

# WRITEGIRL PLANET

Issue No. 10 - Find Your Power Edition

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## IF I RULED THE WORLD...

A WRITING EXPERIMENT INSPIRED  
BY THE MUSIC OF MILCK

## UNLIKELY PAIRINGS

PROTAGONIST.  
ANTAGONIST. GO!

PLUS  
YOUR SELF-CARE  
TOOLKIT



writegirl™  
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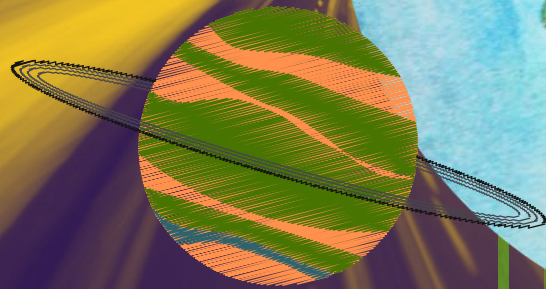
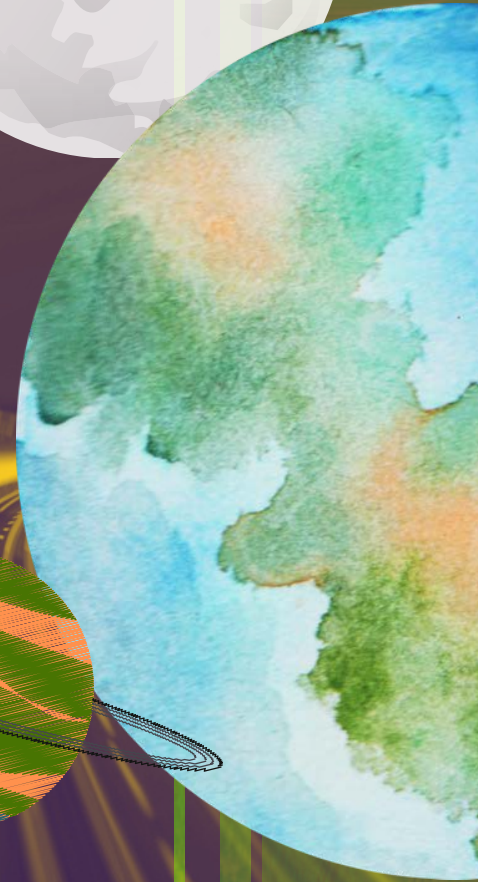
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# HOW TO USE THIS AT HOME

*breathe*

Take a deep breath counting to 4, then exhale slowly counting to 4. You're ready!



**Grab your journal and a pen. (Or a stack of colorful Post-it notes!)**



**Take a break**  
Stand up and stretch your arms skyward.

**“Flip” through this “WriteGirl Planet” and unearth a new adventure.**



When you write the first words that come to mind, give yourself a big smile and then keep writing!

**Check out the WriteGirl smiling faces and get inspired!**



# FIND YOUR POWER

Welcome to Issue #10 of The WriteGirl Planet:  
The "FIND YOUR POWER" Edition!

We really enjoyed putting this together for you,  
all 27 pages of it! So grab a cool glass of water,  
your journal and pen, and get ready to write  
and discover all the powerful words and ideas  
you have to offer the world!

– Editorial Team, The WriteGirl Planet

**“What I want young women and girls to know is: You are powerful and your voice matters. You're going to walk into many rooms in your life and career where you may be the only one who looks like you or who has had the experiences you've had. But you remember that when you are in those rooms, you are not alone. We are all in that room with you, applauding you on, cheering your voice, and just so proud of you. So you use that voice and be strong.”**

**– Kamala Harris,  
Vice President-Elect of the  
United States**







## GINA PRINCE-BYTHEWOOD

Photo by: Samuel Trotter

Award-winning director/writer/producer **Gina Prince-Bythewood** is one of the most versatile storytellers working in film and television. Known for her authentic character-driven work, Prince-Bythewood has directed and written such influential feature films as *Love & Basketball*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, and *Beyond The Lights*.

