

Writers in Residence



SPRING 2021

In the US, over 48,000 youth are confined in
juvenile or criminal justice facilities.
In Ohio, about 2,200 youth are held in juvenile
or criminal justice facilities.

They have been separated and isolated
from family, friends, and members of the
community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of them feel forgotten, alone, & scared.
This is for them.

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MISSION AND VISION



Teach

We teach creative writing to youth who are incarcerated.



Empower

We empower our residents' voices.



Assist

We assist in their re-entry into society.

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.

Relationships

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. This means that we continually welcome and accept our residents into our communities because they belong to an environment that promotes 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.

COHORTS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Cohorts

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Capital University | 5 John Carroll University |
| 2 College of Wooster | 6 Marietta College |
| 3 Heidelberg University | 7 Oberlin College |
| 4 Hiram College | 8 University of Dayton |

Community Partners

- Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility
- Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility
- Lorain County Juvenile Detention Home
- Medina County Juvenile Detention Center
- Montgomery County Center for Adolescent Services
- Portage-Geauga Juvenile Detention Center
- Seneca County Youth Center
- Washington County Juvenile Center



OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Year to date:

Average

- 25 residents
- 8 student volunteers
- 97 hours
- \$2,457.70

YTD

- 590 residents
- 139 student volunteers
- 1,681 hours
- \$43,443.44

Spring 2021

Average

- 40.75 residents
- 8 student volunteers
- 98.25 hours
- \$2,498.50

YTD

- 326 residents
- 37 student volunteers
- 393 hours
- \$10,689.60

Fall 2020

Average

- 27 residents
- 9 student volunteers
- 74 hours
- \$1,890.30

YTD

- 109 residents
- 18 student volunteers
- 223 hours
- \$5,670.89

Spring 2020

Average

- 13 residents
- 8 student volunteers
- 105 hours
- \$2,657.44

YTD

- 76 residents
- 56 student volunteers
- 627 hours
- \$15,944.61

Fall 2019

Average

- 20 residents
- 7 student volunteers
- 110 hours
- \$2,784.59

YTD

- 79 residents
- 28 student volunteers
- 438 hours
- \$11,138.34

Half of our cohorts launched this spring, which actually yielded our highest outputs compared to other seasons.

To clarify how we track our outputs, we take attendance at every session because our service population remains to be extremely transient, generating the total number of residents. However, some of the residents participate in our program more than once, so we averaged the total number of residents from every cohort to produce an approximate number that represents how many residents we engage weekly. We replicated the same calculations for our student volunteers too. The Independent Sector values volunteer time at \$27.20/hour; we multiplied this dollar amount by the total number of service hours for every student volunteer.

Read more about our outputs, outcomes, and impact at
www.writersnresidence.org/impact

A letter from the ***Program Director***

Dear reader,

Before you read any further, allow me to educate you about our program model.

We facilitate weekly creative writing workshops with 5-12 undergraduates from a college or university for 10-15 residents at a juvenile facility in Ohio. Each creative writing workshop lasts 12-weeks during the spring, summer, and fall, and each session runs for 60-90 minutes, teaching our residents various writing techniques, texts, and themes from diverse and dynamic authors.

Then, we publish, showcase, and distribute chapbooks like this one filled with our residents' creative writing inside juvenile facilities, on campuses, and throughout the local communities to raise awareness about the juvenile justice system and advocate for juvenile justice reform at the end of every creative writing workshop.

Maya Angelou said: "I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." When I reflect on this quote in light of the COVID-19 pandemic that forced our in-person program to become remote since the fall of last year, I hope she is wrong. I hope that our residents never forget what we discussed, what we demonstrated, and how we made them feel seen, heard, and understood as well as inspired, optimistic, and supported because they matter: what our residents think, say, and do matters not only to us but to everyone. They possess as much value as anyone else regardless of their circumstances.

We remind them of this every workshop and session while we write poetry and prose; build positive peer relationships; and create a safe environment for them to find relief from their stress, anxiety, depression, and anger. This chapbook serves to remind you of this too, so please consider reading our residents' creative writing with an open mind and a heart.

Zachary Thomas

Creative Expressions During COVID-19

Heidelberg University

A letter from the **Cohort**

Dear reader,

We have thoroughly enjoyed hearing our residents speak passionately about the things that they enjoy. They don't always have the opportunity to talk openly about the things that make them happy, so for us to provide them with that experience was amazing and eye-opening. Plus, some of us want to pursue careers in education, law enforcement, and social work, which only motivated us even more to pursue those aspirations that are now informed by our residents' stories.

During each creative writing workshop, we discussed different aspects of life as it relates to the session's text, technique, or theme. Take, for instance, the time we shared special moments of nostalgia, connecting all of us together with the little enjoyments we cherished as a child. Every individual goes through different trials and tribulations, becomes proud of their achievements, and imagines a better future for themselves. For these reasons, we ask that you read our residents' creative writing with an open mind and a willingness to understand their point of view because that is how you discover the meaning of each artifact.

Finally, we want to thank Zachary Thomas, Sarah Lazzari, and the staff at SCYC for allowing us to engage with the residents. We want to thank our residents who participated in our program because their involvement made this spring worthwhile for everyone, especially via Zoom. They filled the remote platform with smiles and laughter, which we are also extremely grateful. As a matter of fact, we titled this chapbook *Creative Expressions During COVID-19* because despite the pandemic, our residents remembered and expressed the good parts of our past through a year of struggle.

The Heidelberg University Cohort

Untitled

Keithlynn

1. I am nice but crazy competitive.
2. All are unique few are original.
3. they never said "I love you."
4. Am I useful or just used.
5. I will be loved more than ever!

Untitled

Anthony

1. I am tired of being in Jail
2. I am Resonable
3. I like Birthday cake
4. I like to get my way
5. I am outgoing
6. I will be the greatest African American male
role model I possibley can.

Untitled

Bryan

1. Remain humble while going hard.
2. loose your fake self, find your true self

Untitled

Justice

Life 1. No matter what, life goes on

Love 2. Pain is temporary, you'll find better.

Food 3. Chipotle chicken tacos are the best

Advice 4. Begin with the end in mind.

Untitled

Keithlynn

I come from a town that does drugs.

I come from a place that has helpful people.

I come from my home town that has good police.

I came from a town where my friends grew up.

I came a town that the high school band

played in parades

I came from a good high school that helps people

too.

I come from a place where we rap for fun

to forget

But I'm going to come from a town I love

and help out.

Untitled

Anthony

I come from Toledo where the streets aint a game and the system is corrupt, but i'm going to get rich or die tryin and I know I will succeed in life from NBA or being a rapper. I now live in a safer town but that don't mean it will be easy, people act like they know everything.

Untitled

Keaton

I come from the streets of Tiffin where
There's No good restaurants

I come from the trap where there's
Blunts always Burning drug dealers always selling

I come from a town with
Rappers and Song artist

But I'm going toward
A label that is calling my name

Tiffin

Miya

I come from a small trashy town
Where everyone talks too much.

I come from a place where my mom made
a life for us

I come from a place where going to
Mcdonalds or Walmart is exciting.

I come from a place of chaos
Where my room is the safe place.

but I'm going to a place where
It's warm & free & Beautiful.

Untitled

Keaton

One time I really covered somebody
Was when my Parent was talking Bad
About my Best friend I got really
Mad and yelled and Backed them up.

Untitled

Keithlynn

I remember when WE got in a fight (at your dad's), you never
Called me names, you never hit me, you told me
I was being rude, you stuck up for me when your
dad punched me in the face, you calmed me
down by saying something hilarious to me I choked you
and still you never laid a hand on me inspite of
all of that you still love me and I still love you.

Untitled

Dylan

I remember when your mom kicked you
out and you didn't have anywhere to go and
I took you in with me at my moms and you helped
me and my mom pay for food and help throw in
on rent so we could keep our place. I think that made me
look at you like a wife when I ate you ate.

Akiann

Anthony

I remember when an opposition was talking down on you so I texted him and you to go to the park to hoop. You didn't know what was happening, but I did and we whooped that boy. You were happy and was on they head so I did the same. Akiann you are funny and like to Be straight up. My mom never liked you but I told her if I wasn't allowed to hang with you then I would breakdown, and now that she has met you, she claims You as her own son. If I never met you I prolly would have not been the same person.

Untitled

Anthony

when I bought my brother some shoes because he always had my back
when I got in trouble, It made me feel good because I payed him back for
keeping me out of trouble, It made him feel good too because he got some
nice shoes, (vapor max).

Untitled

Brayden

I went to the dentist to get my teeth cleaned, afterwards I got to pick a reward and at that moment I seen the ring toss baby game I knew instantly my little sister would love it so that's what I chose.

Untitled

Miya

I gave my brother
My cookie (my last
cookie.) I lowkey
felt regret but also
was happy for my
brother. We were in
my kitchen & it
was after school.
It was a chocolate
chip cookie.

