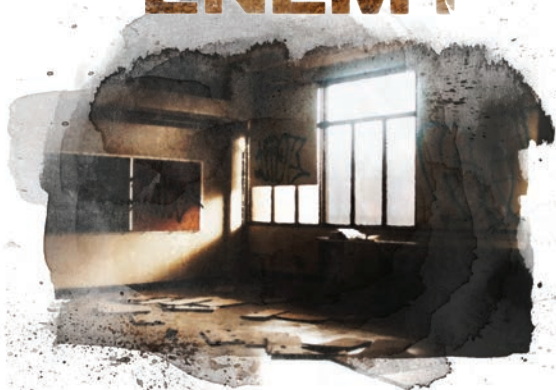


# Writers in Residence

**BE OUR  
SUPPORT  
SYSTEM**

**NOT OUR  
ENEMY**



**Baldwin Wallace University**  
**Spring 2023**

**FOR** the 49,000 juveniles  
confined in detention centers in the US.

For **THE** 2,000 youth  
confined in juvenile facilities in Ohio.

For the **WRITERS**  
in residence this spring.

Many feel invisible,  
voiceless, **AND** misunderstood.

May **THEIR** creative **WRITING** rewrite  
the preexisting narrative  
and **FREE** their voices from incarceration.

And for those no longer with us  
but remain in **OUR HEARTS AND MINDS.**

This is **FOR THEM.**

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# VISION & MISSION VALUES

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

## teach.

WE TEACH CREATIVE WRITING  
TO YOUTH WHO ARE INCARCERATED.

## empower.

WE EMPOWER  
OUR RESIDENTS' VOICES.

## assist.

WE ASSIST  
IN THEIR RE-ENTRY.

## 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.

## 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.



# SCHOOLS & FACILITIES

## ACTIVE (SCHOOLS)

1. Case Western Reserve and John Carroll Universities
2. Oberlin College
3. Hiram College
4. Heidelberg Univ.
5. Baldwin Wallace Univ.

## ACTIVE (FACILITIES)

- 1a. Cuyahoga County JDC
- 2b. Lorain County JDH
- 3c. Portage-Geauga County JDC
- 4d. Seneca County YC
- 5e. Medina County JDC

## INACTIVE (SCHOOLS)

- Bowling Green State Univ.
- Capital Univ.
- Cleveland State Univ.
- College of Wooster
- Marietta College
- Ohio Univ.
- The Ohio State Univ.
- Univ. of Toledo

## INACTIVE (FACILITIES)

- Circleville JCF
- Cuyahoga Hills JCF
- Franklin County JDC
- Hocking Valley CC
- Indian River JCF
- Lucas County JDC
- Washington County JC
- Wood County JDC

# IMPACT

We compiled these creative writing artifacts and designed this chapbook through April of 2023 to ensure its delivery at the final workshop rested in the hands of every resident published inside. As a result, the outputs reported only reflect a fraction of this cohort's and the organization's net impact from this spring program season. We survey our residents before and after each creative writing workshop to understand our outcomes. These surveys give us quantitative and qualitative data so we can maintain a high-quality program experience.

TO LEARN MORE VISIT  
[writersnresidence.org/impact!](https://writersnresidence.org/impact!)





# FOREWORD

Dear reader,

At the intersection of the arts, higher education, and the justice system, sits Writers in Residence, the only nonprofit in Ohio dedicated to creating space and time for youth in detention to reflect on their lives and express their feelings through poetry and prose during Creative Writing Workshops (CWWs). This original idea continues to anchor and propel us forward since our first pilot CWW in 2016 at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center with the support of the Carroll Ballers.

We facilitate our weekly, in-person, or remote CWWs in the spring and fall seasons for 10-15 youth inside juvenile facilities. Every workshop lasts for 3 months and each session runs for 1-1.5 hours. We contract local teaching artists to educate our residents on different writing techniques, texts, and themes from authors that identify as BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, or Midwestern with a preference for Ohioians. We involve 5-10 undergraduate volunteers from the nearby college or university to participate alongside the residents as writers in the same experience.



