

AB<sup>1</sup>

I am mad that I'm here, but I have to suck it up.  
Life sucks right now, but when I get out, I'ma make it better.  
Love is scary and painful.  
Food in jail is garbage.  
Advice is strong, and I should have listened when I had  
the chance.  
Question myself a lot 100%.  
I'll be alright.

## THOUGHTS

---

KM

I am a kid's father on god  
I'm lovin my life right now  
I love my family the most  
my favorite food is ribs and mac n' chesse  
my best advice is to stay out of the system  
one question is how do you turn your life around  
I will be in the NFL when I'm older

## CHALLENGES

---

JN

I'm never getting out of jail. Life has challenges. Never give up.

## DON'T GO TO JUVIE KIDS. IT'S NOT COOL.

---

JD <sup>2</sup>

I am feeling good on my baby.  
Every day I drink juice in the morning.  
One day I will be old.  
Don't go to jail if you don't want to be cold.  
I will play football for the Browns.



## UNTITLED

---

JRR

I am J. I am lightskin.  
I am 12. I am annoying.  
I love mom. My favorite food is pizza.

## UNTITLED

---

JG

I am good being here now.  
Life is a simulation of trials.  
Love defines the heart in you.  
Jail food, not good, not eatin'.

## MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE

---

JM<sup>1</sup>

Why is love hard to find?  
Why make my life a lie?  
Music is me. I am Music.  
The world crashed. Where were you?  
Only thing that love me . . . Music.

## UNTITLED

---

MB

I'm already in this Book y'all.  
Life is not this or in this place I am right now. Life is so much more. It can be discovering the world, doing things with your family and friends, but it's not being incarcerated. As much as I gang talk and say this and that, I just wanna go home!

Out of all the time I've been here, but I know I'm loved by my mom, my peers, and most of all my family.

hard times don't last forever.  
Sitting for some seasons!

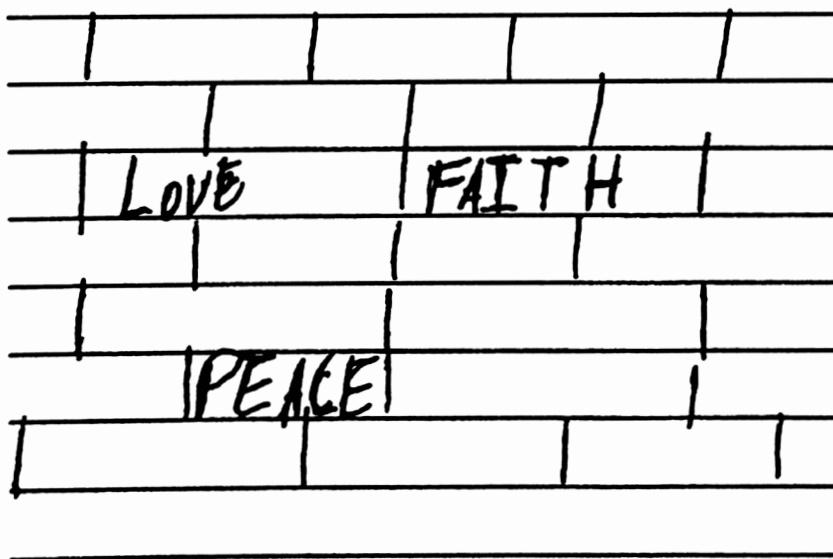
STOP THIS WHILE YOU  
STILL CAN

TM

I am locked up for two years. 18 more months  
to go. Hopefully I will make it.

Wanna give advice to kids locked up. Stop  
playing with guns and robbing people, thinking you're  
cool when you're not. Do y'all really want  
to die at a young age over stupid stuff? How  
would your mama feel? Stop thinking for just  
yourself. Think about what you're putting  
others through. Do you really wanna be  
locked up like this or dead before you're 18?

Stop this. Stop all the killing and robbing . . .



JD<sup>1</sup> LIFE



## THE LIFE OF C

---

CW

I am full of love - life.  
I want to live a long time.  
I love my family and friends.  
I pray for others and people who love and support me.  
I want to learn new languages.

## I WANNA

---

JW <sup>2</sup>

I wanna make a million dollars.  
I love chicken wings on god.  
I want to go to New York.  
I will learn to do better.  
I want to learn to speak Spanish.  
I want to go do karate.

FREE DA Money made millionaires

Life 1. I am very self aware in life.

2. Life can be hard, but it's always the sunshine and roses that pick me up. 3. Life is like a roller coaster that goes around and round. 4. I make mistakes, but I always pick the sunflowers that smell great. 5. Keep going and it will get better.