Untitled

Anthony

Anthony is in space and is on a game called
Cod: Ghost, There is gravity somehow and a basketball
Court. When I walk into the bball court I see Lebron
James dunking over LiL baby and LiL baby is saying Honeybun

Untitled

Dylan

Im in space and I see peter from
Family guy throwing a toilet at a rock
Trying to break it and he cant. Then he
Floats at the toilet and head butts it and
Finally gets it to break. And he finally
Feels like he has succeeded

Untitled

Grace

I'm in the air
like I'm free
like everything I've ever wanted to be
is here. Everybody I care about
My Girl Eva is pulling upchurch
By the car. She throws everyone
I love and they come
Crashing on and I'm filled with joy.

Mi Amor

Grace

Blue like your eyes
the sky which you bring
the smiling face
Your face all blue
Your love so sweet like the sky
Your smile like the ocean

Untitled

Grace

Your eyes like diamonds

Your skin like the sea

Your heart like the pearls

The mock of your tone

your beating heart like love

You are my angle.

Your face all blue

Untitled

Anthony

Dear Anthony, Remember when you were locked up and a lot of crazy things happened while you were away. Well you need to start doing things by yourself and start taking risks, because if you keep hanging out with "those" people then you're not going to get anywhere in life. You can't be trusting anybody cause they always gon do what benefits them. You need to learn from your mistakes and don't think about peoples opinions cuz they aint facts.

Untitled

Breylan

Dear Breylan I know—
how it is in life but just
know it not your body telling
u what to do it's your heart telling
u and your memories of the past
self to do better to know your
mistakes. The thing is that
just follow your dreams and
just help the people in your
life.

P.S.

To the one I love most myself
To the one the only Finn, this is
your spirt telling you this.

Untitled

Cody

April 16, 2021

Dear Cody,

I can be whoever I want to be
have learned that people can change
and that change can be good,
I have amazing Girl. Your kind
respectful you cherish everyone
who you come across. Don't
let anybody push you around.
You are smart and an amazing
Person don't let anybody come
in the way between of
me and myself. Stay in

Contact with God.

Love,

Cody

Untitled

Evan

To myself, a year from now I have to ask one main question. Are you where you wanna be? If so, then great, but knowing myself now You Probably wont. So what will you do about it? Is your relationship with all your family better? Has your dad physacally said, "Im proud of You?" Is your family outside your own blood still around? Do they still mean everything to you like they do now? Have you found a greater Purpose in life? Just make sure you better yourself and find motivation to move forward.

Sincerely, Old Self

Life

Miya

Dear Miya,

Get out of the system, stop doing things u know will get u introuble. You have a lot of potential weather u see it now or not and u can do great things & be successful like other people. Make your mom & dad proud, you've got this. Get back into sports, fix family relationships, be a better person. Don't dwell on things u have no power over and change the things u do have power over.

Sincerely,

Miya

Untitled

Nevaeh

Gushers, thank yu for bein there for me. You've been there since I was little. I always enjoy eating yu wit my lil brother. Me & my lil brother would always find yu in the cabinet when lookin for snacks. My mom would always get mad at us fer eating all of yu cuz you're her favorit too. I love how when I bite down on yu the liquid fills my mouth. My favorite color of yu to eat is red. I usually always get yu when in at tha store. My lil cousins like yu too. I'll be sure to eat some of yu when I get outta jail

Untitled

Grace

Your color so bright,
Oval easy to peel
Your color like the sun
So yellow and pretty
I thank you for your sweet but sour taste
Your a big boss bouser
Your small and able to drink
I love you so much
Your my lemon

Untitled

Miya

Thanks cornbread for always
being there when I need you.
you are squishy and delicious
you arent obnoxious to eat
and you are beautiful.

Untitled

Alana

Thank you so much resses for
Make me feel better.

you pick me up when Im down.

you make my hands smell like
peanut butter when Im finished
eating.

you smell like the sweet joy of
peanut butter.

you must like like you've been
in the sun

An Ode to Pineapples

Katiya

You have always been my favorite
even with your sometimes sour taste
or hard to find during seasons
you were always my go-to when
I went into that huge kitchen
full of wonderful options.

It was you I chose and it will
forever be you I cherish

The sweet tropical smell on
a warm summer evening with
my ocean view I wouldn't
replace for a million

Untitled

Grace

You throw the ball,
You start sprinting
to catch it
you through a touch
down your team
is cheering
You win the
game
The team
yells in
victory.

Tough

Andrew

The aggressive voice.
The grunting noise.
The crowd cheered.
He strove down field
In the eyes
of the team
He faced tonight.
His sweat gleams.
He ran and ran
until the ten
the TD he lands.
The game ends.

Untitled

Miya

In the box sweat dripping
waiting for the ball to come
bat up and ready in my stance
the pitcher eyeing me ready to through a strike
I swing hard and watch the ball fly
fly and fly over second & over the fence
flying across the bases feeling free,
I hit a home run.

Louisville Slugger

Evan

My freshman year. Playing baseball for
tiffin Columbian. I had never really
played at all that year, just wasn't as
talented than some other people at the
time. But our coach put me first at
bat, top of the order, our very last
game. So I remember distinctly I took
my friends baseball bat it was a
Louisville, and I went up. The pitcher
threw a changeup and I just absolutely
cranked it into left field, I
remember it bounced and hit the
fence, and I just kept sprinting.
I ended up getting a triple, and
playing a lot more after that.

Clean Up on Aisle 3

Anthony

When I shoot the ball I feel like Harden but we all know I'm Lebron James. No one can guard me but if they do they gonna need some new ankles. I got ice in my veins I'm like Lamelo I'll pull up from anywhere. You reach I teach clean up on aisle 3 is what they preach.

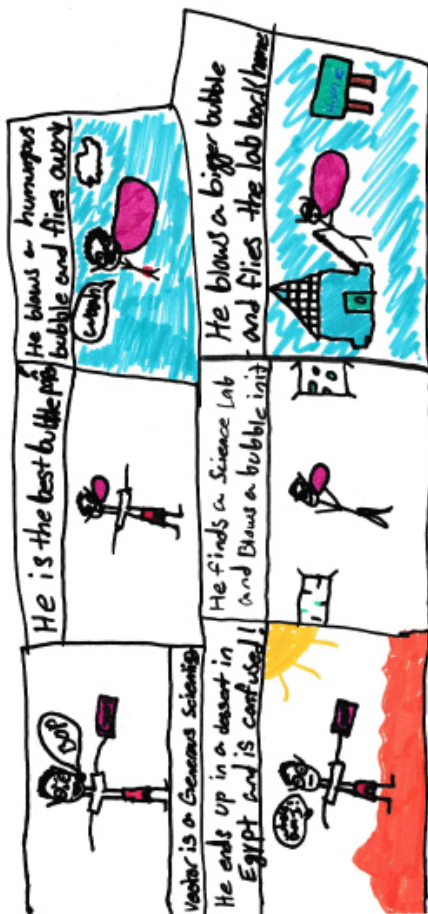


Grace

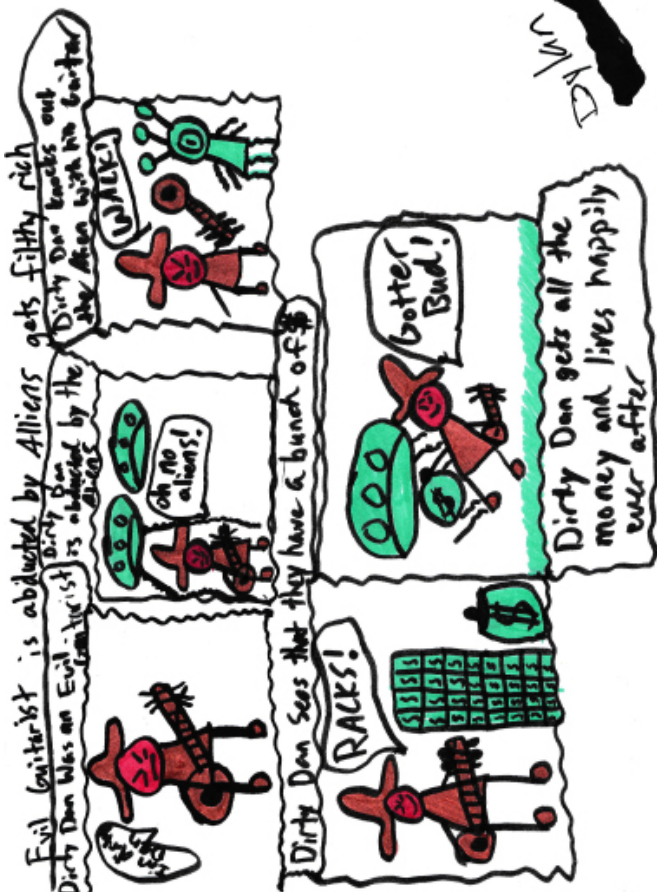


Grace

Generous Scientist who is the world's greatest Bubblegum blower and gets Stranded in the desert



Arman



WALK

***I Come From
A Place
Where People
Come From***

Hiram College

A letter from the **Cohort**

Dear reader,

This chapbook represents the second semester of working with Portage-Geauga Juvenile Detention Center Residents via Zoom. As we were able to become more adjusted with the platform, get our residents the proper microphones so we would be able to hear them better, and our volunteers became more comfortable with the controls, our workshops became even more thoroughly enjoyable. Despite the occasional connection issues and technical difficulties, we managed to pull off a successful series of workshop due to the hard work of the JDC residents. We are grateful to our residents for joining us each Tuesday evening and sharing their writing, experience, and humor. We truly enjoy spending time with them and hated when it was time to press the red Leave Meeting button.

