



*Voices From Behind The Walls*

2019

*For all youth in Ohio who are incarcerated so  
their voices may be freed, heard, and  
understood as a call to reform the juvenile  
justice system.*

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# Letter from the Program Director

Dear reader,

In Ohio, there are close to 2,100 youth in the state's custody according to the Sentencing Project's report from 2015. Ohio's Department of Youth Services recorded a daily facility population of 530 juveniles at all of their prisons and treatment centers, 53% of juveniles are black, and the county with the highest admissions is Cuyahoga with approximately 20%. The Justice Policy Institute highlighted in their 2014 report that it costs approximately \$200,000 to incarcerate a juvenile for a year compared to approximately \$10,000 to educate a youth for a year in Ohio.

These facts only illuminate a small cog of the juvenile justice system's overall mechanical design that for many youth break down their contact with the outside world, their hopes and dreams, and their human dignity.

For 12 weeks, our residents produced creative writing during workshops designed to teach them about different genres from diverse authors so their voices may be freed, heard, and understood by you as a call to reform the juvenile justice system because these are just kids locked inside cages.

Before you read this chapbook, I want you to open your mind and your heart because our residents have done the same to share their work; I want you to separate our residents from qualifiers such as juvenile, delinquent, felon, convict, gang-banger, and criminal because these terms don't define our residents. Then, after you read this chapbook, I want you to ask questions and search for answers; I want you to share this chapbook with everyone around you; and I want you to remember what my mentor Dr. Philip Metres told me: "Their souls are the art."

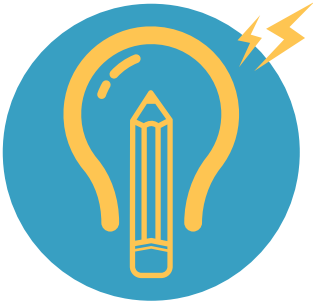
Despite being broken down by the system, by life, by fear, our residents managed to transfer their souls through writing for you to read.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zachary Thomas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Zachary" written above the last name "Thomas".

Zachary Thomas  
Program Director for Writers in Residence

# Mission



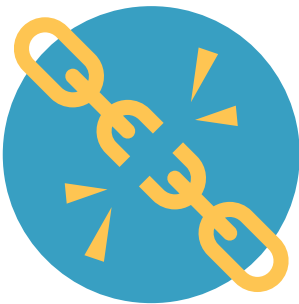
## TEACH

creative writing to youth who are incarcerated in jails and prisons.



## FOSTER

a genuine, long-lasting relationship with the residents.



## FREE

their voices through the distribution and showcase of their creative writing in published chapbooks shared with the community.

# Impact Report

This impact report summarizes all of our cohort's work during the fall semester from August to December:

4 Cohorts

29+ Student Volunteers

66+ Residents

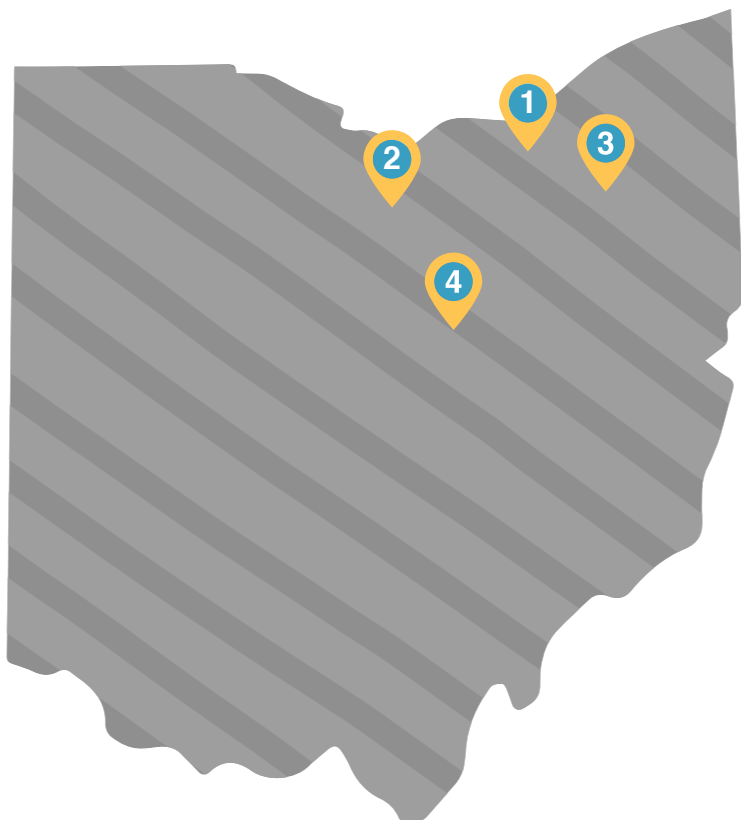
72+ Hours

These totals highlight our program's expansion and development with more cohorts from colleges and universities employing our mission and vision at juvenile detention centers across Ohio. If we compare these totals with the impact report from 2017, which marks the origin of the program, we would see a tripling and quadrupling difference in the number of residents, student volunteers, and service hours.

Visit [writersnresidence.org/impact](http://writersnresidence.org/impact) to learn more.

# Cohorts

- 1 John Carroll University at the Cuyahoga Hills JCF
- 2 Oberlin College at the Lorain County JDH
- 3 Hiram College at the Portage-Geauga County JDC
- 4 College of Wooster at the Indian River JCF





# Letter from the Cohort

Dear reader,

This year's Cohort has been the largest group yet. Although challenging, it has been the most rewarding experience to grow in fellowship alongside the residents of the Cuyahoga Hills Correctional Facility. We've had the privilege of watching these young men grow in their writing while developing our own skills as well. From writing our own raps to creating poetry based off famous artwork, we have laughed alongside one another and cried together during dark times. Through this all, we have formed a bond of companionship. It has been an honor to get to know each individual in our group and to transcend the division that so often obstructs this sort of community to flourish.

Each year, as Writers in Residence's grows, more and more people are able to experience the power of expression and freedom of voice. We are not meant to be caged. We are grateful for this opportunity to learn from these men, to witness their passion, hope, and talent. The friendships we have forged have allowed us to see each other's humanity, and to move beyond our differences. This experience has not only shed light on injustices involved in the criminal justice system but has reminded us of our inherent human dignity and the fact that we belong to one another.

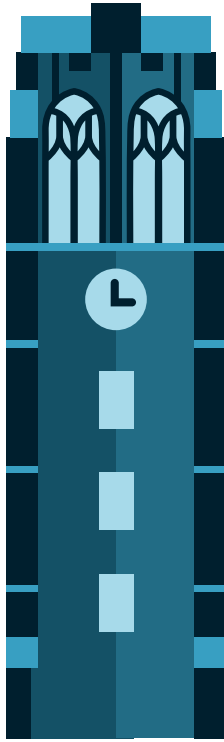
Please read this chapbook with this quote in mind:

“People are more than the worst thing they have ever done in their lives”

– Helen Prejean

Sincerely,  
The John Carroll Cohort





# John Carroll University

*Cuyahoga Hills JCF*

# Woke Up

*Tevin*

I woke up to the fact that  
I am a new man that  
I have a new mind and everything  
inside feels brand new older  
in a way but in others everything is  
the same I walk these halls  
leave the childish fights in my  
wake all because I now have  
learned that most things in  
this place are truly fake plastic  
stuck in place like little pawns  
in a big a\*s game played  
by this system the puppets to  
the man and all of the people  
here are his fans his smile is  
fake painted on a porcelain vase  
I have to realize that I'm  
stuck here 'til I walk  
through those gates and see  
my father's face finally free

# 100% Me

*Josh*

Would you look at me different if I told you everything I've been through. Let's see.

