

WRITEGIRL PLANET

Issue No. 7

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A GREAT WAY TO START
OFF A POEM

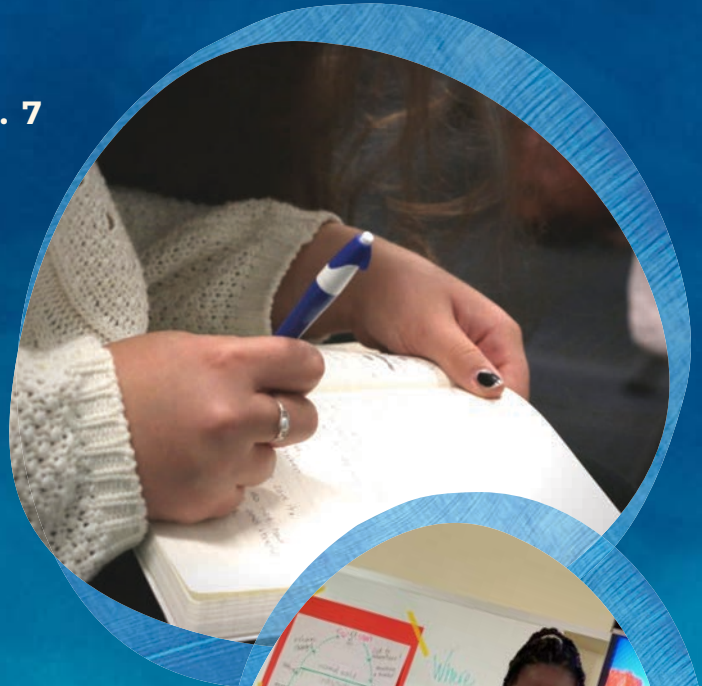
WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW

WHAT DOES THIS OLD
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THE WORLD AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

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PLUS
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A MESSAGE FROM WRITEGIRL

We hope you are all safe and well. We want to share that we are very much engaged in supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, and we are raising our voice and taking action against racism and police brutality. Read our Commitment & Action Plan [here](#).

We're here for you!

Warmly, All of us at WriteGirl



HOW TO USE THIS AT HOME

breathe

Shake out your hands, **shake out your fingers** and take some deep breaths!



Grab your journal and a pen. (Or any paper at all!)



Browse this “WriteGirl Planet” and **find something** that intrigues you.



Take a break for a glass of water!



When you feel like you’ve achieved something, **give yourself some praise** out loud!



WRITEGIRL PLANET SPOTLIGHT

DeAnna Carpenter



DeAnna Carpenter has an uncanny and natural ability to string her thoughts and emotions into words, thus creating catchy, memorable, heartfelt lyrics that resonate with listeners on a soul level.

Born and raised in Detroit, DeAnna credits the culture and history of the city, as well as her years in Cass Tech High School's Marching Band and Florida A&M University's "Marching 100," as her biggest musical influences. Some highlights from DeAnna's career are singing and dancing with the Funk Master himself - George Clinton, opening for R&B-Soul singer Anthony Hamilton at the 2016 *Essence Music Festival* in New Orleans on the Walmart Stage, and being onstage at the 2015 *Ebony Power 100* Gala. DeAnna released her first music album, *Tsunami*, in August 2018, which was featured on the *Women of Substance* Radio podcast, the *Blooming Where Planted* podcast and *KBJB* Radio in Connecticut. She currently resides in Los Angeles and is the Chief Engineer of Inspiration for her brand and company, *She Who Builds* LLC.

At our virtual workshop on June 6, long-time volunteer, DeAnna Carpenter, performed her new song, *Calling Me*. DeAnna's song reminds us that our ability to remain open during troubling times can help us to create art that heals.

"Hearing and seeing the responses at our workshop reassured me that this song was medicine, and it further fueled me to share this medicine with the world."

Check out her music at <https://www.dellesings.com/music>.

Website: [dellesings.com](https://www.dellesings.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/deanna.l.carpenter](https://www.facebook.com/deanna.l.carpenter)

Instagram: [@shewhobuilds](https://www.instagram.com/shewhobuilds)

YouTube: DeAnna Carpenter

WRITEGIRL PLANET SPOTLIGHT

Wadooah Wali

Regardless of the title – Producer, Writer, Director, PR/Digital Media Strategist, Entrepreneur – Wadooah Wali is a natural born storyteller. As a true media influencer, her career expertise spans across traditional and disruptive new media platforms.