We chose to title this chapbook *I Come From A Place Where People Come From* after a line from one of the poems contained within. We believe this to be fitting as it sums up one of the core beliefs of WIR; the problems of mass incarceration and child poverty are not far-away issues that we can simply dismiss, nor do they only affect a small part of the population. It is all around us, and indeed these kids come from all around us. These kids are just that: kids.

One important thing to remember about these kids is that many of them were not able to have the same consistent and quality early education as others their age (and our volunteers) have enjoyed. This can be due to poverty, insufficient accommodations for learning or developmental disabilities, and their schooling being interrupted by incarceration. The works you will read will include grammatical and spelling errors, but

they do not diminish the quality of their work in the slightest. We were able to have very candid and personal discussions with our resident this semester, and we know some of the hardships they have overcome. We have kept the spelling and grammatical errors both to celebrate their triumph over adversity as well as to maintain the honest, unfiltered voices of these young writers.

While we wish we did not meet under these circumstances, with our core group of residents we were happy to see them grow throughout our workshops. Their writing consistently improved and we are incredibly excited to see where their writing will go in the future. Our volunteers really appreciate the consistent work the residents put in in every single workshop, because this program could not function without their enthusiastic participation. We as a cohort value that our residents were brave enough to share their feelings, experiences, and personal stories with us this semester.

Most important to our volunteers are the treasured memories we have accumulated over these last ten weeks. We will always remember our spirited debates on the best musicians and worst brands of chips, our discussions on the concepts of memory, love, and perspective, and, of course, their kindness and consideration towards us and one another. At the end of one of the workshops one of our volunteers decided to show the residents their dog. We will never forget the smiling eyes and masked faces crowded around the monitor, nor the heart-melting words *man, I needed this. It's been too long since I've seen a dog.*

So we'd like to thank the PGJDC staff for making this possible and for their invaluable help in setting up workshops, our faculty advisor Mary Quade for keeping us on track and helping us design curriculum, and Zachary Thomas for making this whole program possible in the first place. Most of all, though, we want to thank our residents.

Untitled

Cosmo

Life: tomorrow's never promised live it up

Love: loyalty over love

Love: life ends but love lives on

Advice: what you give is what you get

Advice: truth can be hurtful

Questions: do people listen or hear?

Food: Swenson's; galley boy potato teezers milkshake

My Thoughts

Sam

I rarely give in to negative vibes.

Some people say life is good.

I believe people can change gradually.

Life is what you make it.

People say make a good goal.

I will be great in life.

The end

Bicycle

Cosmo

like a bike i go from place
to place. it's always a mystery
where i'll end up. if i start
down a hill there really isn't
any way to stop me. All you
can really do is jump off.
you can give it a
paint job or change
some parts but it'll still
be the same bike. You
can decide to use it or go
your own way

The Life Like the Wind

Sam

I am like the wind, you learn to deal with me
but you can't contain me. I'm always calm
but wild inside. I'm free but feel
trapped. You can't see me but I'm
always around. I cool you off
when you feel hot. I help you
travel from place to place but
you can't ever say thanks. When
you go outside and you feel a
breeze, just know I'm here. I
am like the wind, you never
know where I'm going to end up.

Akron

Harris

I come from Akron where
No where is safe.

I come from nothing,
Just the sound of gun
Shots and screams.

I come from Hamilton
Road where we active
247.

I come from poverty,
Where nothing is easy.

I come from a broken
Home, that cant never be
fixed.

Im going to be 18 Arril 2nd,
Ill be an adult,
Im going to Kent, I will
be 18

Untitled

Smith

I come from the cracked hands of a woman
who wasn't scared of nothing
who has less money then everyone
I come from a women who doesn't hate
but dislikes people
I come from where blacks and whites
would shoot
I come from a place where dreams
and hearts get broken
I come from nothing where people kill and steal
I come from people who used to work in fields
I come from a place called Cleveland

Im going
Home 2021
feb. 22
Im going to become
a track star.
Im gonna be the
best. Im gonna
Turn my life around
from the bottom
up Im going to
be on the top.

Ravenna

Sam

I come from empty fridges and Poor pockets
I come from Junkyard hillbillies who Can't hold a job
I come from 209 Jefferson St. where my dad would
always abuse me
I come from the environment that surrounded me,
drugs that my family consumed
I come from 800 infirmary Rd. where they watched
me grow up
I come from a place that me and my friends call
Stoners Ledge where we would smoke
I come from a place called Ravenna where anything is possible
I come from a Place that People come from
I'm going to a place I can call home
I'm going to do better than my ancestors that came before
I'm going to be all that I
can Be

Ravenna

Cosmo

I Come from a Place different that Yours.
I Come from a Place where a lot of People
try to be something they ain't. I Come
from a Place where things Can turn tragic.
I Come from a broken environment into
a broken home. I Come from a Place
to worry about but you don't have
to worry about everyone. I come
from a Place where ends don't meet. I come
from a Place where you Pray for the best
but prepare for the worst. I come from a
Place full of ruin where beauty once was.
I'm heading For the stars and the backdoor. I'm
going down a road toward reunification but at the
same time I'm going away from it. I'm going
to be better than where I'm from

Untitled

Dominic

I remember that time when me and Tyler were at a football game and somebody he had beef with was trying to jump him with his friends and I stood right by him the whole time making sure they wouldn't touch him. My friend was going to get jumped and I basically stepped in and helped him and told them to go off and do they own thing or they aren't gonna like what's going to happen.

Untitled

Sam

I remember when we were at the group home and I ran, and you called me from your android phone crying telling me "Please come home" cuz you didn't want me to get into trouble and I tried to call you back but I had no WIFI so it didn't go through so I walked down Main Street back to the group home and from that point on I never wanted to hurt you again. Instead, I wanted to protect you from getting hurt cuz you mean the world to me & we have always had each other's back through thick and thin. I love you Chenny forever.

Love,

Sam <3

Untitled

Cosmo

I remember when you came to me when you were at your lowest. When you looked up to me as a lifeline. I remember the times we weren't eating, and we were taking off some plates both literally and metaphorically. I remember the first I saw your demons when you had that bad trip and you thought cops were coming. I remember our first time running when the plan went south. I remember the times it was 3 to 2. I remember all the times when we looked to each other for help when we had nowhere else to go.

Besties

Julia

I remember when you got in this fight and I told the other girl she had to go through me before she got to you because you did not do anything wrong to get that and that is why we are Best friends now. I remember that same day, you helped me out when I was having a panic attack and that you had to carry me out of the lunchroom. But on the same day, the other girl started punching you and I tried to get her off you. But A.J got her off you because I could not get her off you but she also punched me too and when she punched us we were just talking to each other and you were talking to M because you liked him and we were just asking him questions and to see if he liked you and he said maybe so yay.

Thank you.

My Little Baby Goat

Julia

It was at 12am on a school night
When you were born. I had to help
you find where the food was, and
this was in the barn. Then the next
day was a school day and you
almost died that day so we helped
you out and got you food and
from there on you thought I was
your mom and I miss you little
one Rip my man

Love Mommy

Chocolate Chip AKA Goat

Julia

I remember when you would go to
the bathroom and you would jump
up on me and fall asleep on
me.

Untitled

Cosmo

there used to be a family of possums living in
a tree outside of our house that used to
eat out of our trash and one time we just
forgot to take the trash out and they
just left

The Death of a Soul Mate

Sam

When I was little, my grandma had a dog named Rex. He was a shiny tan beautiful dog who was hyper for days. He would run around the house for hours at a time and would not get tired. I Loved him. Whenever I would come over he would lay with me and as I got older so did he. He eventually quit eating and running and then died. But the memory of him burns in my mind forever. I loved him and I always will. He was the Best thing in my life.

Good Days

Cosmo

When my Photo was taken, we were about to
Go trick or treating and I was a ninja. I remember
Another Photo from When I Was in like first grade, it
Was me and my brother and sister waiting on the bus.
In the photo you can kind of tell that it's our first day back at
School cause we all look kind of nervous and after the other
Photo was taken we all went trick or treating.
I brought my bike
With one of the only years that I for real remember trick or treating.
Both of those Photos are on my mom's old Facebook.
My mom took both of those Photos. In the School Photo we were on the
sidewalk at the end of our dead-end road there was a nice house on the
corner and a corner store and some railroad tracks behind us.
That's back when life was good, and I didn't have to worry about what would
happen on my way to school. I think I had on a blue shirt and my first pair of
Jordans.

Untitled

Josh

My photo is when I was in 5th grade at my last football practice when it was raining and it was all muddy and we were all covered in mud all of my friends smiling and happy. There was a goal post and a big hill with a big fence and all the boys parents were standing behind it.

Untitled

Harris

It was hot. Everyone was leaving.

The score was 14 to 36. I was happy

My Nephew was in my left arm and my helmet was in

my right. The gates were filled with people leaving. My girl was by my sister.

My girl kept saying I looked good. I changed outta my cleats to my Jordans.