Well at the age of 7 I was in a car accident with my mother, three brothers, and stepfather. My mother died in that car accident. She was thrown out of the car by the momentum of the car rolling. After the car stopped rolling, my brother Jason broke his leg, my little brother Aaron had teeth knocked out, my brother Jeff had nothing wrong. He manage to roll out of the car without getting injured. Me on the other hand, I was stuck underneath the roof of the car. My brother Jeff pulled me from underneath the car. When he pulled me from underneath the car our attention was drawn to a bunch of people running over to surround someone laying on the road. Me and my brother followed suit. We ran over to see who they were surrounding. When we got to see who it was laying on the road we started crying. It was our mother who looked as if she was dying. When we saw her, she looked at us and said our names and that was the last thing she said.

At the age of 15 I witnessed my brother Jeff get shot 6 times. Man I tell you when I saw that my mindset changed. I thought my brother died right in front of me. So I started to carry a gun because if I saw the n\*\*ga who shot my brother he was going to feel the same pain my brother felt, maybe worse. I probably would have killed him with no thought.

At 16 my brother got into another car accident that put him in a coma for a week and a half. He never been the same since then. Also at 16 I got my first body.

At 17 I got arrested for the case I am incarcerated for now. I shot a Euclid police officer. I did four years for that and now it led up to the point in my life where I am telling you about me.

So the question still stands: do you look at me differently based on all the things you know I've been through?

# Court

*Jaylyne*

I'm going to face my biggest fear tomorrow when I go in front of the judge and she's asking me a series of questions on why she should let me out of jail and I just feel so nervous and scared because it's like if I say the wrong thing then she will keep me.

# Six-Words Can't Describe The Struggle

*Kaleb*

1. Six-words can't describe the struggle.
2. Life isn't about the party anymore.
3. Trenches that I dug raised me.
4. So many thoughts I can't think.
5. F\*ck my life somebody help me.
6. Behind the walls sh\*t gets real.
7. Drugs and guns are both evil.
8. Your future are the present choices.
9. Knowledge is key to all success.
10. Six-words is all you need.
11. Get trashed on Friday and Saturday.
12. Drink Friday, Drink Saturday, Sunday Church
13. Show me how you get crazy.
14. Born to fail taught to succeed.

# Money

*Corwin*

Make Money

Don't Let

It Make

You.



# MPR

## *Jaylyne*

Money, power, respect, loyalty, ambitious, honest  
Try to convince me to crash I never go for the bait  
Family first but sometimes they the worst  
Broken so long thought I was cursed  
Crazy thing about the justice system you doing time [away]  
They think its justice for you  
Touchdown to cause hell  
Product of what raised me  
Prison is modern day slavery  
Knowledge is power. Street is sour  
Get rich or die trying

# My New Friend

*Tevin*

Gone with the wind but when I  
inhale the icy sweet cloud of the  
infused smoke I'm back to myself  
thanks to my new best friend M\*ry J\*ne  
in all her beautiful glory and fume  
there is an explosion of pleasure and  
pain relieving numbness all my problems  
are gone just like that I pull back  
the flame and watch the inferno slowly  
blanket the earthy green surface  
as I blow out the cool white  
cotton cloud I let the relaxation  
set in like a dream possessing  
my body the slow calmness calms my  
mind and falls over me like a  
comforting touch from my mother  
all thanks to my new best friend  
M\*ry J\*ne

# Homesick

## *Eris*

Being locked up before Christmas Eve is hurtful  
missing mom at home hurt me  
every time when I hang up that  
phone in JDC but now I'm in CHJCF  
and a newborn niece too pretty, mom  
writing me sending pictures and  
telling me to keep my head up  
my emotions are kicking I miss my  
family.

# Missing Home

*Dalton*

I miss the home I was raised in. For 12 years I learned to read, love, hate. I learned how to walk and fight, I was taught that a family starts somewhere. The day you were taken away from me I screamed and cried so hard, my father put me where no one could hear me. I couldn't talk for months, vocal cords damaged. I still hear the ringing cries of my young self, with you gone, so my mother and big brother left too away to another family, and with them so my heart left leaving a hole gaping, bleeding, filling up temporarily with something dark. I miss my home, my family. Forever gone.