Most recently from Prince-Bythewood is the action drama feature, *The Old Guard*, which she directs and stars Charlize Theron and Kiki Layne. A Netflix original feature, it is based on the popular comic book series created by author Greg Rucka and illustrator Leandro Fernández. The blockbuster is already among the Top 10 most popular Netflix films of all time since its July 10 release with Prince-Bythewood becoming the first Black female director on the list.

Other recent credits for Prince-Bythewood include the special event series, *Shots Fired*, which she and her husband Reggie Rock Bythewood served as Series Creators and Executive Producers. The ten-hour series for Fox examined the dangerous aftermath of two racially charged shootings in a small Southern town. In addition, Prince-Bythewood directed the pilot for Marvel's *Cloak & Dagger*, which launched to strong reviews and viewers, starring breakout actors Olivia Holt and Aubrey Joseph as two teenagers with newly acquired superpowers who are mysteriously linked to one another.

Prince-Bythewood's next feature film will be directing the historical epic, *The Woman King* for TriStar Pictures, starring Viola Davis. *The Woman King* is inspired by true events that took place in The Kingdom of Dahomey, one of the most powerful states of Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries. The story follows Nanisca (Davis), General of the all-female military unit, and her daughter Nawi, who together fought the French and neighboring tribes who violated their honor, enslaved their people, and threatened to destroy everything they've lived for.

## GINA PRINCE-BYTHEWOOD

"Write what you know, but you can put your experience in any genre. You can put your story anywhere – in space, in a western, in a superhero movie. Write what you know, but write what you want to see for yourself."

– Gina Prince-Bythewood at *WriteGirl Welcome Day 2020*

For television, Prince-Bythewood will direct the first episode and serve as an Executive Producer of ABC's limited series *Women of the Movement*. The series, set to debut in 2021, will be comprised of six episodes focusing on Mamie Till Mobley, who devoted her life to seeking justice for her son Emmett Till following his brutal murder in the Jim Crow South, and is inspired by the book *Emmett Till: The Murder That Shocked the World and Propelled the Civil Rights Movement* by Devery S. Anderson. *Women of the Movement* is being written and Executive Produced by Marissa Jo Cerar and executive produced by Jay-Z, Jay Brown and Tyran "Ty Ty" Smith of Roc Nation; Will Smith and James Lassiter of Overbrook Entertainment; Aaron Kaplan, Dana Honor and Michael Lohmann from Kapital Entertainment; Prince-Bythewood; Rosanna Grace of Serendipity Film Group; Alex Foster and John Powers Middleton of The Middleton Media Group; and David Clark at Mazo Partners.

In August, Prince-Bythewood and Reggie Rock Bythewood signed a multi-year first-look deal with Touchstone Television (formerly Fox 21 Television Studios) under their production company, Undisputed Cinema. The multi-year deal covers television projects for broadcast and streaming platforms. The versatile duo's Undisputed Cinema produces timely and timeless character-driven stories aimed to challenge audiences' perspectives in different ways. Undisputed Cinema's stories show humanity on-screen and create deep connections driven to build empathy between their characters and their viewers.

An advocate for equal representation in film and television on-screen and behind-the-scenes, Prince-Bythewood funds a scholarship for African American students in the film program at UCLA, her alma mater.

"Anybody can portray reality but an artist portrays what reality should be."

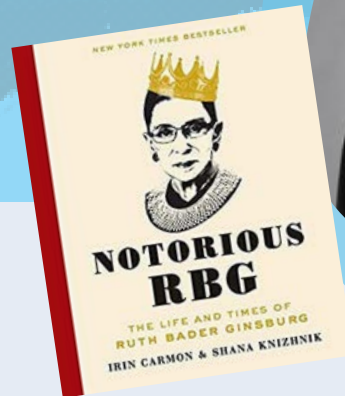
– Gina Prince-Bythewood  
at *WriteGirl Welcome Day 2020*





## REMEMBERING RBG

1933 - 2020



The late Supreme Court Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsberg** served 27 years on the nation's highest court. In the 1970s, she led her legal crusade for gender equality, changing laws that restricted what women could do and barred them from jobs, rights and even jury service. In her 80s, she became something of a rock star to women of all ages and was the subject of a hit documentary, a biopic, an operetta, Saturday Night Live sketches and the hip-hop-inspired nickname The Notorious RBG. She was known for her grit and emphasizing the **POWER** of dissent as a chance to persuade and change a future court. She was also known for her humor and candor. She was born in Brooklyn and went to public schools, then onto Cornell University on a full scholarship.