Wadooah has 20+ years as a PR professional for launches, M&A / public exists and digital communications campaigns for emerging tech and traditional, digital / new media companies including WarnerMedia's Linear TV Networks (TBS & TNT), Fullscreen, M-GO (startup formerly backed by DreamWorks and Technicolor) and podcast leader Midroll Media/Ear Wolf (acquired by Scripps Media).

As an award-winning indie creator, she's passionate about connecting audiences with stories via writing, directing and producing various video and podcast projects. Additionally, Wadooah currently serves as an advisory board member of GALECA, a co-founder & advisor for Revry.TV and is a frequent guest speaker at the YouTube LA Space. She was previously the director of PR & marketing for Equality Fashion Week 2019 and a founding member & co-chair of TurnOUT LA.

Twitter: @dubya2

Instagram: @dubya2

Tips: Your voice and your experiences matter!! Write what YOU want to read. Write with intention. Write as often as you can.

A FEW POEMS AND SOME POETRY WRITING TIPS

POETRY

*there is
nothing left
to worry about
the sun and her flowers are here.*

This is a poem by Rupi Kaur. See how much meaning she gets across in just a few words? Rupi started out by posting short poems on Instagram, and now she's a world-famous poet. It just goes to show: poems can be any length, take any form — and can be about anything you can imagine. There are pretty much no rules when it comes to poetry.

Well, we say no rules... but there are definitely a few tips and tricks to make your poetry really shine. First of all, include what we call sensory specific details. Use your five senses. What did the flower smell like? How did the rain taste? Details like that help the poem come alive for the reader — it helps them feel how you felt when you were writing it.

And instead of using a common phrase like 'busy as a bee', find a different way of describing the busyness that's all yours. That'll make your poem really unique. We also try to avoid rhyming wherever we can - rhyming poems are actually really difficult to do well. Instead, play around with form and rhythm, and with metaphors and similes to create a visual image for your readers. The poet Emily Dickinson used the beautiful metaphor: "hope is the thing with feathers".

Ultimately, poetry is a way for you to express your creativity, and to be playful and experimental with language. We hope you find some inspiration to ignite your inner poet in this issue of *WriteGirl Planet!*



Keep it simple. Poetry can come from things we encounter every day. Don't be afraid to mine the simple things from your everyday life for inspiration.

POETRY: WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

“The siren song returns in me,
I sing it across her throat: Am I
what I love? Is this the glittering world
I’ve been begging for?”

– Natalie Diaz

Natalie Diaz is a Mojave American poet, language activist, former professional basketball player and educator. She is enrolled in the Gila River Indian Community.

“I’ve stayed in the front yard all my life
I want a peek at the back
Where it’s rough and untended and hungry weed grows.
A girl gets sick of a rose.”

– From “a song in the front yard” by Gwendolyn Brooks

Gwendolyn Brooks was an American poet, author and teacher. She was the first African American to win a Pulitzer Prize. Her work often dealt with the personal celebrations and struggles of ordinary people in her community.

Poetry doesn't have to provide the reader with answers. What if you asked questions instead?

Don't focus on rhyming in your poetry. It's a "rule" that will only keep you from getting to the good stuff.



Profile of Poet Ada Limón



Interested in reading intriguing contemporary poetry? Ada Limón is for you!

Ada Limón is the author of five books of poems. Her most recent book is *The Carrying*, which was named one of the top five poetry books of 2018 by the *Washington Post*.

In her poetry, Limón writes about personal experiences: childhood; the places she's lived, including California, New York, and Kentucky; falling in love; self-identity; losing a parent. Her poems embrace both the chaos and beauty of life.