## Our CWWs accomplish these primary goals:

- Increase our residents' literacy levels and writing dispositions
- Build our residents' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-awareness
- Provide our residents with positive peer mentorship
- Publish our residents' creative writing into chapbooks to showcase and distribute within juvenile facilities, on campuses, and throughout the local communities
- Advocate for our residents by raising awareness and educating our communities about the justice system

Although our purpose, history, program model, and goals remain clear, the implementation of our CWWs for our youth persists with limitations and variables. Take, for example, the short amount of time in which our residents have to write, leaving few opportunities for revisions. The youth's creative writing artifacts that we publish exist unfinished oftentimes even though they would take advantage of the chance to edit their work if provided, especially as first-time writers. Finally, the juvenile facilities that we partner with operate in rural and urban communities, under strict and lenient supervision, and with staff shortages to name a few variables that affect our CWWs.

By overcoming these constraints and factors, we still empower our residents' voices. And for those reasons, I'm proud to present this chapbook: proof that freedom is possible and necessary.

Zachary Thomas  
Executive Director



## LETTER FROM THE COHORT

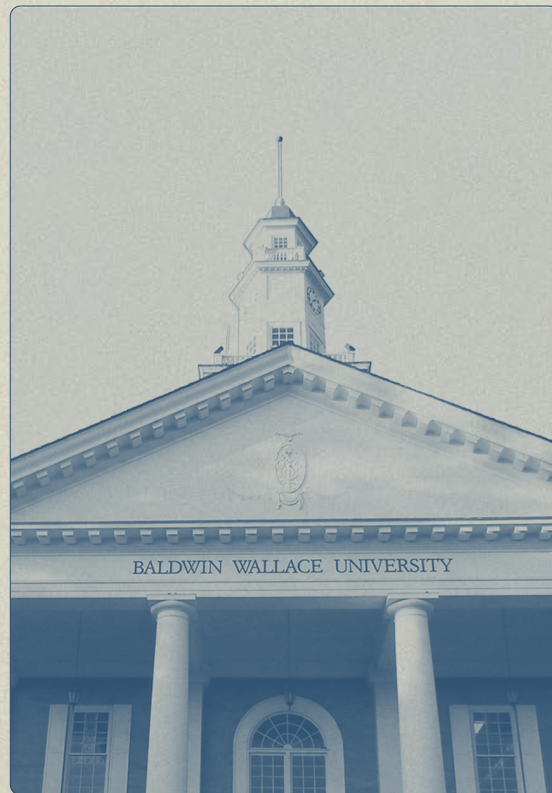
Dear reader,

We really loved connecting with the youth to help them express themselves on paper. Getting them to open up both to us and on paper was incredible. We enjoy when the residents open up and talk about their likes, dislikes, and lives in general. It forms connections between the residents and us which is ultimately why we love this program. We think a lot about the session where we talked about empathy. The kids had so many great things to say about what it meant to them. They shared stories of strength, kindness, and empathy from their own lives that were really beautiful.

These residents are going through a very difficult time in their lives, but they still bring their best to every session. Many of the residents bravely write about struggles and traumatic events from their lives. Their pieces should be approached with compassion and respect. The youth we have worked with this season have such incredible creative thoughts and so much to offer the world. It's so important to listen to what they have to say, as they all have unique experiences and perspectives.

Because of this experience, we are now more aware of what youth need in order to grow and succeed. We are so grateful for the opportunity to meet and connect with the youth we have worked with and to help them express themselves and open up their creative sides. We thank them for the moments where we learned from them and the moments where we taught them something new.

Baldwin Wallace University Cohort





## untitled

Funny quick independent/fit/just right  
Pizza is life two is good  
Live slow die fast is way  
Swim if able quick if not

C.M.

## untitled

Killua got hair like the moon, his mood is  
Like Sun he kilrr I need to like varbmiss  
He's like the letrist he fien  
Like the zoeatk for riel at

K.S.

## untitled

Im cold like ice  
Fly like a kite  
Cool like water  
In midnight  
Ive been through alot  
My pops wasnt there  
Dude couldnt even teach me how to walk  
Turning out like him  
Its time to change the clock  
I dont wanna be him  
He six feet feet under  
Dead like a rock

P.W.

## untitled

Funny, creative, smart, follower, kindhearted, good friend  
Year 16, trapped in a cell  
Adopted, but I will be loved  
Friends can be salt and pepper

J.G.<sup>1</sup>

## untitled

When I get out imma eat  
Momma told me stay on my feet  
Imma eat a good a treat  
And then imma go to sleep  
I said I want to rap  
I never wanna nap  
I wanna eat a snack  
I can't take a step back  
I gotta take a map  
Can't spend a stack

D.M.