# Beautifully Painful

## *Kaleb*

Shadows in the dark  
Creeping up silently now  
To take me away

Wasting my life now  
Just trying to find myself  
Searching for nothing

Beautiful grey eyes  
Brown hair cannot help but stare  
Sounds weird but it's true

Fall foliage falling  
Indescribable to me  
Beautiful as ever

Halloween spooky  
October monsters showing  
Big Jack-O-Lantern

Lower than before  
Cannot help but be lonely  
Momma it's okay

# Dreams of Death

*Jonathan*

Dreams of playing tag with ghosts  
What is the meaning of it=  
Am I trying to find someone?  
Or are they looking for me  
The feeling of a great longing  
Almost makes me a little confused  
Was it someone close to me?  
Was it someone that I love?  
I think of that one person  
And try to call them daily  
They haven't picked up the phone  
That person came to die  
If that person died that night  
What am I to live for?  
Is there any hope for me?  
If there is I can't see

# On My Own Time

*Kaleb*

Fall: Red, yellow, green, and orange trees  
that's when we know it's fall.

All these beautiful colors overlooked by a sky full of blue.

Each day and every single one outstandingly beautiful like you.

# Pieces

*Dalton*

Pieces broken  
apart they hold their own story  
to each their own  
together they form  
what you see today  
look closely  
and you'll see  
me.



# Stay Solid

*Kaleb*

I can't write much about this subject because it's something I'm going through as we speak and I'm just trying to move on from it. Writing about it and thinking about it makes me super depressed and upset. I am not saying this to be a cop-out or anything I'm just very touchy about this right now and don't want to talk about it. I feel uncomfortable because I know it's going to make me down and depressed again. I'm just trying to move on from it rather than write or think or speak about it.

I knew I loved her but didn't know how much I loved her until she was gone. One thing I learned is that no matter how much love you give some people still sh\*t on you. I let this break me but now I'm looking back and using it as a lesson and using it to help shape the man I'm becoming. Still haven't let her go and I won't that's because I love her and told her I would never give up. Every day I sit in jail staring at her pictures knowing I'll never love you the same. Dirt on my name for who I was but you let people's opinion of me not get to you and you still chose to be with me. I got locked up and you let everyone take over you. Just know that no matter I'll always love my boo.

# Freedom

*A.F.*

I will be free one day. When I call my family they start to cry. But I tell them I will be home soon. I tell them to keep me in their prayers until I come home. I let everyone know I will be free one day. To keep our freedom, don't do drugs and stay out of trouble because life will not last forever. So spend as much time you can while you're alive with your family and friends. I know how it feels to be locked up and not be home with your friends and family. Freedom should be your everything to you and me. When you are locked up, you have no freedom to run and play. So I know it stinks to be locked up far away from your loved ones. When you call them you tell them you are ready to come home and you are done getting in trouble with the law. I'm so done with getting locked up. I know how every young man feels getting locked up. I've been there. I know how it feels.

# Love is Evil

*Dalton*

Love is evil spell it backwards

No hand is given only taken

Broken glass inside me hide me

Promises made false words remain true

Lost and broken words unspoken needed

Friends will go I will stay

# Every Night...Every Year...Every Day...I'll Be Fine

## *Dontay*

every night  
i cry myself to sleep  
went to jail  
and lost my heart  
when i dream  
all i see are strange things  
i'm dead  
trapped in the dark  
but i'll be fine...oh i...will...be...fine

every year  
i always see different things  
i don't know where to start  
i'm learning to cherish finer things  
Wizard of Oz don't have a heart  
but i'll be fine...oh i...will...be...fine

every day  
i'm waiting to sing  
just like  
Emery Clark!  
life don't mean  
go for finer things  
but don't deal yourself short  
but i'll be fine...oh i...will...be...fine

# Man to Man

## *Dalton*

Man to man

Eye to eye

He challenged me

Moments fly by

Blood seeps on the floor

My clothes, my soul

Unchallenged now

I won

He's gone

Never

To

Return

# Lost

*Jonathan*

Is it up or is it down?