When I lost you, my body collapsed.  
Why you leave me? I couldn't take  
that.  
I will forever get get back.  
Keep your name alive.  
Sit back and watch me shine.  
You sent chills through my spine.  
I love your family like they're mine.  
You did to for our brother. I  
love you like no other.  
I know you don't want me sad. I'm mad. Sometimes  
I watch your body fly like birds in the sky.  
I love you for life.

I am/I'm . . .

1. I am strong all the time.
2. I'm going to keep going, keep remind.
3. I'm loving to family and others.
4. I am going to cherish life.
5. Be mindful to yourself and others.



Nothing lasts forever except death. Dear D, I still wait for you every day. You're always on my mind, and I would do anything for you back. I know I don't talk to you anymore, but I still dream of you. I hope we find our way back, and I know we will, and I'm willing to wait a lifetime. No matter how many people I meet, you're always my favorite. No one will ever replace you habibi. I love you.

Don't give up on that person. You never know how close you are until you're there.

## DON'T EVER GIVE UP

ZA

life feels trapped because Im in DH.  
Be kind to others.  
have respect to get respect.  
no matter how hard life gets don't ever give up.  
everyone makes mistakes.  
you can do anything in life as long as you put your mind to it.  
don't put others down.  
love may hurt but don't give up.

## 6 WORDS

JB <sup>2</sup>

I am angry, irritable but content.  
I love life when I'm free.  
Love is precious when it's right.  
Don't get with the wrong crowd.  
I'll be living my life free.

## MY FEELINGS

AE

I am sad.  
Life just keeps on making me sad about everything.  
Love, I'm so in love with him. He makes me the happiest.  
Food, food I look at it and it makes me sick. I don't know why.  
Advice, keep going and don't give up.  
Questions, "What do you want from me???"  
I'll be alright in the end.

## DONT BE SCARED OF IT. BE AWARE OF IT

BK

Im confused but girl . . . God knows  
life is so spontaneous but . . . God . . .  
Love you Z I wanna grow  
Give yourself grace to grow . . . YAMEAN?!  
When will I meet my niece?  
I'll be the best I can

MKAY? Mokay

# +AFFIRMATIONS

## 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]."



## M THROUGH THE GLASS

---

MG

If I were to look at myself in the mirror, I'd see someone who never stops caring about others and helps them in and through situations. I'd see someone who's scared of what others think but doesn't show it. I'd see someone who mentors but is scared to be mentored himself, not wanting to let someone in and mirror himself.

## M THROUGH THE GLASS PART TWO

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MG

If I were to look at myself through a looking glass, I'd see a soldier who fights everyone's war but is afraid to face his own wars and his own self. I'd see a king who'd die for his people and beliefs, who stands on his morals. I'd see a leader who leads all but is too worried to lead his own self through life. I'd see a bird scared to use his wings due to not wanting to see more tragedy. I'd see a man hiding behind a rainbow reluctant to move through the world spreading joy and that gives joy to himself.

## UNTITLED

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JM<sup>1</sup>

Say I'm a fake when I'm the realest they ever met.

## UNTITLED

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JB<sup>5</sup>

Where I am isn't who I am because this ain't me cause I  
don't like being here. I am excited because I leave Thursday,  
and I am trying to stay out of, and I am the realest person in  
my group.

## WHAT I THINK OF MYSELF

---

JW<sup>1</sup>

I am fast.  
I am cute.  
I am short.  
I am a money getter.  
I am funny.  
I am mean.  
I am creative.  
I am loveable.  
I am a ladie's guy.  
I am musical.



I love football because I grew up  
playing it in lorain OHIO . .

I think im handsom because a lot of  
people say I am.

I like money because it help a lot  
of people get around a lot.

I think im confident because I don't  
know.

## WHERE I NEED TO BE

---

AB<sup>1</sup>

My tattoo, my hair when it's done, I'm nice, I'm fun, I got a lot of tricks.

In jail the food is bunzzz. Where I want to be in the future is in my Hellcat with a beautiful woman. Where I am right now is not the place I want to be. I don't need to be here. I want to be rich with a son and daughter and a beautiful woman in a demon Charger. Where I am right now the food is garbage. Where I need to be is at Wing Stop.

## WHO I AM

---

KM

Where I am isn't who I am  
I am athletic  
I am capable of getting out

## THE WAY THINGS ARE

---

JN

Where I am isn't who I am. Just because I make bad choices doesn't mean I am a bad person. I do what I can to survive. I make mistakes along the way. That's just the way things are. I am a strong man who fights for who I love and for what I believe.