## untitled

I'm going back to trade school to do HVAC.  
I might go get my license and then drive  
Both my vehicles.  
I going to eat all the food  
Im gonna drive my dads cars  
Im gunna have chicken tenders with fries  
Im gunna finish harry potter  
Im going to get an air frier to cook fries

J.C.<sup>1</sup>

## accused

I am all alone in my Jail cell I tend to get in my feelings  
I don't even have depression it's all of my anger  
that I can't even get that  
People say stuff about me that ain't true  
So what am I gonna do I have a right to a trial  
So that's what I'm gonna do.

W.R.



## untitled

Your Death got me feeling some typa way  
Wish I could see you every day.  
You my Blood Im yo young  
Hope you didnt go thinking I was tryna be a thug.  
Hoping for the day that someone will finally stay  
Every night for that I pray.

T.A.<sup>1</sup>

## untitled

Let's go  
Rip... tear... kill  
Kill... time to kill  
The voice

K.S.

## untitled

You tell me I can't be great  
You be throwin' shade  
Well you don't know me  
So stop talkin' with your friggin' goatee  
I be the black mamba. You be a gardner snake  
Talkin' crap on me, you got nuthin' on your plate  
Me? I just be feelin' fire  
I got the bag and all the money  
You lookin' ugly like Professor Snape  
I be beaten the ops up like Mohamad Ali  
Keep on runnin' you gonna be late  
Ima do that kung foo like friggin' Bruce Lee

B.S.

## untitled

One more year and I swear Im outta here  
Going to college tryna start new there  
The past is for the past  
Just hope in my future Im gonna last

T.A.<sup>1</sup>

## untitled

Draco  
He's not even that good.  
His broomstick  
Malfoy  
I'm not buying  
Selling

P.W.

## untitled

Still running fast. As you see, we are holding on.  
Their opponent smashed Malfoy. On tiptoes, he squeaked.  
That was an excellent idea, but it was very obvious.  
Possibly he's going to come now if they split up.  
I think he moved automatically smiling coldly at  
Malfoy. He'd seen Hags large and square.

N.C.

## untitled

"One—two—three—"  
Both of them swung their wands above  
their heads and pointed them at their opponent.  
Do you think he's alright?

D.M.



## untitled

The headmaster said, "Dumbledore, all of us have feet."

N.C.

## untitled

Wearing broken glasses around  
and spotted a bell clanged, identical cold, gray eyes  
looking lazily touch nothing, drumming his fingers  
on the counter looking sulky and bad-tempered,  
the Dark Lord disappeared.

E.F.

## untitled

Lockhart will cast our first spells. Aiming to kill,  
of course. His hat had fallen off and his wavy hair was  
standing on end. I'm going to come. Snape reached Harry  
and Ron first. Malfoy strutted over, smirking.  
We don't want any accidents.

S.D.

## untitled

A cold satisfied smile  
outta no pleasure, dreadful suspension,  
I'm afraid you're losing your touch.

L.Z.

## i don't even know

How are you?

Upset

Let's go, pudding

Shut up a minute

So hungry... for so long...

"Listen!" Said some ceiling.

W.R.

## untitled

The thing about the

Heart is to love and

Exhaustion

King Von is dead so his life is

Endfull

Y... he not from a block

J.S.<sup>1</sup>

## untitled

Middle of the dance floor.

"Welcome, Patrick! Don't mind Nick!" Shouted Sir Patrick's head from the dance floor. "If I could have everyone's attention, please, it's time for my speech!"

Icy blue spotlight. Were turning to watch his audience as the orchestra ground back into action and the ghosts swept back onto the dance floor.

J.G.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

Smiling he told the crowd I wouldn't smash into the wall and slid down to the floor.

Do you think he cares?

T.A.<sup>1</sup>



## untitled

Things about your  
Health is that it involves  
Every

Key  
Emotion  
You produce

To  
Operate as a person in

Life  
It may get  
Fearful but  
Every time

It  
Starts you

May  
Overpower  
Negatives and  
Exempt  
Your bad thoughts

N.D.<sup>1</sup>

## untitled

Thinking  
Happiness  
Exploring

Kittens  
Excitement  
Your love

Thugging it out  
Ordering food

Loving yourself  
Independence  
Freedom  
Effort

Intuition  
Spreading kindness

Care  
Anxious  
Loyalty  
Making good decisions

L.Z.