Is it left or is it right?

I look around with a frown

I seem to be lost tonight

# Mother

## *Orion*

I have a good mother and she's very sweet. During fun times she always tickleb my feet. When I'm down or drowning in self-doubt all I have to do is call her name and she will let me out. We have been there for each other always through the thick and thin when there is a secret that I didn't know she would let me in. She will never leave my heart no matter what she does. She's my mother, she's my one true love.

# Be Still My Heart

## *Dontay*

be still my heart  
beating  
trying to burst out my chest  
soul leaving  
crying  
like burning flesh  
body hearing  
thoughts creeping  
thinking about death

be still my heart  
and let the time come  
nice try  
wrong day  
thoughts and mind go too sleeping  
i'm old  
but never gone  
here  
like  
Morgan Freeman

be still my heart  
i know it hurts to hurt the people you love  
they call me a criminal  
pretense unknown,  
bringing peace like a dove  
heart shown, i hate to save a grudge,  
i'm all alone,  
but hanging on 'cause i know  
God still here!



# I Have An Angel

*Orion*

I have an angel with me in my life. She resides with me in every moment of my life. From the moment she emerged she owned my heart and soul. She brings me the greatest joys. We are linked spiritually and physically. She has the greatest beauty I have ever seen. I have written of the likes of her red hair, eyes of the sea. A heart capable of capturing a soul of anyone or anything that comes near. She has a power. She's strong, beautiful, powerful in spirit, graceful, delicate, charming and funny. She's my smiling angel my baby my Sophie.

# Saddened

## *Dontay*

i don't belong, like a body six feet under i'm gone...  
my heart is craving death for hunger...  
my body is aching with pain all over...  
people crave and left like soldiers...  
baby in my arms, in my heart yeah i'm holding her...  
you ever sung a song in the dark like a crazed prisoner...  
in the box...  
caged like an animal...  
my mind blocked like a tile on the wall...  
i'm starting to fall...  
tired of standing tall...  
trapped behind these walls...  
don't wanna be alive...at...all...at...all...  
they gave up on me...  
promise to never leave me lonely...  
this ain't music...this ain't Sony...  
my pain is real...  
my life ain't phony...  
dangerous and maddened...  
what's wrong with me?...oh...  
just saddened.

# Outcast

## *Kaleb*

Everything goes stone cold and rock solid like a body that's been in a casket for years that how your mind feel. Hopeless and powerless. The depression hits harder than a bullet causing more damage mentally than you have ever experienced before. Feeling like a dead rose you never know when your life will come back and your colors will shine again. So tensed up mentally you feel like your mind and thoughts are being squeezed and squashed to bits and pieces never knowing if you'll get yourself back together ever again. My life consists of standing behind one-way glass hoping no one will see the pain on the other side. So many thoughts run through your mind. So much pain. What do I do, forget or forgive? Every day the happiness we used to have flickers on and off in my mind like a light I try to use it to help me find my way through this darkness but it seems as if the light isn't bright enough or maybe it burned out because I feel as if I'm forever lost in my emotional pain and darkness.

# Cesar

## *Dontay*

cold night  
lost like an unbeliever  
moonlight  
shoot for the stars  
they call that...  
an achiever  
stare at the light  
you go blind  
shivering,  
need a heater  
you know i like too rhyme  
they call me “animal,” they call me  
“creative,” i might go tonight  
in the casket i look like a  
sleeper...never go put up a fight  
you’ll never beat her  
women want love – it’s hard to find don’t you be a cheater,  
stop lyin’ – she stop cryin’ – i’m talking to cesar...cesar...cesar

# Associates

## *Eris*

My friends miss me. People in jail calling  
me bro. I wanna run around with the  
same people. I don't wanna hang out  
with new ones.