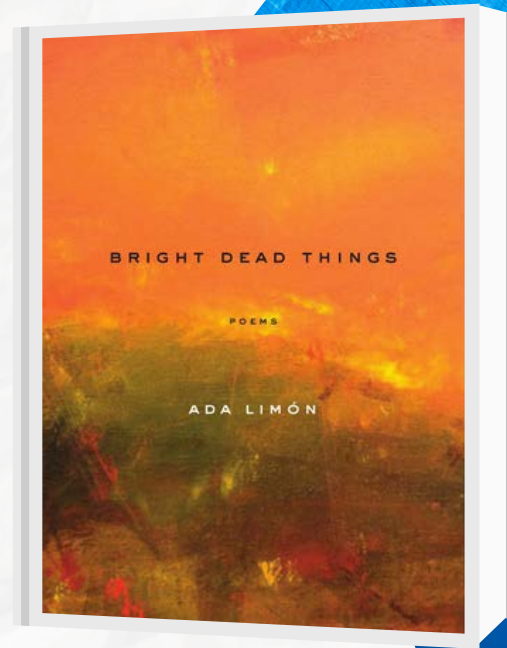
How to Triumph Like a Girl

"I like the lady horses best,
how they make it all look easy,
like running 40 miles per hour
is as fun as taking a nap, or grass.
I like their lady horse swagger,
after winning. Ears up, girls, ears up!"

From Bright Dead Things (Milkweed Editions, 2015).

Read the full poem in its reprinted format on the Poetry Foundation's website:
www.poetryfoundation.org.

Limón is also a feminist poet. Her poem "How to Triumph Like a Girl" is an anthem for girls and women everywhere.



A FEW POEMS AND SOME
POETRY WRITING TIPS

“Love has turned on me
and now I am its liar”

– from "Romance" by **Elaine Kahn**, a Los Angeles-based poet, artist and musician.

“The sea nips at us from a great distance
like a postcard from someone
who calls himself your uncle

and meanwhile think of all the time I’ve wasted
rhyming vacuum with perfume
in search of a new feeling”

– from "Poem" by **Heather Christle**, a former creative writing fellow in poetry at Emory University. Her poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Boston Review* and many other journals.

“The baby
says to the old
man let’s
have a cup
of coffee
the old
man says now
you’re talking”

-- "The Baby" by **Eileen Myles**, a poet, novelist, performer and art journalist who received the Lambda Pioneer Award for contributions to the LGBT literary community.

A FEW POEMS AND SOME POETRY WRITING TIPS

"Hello. I share your doubt. I am full of uncertainty. I have a headache.
I don't know anything.
Inconclusive."

- "Doubt" by **Emily Berry**, an English poet and writer currently completing a PhD in Creative and Critical Writing at the University of East Anglia.



Writing Tips!

Have fun! Poetry doesn't have to be so serious. Don't be afraid to inject a little humor.

A poem doesn't have to be long to make an impact. Try writing short poems that pack a punch!

Don't know what you're doing? Write about it! A poem can be about anything, including being lost.

JOURNALING: WHAT IS IT?

JOURNALING

Dear diary... what should I write about in my journal today? That's the awesome thing about keeping a journal: you can write absolutely anything you want. Journaling is the practice of writing about your thoughts, feelings and experiences. It's a way of processing your emotions and sparking your imagination.

The pages of your journal are just for you, a space where you can dream up anything at all. Journaling is the perfect way to get in that creative flow and start feeling inspired. It's also a great place to practice your writing and to experiment with any genre, style or idea.

But what you might not know is that writing in your journal every day has a bunch of other benefits too. It helps you work through your emotions and boosts your mood. Journaling can even decrease stress and help you solve problems.

And there's not just one way to keep a journal. There are loads of different kinds of journaling you could experiment with. For example, you can write about food, nature, running or about books you've read. There are also gratitude journals where you write down things you're thankful for. You could even keep a dream journal by your bed.

**FUN
FACT**

Did you know that the artist Frida Kahlo kept a journal? We hope this issue of the WriteGirl Planet fires up your journaling imagination!

Check out this terrific article written by Maria Popova in the online publication, Brain Pickings: ["Celebrated Writers on the Benefits of Keeping a Diary."](#)

**RECOMMENDED
READING**





Profile of Journal Writer: May Sarton

Reading contemporary authors is great practice – and so is reading women writers of the past whose voices are still with us. May Sarton (1912-1955) is one of those writers. She wrote poetry and novels, but she was also a journal writer.