## mi kee(s) to lyphe

Time

Happiness

Economy

Kindness

Entertainment

Youthfulness

The gingerbread man

Old boomers

Love

Influences

Freedom

Education

I, and me

Socks

Five Guys

Oranges

Olive Garden

Dedication

B.S.

## safety is key!

Trust

Hope

Energy

Karma

Electricity

Year

Time

O2

Love

Insurgents

Food

Ecosystem

India

Sleep

Safety

Antimatter

Fresh water

Energy from the sun

Teamwork

Youth

J.D.

## untitled

The key is yourself

Help others

Experiencing other's pain as the same xy

Keep others close

Extreme knowledge is to be shared

Your home is where the heart is

To love others more than yourself

On and off fights

Like or not doesn't determine family

Is not always good

Feeling different about

Everyone's plans

Internal joy

Surrounding yourself with safe people

Family is safe

All lives matter

Mad isn't always final

Isn't always blood

Like yourself

Yourself

T.A.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

Temper is something that can be controlled

Healing takes time

Essembling your life will go down and up

Kindness will lead you to the gate of heaven

Everything you do will lead you down path

Young have chance to make change and make right

Talking can make things better

Opening up is relieving

Live to the fullest

Interest can take you far

Faith will help your way down the road

Entertainment and happiness makes time go fast

In life there is ups and downs

Stay on the path you want to live

K.L.

## untitled

To  
Have  
Everything

Keep  
Enjoying  
Youth

Take  
Over

Love  
Instead of  
Fighting  
Everyone

Isn't  
Same

Have  
A  
Plan.  
Please  
Inspire  
No one.  
Enjoying  
Special  
Situations

N.C.

## untitled

Trust  
Hurt  
Excitement

Kind  
Except in  
You

Teamwork  
Ordinary

Love  
Is good  
LiFe  
Enjoy

I love my life  
Splash

K.S.



## **be yourself**

To try your best in life  
Honor your father and mother  
Eat healthy

Keep your personality kind  
Eat new things  
YouTube music

Trust in yourself and don't give up  
Overcome your fears

Listen to music  
Identify yourself as who you truly are  
Funny, fast, fear, face, and food  
Even if it means to stop and think before you do

I will not lose hope  
Star Wars

W.R.

## **people say that life is hurt but love is hurt**

Life hurts when you can't find the right people  
Why is love rude.  
Why my mom say she proud but I don't believe it.  
Why she say she loves me but and she leaves me.

K.S.

## **untitled**

Am I hungry or Just Fat.

C.C.

## untitled

Am I crazy or just woke?  
Why does wrong feel so right?  
Gain it today lose it tomorrow  
It will be okay till tomorrow  
Love the pain hate the loss

I feel like an alien sometimes.  
Is she really what I need?

J.S.<sup>2</sup>

## life's tough

Being outdoors is like being in heaven.  
Turning wrenches is like turning your outlook on life  
The more you play a part in the  
world the more experience you will have.

J.C.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

1. Be careful	3. real	5. can end anytime
2. Hard	4. not a game	6. is you and what you see

1. Of what people have gone through  
2. Where we're from  
3. Of what they seen and done  
4. Of how they act and approach to you

1. Be careful who you call friends  
2. Be careful of who you mess around with  
3. act hard  
4. Failure is the key to success  
5. Don't talk about it.

W.R.

## the story of me

Music moves me through my life.

I miss my relationship so much.

If there's pizza, I'll be there.

Don't be so quick to judge.

Who do I strive to be?

I will be better than yesterday.

G.Z.

## straight outta middle school

It sucks, there is no freedom a lot of the

Time it feels like my mom doesn't understand what

I'm going through or where I'm coming from.

Parents want us to wait on them hand and

Foot and expect the world out of us but

When we want or need something its a no or

We have to earn it. They never let us go anywhere

Or do anything and expect us to be okay with that.

T.A.<sup>1</sup>

## tee[n]s

You only think that [teen's

attention is bad and impossible.] But

You do not know what I do, but I know what

I do is bad. And if I get cut you

will be mad at me for be a street

artist. But I want to be what I want to be

and I know that what I do is not good

and not good for myself and I know that

I stay to myself but I still love you

no matter what.

K.S.

## untitled

You can do whatever just in overall you

don't have as many things to take care of

an adults are always something that

really isn't true for real thats all for real

C.C.

## teenage life

It is true my generation is lazy,  
However some are not.  
Including myself in the same,  
Can we get off our phones or,  
Change our tones?  
Sometimes it's not about  
What you think we are, until  
you know  
What it's like everyday, to grow  
and change.  
At times its good,  
At times it's bad  
But I know, we can change  
the world.