Despite scoring high on the civil service exam, her only real job prospect out of college was as a typist. She eventually attended Harvard Law School, one of only nine women in a class of 500. But despite her academic achievements, the doors to law firms upon graduation were still closed to women. Through her mentor, a law professor, she started her legal career by securing a clerkship in New York. After decades of working as a lawyer for progressive organizations like the ACLU, RBG was confirmed to the Supreme Court in 1993 by a vote of 96-3.

In her witty and engaging book, *My Own Words*, she discusses gender equality, the Supreme Court, being Jewish, law and lawyers in opera, and the value of looking outside of US shores when interpreting the US Constitution.

To learn more, here is a link to her biography and the cases she argued:  
[https://www.oyez.org/justices/ruth\\_bader\\_ginsburg](https://www.oyez.org/justices/ruth_bader_ginsburg).

And for a range of books for varying age groups on Ruth Bader Ginsberg, click here:  
<https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=18772>.



# ANGIE THOMAS



## AUTHOR OF THE HATE U GIVE



A rapper-turned-writer, Angie Thomas holds a BFA from Belhaven University and an unofficial degree in hip-hop. She grew up and still lives in Jackson, Mississippi.

She was awarded the Walter Dean Myers Grant 2015 by We Need Diverse Books. When it comes to being an author, she tells young writers “to write, write, write, and be prepared to re-write, re-write, re-write, and also, read, read, read.” She also advises, “the biggest key though is to never give up.” Her 2017 debut novel, *The Hate U Give*, emphasizes the need to speak up about injustice and the POWER of speaking up.

Her book is a #1 New York Times Bestseller and became a major motion picture from Fox 2000, starring Amandla Stenberg and directed by George Tillman, Jr.

Her second novel, *On the Come Up*, is a story of fighting for your dreams even when the odds are stacked against you.





## MICHELLE OBAMA



Best known as the former First Lady, **Michelle Obama** is an attorney, an author and a passionate advocate of education around the world. Michelle's early life gave her an understanding of what "normal" life is like, and that relatability is a big part of her appeal.

She grew up on the South Side of Chicago. Her home, a small one-bedroom apartment, was on the second floor of a house belonging to her great-aunt. Michelle's mother, a stay-at-home mom, and her father, a city laborer, gave Michelle a strong sense of home, something that has stayed with her throughout her life. Known for her authenticity, Michelle has a personal code for when she's speaking politically, to say only what she absolutely believes and what she absolutely feels. Her speeches are full of passion, humor, and confidence, but confidence is something she's had to learn.

In *Becoming*, her 2018 memoir, Michelle reveals a mantra she uses to help summon confidence whenever she feels doubt. It's a mantra she first used in high school. "Am I good enough?" she asks herself. Then comes the reply, "Yes I am." That same mantra has been a driving force in her work. Her 2015 initiative, *Let Girls Learn*, focused on the importance of educating girls worldwide. She wanted to empower young girls to see that yes, they are good enough and yes, absolutely, they can.

## MICHELLE OBAMA

Check out these other programs championed by Michelle Obama as First Lady:

**Let's Move!** (2010) aimed to end childhood obesity by putting healthier meals into schools, helping children get active, and ensuring that families had access to healthy, affordable food.

**Joining Forces** (2011), launched by Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, called on Americans to support the armed forces, veterans, and their families, through education and employment, to give them the tools they need to succeed in life.

**Reach Higher** (2014) aimed to inspire every U.S. student to take charge of their future by completing their education past high school.

**Better Make Room** (2015) aimed to celebrate education and to help students navigate the college-going process. And she didn't stop when she left the White House!