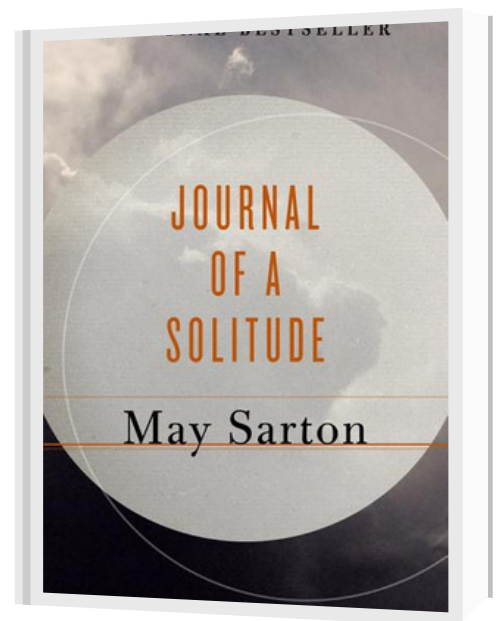
Since we’ve been spending time at home because of COVID-19, May Sarton’s *Journal of a Solitude*, which covers one year of her life, is a perfect book to turn to. In it, she writes about solitude (which feels especially relatable right now!), mental health, books, the natural world, people, ideas – everything! It’s truly a record of her mind day by day, and it’s pretty cool to remember that people who lived before us experienced many of the same things we experience today.

Check out this short passage from an entry dated October 5, where Sarton describes not only how she is feeling but what the world around her at home looks like. This passage is a good reminder that all the details of our lives – from weather to restlessness – matter and are worth carefully recording.

From *Journal of a Solitude*

There is nothing to be done but go ahead with life moment by moment and hour by hour – put out birdseed, tidy the rooms, try to create order and peace around me even if I cannot achieve it inside me. Now at ten thirty there is such radiant light outside that the house feels dark. I look through the hall into the cozy room, all in darkness, right through to the window at the end, and a transparent sheaf of golden and green leaves. And here in my study the sunlight is that autumn white, so clear, it calls for an inward act to match it...clarify, clarify.

From May Sarton’s *Journal of a Solitude* (Norton, 1973), p. 33.



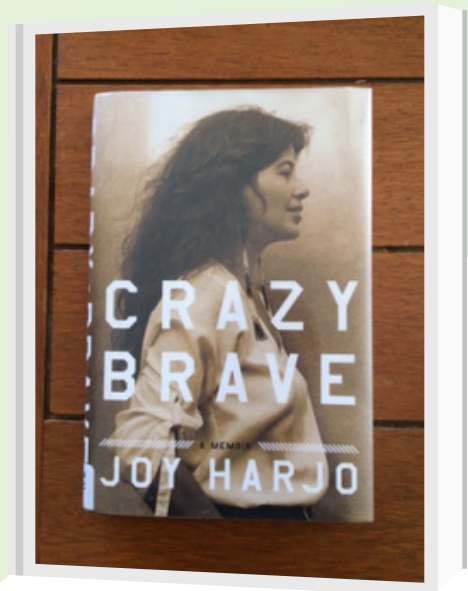
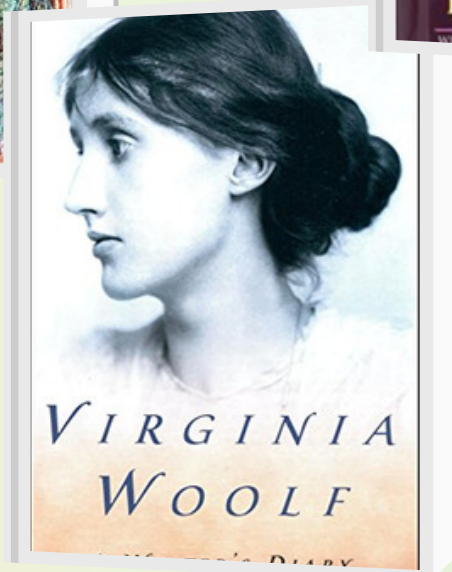
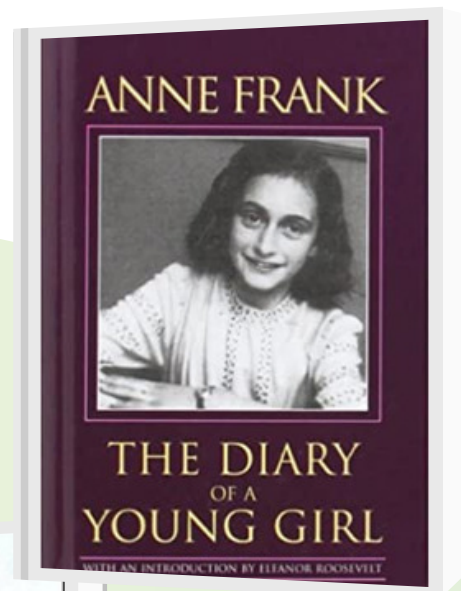
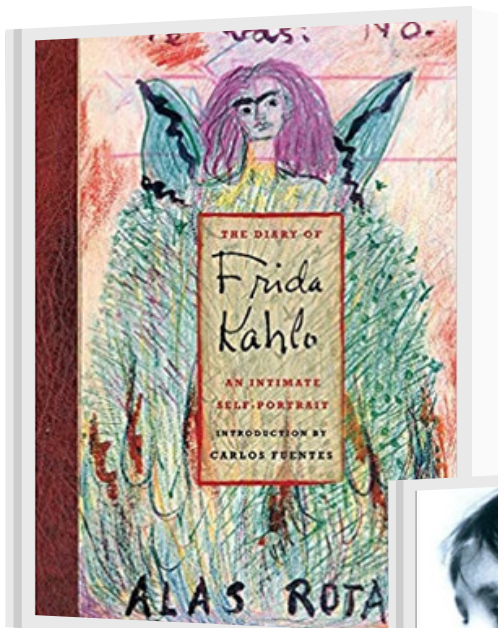
A few notable published journals and memoirs:

The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait, by Frida Kahlo

A Writer's Diary, by Virginia Woolf

The Diary of a Young Girl, by Anne Frank

Crazy Brave, by Joy Harjo





JOURNALING EXPERIMENTS FOR YOU, FROM WRITEGIRL

One Word Kick-Off!

Not sure where to begin? Try starting with a word or a phrase that resonates for you. Perhaps it's an unusual way of saying something, or a phrase that you use or hear often. Perhaps you love the sound of it or the feel of it on your tongue. You could doodle the word in your journal, or doodle around it. See where that doodling leads you. When you're not thinking too hard about what to write, your subconscious provides lots of ideas for you. As ideas pop up, add them to the page.

Whatever you write, include lots of details! Imagine coming back to your journal months or even years from now. What if something you come across sparks a new writing idea? You'll want to get right back into that moment, to see and experience things the way you did then. The more detail you can include about how you felt and thought, what you did and saw, the more authentic and powerful your writing will be.






Home on the Range: My Life as an Urban Rancher

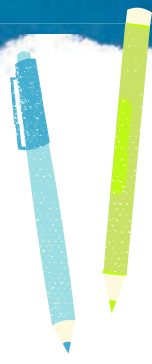
1. Imagine your home as a farm on a range, where each family member has responsibilities, chores, nicknames, and things to “harvest” every day. Write about a typical day in your “life on the range.” What time do you wake up in the morning, and what’s the first thing you do? What do you need to finish by the end of the day? How do you keep track of your chores? What do the ranchers eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner?
2. Now, take one aspect of your ranch life and bring it back into the “real” world. Write into that aspect, going as deep as you can. For example: write about your meals. What time do you eat dinner, and why? Who cooks? What are some common dishes that are served? What do they remind you of? Where do you go to get groceries and why? Have your eating habits and likes and dislikes changed over the years? Why?

Did you know?



The old adage “write what you know” sometimes means bringing elements of your real life into a fictive world. Just because you aren’t a cowgirl, daredevil, farmer or trapeze artist doesn’t mean you can’t write an evocative story about someone living that life. Bringing your personal experience to fictional characters adds layers of authenticity and complexity to your writing.





POETRY EXPERIMENTS FOR YOU, FROM WRITEGIRL

Rant or Rave!

Writing poetry right out of the box can sometimes feel overwhelming. Here's a tip — start with a rant or a rave! This is your Soapbox moment! Let the words just flow.