R.K.

## being a teen in my shoes

It is false that teens just sit around  
All day and make bad decisions, it is false  
That teens are a waste of space and  
Need to be sent off to military school  
To "get their act together." I think being  
A teen in the system especially is very  
Hard, everyone looks at you like your less  
Than others, it makes me feel sad. I want  
Adults to realize that just because I've  
Been to jail, that doesn't mean I shouldn't  
Be allowed near your children, or allowed to  
Work at this specific job. I think adults  
Got us all wrong tbh. I think we should  
All be given 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and so  
Many chances, we're kids, we make mistakes,  
That doesn't mean give up on us , and wash  
Your hands of us. Give us the opportunity to  
Change on our own accord, be our support  
System, not our enemy.

W.R.



## teenage years for me

It is false that teens are bad kids  
by the way they dress or whatever and  
some people just don't get why teens  
are like that. So they talk bad about them.  
When I was a teen, it was hard and  
I always got in trouble for coming home  
high. To be honest it kind of felt  
like my dad had a nose for trouble.  
But, I'm glad he used to ground me  
or whatever because now I realize  
that he was just trying to  
keep me out of trouble.

J.C.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

Being a teenager can be hard.  
You want to experience things that your parents or  
guardians think is dangerous and others just wouldn't  
agree with. Some adults think we are too  
eager to grow up but,  
we really just wanna push our boundaries  
of fun. It is false that teens walk around looking for  
trouble. Not all kids with bad grades are bad kids,  
some have struggles  
all of us will never know.  
Most importantly just cause Ima a long-haired,  
Short-tempered, smart-aleck doesn't mean Ima turn  
yo daughter bad or steal from you.

J.S.<sup>2</sup>

## love yourself ♥

1. You are a beautiful person
2. You are strong and worth alot
3. You are smart
4. You are going towards great places in the future
5. You life is worth living.
6. Your nose is not that bad.

T.A.<sup>1</sup>

## affirmation station

1. You aren't a horrible person.
2. You aren't going to create more problems for people.
3. Life can and will get better, just think positive.
4. Don't play an Ace if a 2 will do.
5. Don't think of past trauma when it just hurts more.

J.C.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

1. You are good enough.
2. Keep in mind that those who don't support you only bring you down.
3. Remember to think things through and not act on your emotions.
4. Life is a gamble, play your cards wisely.
5. You are what you surround yourself with.
6. Stop letting women influence your emotions.
7. Your music slaps, never stop.

J.S.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

1. Keep in mind that I'm a good friend.
2. Remember to keep your head up.
3. You are beautiful.
4. Remember to keep your head sideways.
5. I'm a good kid.

C.C.

## affirmation to g

G you are more than what meets the eye. Remember to give yourself breaks; you are not a robot. Keep in mind, you are not a criminal, you just made a couple big mistakes. You are not perfect, but thats okay :) Remember that you have so much potential.

G.Z.

## affirmations

I can comfort others while keeping a lighthearted mood.  
I'm beautiful and smart. I play guitar and do choir, so I'm musical.  
You can fix yourself and fix your problems you made.

A.D.

## light

★ In the start,  
you are unknown.

It's yet to be seen  
the potentials.

Always make sure  
to come up from  
the dark. Everytime  
you can't see.

Because in the end,  
there is always a  
light at the end of  
the tunnel. ★

R.K.

## untitled

What if Jack wasn't frosty  
Then my cuz could be legal  
Otherwise, driving makes me bonkers.  
What if baseball had no balls  
Then I could play poppy playtime and hug huggy wuggy  
Otherwise, Wednesday Addams might get you.  
What if Tommy wasn't Hillfiger  
Then I could be happy if I was not here  
Otherwise, supernatural will come back.

B.I.

## untitled

then we go to mars  
otherwise everything could fall apart!  
If I fell out the plan  
then the world goes cold  
but, it's okay because I've got friends in all the right places.  
If I sneak out the crib  
then people will be fun  
but, I guess they were trying to teach me how to think.  
If I got caught  
then color is tasted  
but, don't you know ? we're already here.

J.C.<sup>2</sup>



## untitled

Then I could drink a bang  
Otherwise, stars look like lasers  
What if April was maren  
Then I could be free  
Otherwise, please don't repeat them words.  
What if tacos were italian food  
Then I could say hi to ZZ.  
Otherwise, bars will be bars.