GTA 5 online I'm chillin' posted at the gas  
station in my all red and black Zortiho  
and someone that's in all blue comin'  
from the store come out and all blue cars  
come and throw sticky bombs at  
me. Then I die.

# Darkness

## *Orion*

Take your book bag, my mother tells me.

I ignore her.

How can you go to school without a pen or paper, she shrills?

I pick it up and walk out the door.

She smiles satisfied.

What she doesn't know is that it's empty!

I'm empty.

It's easier to let yourself drown.

Why struggle and slip? Try swim and choke?

It's better to let go now.

The water is black and cold and deep and dark.

I slip beneath.

It's so easy.

Teachers ask for assignments.

Gossip and whispers surround us.

I'm starting to feel the darkness I let go.

I swim below everything.

I see only the ripples coming from the surface.

Nothing scares me here below

I've seen it done. It chilled with it. My mind wanders to the fact that I'm lost, brokenhearted that I'm not with her. So I keep sinking to the bottom.

There are monsters here below.

Dark some of them.

Beautiful with black hair one of them.

I can swim around. In my own sorrow.

In my own anger.

No one notices or if they do, they understand and swim by.

Better to feel anger than sorrow.

Better to feel nothing than to feel sorrow.

Better not to feel.

But yet I have feelings for her, always did. She was there for me always.

For her something inside of me wants to rise up out of the dark cold water.

Wants to feel her warm body on my wet cold skin.

Run along the beach with her and laugh with her and feel the warm sand on our cold feet and leave the pain and scars buried beneath.

# Poetry Anthem

## *Dontay*

scramble make my mind itch  
Ice Cube got the greatest diss  
pipe down  
don't talk  
thoughts creeping  
Myles Garrett blitz  
what's going on  
who a part of this  
wing chun, karate kick, karate kid, served a bid,  
lip split  
face off the grid  
my heart sit  
gotta gift  
it's some piff  
MJ's greatest hit  
all his albums  
everyday we lit  
Dontay doing it with great  
passion  
O's for treat sample  
you ready to introduce?  
Introduce  
Poetry Anthem.



# Wasted Time

*Jonathan*

I sit and watch the old clock  
As it slowly ticks away  
My time here is almost up  
And I've got nothing to say

# Alone

*Eris*

Personally I wish I was a better child  
growing up I ain't have nothing so being  
alone left me running wild.

# Cliffhanger

*Jonathan*

Sometimes it's not the cliffhanger itself but what comes after. A cliffhanger doesn't have to be just in a good book, it could be anywhere. Life can be a cliffhanger. When have you ever known what would happen in the next 20 years? When I was 2 I didn't know I would be neglected by my mother. When I was 4 and moved in with my grandparents I didn't know I would be adopted by them 6 years later. What I'm trying to say is that I'm scared of the unknown.

# Pain is Real

## *Orion*

Let me tell you one of the most shocking things you'll ever know about me.

So the pain is real. Ya I know is what everyone tells me. It's always I know. But if you really knew you would try to help me. If you really cared you wouldn't have just walked pass when I was drenched in blood crying sad from the pain you've inflicted on me. I'm dead. How did you not know that and you have the guts to say ya I know. You didn't know you never knew I suffered from being raped, beaten, stabbed, cut and all you had to say was I know. If this is life then why should I live. Why should anyone? I hope you find help from someone. At least that will make one of us.

I can't do this on my own.

# Wish

*Jonathan*

Sun sets every day  
As does the moon every night  
Let the stars shine bright

Shine bright little star  
Show your great beauty to all  
Don't you ever fall

Should you ever do  
Fall gracefully with a wish  
Sounding like a swish

Wishing for a life  
And I get the opposite  
Well ain't that some sh\*t

I am still waiting  
For a life that I wished for  
It's in front of me

It's cold eyes staring  
I'm wishing for something else  
Anything but life

I wish for a wish  
To be able to go back  
To the life I had

Don't wish for a life  
Wish for the life that you have  
Not a different one

While in doing so  
You're doing your whole self-worth  
You're your own person

# Plea For Death

*Tevin*

Death draws me in like a  
warm welcoming friend to the  
open wound I will tend watch  
the red river flow with scarlet  
pools stupid fools don't you see  
what's being done to me all this  
death takes my breath I gasp  
for air will I be spared  
are you even aware of what fights  
within me every time god takes  
one of you away my faith will stay  
strong for you and the fact that  
you are above keeping me strong  
I love you for sure the pain is  
too much to endure is this the end  
for me I think I can see the  
light the coppery smell the screams  
as I take flight and say  
goodbye to life and  
die for the final  
time