Look back at what you've written. A poem can be a stream of words. If this structure inspires you, great! If not, see if you can break it down into a structure that reads more like a poem. Try this:

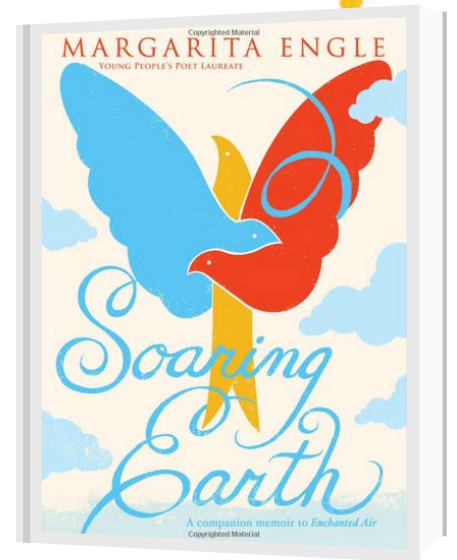
- Find the main ideas in your rant or rave and break them out into lines.
- Trim your sentences to remove all but the main idea and the words that pack the biggest punch.
- Look at your descriptions. Can you find more unusual words, or imagery, to show what you mean?
- Try to paint a picture for us using your senses so that we can feel your experience as we read the poem.





Check it out!

Check out this excerpt from Margarita Engle's free verse memoir, *Soaring Earth: A Companion Memoir to Enchanted Air*. It is packed with imagery. She chooses words that show us her emotions. Her lethargy is tangible. Notice the fun twist at the end of the poem, too!



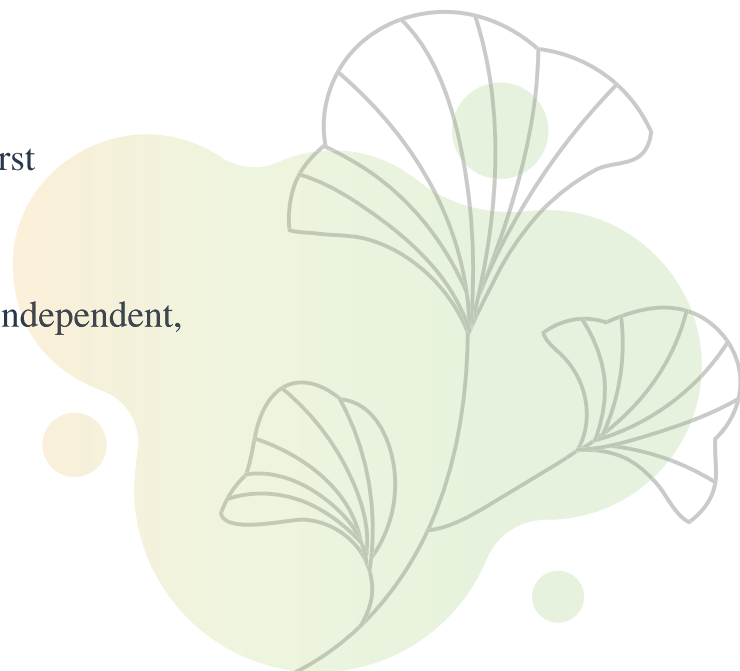
Summer visits to the enchanted air of Trinidad de Cuba are illegal now, transforming my mother's hometown into a mystery of impossibility, no longer reachable in real life.

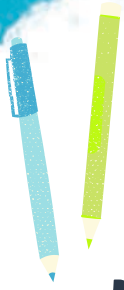
My roaming dreams can only ramble through the library, dancing on flat, shiny pages, across all the countries of *National Geographic* magazine, choosing villages with brilliant sunlight, bright parrots, green jungles, tropical heat.

I've endured enough of being in-between - too young for solitary trips, but more than old enough for motionless teenage isolation.

Yes, I feel ready to grow up and seize the first job that promises a nomadic life...

but before I can finish college and become independent, I have to start high school.