T.A.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

If I go to juvie  
Then we have anchovies  
But I really really really want to succeed  
If I make it out the clink  
Then the end happened  
But, you know all the answers already!  
If I need help  
Then ice was warm  
Otherwise, I'll never have a house with a garage and a pool.  
If I go  
Then time is slower than anything.

K.L.

## untitled

If buildings weren't real  
Then I couldn't talk as a free man  
Life is a big coincidence  
If cake was bad  
Then my mom and dad would still be together  
I otherwise engaged  
If I was older I would older  
Otherwise is weird  
If TV was a munch  
Then Officer D wouldn't want to quit.

T.L.

## wack thoughts

Feet smell like cheese  
So what if I didn't make the grade  
This is weird to do  
Pork is a strange meat  
Squirrel soup? Sounds yummy  
Reassure yourself that time is what you need  
more than anything else.  
Life twice as long.  
Chairs are cold.  
People are weird but I promise I'm weirder.  
If jaws was so bad, why wouldn't they just leave the beach?  
Crispy chicken is good

K.L.

## untitled

Then I shall run  
Otherwise an eagle would be any spirit animal  
What if the sky was green  
Then he will cry  
But if found her on facebook  
If my home was gregory  
Then taco bell will rise  
Otherwise I will become James Bond  
If my mom trusted me, I could fly like a penguin  
Then the cow and pig fought  
But this isn't the end, just the beginning.

A.A.

## untitled

I miss real meat so much!!  
I need to get out of here immediately  
Burger king foot lettuce  
Run Forest Run!  
Holy cows gathering in a respite  
I miss P9 and the bomb I could cry!  
Santa isn't real btw.  
Boom goes the dynamite  
My next line gonna be fire!  
Sanity does not exist  
Have u ever seen a monkey bungee jump.

T.A.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

C found some moon rocks in the ice cream store.  
Jail makes my head hurt and it makes me sad  
45 seconds to end of time is just enough to say goodbye  
My puppy is cuddly.  
walter white and is a bad man  
Covid is dumb, masks suck  
Super Bowl ads just ain't what they used to be.  
Life is better in silence  
I don't like the winter  
Taco bell makes my stomach hurt tbh  
Here is your GRAND FINALE: love is all there is.

T.L.

## untitled

Taco bell is everything  
Sike I lied  
What time did time itself start?  
My dog is fat  
I miss my kitten Salem  
Choco chip cookies leave them out for me not for Santa  
Cleaning relaxes me  
Ride on the magic school bus  
Crocs are houseshoes and outside shoes  
I love ice cream cake  
Smarties are smelly

A.A.



## untitled

Cowboys trying to hotwire a happy meal

The bread at Outback Steakhouse is gas!

Snakes are cool

Butter i slippery

I will get your name right...one day

I want a puppy

My name is slim shady

Not the nails on a chalkboard, heebiejeebies

Fair animals smell

Strawberries and tacos

And gold rained from thunder and lightning

L.Z.

## untitled

Officer S is the best

I feel like doing 1000 sit ups

Words are difficult for frantic minds

Be happy fabrezzel

Donkeys smell like cheese

Bird is the word

Don't press the red button

Hippie beards keep the world sane

Ronald McDonald in a candy store

Jesus is king

Gats are scary

K.L.

## untitled

What if I liked blue  
Then the turtle sprinted  
But instead we carved pumpkins  
If i lived in Egypt  
Then the dog ate the fish  
Otherwise my pen bleeds drinkable water  
If lavender wasn't purple  
Then cows should be banished  
But I watch Adventure Time now  
If cows and horses weren't smelly  
Then the cookies should be thrown away

L.Z.

## untitled

The pineapple jumped off a cow  
I feel it  
I'm gonna get a lamborghini when I get out  
Startled bluejays bat against the wall  
I feel like a walking corpse lol!  
I miss fried chicken  
Forget the clocks  
Yellow is the best  
Oh my god, oh my god you guys!  
Is reality real? If it's not is it still reality?

K.L.

## untitled

I wanna sleep the rest of the day  
Goodnes, gracious, giant gallows gathering  
Hispanic food is the bomb!  
Why can't they give us real food here 😞  
I need out the clink  
My name is doug  
I'm thinking way too hard, bro.  
I feel lost ? but I know where I am?  
I really want panera like rn  
Watchout for Jamal

J.C.<sup>2</sup>

## tee grizzle chicken noodle soup

Then I wouldn't be in jail  
Otherwise weirdness is key  
If pens were red  
Then I shouldn't be here  
Otherwise crazy  
If Harry Potter wasn't magic  
Then pigs could fly  
Otherwise in distress  
If paper was red  
Then my cat ruby wouldn't scratch me as much  
Otherwise endangered.