# I'm Sorry

## *Orion*

Screeching tires shattering glass twisting metal, fiber glass the scene is set it all Ojo es Black. The curtain raised, the final act. Sirens ringing in the night sounds of horror, gasps of fright. Intense rain, the smell of blood tearing eyes begin to flood.

They pull out bodies one by one. What's going on we were having fun? My friend is missing what did I do? Her belongings everywhere in the road there lies her shoe.

A man is leaning over me and looks into my eyes. What were you thinking son? Did you really think you could drive= He pulls out a sheet still looking at me only if you would have called mom or dad you'd still be alive. I start to scream I start to yell but no one can hear me. No one can tell they put me in an ambulance. They take me away. The doctor at the hospital exclaims, DOA. My father is in shock my mother is in tears. She collapses and in grief overcome by fear. They take me to this house and place me in this box. I keep asking what is happening but I can't make it stop. Everyone is crying my family is so sad. I wish someone would answer me. I'm starting to get mad. My mother leans over and kisses me goodbye. My dad is pulling her away while she is screaming why. They lower my body into a dirt grave. It feels so cold I yell to be saved. I see an angel I begin to cry can you tell me what is happening? She tells me that I have died. I can't be dead. I'm still so young. I want to do so many things. What about college or graduation day? What about a wedding? Please I want to stay. Looking at my family I say my last goodbye. I'm sorry I disappointed you dad, mamma please don't cry. I didn't mean to hurt you or cause you any pain. I'm sorry that all you're left with is a grave that bears my name. The plans for my future now buried in a grave. It was a stupid thing to do. I wish I could take it back. But the curtain is being lowered now so end my final act.

# Real Life

*Tevin*

Life is a joke for those  
who care people stop and stare  
well aware of where I've been  
and who I am then again  
why do I care they say I'm  
a menace and that's fair but  
look out and see the places I'm  
going not where I've been I  
ask myself when will it all  
end when we walk around  
the bend and see an old  
friend and they pretend you don't  
exist you're a name on a list  
not hard to miss and you know  
how they describe me 220366 and  
I'm pissed so this is all I'll  
say stay out of my godda\*n  
way



# Here to You

*Tevin*

The day my brothers left I  
thought I would never write again  
but then I met the man who  
helped me realize something I didn't  
find out 'til recently there are  
people who can help me be me  
again the way you said you  
read all my sh\*t the first  
day I honestly had no clue  
what to say in some way  
you made my brother reappear  
since that day you have made  
me become myself again and  
I can't find a way to say  
this other than thank you  
I never thought I would  
be the real me again and because  
of you I can thanks man

# I Wonder?

*Josh*

Sometimes I wonder do I leave a permanent spot in her head like she does to me?

Sometimes I wonder does she think of my smile as frequently as I do hers?

Sometimes I wonder do I give her butterflies like how she gives me?

Sometimes I wonder does she get nervous around me like how I do around her?

Sometimes I wonder will she give me a chance?

Sometimes I wonder will she ever understand?

Sometimes I wonder what does her average day look like?

Sometimes I wonder what do we have in common?

Sometimes I wonder what she fantasizes about?

Sometimes I wonder what is her dream?

Sometimes I wonder what does she wonder?