Photo of Brother & Sister

Sam

It was a week after I got out of treatment. White shirt, black pants sitting on a still colored paper. I was only 17, she was 18, eye shadow, in a circular case, black outfit, white socks, brother and a sister, fun times at the house of our mother's maker, times we've not spent in a while. Food cooking on the stove top, coffee in the pot, 1 hour after our eyes open, we leave, disappearing from that place, that place with so many memories, memories we have made forever of the love we share with one another all going back to that Photo of me and my sis all over again. Back in that house, Back in that small room and a twin-sized bed. We share the love for that home back in our heads, Pink wall where her diploma hangs, we look back at that Photo missing all that we had. I couldn't imagine life being good before that Photo.

Untitled

Terriana

My photograph was taken back in 2018 with my family we went to an professional photo shot. We wear in all white with black jeans and white shoes. In are photo it had a lot of details in the background it was really pretty and had lots of flowers in the back. What wasn't in the photo that was interesting was it was no clouds but everything else was there

Untitled

Ty

This Photo is of me and my boyfriend holding hands in New York City. IN the photo you can see my right hand which has a bracelet he gave me in it and you can see his left hand and his hand tattoos holding my hand as the camera also points at the buildings as we hold hands. You cant see anything but our hands and what's in front of us. But after the Photo we danced a little and he picked me up, held me, swung me in his arms and kissed me while everybody stared as they walked past us. During this photo I was very happy and excited to see the city.

Isolation

Cosmo

- 1 isolation sucks
Camera locked on every move
all alone but watched

- 2 never aloud with others
two more days of this bulls**t
just me and myself

- 3 one choice led to this
Consequences have actions
never coming back

- 4 Orange slides blue shirts
Need to get out of this Place
white walls barbwire fence

- 5 One day I'll be free
they can't keep me forever
I'm on my way out

- 6 blue or green bed mat
uncomfortable blankets
this places gets to you
- 7 Phone calls rejected
No visit from family
family giving up
- 8 can't blame me for this
Product of environment
People don't get it

Untitled

Julia

- 1 Salty Barbeque
 Chips are so good, I Love chips
 are so good to eat

- 2 Friends are amusing
 They Help out with anything
 And everything too

Oof Means to Me

Julia

Why are you saying that?

You are so stupid and shut up

Oof you lost your bf/gf

Go off somewhere else

Why in the world would you do that?

Oof oof oof

Oof that hurt ha ha ha

Tweaking

Cosmo

You're acting dumb, bro you're tweaking
You got to chill all this ain't worth it
You just got out and you on the way back
You got six siblings think about that
Focus on your priorities
You tweaking bout old sh*t leave that in the past
Your time is gonna double if you don't chill
11 times in 3 years, this ain't the life.
Put it on some paper, speak about it,
Stop turning up cause you're angry at the world.
No more dope get out of the game.
You're running ruining lives, got momma's tweaking
22 days left, that's a nap
I'm done with my old ways, I'm never coming back

Untitled

Jeffrey

Blizzard

You are sweet and

Feel good on a hot

Day and when i eat the

Oreo's or reces it cocnehes

And you look so good

Untitled

Cosmo

Kiwis taste like the ocean
they look unpleasant but
Smell great. They feel
like fuzz on a new tennis
ball before it's been on a
Court. Kiwis smell
like freedom. They smell
like my grandma's kitchen
after grocery shopping

Ode to the First Food I Made

Julia

Potato you're like a sweet potato and you're soft and nice
and mushier in the middle. I love it when you melt in my mouth.
You look so creamy when I look at you same like you have
So much goodness in you.
I hear you pop when you're being cooked on the stove.
You need bacon to taste so good. You smell so good.
The bacon in you is chewy and salty at the same time.
You look so chunky and creamy at the same time you need
More meat in you and more sweet potato to taste anything
and more like rice

The Loss of Daddy

Julia

Dear Daddy,

I just lost 2 weeks now! I can't even say that you were a bad dad because you were the best dad in the world. You were old. You were only 67 years old like how old mom is now. I love you so much to the moon and back. You are my best friend. You know when I'm happy, sad, mad, and etc. I just can't believe that you're gone.

RIP Daddy.

RIP Best Friend

What's Done is Done

Cosmo

This is my letter to you, my future self.

You did your time now build back your bridges.

Don't put yourself in bad places you'll end up back here. Don't focus on others as much as yourself. Stay in your zone don't mind others' business. Bury your broken bonds f**k those who wronged you. They're not there now so don't worry about them. You did what you did you can't take that back. That's just some old sh*t so forget about that. Just try your best not to do it again. Try not to do wrong the way that you used to. Associate yourself with better people. Try to stay up, don't let no one bring you down. Do what you need to do and not what you don't. But make sure to have fun that's what life is about. And remember what's done is done don't ever look back.

—Cosmo

Untitled

Jeffrey

Dear future self, don't do anything
to get yourself back in jail when
you get out you need to get
back in school so you can
get a job and maybe even
play sports, save up money
so i can get a car
soon stay off of drugs
because obviously the get ya
nowhere in life but they can get
you locked up. Dear future self just
keep yo head UP.

Unbroken: Voices from Medina County JDC

The Mixed Cohort

A letter from the **Cohort**

Dear reader,

Even though it wasn't ideal but nonetheless possible to foster a connection regardless of circumstances, whether it's via Zoom, Google Meet, or two plastic cups and some string, two receptive minds will join like magnets. This is what we learned, and this is what happened between the residents and the student volunteers.

The intellectual conversations paired with laughter are truly what will really stick with us from this spring. We loved experiencing those moments where we all let go a bit and truly connected with one another because that is a bit harder to do during a remote creative writing workshop. We feel relieved and lifted when the residents were smiling behind their masks and talking over one another to get their piece in, simply because they are excited about the topic of discussion. We also really enjoyed when they would openly ask us questions because it showed that they were comfortable with us.

We remain grateful that Writers in Residence still exists and operates amid the pandemic, but we also await the true return of the organization's in-person programming because nothing will substitute the impact of making physical space for creative expression and critical reflection.

However, we still provided our residents with a respite of joy every Sunday afternoon. When we had ten extra minutes at the end of a session to joke around, or a resident read a poem that they really liked, these moments made the workshop so real and human. We feel as though we have made connections with our residents and learned about their experiences that we otherwise would have never been exposed to and that alone is priceless.

The Mixed Cohort

Untitled

D

I'll be good at basketball if i keep trying

All eyes on me everyday

I have fear of big snakes

I'm awful for being in Jail

Untitled

L

1. I am pushing on, feeling hopeful
2. Love is tough, so am I
3. Worry later, have fun right now
4. Big Mac from mcdonalds is good
5. Baconator fills my tummy all up
6. Keep friends close, but enemies closer
7. Work hard, expect greatness in return
8. Everything is earned, nothing is given
9. I'll be alright in 90 days

Untitled

D

1. rocks & Stars takes place in space.
2. Sharks, dogs, snakes
3. Eating brings me Joy.

Untitled

J

1. Astronauts landing
2. on the ISS
3. Uzi and I
3. bumping on the way up together
4. we chewing on Mcdonald's
5. bumping lil uzi song at the ISS

Untitled

R

Floatin in space space
But I think I'm laced
got the cops behind me
Guess I left a trace
Now I'm doing the race
Running so fast I skipped first base

My name is my reputation

R

Wake up well I didn't
Wake up cuz I never
Went to sleep, Banging
the 6 all night and
studying at the same
time. One makes money
how one makes it later
so I'm kinda split.

Untitled

T

When me and Zack and our other friends
went to a neighborhood park I got the
cops called on me by a lady and She accused me
of assaulting a kid and she said I was
being suspicious and the other kid left and Zack
Stayed with me and defended me.

Untitled

J

We were at swensons me, my girlfriend, and a few of my friends. I was playing this girl. And her dad Pulled up to swensons. me and my friend who's 6'3 got out of my car and he didn't fight us because he was a shrimp.

Untitled

M

This one time my mom was dating this one guy and he was always being mean to her. This one time specificaly he said something nasty to her so I kicked him out of my house. My mom was really hurt from the whole thing and I spent the day with her to make her feel better.

Untitled

D

Someone told me i wasn't good at basketball and said stop trying and i got mad and yelled at the person.

Working out, playing basketball, music, games, good grades, nice clothes, nice shoes, complimented

Untitled

R

They think I'm a risk
They think I'm a menace
But it's all talk cuz they
never seen me outside these walls

They say I got whip skills
and they just seen me burn him
There gasing me up
and were bumping the beamer

yeah I'm out now
and I ain't got no bracelet
so Best believe I'm hype
cant nothing faze me

Untitled

J

They hate on my style
but in reality I'm
so fresh and so clean
oh that man doesn't
like me, tells me I look weak
but I know, within me
I am strong, but not weak.

How they don't like my music,
too bad that doesn't affect me
people say my writing is sloppy
but, my grades speak for me.

Untitled

M

Family is
a gift you are given
the second you are born

Family is a hand
always there to elevate you

Family isn't always blood
but the people who accept you
regardless

Family is a book of memories
that you can look back on
and smile

Family are the people who
back you up when your cornered

Family is a gift given the
second your born.

Untitled

B

The family is the forbidden fruit.

The fall of man,

Yet a gift

even when you aren't who
the expected.