G.Z.

## life as i live

My life started all sadness,  
and turned to madness.  
Ya I cry ery time I got beat senslesly,  
ya sighed at my peeps density.  
Ya friend's name fat lidy,  
take pitty.  
He's — sick a dis city,  
his dads lexuxes go on endlessly  
I feel dead  
always stuck in my head carelessly  
ya my freinds densly off the e\*\*\*\*\*  
the poison hit me tastlessly  
ya my minds pure insanity

B.L.

## when i get out

When I get out I am going to praise the lord  
When I get home my head is going to hit the board  
When I get up I'm going to call my friends  
When I get off the phone I'll save for the benz  
When I get the money I will buy a car  
When I get the car I will smell no tar  
When I get out I'm going to leave my past behind  
When I get out I'm going to fix my life on the climb  
When I get my life together I will be happy  
When I get out I will be dressing snappy

N.D.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

I'm gonna let everything fly, cook a big  
dinner, eat, cook another dinner, play  
xbox, then go watch a movie with my family.  
If I'm allowed outside, I would go mess  
with my friends, probably continue boxing.  
I'd also munch on some KFC.

T.L.

## untitled

Heartbreak and sadness you left me alone  
by myself but it's good now I'm in  
good health heart been broke so  
many times it melt please just don't  
leave me alone again by myself

T.M.

## untitled

Sittin in my room tears down my face  
Deep in my mind thoughts can't keep the pace  
I try not to cry  
all day cuz my homies try to pry  
I am so tired of love  
please put a bullet in the dove  
watch I and fall from God's hand's up above  
He told me to believe in him  
but this path is starting to get thin  
I be sittin in my cell  
These Demons are my friends as far as I can tell  
but it's another one those days  
cuz I don't know why I don't feel ok  
so I'm going to close both my eyes to  
focus on pain it because my mind alone in  
my brain  
the rest of my family has left a stain  
everyone worring if I creep  
cuz they be using meds to sleep  
But I worring man cuz my conscience is like Mr. Clean.

T.A.<sup>2</sup>



## untitled

I got played like a fiddle  
Been in here since I was little  
I have been in pain  
This life make me use a cane

K.L.

## the hard times

wish I could take back the stuff that I said  
seem like every night I sit up depressed in my bed  
I cannot compress these thoughts that enter my head  
sometimes I regret some of the people I met  
I keep writing this book I've read

J.C.<sup>2</sup>

## in my feelz

You say you love me, but do you really  
girls all up on me, they be actin silly  
now I'm in jail, ion get no play  
I be sayin I miss you bae  
I'm feeling crazy in my cell  
when I get out, who can tell?  
all these thoughts running thru my head  
I really just missing bed.  
You sat there and broke my heart  
now my chest heavy  
can't get my breath to start  
used to wake up n eat cold ramen  
now ion eat like the common  
they make us stand up tall like a soldier  
thats the real chip on my shoulder

G.Z.

## no soul

Use to have a heart of gold  
but ever sinse that day it's only been cold  
I still have a heart but got no soul  
It's like having a ball with no goal  
the hole inside of me can't get full  
even when that stuff should be filling

J.S.<sup>3</sup>

## cedar point

At Cedar Point, I went with a huge friend  
group we ended up getting separated from each other  
at like 2:30 and didn't find each other till 7. We went  
with 7 people. And we ended up calling each other  
giving each other hints about where we were G  
was not enjoying this. However, the rest of us were.

A.O.<sup>1</sup>

## what being a teen is like

Being a teen is harder than adults think.  
They think we get it easy  
with all our new tech  
and with how we are taught  
when in reality we are suffering  
on the inside of us.  
On the inside, it's like a warzone  
and when our parents blame us  
for everything that happens  
when it is our fault  
we try again and again  
to please them and make them happy  
and it doesn't work and never will  
but this has just made us stronger.  
We ended up having the highest work ethic  
out there in the world, one day  
we will run the USA and we will  
change the world and show our  
parents that we aren't who they say we are.