# Unspoken

## *Dalton*

Eyes blue like the sea  
Attitude and personality you never could forget  
The looks she gives kill

Attraction unspoken forever that way  
Will she ever know I think not  
Like autumn it dies inside

Fear upon fear in me  
Fear of the unknown pulls me deep  
Let it go and die

# Do You Know?

*Josh*

Do you know how it feel to lose your mother?

Do you know how feelings work?

Do you know why?

Do you know why I write?

Do you know where these feelings come from?

Do you know how it feels to not have a father?

Do you know how it feels to be abandoned?

Do you know where I'm coming from?

Do you know how I feel?

Do you know that I have dreams?

Do you know history repeats itself?

Do you know I like her?

Do you know?

Do you know her eyes are blue and could make you fall in love?

Do you know she seems perfect?

# HER

*Josh*

Her smile is the most beautiful

Her eyes blue like the sky

Her voice beautiful like an angel

Her swag is unique

Her personality will draw you in like a magnet

Her independence is so attractive

Her body is hypnotic

# Just Can't Wait

*Corwin*

Have fun with no clothes

Dark night no Batman

But I feel like Superman

Me and you just can't wait 'til tonight.

# Love Her

## *Eris*

Everyone is saying she's fake but she's been the realest in my life. They want me to lose her.

My mom is sick, I'm far from home. I hope I make it out of this hell hole to take care of my mother.

# Letter To My Brotha!

Bro! There isn't enough I can say or do to show you I love you man like. I will give you half of everything I own. I will walk in front of a train for you. I will take a bullet for you. Matter of fact f\*ck 1 bullet I will take as many as I have to. This is for my mud brotha if I don't know nothing I know he a whole 100. This is for my blood brotha gotta stick togetha all we got is each other. I'll ride for you n\*\*ga 'cause we walk togetha. Split what's mine 'cause we started together. It's a cold world I hope you don't change. I'll die for you n\*\*ga hope you feel the same way. If I ever see the day where they pay me a mill ticket best believe you gettin' half. This for my brotha LEAK if I got it then you got it my n\*\*ga I swear to God. I'm with you wrong or right. When the ops come we was shooting with each otha. When the hurricanes came we was stacking with each otha. I can't wait to get some money to ice my n\*\*ga out. I'm down to ride for my brotha. Can't no n\*\*ga talk bad about my brotha. If I ain't got nobody I got my brotha. If he shoot I'm shooting. If he fights best believe we dubbin' 'em. My brotha won't change on this n\*\*ga for nothing. I remember them nights on the unit reminiscing about when we was out. Talking about what we gonna do when we get out. Like Lil Dirk said: "Mud brothas different mothas not blood brothas but I love 'em." Even though we blood. If I get killed just know bro you gonna have everything I own. If I die with kids bro please look after my lil n\*\*gas for me. I swear to God can't no one tell us sh\*t 'bout each other. Like we know things 'bout each other pops don't even know. Man bruh I love you my n\*\*ga through this letter you should know how much.

Love,  
Josh





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- Rachel
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- Anthony
- Zach

# Vision



We work towards reducing our residents' recidivism rates by increasing their literacy levels through creative writing that gives them the ability to critically think, creatively express, and independently manage their stress, anxiety, and trauma. As our program grows, we will develop a pipeline between the “inside” and the “outside” for our residents to continue their writing and mentorship with our volunteers as well as benefit from our support network. Finally, we will start conversations with the help of our residents' creative writing to remind our communities about this marginalized population that deserves to be treated as human beings with dignity and educate our communities about the juvenile justice system to create change.

# Donate

Your donation will allow us to continue teaching creative writing to youth who are incarcerated in jails and prisons; fostering a genuine, long-lasting relationship with the residents; and freeing their voices through the distribution and showcase of their creative writing in our published chapbooks shared with the community.

But beyond supporting our mission and vision, your donation will also allow us to:

- Educate our communities about the juvenile justice system.
- Support our residents re-entering back into society.
- Sustain our cohorts' ability to serve youth who are incarcerated.

**Visit [writersnresidence.org/donate](https://writersnresidence.org/donate) or scan the code with your phone's camera below to donate!**