**When We All Vote** (2018), launched with Tom Hanks and others, is on a mission to get people out to vote. In the 2018 midterms, When We All Vote engaged with 200 million Americans online! For 2020, When We All Vote has teamed up with LeBron James' organization, More Than A Vote. Together they're encouraging early voting across the country. You can find out more at [whenweallvote.org](https://whenweallvote.org)

Did you know? As First Lady, Michelle Obama honored WriteGirl with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award. She is the best-selling author of *Becoming*, which sold more copies than any other book published in the U.S. in 2018!



## GLORIA STEINEM



New documentary,  
*Gloria: In Her Own Words*, is out now!

Gloria Steinem is a journalist, activist and feminist trailblazer. Steinem began her career as a journalist in the 1960s covering reproductive rights and other women's issues for magazines like *Esquire* and *New York*. She was later recognized as a prominent feminist voice after publishing an article called "After Black Power, Women's Liberation," an opinion piece that noted early that racial justice and justice for all genders are part of the same fight. In 1972, she co-founded *Ms.*, a feminism-themed magazine that was sold to the Feminist Majority Foundation in 2001 and is now published right here in LA County. In 1971, she was one of over 300 women who co-founded the grassroots organization National Women's Political Caucus with other feminist leaders, like Fannie Lou Farmer, a voting-rights activist and Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman to run for president.

In 2015, she released *My Life on the Road*, a memoir about her work in journalism and activism. Last month, a biopic called *The Glorias* about Steinem was released direct-to-streaming. It was directed by Julie Taymor, who is known for creating the stage adaptation of *The Lion King*, the Frida Kahlo biopic *Frida*, and the Beatles jukebox musical *Across the Universe*. *The Glorias* stars Julianne Moore as Steinem.