## IN THE LIFE OF C

---

CW

I am capable of doing better than what I was doing before I put myself in the predicament, and I feel like after I'm done with all this BS, I will do better than what I was now and then, and I will be successful.

## LOVE YOU GRANDMA <3

---

BK

Where I am is not who I am Im actually cool  
I am creative, I am unique  
I am funny, I am Athletic  
I am smart, I am good at hair  
I am disciplined, I am a survivalist

I am my daddys daughter

## AFFIRMATIONS

---

ZA

I am nice.  
I am caring.  
I am confident.  
I am smart.  
I am loving.  
I am helpful.  
I am worthy.  
I am loved.  
I am beautiful.  
I am supportive.  
I am forgiving.

## SELF LOVE/GOOD THINGS TO TELL YOURSELF

---

ST

1. You are beautiful.
2. You are smart.
3. You can be more friendly.
4. You can care more for others' feelings.
5. You can be more aware of things.
6. You can be more helpful.
7. You are a black queen.
8. You are loved.
9. You have more to life than the bad things.
10. Don't be afraid to be yourself.

You are a friendly person.

You are careful of others' feelings.

You are aware of things.

You are a helpful person.

## THE GIRL IN THE CELL

---

AG

Where I am isn't who I am in time, I am an outgoing person. I am a good friend. I am a good listener. I am a beautiful girl on the outside, but inside I have scars I deal with. I am a person who gives light to people when I have darkness within myself. I am someone who will give you my last \$20 if you ever need it. I am someone who will give you my coat if we were in the cold. I am someone who will give you my last meal even if I'm hungry. I am someone who would stay up all night if you need to talk. I am a good person at heart. I am capable of being a better version of myself than what I am now.

The 10 things I love about myself are one, I am a kind person. Two, I love making people laugh and smile and seeing them happy. Three, I love how I am not quick to give up. Four, my love and faith for the Lord is something I will never give up or trade for anything else because I know nothing else is better than the love that God can give. Five, the way I love and care for people. Six, I love the way I love teaching preteens and younger kids about how to get through certain situations. Seven, I love the way that I put so much effort into changing my old ways into better, new ways. Eight, I love the way that I encourage people to do their best. Nine, I love the way that I encourage people that are suicidal or depressed to keep living. Ten, I love that I love writing and listening to people vent and helping them.



**ME**

---

JB<sup>2</sup>

I AM PRETTY  
I AM LOVing  
I AM forgiving  
I AM supportive

# +INSPIRATION

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## 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.

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## 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.



## LOVES MOVEMENT

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JM<sup>1</sup>

What moves me? It must be  
the music coursing through  
my veins, the education of  
life flowing through my brain.

## UNTITLED

---

JB<sup>4</sup>

The thing that gets me going is my freinds and a  
road trip, and certant frogrents, plus the road trip.

## WHAT I LOOK UP TO

---

AB<sup>1</sup>

My father, my mother, my unc in law, I promised them I'd never come back to jail. My father, I don't want to be like him. My mother, I want to be like her. My unc in law, we have great talks. I want to be as wise as him. 100%

## UNTITLED

---

IW

What moves me? It must be my family  
It must be supporting them  
It must be doing it any way I can  
It must be putting my mom in a  
big house  
It must be

## VENTING

DD

I just miss my wife. She's my everything. She's my best friend, my world, the reason I breathe. Being here makes her think otherwise about us, and I don't know anymore. I miss her so much. I'm so thankful for all the support she gives me, makes me feel like the richest man in the world. No money or anything could replace how she makes me feel. The constant comfort of knowing I have a home that's not home and that's anywhere I go with her. She made me a better person, made me want to help others and even help myself. She woke me up, and I'm beyond happy to be awake.

## STUFF THAT INSPIRES ME

KM

I wanna inspire my kid and shes inspiring me to be a better person.

## COLORS AND LITTLE ONES

---

AL

It must be the bright orange that marks the end of a day.  
It must be that same orange that says a new one is here.  
It must be the beauty in the pain that makes that cloudy sky clear.  
It must be the sweetness of their voices in my ear.  
It must be the joy on their faces on Christmas day.  
It must be my siblings: why I choose to stay.

## MONEY MOVES \$

---

LS

What moves me going outside making  
money then playing with my sisters going  
to work going to the gym working out  
trying to get out this place doing  
good for ma mom making her happy  
trying to move her out the hood  
stop selling drugs.