Love is love and family
can't change that.

you are you no one can

Change that, only you can
change

that

Untitled

J

The family is
solid as a rock
we always will
have respect and love for one another
Even though our
music is quite different
The honesty between us never fails
we may fight as
most families do
but at the end
of the day
we help each other
make our dreams
come true
The family is
solid as a rock.

Untitled

J

1. I am fun smart athletic bored
2. Bumping Juice, Uzi, Polo, the G.O.A.Ts.
3. Chipotle white rice extra chicken yumm
4. Started strong can't stop gotta finish
5. Help others makes you stronger inside
6. The mind is powerful use wisely
7. Tell that girl bye see ya
8. I will be better then you

Untitled

H

1. I am tired, upset, stressed, hungry
2. I am funny, sarcastic, humouros, excting
3. I am wonderful, happy, smiley couragous
4. I am selfish addictive, stubborn, manipulative
5. I am smart, artistic, creative, adventorous
6. I'll be Everything I need to be

Untitled

X

1. I am a good advice giver
2. I am a very good friend
3. I am a really caring person
4. I am a strong, independent person
5. I am a spontaneous/rambunctious person
6. I am a very funny person
7. I am a daring risk taker
8. I have an addictive personality
9. I will be a better me

Untitled

M

1. are their animles in heaven
2. I want to be 100% truthful to my famleiy
3. I am a hard worker to fix all the wrong ive Done
4. I workhard on makeing money and saveing it
5. im working on Becoming a beter Role mottlefor my littel Brother

Untitled

S

1. love to see you down, hate to see you up
2. nothing will come easy to you
3. everything happens for a reason
4. I will be a better son

Untitled

N

1. Thief, liar, Druggo, chill, funny, loyal
2. funny, calm, smart, outgoing, caring, loving
3. Kind, Respectful, confident, lucky, willing, Safe
4. I will be Sober, honest, free

Untitled

W

1. I'm confedant, funny, selfish, aragant,
white, long haired
2. don't wait for things get better
3. Stop saying love ya'll being corney
4. I want food, I get food
5. Why you fake, drop the act
6. Are avicatos a fruit or not

Untitled

Z

1. I'm funny trustworthy, athletic, realistic confident, sarcastic
2. life is what you make it
3. love can always be found
to hate you have to care
4. fight for the things you love
5. don't let anyone stop you achieving your goals
6. What would've happened if one things different
Take your chances, they come once

Untitled

A

1. I won the 2016 basketball tournament.
2. I'm funny because i get it from my family.
3. I'll be fine, let me think
4. I always respected everyone even if i dont know them.
5. Im really under standing when talking to others.

If there something you want it's worth working for

Untitled

R

I come from places that can be good and bad
Places that can take your life over
And places that can benefit.
People that give you a lesson
And people that make you hurt
Places where you call fun and
Others where it sucks
Family that cares while the others
Make you want to run forever.
But I'm going to try to take the
Good path and see where it leads me.

Untitled

X

I come from being a nobody
I come from places where it's not muddy
From a single mom with no support
To steppin in things I couldn't afford
A hustler, a go-getter, that's who I am
From hated to everyone being a fan

Untitled

M

I come from a small town and lots of drugs
And abandoned places where people go to do drugs
One place is the brickyard and not far from
There is an abandoned factory

And I'm going to Virginia and getting
My life back on track

To meet the right one and make better friends
And to get a job
And to get a nice truck to cruise around
In with my friends

And I want to become a better big brother
And not be in jail and be with him

Untitled

J

I come from a small town, where everyone
Knew each other and everything that went on.

Kids who would go to school and as soon
As we all got home we would link at
The park play football or catch things in
The lodi creek.

I come from the town where not everyone
Got along and but most tried.

Kids would fist fight and make up the day
After like nothing happened.

And every day the same old lodi kids
Would do the same thing just different
Day.

Untitled

C

I come from where if you don't do something

You don't want to do you're scared

And if you're doing good they

Claim you as a friend or a cousin and they have been with you since the beginning

If you get stopped by the cops you run and

If you get caught you don't know who was there

I'm going to get out of Ohio to get good money

Untitled

N

I come from Seville Ohio where I skate

I come from drugs and alcohol

I come from friends and influence

I come from Board and frame

I come from weapons and ammunition

I come from dirt and game

I'm going to change

Untitled

J

I come from a town with seed people
But even better donuts
I come from playing football on Friday nights
Adrenaline pumping through my veins
I come from swimming in pools and Granger lake
Not even caring about sunburn
I come from playing pickup basketball at the Marriott Inn
Till the lights go out
I come from home cooked meals on the grill
And fast food from McDonalds
I come from a family who loves me
Even in jail
But I'm going to create my own path
And help others along the way

Untitled

M

I come from Cave City, Kentucky.
With many back roads

I come from questionable attire.
Where it was normal to wear boots with shorts

I come from small houses,
Everyone knew everyone

I come from a community,
With unstoppable laughter in class

I come from dirt bikes
And four-wheelers

But I'm going to big houses
With built in theaters

Untitled

G

I come from Lodi, Ohio where it's a really
Small town but there is a lot to do like parks
There was a lot of hangout spots and small
Town events throughout the year like parades
The corn festival. Corn fest was like a mini
Fair there were rides and fair food and stuff.

Untitled

W

I come from a home where holding together
A healthy relationship was like trying to
Carry water with only bare hands

I come from friends the age of my
Older sisters, which no one approved of

I come from a school with metal detectors
And staff who silenced the hurt and gone

I come from friends who kept drugs and
Weapons on them more than phones.

I come from an area where going out
Alone was punished

I come from where fighting and hugging
Would go to the same people

But I'm going to a better path.

Untitled

A

I come from a small place called the square where there's not
A lot of stuff to do but play b-ball

I come from Ray Miller where we play baseball and see the
Same people every day.

I come from a place where it used to be violent
To a peace and quiet neighborhood.

I come from a place where a lot of people that was close to you are
Gone, but I'm going to be the one who makes it out

I come from a place where people don't think of success and positive things
I come from a place where is born at and
Lived in the same house before.

Untitled

C

a football game I have a goal to reach its to win if you get hit you got to get back up and try a different plan if i didnt work the first 4 downs. And sometimes you got to defend people from coming acrossed you. To get first downs is like something positive that happens when you are trying to reach your goal.

broke down car is me

W

1. I once was a great mobile
car
2. I would see so many places and
so many faces
3. I hung out with other cars like me
4. Then one day I crashed it was
a dumb accident
5. I thought I could keep movin
and that the fires would go away
6. But the I got more and towed
away
7. They found all my diesel and oils so
I was put in impound
8. I said I could be fixed so I
went to the mechanic's but then
they said I was too broke and
brought me back

Untitled

J

Power on, power off

Setting picked up and put down all day

[no idea] on top of me, see right through me

Let you know what's going on by vibrating

Crack my screen, it happens

just don't forget

to put me on my

charger.

Untitled

M

I'm like a bottle because I keep my feelings
Bottled up like a bottle keeps the drink
Bottled up and when people are
Done with bottles they throw them
Away just like how when my
Friends were done with me
They threw me away to jail
By putting all the blame on someone.

Book

Z

people open and close me all the time
some read only the words [two words] some read between the lines
if you don't read the beginning you won't fully understand the end.
I have good days and I have bad ones.

My Mothers Working Hands

S

When I was born the first person that I saw
Was my mother already working as hard as the
law. When I turned 3 my mother crafted me a present
I would love, a beautiful peice of leather work that id
oh so love. When I turned 7 I relized my hands have
yet to be like my mothers. I have never crafted
a peice of wood into something beautiful nor washed and
bathed a child and I had yet to learn the lesson
of how my mom survied the wild life she
lived. Yet she taught me how to craft a
peice of leather work and it was so beautiful
like the beauty of the light in her eyes
my mother is the light inside me that
my family loves so now I do trully
understand what it is like to work hard
like my mothers working hands.

What I mean by this is that my mom inspired
me to grow up and to Do good deads
for others.

Untitled

M

Something that is my light is the [?] my family, who help me get through this time in Jail. My family helps me by giving me positive thoughts and give me something to think about So I get through this time in Jail easier.

look on the bright side

W

1. Jail is poo poo, and these dudes is burning me out
 , but look on the bright side, we get tacos sometimes.
2. These shoes be hurting me, I swear flip
 flops got more support, but look on the bright side
3. I get to take naps
 the air is stuffy and my lies be cracker
 , but look on the bright side, theres females
 waiting on the outs
4. My sell is uncomfy, and I swear they
 be opening my door every time I
 dump but look on the bright sides
 I got a sandwhich today.

Untitled

J

Welp right Now life is trash But look at
the bright side I go home in 36 Dayz
an my life will Finally be Back. Their
is always parts in life that's Not Fair
Nor Fun But at the end of the day
Jus know it will be OKAY!!!

Untitled

A

Basketball, It helps me when Im down and stress, I can hoop 6-8 hours a day and thats what i like. my girl is the only person that can calm me down, you know how black widow can calm the hulk down its like dat.

Untitled

T

Me and my mom may
argue and she may
make me mad
but I can play
PS4 to make sure
It wasnt in
vain.