## NATALIE DIAZ

**"I WRITE HUNGRY SENTENCES  
BECAUSE THEY WANT MORE AND  
MORE LYRICISM AND IMAGERY TO  
SATISFY THEM."**

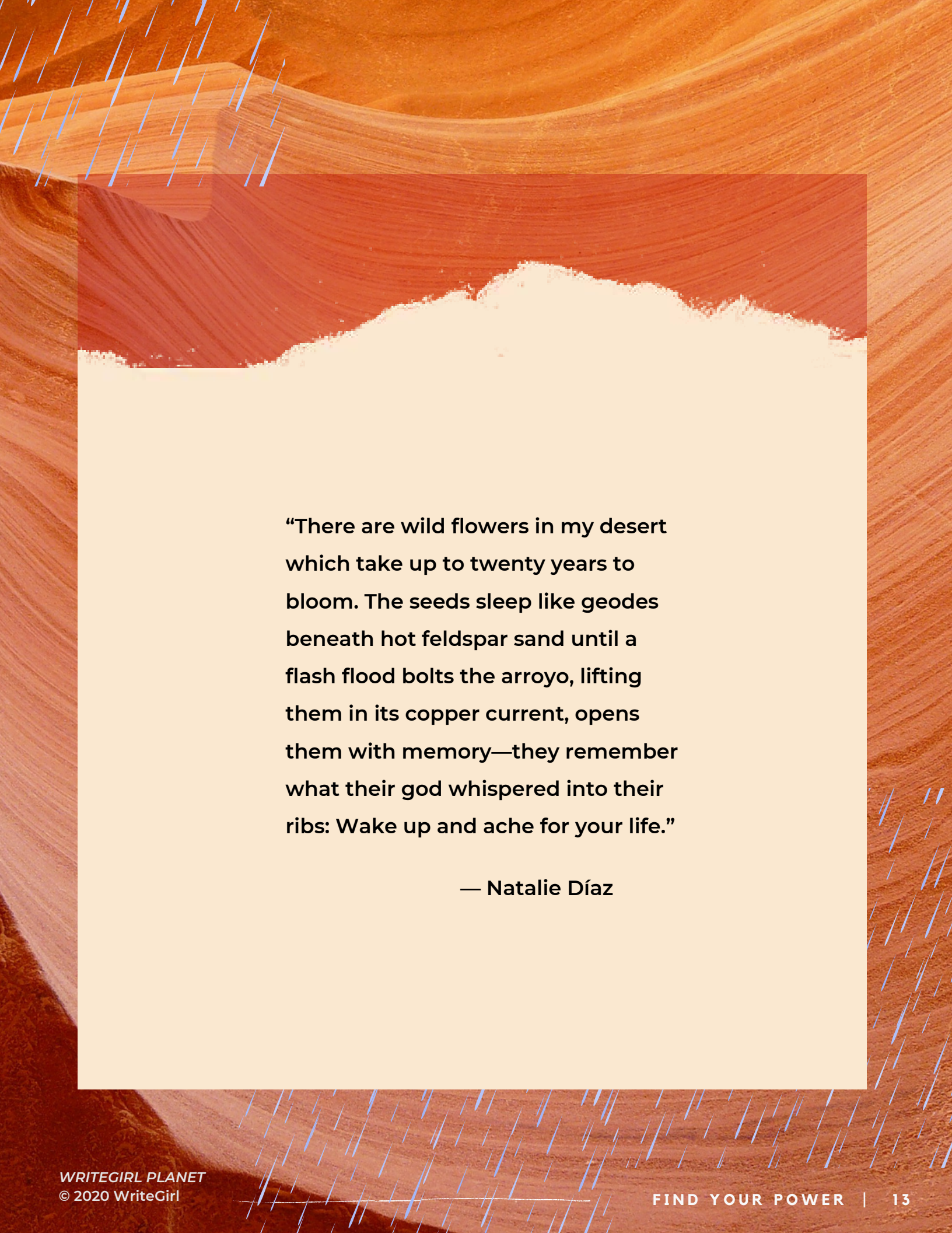
**- POET, NATALIE DIAZ**

**Natalie Diaz** is a Mojave poet who grew up on the Fort Mojave Indian Village in Needles, California, and is now a member of the Gila River Indian community in Arizona. Diaz is the perfect example of how following your talents can take you to numerous new places. She attended college at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, on a sports scholarship.

An excellent basketball player, Diaz went on to play professionally in Europe and Asia before returning to Old Dominion for an MFA in poetry.

Her first collection, *When My Brother Was an Aztec*, captures Mojave life and living with a family member's addiction with beautiful language and dark humor. Her latest, *Post-Colonial Love Poem*, was published in March of this year and is currently nominated for the National Book Award in poetry.





**“There are wild flowers in my desert  
which take up to twenty years to  
bloom. The seeds sleep like geodes  
beneath hot feldspar sand until a  
flash flood bolts the arroyo, lifting  
them in its copper current, opens  
them with memory—they remember  
what their god whispered into their  
ribs: Wake up and ache for your life.”**

**— Natalie Díaz**



## IF I RULED THE WORLD

Here's a chorus and verse from MILCK's song, "If I Ruled the World":

*Chorus:*

If I ruled the world  
If I ruled the world, ruled the world, ruled the world  
If I ruled the world  
If I ruled the world, ruled the world, ruled the world  
If I ruled, it would be less about me more about you  
More about you  
If I ruled, it would be less about me more about you  
More about you

*Verse:*

We'd be kind to refugees, plant more trees in inner cities  
We'd bus kids to see the ocean, some kids never see the ocean  
I'd make news more beneficial, I'd make every driver signal  
Only love is my objective, only love is my perspective  
I'd keep music in the schools, and hear every point of view  
If I ruled, it would be less about me, more about you

### Writing Activity:

Each of us holds the POWER to make changes.

Now, try creating your verse to "If I ruled the world" by listing ten things you'd do if you ruled the world.



## MASTER THAT MOMENT!

Your scene starts with a spotlight on your main character, in the middle of a crowd. Horrified to be the center of attention, they realize that the crowd is waiting for them to react. They hesitate. They contemplate making a run for it. But inside they realize that this is their moment, that speaking their truth is bigger than their fear.

Tell us what happens next.

As you write, think about how you want your audience to feel when the scene ends. Will they be cheering? Will they be laughing? Will they be frightened for your character? Will they be shocked by what's just been done or said?



## DIVE WITHIN

Start by picking a character. Decide a few things about them. Maybe start with what do they look like? What kind of things do they like? What age group do they fall into? Then choose a setting. Maybe a bedroom or garden or a coffee shop.