N.D.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

Then I can go on vacation  
if im getto you are too  
Then the cat was purple  
if the car is speeding they will get pulled over  
Then I will go swimming  
I love cheese  
Then the food came alive  
if you get in trouble at school you will get in trouble at  
home  
Then I will get ice cream.  
I want a bed

N.L.

## untitled

if the cow jumps over the moon  
Then the dog lost his Ears  
If it rains roads will be flooded and cars will stop  
Then I will cuddle with my dog  
If im dwade from Obn than I dont mess with te opps  
Then the sky was falling  
If you throw rock's at a car you will get the cops called  
Then I will smell bacon cooking.  
If you can jump  
Then he blew his nose  
If you break your arm you will have surgery

A.O.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

If the train

Then I will sit outside

if the cow has spots

Then he was blue

if you throw a football at a window the window break

Then I will cry

I like cats

Then it was inside out

If you crash a bike you will get hurt

Then I will travel to Europe.

I like me chickens

T.C.

## untitled

1. I was born in the year of the blue blanket

2. My mother was A leather belt

3. And my father, a can of peanut's

4. Is it any wonder I grew up to be a kind of cross  
between spongbob

5. and a rattlesnake

6. Take a look at me. I am tired, Hungry, and mad

7. Is it any wonder that at night I still sometimes have  
nightmares about clown's with there red ballon

A.O.<sup>2</sup>

## untitled

1. I was born in the year of the green blanket
2. My mother was a Black spatula
3. and my father, a Train of thought
4. Is it any wonder I grew up to be a kind of cross  
    between harry Potter
5. and a Panther
6. Take a look at me. I am hungry, happy, and Chill
7. Is it any wonder that at night I still sometimes  
    have nightmares about my mom dying from cancer.

N.L.

## untitled

1. I was born in the year of the Xbox
2. My mother was a knife
3. and my father, a glasses
4. Is it any wonder I grew up to be a kind of cross  
    between Harry potter
5. and a cats
6. Take a look at me. I am tired, bored, and wicked
7. Is it any wonder that at night I still sometimes  
    have nightmares about spiders and bugs crawling all  
    over me.

T.C.

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 create personal goals, develop valuable life skills, and continue to build their self-esteem. Throughout the 12 weeks of the CWWs, we inform our youth about the RMI, emphasizing that they have the opportunity to engage with an adult mentor from their home community. For residents who express an interest, we coordinate with the juvenile facilities to contact their guardians and then connect them with a mentor.

The youth and their guardians create target goals to pursue over 12-18 months. Then, our mentors work directly with their mentees to build relationships and develop life skills. 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.

#### GOALS:

- Provide our mentees with positive peer mentorship to cultivate their trust in others and themselves.
- Build our mentees' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-awareness.
- Facilitate the design and implementation of our mentees' reentry care plan that details SMART goals for them to be successful.
- Connect our mentees to local social services and community resources including education, employment, housing, transportation, food security, and physical and mental health support systems.
- Create a safe and confidential atmosphere for our mentees to grow and learn alongside their mentor.

To our readers, 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. Scan the QR code to apply!

#### INVOLVEMENT:

- Meeting for 2-4 hours every month with a mentee.
- Reporting on engagements and accomplishments with a mentee.
- Cultivating a relationship with a mentee for 12-18 months.

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



Reach out to us at  
[info@writersnresidence.org](mailto:info@writersnresidence.org),  
[writersnresidence.org](https://writersnresidence.org),  
 or any social media platform.

And a special thanks to the following:

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- Residents and Juvenile Facility Staff
- Student Volunteers, Transcribers, Cohort Advisors, and Mentors
- Staff, Teaching Artists, Production Manager, and Printer
- Board of Directors, Community Partners, and Donors

It takes a team to achieve what we do, so thank you to everyone involved!




### Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards\*



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# WAYS TO GIVE

**THIS CHAPBOOK IS ONLY AVAILABLE  
IN EXCHANGE FOR A DONATION.**

Your support directly benefits our youth  
through education and reentry.

**\$10** – This gift covers the cost of a chapbook printed by  
Outlandish Press in Cleveland, OH.

**\$100** – This contribution allows a local teaching artist to  
facilitate a creative writing workshop at a juvenile facility.  
Or, this gift matches a resident with an adult mentor in their  
community.

**\$300** – This donation sustains the organization's daily  
operations to provide its programs and initiatives.

**Visit [writersnresidence.org/donate](https://writersnresidence.org/donate) to give  
or scan the code below.**



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