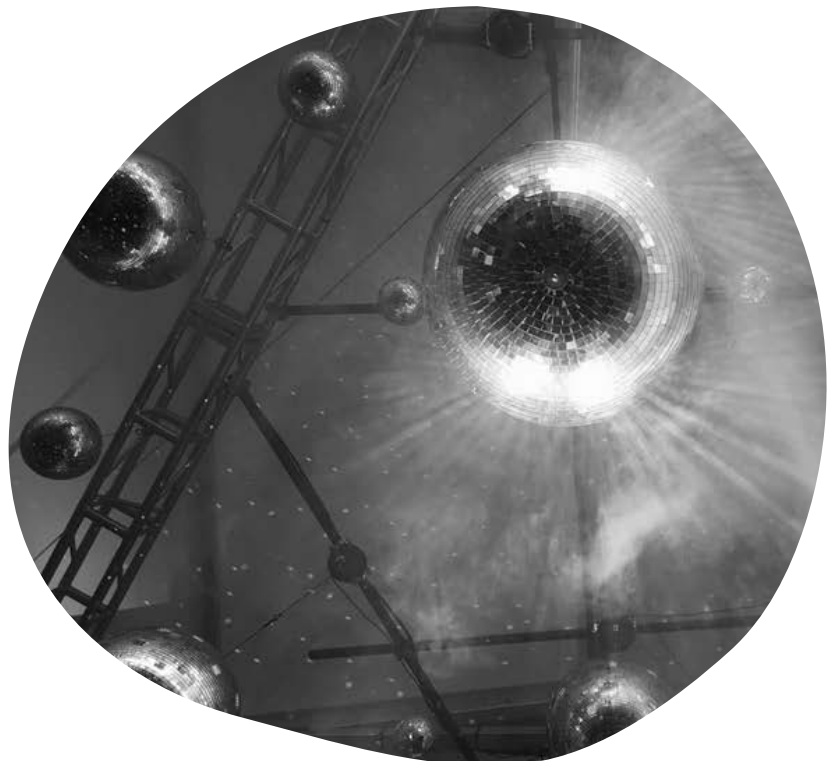
Lost and Found

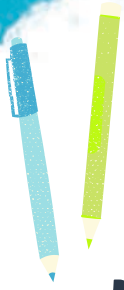
Create a poem in the style of a “lost and found” ad. First, choose any object. It can be an ordinary object or something silly and nonsensical. Then write the first half of the poem from the perspective of the person who lost the object and the second half of the poem from the perspective of the person who found it.

Keep Writing!

Spend some time getting to know the person who lost the object and the person who found it so that you can show how they each might react to the object. Think about their passions, interests and tastes. The more different they are from each other, the more fun you can have with them in your poem!

Here’s a fun little article, [“9 Weirdest Lost and Found Items”](#)





Listen In!

Sit for a few minutes, listening to the sounds around you. Observe how the sounds affect you. Are they soothing or irritating? Do they drift over you or do they dominate your space? Tap into how your body feels, then write a poem that captures those sensations with the words you choose.

Make it unique!

See if you can use imagery or unusual words that make your experience unique to you. Instead of footsteps thumping, perhaps they pulse like the opening beats of a song. Instead of a refrigerator humming, perhaps it *purrs*, or *mumbles* or *thrums*.





List Poem

Make a short list of things you care about, or would like to change, or even things you fantasize about. How about, “If I were a chameleon/narwhal/panda...” or “If every day was Saturday...” Choose one to write about as a poem. Be as nonsensical as you like...“If my room were made of cheese...”

THE TIME I BROKE...

Write sixteen lines beginning with the phrase “The Time I Broke...” The broken thing should be *physical* (e.g. a tree branch, a jar of salsa, a bone in your hand) and followed by detail on what happened after it was broken. If you can’t think of sixteen things you’ve broken, get creative. You can use just a few words, complete or multiple sentences, or short, evocative fragments. Mix it up and play with the rhythms!

Now, take what you’ve written and shape it into a poem called “The Time I Broke.” Let the repetitive phrase move through your poem like a wave. Structure your piece so the lines pile on one after the other to culminate in a defining moment. You might draw attention to the final line by shortening or lengthening it, so long as you remember to keep it anchored with specific details.

Did you know?

“Anaphora” is a literary device in which words or phrases are repeated at the beginning of successive lines. In poetry, anaphora can be used to set a mood, emphasize an idea, or provide a solid structure for a delicate argument.

THE WORLD AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

Check out these digital resources to support the #BlackLivesMatter Movement and stay engaged without leaving your room!

Get Involved!

Join the [#BlackLivesMatter](#) movement email list to receive network actions, programs and more to your inbox!

Get informed.

This [article](#) from the **National Association of School Psychologists** breaks down understanding race and privilege. **[Facing History and Ourselves](#)** is a great resource with articles on understanding the role of race in America. The National Museum of African American History & Culture put together [this helpful guide](#) on navigating starting a conversation on race.

Help spread the message!

For graphics showing your support of #BlackLivesMatter to share on your own social media, [click here](#).

Support Black-Owned Bookstores in Los Angeles.