Put your character in your setting and write a story using only their thoughts. What are they observing? What keeps coming to their mind? Dig deep and try to really examine who your character is. Dive a little deeper. Are they struggling with anything? How can they overcome their struggles? Write a few sentences about who they are, what they're feeling, what they want. How can they find strength?

Now use this character and what you've learned about them to write an action-packed paragraph where they overcome something. Try to make the action of the story secondary to the struggle within. Are they time-traveling? Are they meeting a long-lost relative? Are they about to land on the moon? Are they in the middle of solving a mystery? Are they simply helping two friends solve a disagreement? Use what we know about them to really get close to their mind as they embark on their journey.

## WORD POWER

Make up a word that conjures up a special memory or an experience. Write the word in your journal. Maybe doodle around your word to help get out all the sensations you associate with it. Now define your new word by describing all those sensations. Use imagery to make your description vivid!

Can you turn your description into a poem? Try repeating your new word at the beginning of each line and see if you like what that repetition adds to the rhythm and flow.



## JUST KEEP SEARCHING

1. Close your eyes
2. Think of a color
3. Open your eyes and find something that color (or close to it)
4. Write a paragraph about somebody searching for this object

Things to consider: Who is searching? Why are they searching for this object? Is it a family relic? Is it supernatural in some way? Is anybody else searching for this object? What do they plan to do with it if they find it? How essential is finding the object? What happens if they don't find it? How will finding this object change them?

## UNLIKELY PAIRINGS

Choose a protagonist: Dentist, Class President, Judge, Librarian, Cashier

Choose an antagonist: High School Speech Class Teacher, Car Salesperson, Birthday Clown, Retail Worker, Retired Swim Team Coach

Choose a genre: Mystery, Comedy, Romance, Fantasy, Science Fiction

Use your two characters and your genre to create your story.

Things to consider:

How do these characters know or come to know each other?

Is their conflict between them or a conflict from an outside source?

Are they working together?

How can they help each other?

Don't forget to let tropes of the genres help lead you.

Are they trying to solve a mystery?

Is there love in the air?

Maybe one character's coping mechanism is cracking jokes!





## ENERGY WAVES

Do you remember feeling a wave of excitement, or joy, or strength? A moment when you wanted to throw a fist into the air and shout, “YES!” A moment when you felt that you might burst with the swell of emotion surging through you?

Tell us about that moment. Where were you? What did you see, hear, feel? You could choose to jump into the story right at the fist-pumping moment or lead us up to it and let that moment be your final line. Use images to describe what led up to that moment so vividly that we can picture you there and can ride that wave of excitement with you all the way.

## MIGHTY MOMENTS

Think of a time that you had to rely on what’s inside of you—your determination, your enthusiasm, your optimism—to get through a challenging situation. Maybe you choose to write about something dramatic, or something funny or frightening.

As you tell us about that experience, be sure to include lots of sensory details so that we can see and hear and feel the things that you did.

Optional: Think of a color that might be a fun title for your memory. Keep the color in mind to help you create atmosphere as you write. You can make the color up! “Pureed Purple Moments” or “My Greenbury Striped Day”.



## WRITER'S BLOCK WOES

Describe a character who is a skilled writer. Their only flaw is, they have a very unusual method of getting over writer's block. Write a short story describing their method and how it may have gotten them into some silly situations.



## FAR FLUNG FRIENDS

Write a story about a group of friends who live in different parts of the world but reunite every few years to stay connected. Who are the group members? Describe their most recent gathering.

## WEATHER POWER

You get to create a new season! What does that season look like? Is it warm, cold, or somewhere in between? Are the days long or short?

What's happening in nature during your season? How do the trees and plants look and smell? What colors are in the sky? What do people do in your new season?

Give us specific details so that we feel that we're in your new season with you!

# THE WORLD AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!



## JOIN AN ONLINE BOOK CLUB:

@BlackGirlsWithMagicBooks focuses on speculative fiction and science fiction/fantasy by Black female and non-binary authors: <https://blackgirlswithmagic.com/>

BLACK  
GIRLS  
WITH MAGIC



## WATCH ART BEING INSTALLED:

Yoshitomo Nara's awesome outdoor sculpture "Miss Forest" is now on display at LACMA. Appearing like a sleeping forest spirit, this HUGE bronze structure depicts a girl whose hair rises into the conical point of an evergreen tree, evoking the Shinto tradition of Mr. Nara's family lineage and upbringing in a city on the Japanese island of Honshu.