Untitled

J

I was trying to keep
my concentration When
I heard Everything complaining
it was at that time i wished
I was swimming Maybe
hydroplaning all because
my mind started straining
moral is keep concentrating
not contemplating

Untitled

D

ima be excited

If i do months i can't cry bc one of my
friend did 2/1 years with no tears

Untitled

J

Im Lost right Now, sike I got it

Big Trees with No Leafs

Im too cool For school

Life is Boring in Jail

Untitled

W

Where could the Food be?
My stomach's baren dessert
I think I hear food

My Parents left me
They got it like snakes in sun
Why forsaken me

Refrigerator
What a wonderus comfort
It's my disney land

Untitled

D

Refridgerator

Basketball is so awesome

I hate school so much

Untitled

A

Refrigerator

Promises are broken

Love doesn't last long

Untitled

M

Door locks spio

Like vending machines working

Others dropping like shoes

Erases goo like candy

Ploliils all the way

Fike dldrag drwrech

Untitled

J

Nice Winter No snow

Great time watching the wind blow

Knippy spring season

Untitled

A

My guilty pleasure is smoking weed.
before I feel anxious or upset after I feel
content and tired sometimes hungry for
some fried chicken

Untitled

M

Boxing? Volleyball?

Drinking or smoking weed

Writing about how I feel

Watching childhood movies

Untitled

J

Constant thought's of getting released,
I use my positivity to get me threw
the Day, An to remind my-self it
will all be over

with soon.

Untitled

J

Making food Especially when its
seasoned good, good songs that I
really like the beat to or think
are lyrically good, I have a few
funny favorite movies too like step brothers,
talledega nights, an scary movie 3, trailer
park bois, also I like nature alot
but lately I forgot about that
mainly why I like seasoned food so
much is cause it never ah. get old
cause you could make anything
like 10 different ways, an pair it
with 10 other foods an- then
you could pair it with a
movie thats really funny or whatever
an keep those same feelings going
on
or around some music that you
really like an maybe put
some music. With a spot
in the woods you really
like an maybe proolly also find
some type of nice peace

Untitled

D

Pizza, chicken, burgers, tacos, fish

rap music

Lifetime tv show

Horror, Action, and Crime movies

Playing the game, basketball, swim, hang w friends

All this means so much to me

because this is what i enjoy doing

Untitled

L

1. My bestfriend and I buy each other everything, and do everything together.
she also check up on me everyday, I do also.
2. my best friend and I don't look out for each other.
3. my bestfriend takes me out of state almost everytime she leaves Ohio.

Untitled

J

1. I was very clearly in a terrible mood that was lasting Week and my first childhood best friend came by to once again help me realize I'm not alone. People still think nicely of me, everybody still wants to be around me, and that we are doing good, and have nothing impactful to worry about besides our future, and the people we know will be in it, and it really helped me find my way out of a bad mood.
2. Me and my best friends went sledding and got food. Even though like 3 of us didn't have money, and we even bought the sleds, all of us we definitely. Excited, and it was the only

Untitled

T

I lived in brunswick for most of my life
and I moved to medina

Me and my friend got the cops called on us
for no reason and a weomen was
screaming at us about random stuff.

Me and my friend were hanging
out when a kid was screaming and
we went outside and he was so mad
at his mom and he stated screaming at her n cussing
at her to.

Untitled

T

1. my Bestfriend and I hang out every Day after school
Till me mom get home from work Because
my mom doesnt Like her
2. my Bestfriend and I ever Since we've
Known each other have always wanted to grow
up and move to L.A together, she wants to be a
Doctor and a wanna be a interior designer
3. my Bestfriend isnt really supposed to hang out
with me, I'm only aloud at her house when
her moms not home because She Doesnt Like
me. She's not supposed to hang out with me

Untitled

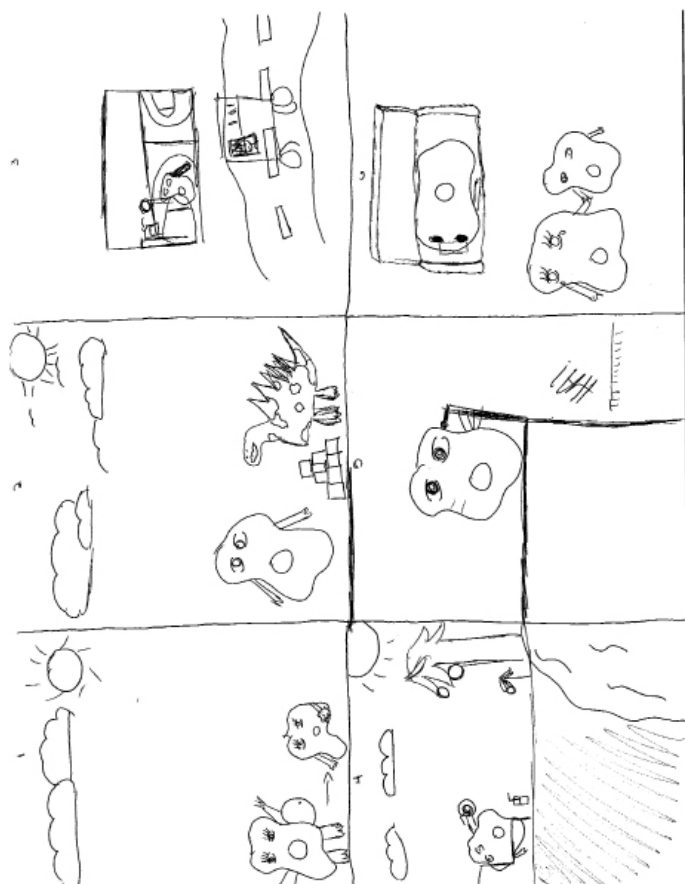
E

1. Me and my bestfriend were at the park once and she had tripped over one of the benches because she wasn't paying attention, and she fell and had broken her wrist but ended up laughing it off.
2. Me and my bestfriend went to D.C. for a trip and when we were in the hotel rooms she dressed up as a grandma with an iron.
3. During Language arts in 7th grade she would collect fluffy pends from the book fair and wrote creative stories and shared them.

Untitled

D

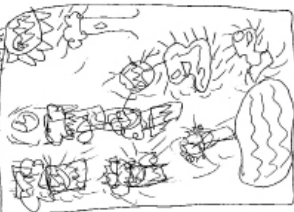
me and my homie was at my house when
dis girl wanted to come over and
she knew i was home and my friend lied
to her saying i got locked up.