Reparations Club: [rep.club](#), Eso Won Books: [esowonbookstore.com](#), Malik Books: [malikbooks.com](#), Free Black Women's Library - LA: [thefreeblackwomenslibla.com](#) (lending library) and The Underground Museum: <https://the-underground-museum.square.site> are some great options.

Get Published!

A Collection of Young, Black Voices

<https://bit.ly/3imUlvT>

Compiled and edited by a WriteGirl mentee, Autumn M., this collection will amplify and shine a light on young black voices. Try to share work you would like to share with the world. But don't feel limited to just writing! Paintings, drawings, or photography can be submitted as well! All proceeds from the collection will go to The Okra Project, a collective that brings home-cooked, healthy, and culturally specific meals to Black trans people across the country.



Calm Down Magazine

WWW.CALMDOWNMAGAZINE.WIXSITE.COM

Created by WriteGirl mentee Sophia M., *Calm Down Magazine* caters to sharing all the tranquility that comes with creating things, and expressing through verbal and visual art the things that make artists feel calm. Use [this form](#) to submit your writing and you could get featured!



THIS IS SOPHIA!

Your Story Matters: Collecting COVID-19 Stories

WWW.NHMLAC.ORG/YOUR-STORY-MATTERS

Your Story Matters is a new initiative of the Natural History Museum. They want to document the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on people in the Los Angeles region. Selected stories will be part of the permanent museum collection and may one day be developed into an exhibition or program. The stories can be in any language and sent with audio, video, or written text. Share your story [here](#).



“Say It In Six”

WWW.SIXWORDMEMOIRS.COM/TEENS

If you enjoyed the recent WriteGirl workshop on writing personal experiences, you might want to check out the Six Word Memoir project. Can you distill your personal experience into six perfect words? They publish a six-word memoir (plus illustrations if you have them) written by a teen every day on their site.

Escape Online!

MEDITATION

WriteGirl Special Guest Rory Green guides you through a meditation focused on opening yourself up to creative possibility. Find a comfortable and quiet spot in your home and listen along here: [Rory Green Guided Meditation](#)

ONLINE ADVENTURES

[HELLOGIGGLES.COM](#)

Stuck at home dreaming of escape? Why not take a virtual trip to a theme park and ride some roller coasters online via [hellogiggles.com/news/virtual-roller-coaster-rides/](#)

[WWW.TRAVELANDLEISURE.COM](#)

If a slow, leisurely train ride through magnificent landscapes is more your style, grab some headphones and your favorite chill out tunes and head on over to [www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/bus-train/virtual-train-rides](#)

Then, write a poem or memoir piece called "The Journey".



"'You cannot step over a mountain,' she told me, 'but if you step over pebble by pebble, you'll look back and the mountain will be behind you.'"

— Ann Rule, American writer

Craft Contemporary
CRAFT AT HOME

Craft Tutorials

Easy-to-follow craft projects at home

GET CRAFTING

CRAFTCONTEMPORARY.ORG

The Craft Contemporary Museum on Miracle Mile is closed at present, but they have a great online guide to some inventive crafting you can try at home:

www.craftcontemporary.org/craft-at-home/



"Stories have given me a place in which to lose myself. They have allowed me to remember. They have allowed me to forget. They have allowed me to imagine different endings and better possible worlds."

– Roxane Gay, American writer, professor, editor and social commentator.

SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

Take “Should” out of your Vocabulary

Do you feel like you “should” be feeling a certain way? Focus on how you are actually feeling. Start a journal entry, “I think I should be feeling _____ but I am actually feeling _____.” Allow yourself to feel how you feel, because it is valid!

Facts Vs. Feelings

When we’re dealing with strong emotions, we often confuse feelings for facts. Make two columns on a piece of paper, one for “facts” and one for “feelings”. Writing them out can help us sort out what we’re really experiencing and what might just be anxiety.

Peaceful Escape

It can be hard to find peace during times of great change. Close your eyes and think of a place where you feel truly peaceful. How does it look, smell, sound? Try writing a story set in that serene place. What do your characters learn there?

For additional resources to help you and your family with information on COVID-19, please visit the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website, which lists a great deal of information and resources.

<https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/prepareyourhealth/index.html>

WHAT'S NEXT?



SAVE THE DATE:

WRITEGIRL SEASON-END CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, JULY 25TH

TIME TBA

SPECIAL THANKS FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORKSHOPS:



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We're here
for you!