See how the work was installed:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=583697099180572>



# THE WORLD AT YOUR FINGERTIPS... ...CONTINUED!



## LOVE MUSIC? ENJOY THESE SHORT VIDEOS

**MUSE/IQUE In A Minute! (...Or Two)** is a bite-sized music series where our favorite musicians, artists, dancers and vocalists give us an up-close peek at the magic behind their craft. Videos curated by MUSE/IQUE Artistic Director Rachael Worby.

## SUBMIT YOUR WRITING - POLYPHONY LIT:

Submit your original poetry, fiction and creative non-fiction to **Polyphony Lit**. If you submit your piece by March 31, 2021, it's guaranteed that student editors will provide feedback, including the ones they do not accept for publication. Learn more here at their website here: <https://www.polyphonylit.org/>.

## 53-WORD STORY CONTEST

Story writers! Put yourself to the test and respond to a prompt with a 53-word story. The prompt changes each month, and responses must be 53 words exactly—no more and no less. Only stories are permitted, and one submission per writer per month is allowed.

**Submission deadline:** 15th of each month  
Find out more here: [53-Word Story Contest — Press 53](#)



# SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

## TAP INTO YOUR POWER

Empowered people not only are able to empower others, but also show up for the community, make a difference, live happier lives, and make a brighter impact on the world.

To empower others, we first need to take care of ourselves!

Tap into your own power through this Self-care Toolkit on the following pages!





# SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

## 1. TAKE A BREAK FROM SCREENS

Take a walk or bike ride! Walk around your neighborhood. Go to a park. Listen to the sounds around you. Take in the scents and sights. Enjoy the real world and time away from a computer or phone screen.



## 2. TRY UNGUIDED MEDITATION

Meditation, in its simplest form, is breathing. On average, you take 20,000 breaths a day. Why not make a few intentional? **Set a timer for two minutes. When your attention wanders, return your focus to your natural breaths.**

## 3. TRY GUIDED MEDITATION

Apps like Headspace and Calm offer guided meditations that help you feel empowered, focused and relaxed. LA County residents can use Headspace Premium for free through the rest of 2020. **Visit [headspace.com/lacounty](https://www.headspace.com/lacounty) to sign up.**



## 4. WRITE AN EMPOWERMENT ACTIVITY LIST

Throughout the next few days, keep track of the activities that you automatically turn to when you need a pick me up. Calling a friend? Walking? Organizing a drawer? Reaching for your art supplies? **Write your strategies on a sticky note, and put it near your bed. Turn to this personalized list of empowerment activities whenever the moment calls.**



Treat Yourself

# SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

## FRESH WAYS TO EMPOWER OTHERS

Do you ever catch yourself relying on the common “How are you?” that we all ask?

Do you ever get stuck, wanting to know more, but not quite sure what to ask?

Here are examples of fresh ways to find out how others are doing.

What’s something you’ve accomplished this week that you’re **proud of**?

What’s something you’re **looking forward** to?

What’s something you’ve **discovered** recently?

What or who **inspires** you?

What are some things that make you feel **a sense of purpose**?

Have you had any experiences lately that you felt really helped you **grow**?

Is there a person you **look up to** on a daily basis?

What makes you feel **energized**?





# SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

## FRESH WAYS TO COMPLIMENT OTHERS

What about compliments? They can go a long way. Putting your appreciation into words and letting the people in your life know they affect is a powerful thing. Here are some fresh ways to uplift the people in your life!

People are lucky to have your **influence** in their lives.

You have the best **advice**.

I love the way you **carry yourself**.

I always feel comfortable **being myself** with you.

You help me feel **strong**.

You're incredibly **supportive**.

You have a bright spirit that **brings light** to those around you.





**SUBMIT  
YOUR  
WORK!**



Share your work with us!

Visit the

[WriteGirl Clubhouse Page](#)

to submit your creative work!





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