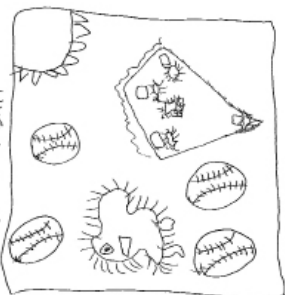
3 video games



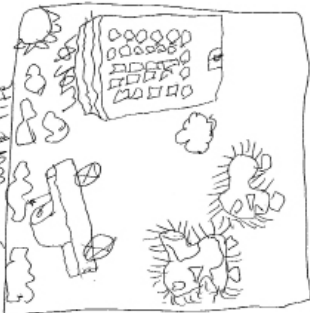
6 Monster Truck



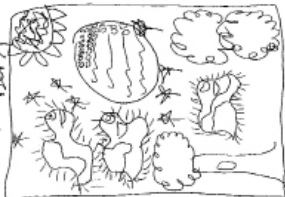
2 Baseball



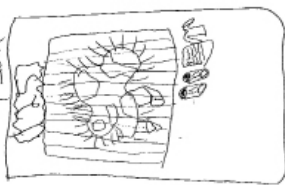
5 Work Life



1 Ball



4 Jail



Jason Misk

2 AS a Kid



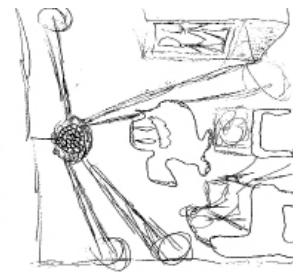
young adult



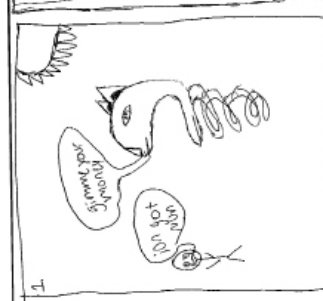
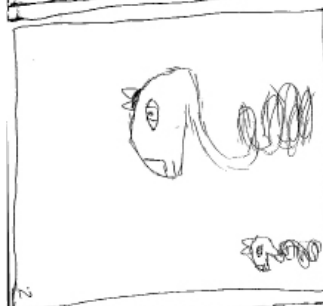
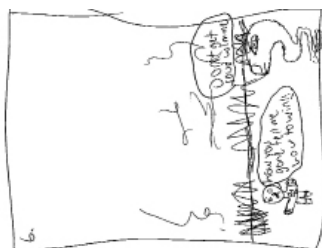
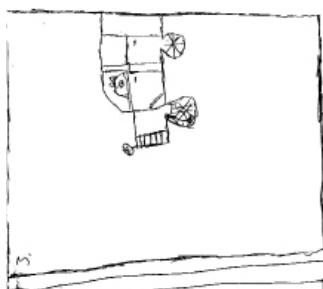
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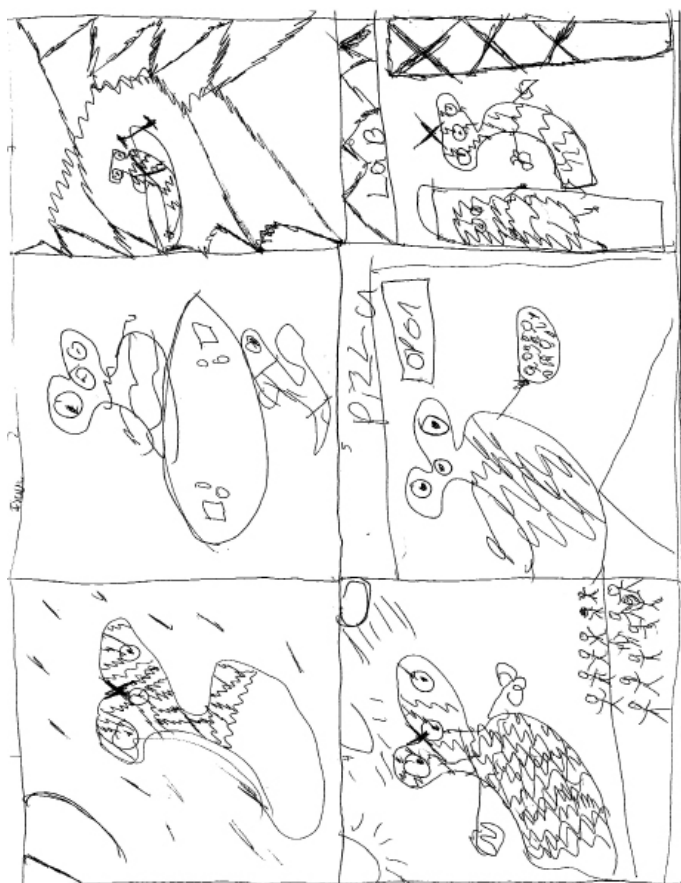


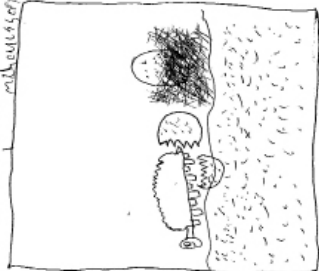
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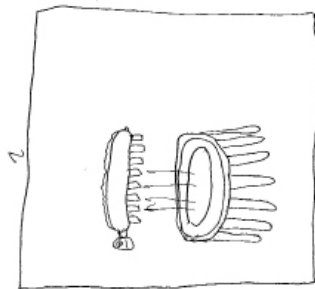


Figure

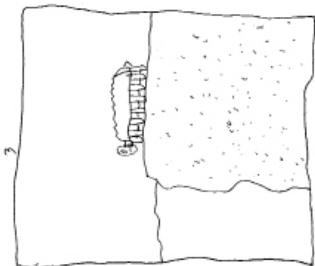




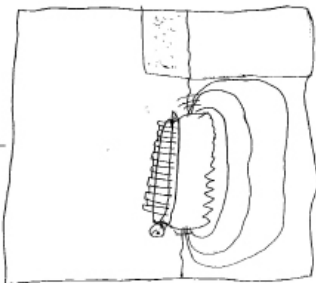
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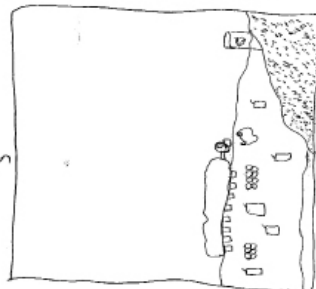
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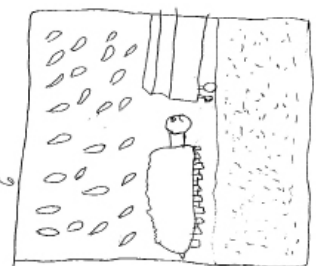
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6



5



Let's Get Real

University of Dayton

A letter from the **Cohort**

Dear reader,

Sometimes during our creative writing workshops, our residents would say: "let's get real!" They wanted all of us to be genuine, vulnerable, and connected. That's why the title of our chapbook is *Let's Get Real* because their poetry and prose embodies these qualities, which reminds us about the significance of the arts and youth development.

We really enjoyed learning about our residents through our conversations as well as their creative writing. That's how we discovered how much we had in common with them. Whenever a resident read a piece that was really personal to them were the best moments. This highlighted the similarities between their emotions and our emotions.

Everything was true, raw, and unrestricted. We saw their hopes, fears, and dreams that they chose to share with us. Actually, we were afraid that the remote program model via Zoom would require us to engage with youth who would be closed off and unwilling to participate. That was very far from the reality. From day one our residents brought their

energy and passion to each session, involving themselves fully to this new experience for the juvenile facility and our university. The creative writing workshops improved repeatedly week after week.

Our residents have endured more in their lives than what most individuals deal with their entire lives. Our residents have made mistakes in their lives and they are learning from those mistakes to create a better future for themselves. But their mistakes shouldn't define their character nor their possibilities.

We want to thank our residents, our leader Zach, all of our student volunteers, and the staff because together we created a space to easily build relationships with each other that dismantle the barriers between us.

The University of Dayton Cohort

Untitled

Te'Nae

- 1) Your life is worth more than you know
- 2) My love for is going to be limitless
- 3) Good is my coping skill
- 4) My mistakes are my Destiny
- 5) Do you really love me?

Untitled

Imari

1. I will find true happiness soon
2. Steak bowls from Chipotle taste great
3. Show no love, receive no pain

Untitled

Alexus

1. You're a diamond in the rough
2. Lost but not forever
3. The best food is brain food
4. Don't give up, keep going
5. Why is it this hard?

Untitled

Angel

Life: When life gives you lemons make lemonade

Love: Love hate relationship

Food: I cant wait to eat my moms food again

Advice: Honesty is key

Questions: What are you wearing Jake from state farm

Untitled

Rachel

1. I am beautiful
2. My love is special
3. I am thick and proud of it
4. I want some subway
5. Life's better with friends
6. Am I just paranoid?

Untitled

Mykala

Life – Life is one of my strongest values

Love – The love word is as strong as the hate word

Food – My favorite type of food is seafood

Advice – Just keep pushing. Never give.

Questions – Who's really there for me?

Untitled

Masonique

- I am going to remain humble through life situations
- You can never say I love you too much
- The best food is seafood
- Learn from your mistakes today so you don't make the same ones tomorrow
- The pain from some love is a little bit equal as

Untitled

Angel

I come from poverty, where I had to steal everything
I needed. Drugs was everywhere I turned even in my
veins. The streets are a cold place. Kill or be Killed, Do
what we had to do to make a living. I know more about
drugs then I do anything else. Cold winters, hot summers,
Broken doors, boarded up windows,
But im going to get myself and my family out the
mud, and right my wrongs.

Untitled

Imari

I come from the heart of the ghetto
where kids younger than me are dying

I come from drugs being the reason
why I had clothes on my back and a
bed to lay.

I come from the projects where unless
you turn on the light, the roaches gone greet
you at the door

I come from a home where promises
always get broke and men got chose first

But I'm going to be better than what
I've seen growing up

Untitled

Masonique

1. I come from the struggle where young babies
grow up with no mothers.
2. thugs on the block are tryna make another
dollar by the hustle.
3. crackheads are steady begging for cash
4. Oh look down the street it's another car crash
5. but I'm going to choose to do better
6. and when they speak on me they gone to
say yeah she came from the bottom but she's on
a higher level.

Untitled

Mykala

1. I come from Westwood, it aint too ghetto,
but it's still the hood
2. I come from living off dope money, I aint proud,
but shoot, I was hungry
3. I come from a single parent mom taking care of three,
I love the woman so much. She's the one who made me
4. But I'm going to be somebody, I know I will never
be a nobody

Untitled

Alexus

I come from my grandmothers love.

I come from the city of youngstown

I come from food stamps & welfare

I come from one of the worst parts of youngstown

I come from raising my brother

I come from an addicted mother

I come from disappointment

But I'm going to thrive regardless and break the

Chain

Untitled

Te'Nae

I come from the Dirty Slums called
Case, I come from A city filled with
youngs deaths. I come from A home
where my mom is Doing what she
gotta do for her kids without any help. I come from
a place where kids 9 and 10 is
out hustling. I come from A
place where I witnessed robberies,
but Im going to go home and be
that high school grad with No
juvenile charges and A changed
mindset.

Untitled

Rachel

I come from a place of powder
Where everyone competes for power

I come from a family you can't see
Cause we were masks that says we're happy

I come from a place of hate
Where everyone bullies to stay safe

I come from a place of homelessness
Cause jobs are something people loss it here

I come from a block of psychos
Who beat people up cause they think there whackos

I come from a poor place
Where people rob each other to their face

but I'm gonna be different
for my children

Untitled

Imari

I remember when me and my sisters was at p.o.c park and this little girl that look like the mom off rugrats threw a ball at my sister and pushed her off the swing and I dragged the girl to a mud puddle and me and my other sister threw her in the mud. the thing is she used to think she was a bully and I wasn't goin her name was shariyah and she aint have no edges. Moral of the story, behind mines, we an go to war with all yours 100 and loose no sleep.