I want to inspire my little sister because I want her to know that life is not going to always be how you want it. But don't give up on it because it's a lot of things in the world that's not going to be her way, but that doesn't mean you can't change it or make it better. So that's why I want to inspire my little sister. And also I don't want her to end up like me and do things that I've done because it's not worth it. And I want her to stay true to herself. And I'm going to do that by telling her good things that will make her be the best she can be, also tell her to never give up! And also show her my change so if she sees me being the best person I can it can inspire her to be the best her she can be. And also teach her that she doesn't have to do anything alone. I'm always going to be there to support her. And just cause it didn't happen the first time doesn't mean it's never going to happen.



## LOVE YOUR MOM!

---

JB <sup>2</sup>

Me and my mom have gone thru sm bs. We fight, argue, and dissaggre so much. I have so much anger towards her but ive learned to love her no matter what. She's my mom and my only mom. She will always be there for me. Being without her for so long makes me feel so lost. You will never find anyone who loves you like your mom does. A moms love for her kid is very strong. I just miss her and I want to see her. even tho she not my fav person shes still my mom. Jus bc some bs happens doesn't make my feelings change. I love my mom I always will. But its gonna take some time to forgive her and fr come home and live wit her again. But it will happen I will see her again and I will love her. and one day things will go back to th norm.

22

What moves me is my future wife who just proposed to me via letter and or indirect message. She is my inspiration to keep going and live my life. She keeps me going strong to have something to look forward to when I eventually get out. Hopefully it doesn't take too long. I look forward to holding and kissing and loving on her. She is my everything and anything.

## BALLAD OF A DEAD SOLDIER

---

MG

If I were a soldier, I'd be classified as dead  
not because I'm cold or deceased, but because  
I'm an open book. I've killed off sensory of afraid  
or unwillingness, of feeling, seeing, or speaking  
the past and present. I face pain and grief head  
on, no helmet or hope of help, nor do I  
ask or wish for it or sympathy. I just simply  
hope to accomplish my dreams of helping everyone  
of those I meet out of their steep holes they're  
in or have found themselves in through my own  
experiences and knowledge of this world. I've  
seen its cruelest nastiest parts since I was a little  
kid. I'm 17 now, sadly turned it in the DH, yet  
I keep my head high and hope for the future.  
I realize even though I didn't do the crime,  
I will do the time, not for this but the mistakes  
I've made in life, and even though I'm scared,  
I'ma march this valley of death and continue  
to prosper no matter the time or battle.

I'll admit I'm harsh on myself, but I feel as if  
that's because I hold myself to a high standard  
of self and containment that's built from different  
times far before mine. Everyone calls me old school.

## M - I - A

JW <sup>3</sup>

The girl left a hole in my heart I just  
hope she don't repeat it and she played  
her role from the start but she never  
gave me reasons drop like 3-4 lines Went  
to mars just to battles my demons he got  
hit left blood onna walls and left blood  
onna cement

## SMALL SMALL WORLD

JD <sup>1</sup>

let your Faith be bigger than your fear.  
Family is all you got don't let them go.

## MY THOUGHTS

---

ANONYMOUS

When I'm in my room a lot, I think about what the Judge is going to say at court. Sometimes I get worried.

## WHAT MOVES ME? IT MUST BE GOD

---

AG

What moves me? It must be God.  
It must be my friends.  
It must be my mind.  
It must be my boyfriend in another lifetime.  
It must be my son.  
It must be my pain.  
It must be my joy when the rain goes away . . .

What moves me? It must be God.  
It must be his strength when I am weak.  
It must be his power in me, it must be . . .  
God moves me to be ME. He never lets me  
down. He tells me I'm his angel even when I'm lonely  
and he gave me someone who will always love  
me. He brought me a light in my darkness. He  
brought me a blessing. I ask him was this  
all for me or was it a lesson? I spent  
night after night asking him things. One night he  
came in my dreams and said to me, "You are  
my daughter. You are the light. If you ever feel  
down, I will make things right. I'm giving you an  
angel. It's a blessing in my eyes." Three months later he  
brought my son in my life. What moves me? My son.

nah....

## WRITERS IN RESIDENCE IS...

---

...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,

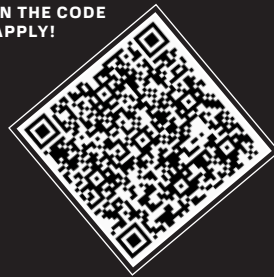
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the stories that appear in this chapbook from our residents are powerful, and as they continue to grow and head back home, those stories don't end. We are always looking for adult volunteers who are passionate about mentoring one of our youth to thrive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

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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.

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

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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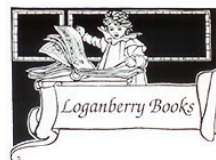
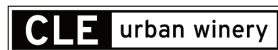
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**Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards\***

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