I Remember

Te'Nae

I remember when I met you, and I didn't know how I felt. I also Remember talking to you and feeling you out to see if we were going to be cool, I Also remember how you made a joke When I was mad and I Knew we were going to be cool, I Also remember saying that I'm always going to be here for you And you saying if I need anything you're here for me.

Untitled

Rachel

I remember when the bullies saw the weakness in you. They bullied you, and I had to do something, so I fought for you cause I knew you couldn't. You were weak like me but I had a little power in me to fight, honestly I'm always rooting for you, I'll always want to be there to help you off your knees.

Untitled

Masonique

I remember when it was me and you friend and we was at a Park and we saw these girls and they was like what yall looking at do yall want to fight so you was like wassup We can throw these things all night.

Untitled

Angel

I remember when I first met Brandon. It was love at first sight! I Ask him to take me on a 4-wheeler ride, we was gone till midnight! After that we was with each other every day. A couple months later we moved in together. If anybody would get smart with him, or did him wrong, I would get smart with them!

Untitled

Alexus

I remember when my mom's boyfriend snatched up my brother and I punched him in the side of his head.

Untitled

Johnae

I think this picture is saying that the kids can be different and can live their best life. They can be whatever they want to be. They have to be someone they are not and they are wild and they have different faces but on the same face.

Untitled

Te'Nae

I see a group of people with a lot of different emotions and a lot of different backgrounds. I see broken bodies, I see mismatch clothes, I see power in their own ways. I see broken homes. I see homelessness, maybe hopelessness. I see Grown kids being forced to be an adult but still a kid in their mind.

Untitled

Rachel

Kids in this day and age don't know what they want to be. They try to be different people but it's hard when so many things happen like pandemics and protests for equal rights. Sometimes kids turn down the wrong road and end up stuck in anger and sadness or in a cell but only life was easier for kids if only there was no pressure cause it's hard to be yourself when everyone says you're someone else

Untitled

Masonique

I feel like this is a collage of kids put together from different backgrounds that is being forced to grow up faster than they want I also see two hands held out like they begging for something some of the kids don't have on shoes so they are probably struggling.

Untitled

Angel

All he looked forward to were the parties.

Until he started to get sick.

Now he is all alone trying to fit in.

Wearing his raggedy old cloth's that he always wears. Leaning away from the crowd, not knowing whether to follow the other kids or just do him.

Untitled

Alexus

As kids we are forced to change...

But regardless we ALL find

A way

Untitled

Ma-Raya

I see all different colored people. I also see kids that want to be kids but can't they struggle because they fumble they fumble but want to be humble.

Untitled

Masonique

I feel so weightless in space and I seen
Megan da Stallion doing the race She was clutching
a brief case filled with heels she bought yesterday
I love this chick so much because she has such
a pretty face.

Untitled

Rachel

What I like about space

is that I go there when my mind's in a

race it's calm, roomy and soothing and

it makes me happy it really makes me feel
joy.

Untitled

Johnae

Meteor's gliding across space.
Catching fire as it keeps going.
I would find a pizza shop labeled
"space pizza" only for \$1 for large, because
they get customers every blue moon.
I'm having a great time here.

Untitled

Angel

I feel as I am floating
like clouds.
my hair is bouncing up and down
as I float in different directions.
I looked up and my heart dropped.
In front of me was my grandpa bob.
How could this be true?
He already died on december 27 2011.
Now that he is back in my life
Imma make the most out of it.
We are both reunited and light as
Air.

Untitled

Alexus

Floating through the stars
No matter where you are
At least I'm no longer behind "bars"
I see her... the one that brings me
down to earth
She is how I know my worth
To me she's somebody to you she's nobody
her name is Masonique
and our friendship is not so bleak
She is my person

Untitled

Te'Nae

Me and Nba youngboy in space vibin.
We laughing and rapping about
Freedom. He said freedom, freedom
everywhere there's no time in the air.
Big moon, small rock, tick tock on
the clock. Alone in my mind, but
not in the sky, I see my Auntie
Approaching and give a loud
cry. We laugh and cry, but the
tears Are moving because were
in the sky.

Untitled

Johnae

1. the sunrise comes up.
I become heartless until,
Jacob comes to save.
2. When sunsets again.
I become more heartless now,
because he left me.

Untitled

Ma-Raya

I love my mom to
death touch her and
you will be laid to
rest.

Untitled

Alexus

It was cold outside
When I was removed from home
Walking in the snow sucks

Masonique is pretty
She is genuinely funny
She is My best friend

Untitled

Kaya

HOB GOBLIN
SNEAKING AROUND MY CALM SOUL
LEAVE ME ALONE NOW

I GOT ME ONLY
I WILL NOT ACQUIESE, NAH
IM TO DUBIOUS

MANIFESTATION
UNIVERSAL MESSAGES
ACCUMULATE ME /OR/ EVERYWHERE AROUND

IM WATCHING ALL
READING, OBSERVING, I KNOW
WITH MY EARS, NO FEARS

Untitled

Masonique

I was heartless til
I meet Timya and fell in love
and now she is my sunshine on a cloudy day

I like chips with dip
on the block I see all the crips
licking their lips tryna get a kiss

Untitled

Rachel

I love cats

But some people don't

I hate Jail

I am fu**ing sad

I hate life so much

Sorry I'm sad.

Brandon

Angel

Brandon

He's my forever rock

Always there when I need him

unbreakable love

Loyal to him only

Brandon is my Happiness

For him I would kill

Untitled

Masonique

This is the kind of world we live
in. Where you can't trust no one
The same people that tell you they
love you is gone be the same ones
that when times get bad holding
the pole up to you and your loved
ones head yelling bro just give
the dough up.
(can't trust no one it's me vs me)

Untitled

Jenelle

This is the kind of world we live in. The world we live in is divided in so many ways good and bad. My mom used to always say you want in one hand + sh*t in the other see which one fills up faster.

Untitled

Rachel

this is the kind of world we live in
hurtin people just fore fun. getting
angry then going off like a gun, honestly
what has this world become?

End-talk is Cheap - Actions Speak.

Kaya

This is the kind of the world we
Live in Theres the light
and the dark in this world. A lot of
this world is made from Indoctrination
not a lot of people try to expand their
knowledge or look at different perspectives.
I have met a very small amount
of people who are different. The
good may be disguised as bad. Im
grateful to even have an opportunity
to have a life on this earth b/c
I have no true Idea where Im
going next. The bad is beautiful
there's beauty in the struggle.
the world is losing Its humbleness
but a lot of us are becoming aware.
You gotta mind your business and
protect your soul and energy. you
don't got no one but yourself-watch your own
back.

Untitled

Te'Nae

This is the kind of world we live in
a world where black men cant
walk down the street without out
being A menace. A world where
little kids Grow up fast, a world
where you get shot if you're at the
wrong place at the wrong time.
A world where there is poverty
and helplessness. A world where
they take your 3rd grade test scores
to build prisons but all in all
if we keep our hope alive, Everything
will work out for its good, but the
good die young. Big facts.

Untitled

Angel

This is the kind of world we live in
a big ball of fire.

Where you can't trust anybody not
even your family.

People Join a gang Just to be a part of something.

The darkness is taking over

Untitled

Johnae

This kind of world we live in
is cruel, cold & heartless. No one really
cares about anyone anymore. "There
is plenty of fish in this dirty sea."
Someone wise told me just by the
way you can view everything &
everyone. Sit back & observe everyone
& see how they all move.

Untitled

Ariel

This is the kind of world
we live in... With Police
Brutality, racism, Hared, &
Sex trafficking

From the Inside Looking Out

Johnae, Te'Nae, Masonique, Angel
Ma-Raya, Rachel, Ariel,
Kaya, Shyeria, Jenelle

Thank you For lending us
more than enough ears.

Thank you tolerating our
nonsense

Thank you For attempting
to understand and never
Judging us.

Thank you For helping us
come alive through poetry

Thank you For taking time
out of your days to help
us expand our knowledge
and understanding

Thank you For accepting us
as the way we are and
not trying to mold us Into
something were not

Thank you For bringing
synergy to our unit

Thank you For seeing through
our negative experiences

Thank you for showing
empathy Instead of sympathy
and Last off thank you for
Listening to our stories.

Acknowledgements

- Residents
- Student Volunteers
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- Special Guest Authors and Artists
- Donors and Community Members
- Board of Directors
- Graphic Designer

Thank you for working with us to fulfill our mission and vision! We appreciate your time, talents, and treasure. This work relies heavily on collaboration, so without every stakeholder's contribution, then we would not be operational.

We want to express our endless gratitude for The Cleveland Foundation's and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award's on-going generosity.

We ask that you please consider donating because your financial contribution will sustain our ability to teach creative writing to youth who are incarcerated to empower their voices and assist in their re-entry into society. Your donation will allow us to:

- Purchase programmatic materials (e.g., writing materials, technology, personal protective equipment (PPE), snacks, and chapbooks) for our creative writing workshops.
- Compensate special guest authors and artists to facilitate one or more of our creative writing workshops with an honorarium.
- Assist our residents who are re-entering society with very little or zero access to social services and resource to prevent recidivating.
- Educate our local communities and government officials about the juvenile justice system's traumatic effect on our youth.

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scan the QR code below
with your smartphone's camera to donate!



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