

RIGHT

2

WRITE

2024



SARAH LAWRENCE

Community Partnerships

Right-to-Write

Spring 2024

Youth Opportunity Program Participants

Marcus "HD" Byrd	Jeremiah "Jay J" Hughes
Mario Chávez	Cecil "3" Kelly
Andrew Constantin	Jeremiah "Jay Dee" Malcom
Dwight "DJ" Harris	Xavier "X" Rice
Naseem "90" Harris	Tyshawn Watkins
Ayden "Glo" Hendricks	
Khaliek Hite	

SLC Student Facilitators

Arianna
Camille
Dexter
Grace
Syd

Graduate Student Coordinator

Paulina

This anthology is the result of a collaboration between students at Sarah Lawrence College and a dedicated group of writers in the Youth Opportunities Program. The collected works shown in these pages represent the creativity, artistry, cooperation, and determination of the participants. As an introduction to this anthology, the facilitators have shared the following sentiments:

It has been an enormous privilege to work with such a bright group of minds this semester. I have been consistently blown away by the group's willingness to be vulnerable and share their writing with us, as well as their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn and collaborate with us and the other writers. There is no doubt in my mind that this has been an immensely rewarding experience for all involved, and even my role as a facilitator has, well, facilitated so much learning and growing both on a personal as well as artistic level. I am sad to leave so soon, but I am excited for what the future holds for my fellow writers and hope to continue this type of work in the future.

Dexter

I have very much appreciated the openness and willingness each and every one of you brought to the prompts. I have enjoyed writing with everyone each week. I got to see writing from a new perspective and remember what it feels like to get back to basics, to take an hour, half hour, or 20 minutes and just write. Writing all together made it feel more valuable. I enjoyed seeing writing through your eyes and I feel inspired to explore writing more freely after this experience. I hope you all feel excited and inspired to write more in the future, all of you are great writers and I hope we helped you find your voice. I am very proud of your progress and willingness to share your pieces with the group. I hope this was a rewarding experience that will encourage you to keep speaking out your wonderful words.

Grace

I am so glad we were received with open minds and hearts that everyone was willing to be vulnerable through writing. All the writing produced through Right-to-Write has been incredible, my favorites being our collaborative works. It has been a privilege to work with everyone and see some individuals develop a fondness for writing. What's more, those who did not like writing still participated and shared whenever possible. I am so glad to have heard everyone's stories, and share some time with our writing throughout the program. I hope Right-to-Write has assured everyone involved that writing can take many forms. I hope everyone took something from this program and continues to write fiction, poetry, and dialogue wherever they might find themselves. Creativity is something we can take with us everywhere; no one can ever take our minds.

Arianna

I am so honored that we were able to share a creative space with so many wonderful writers this semester. This was truly a reciprocal project, in which both our facilitators and our writers were able to step out of their comfort zones and exchange creative work with each other. It was wonderful to see even those writers who were quiet or reluctant ultimately make the effort to put their thoughts and ideas on the page and even share them with the group. I loved everyone's thoughtfulness and originality, especially when trying new styles of writing like collaborative poems or descriptive odes. Thank you to our writers for your hard work and creativity; I learned a lot from all of you and I hope you continue to express yourselves through art of any form!

Camille

The stories that we tell of ourselves and others are the most potent narratives that we carry. So often we forget the value of these stories, or we are tricked into believing that these stories don't matter or that our voice doesn't matter, that no one wants to listen. These lies seed deep within us and silence us. But they are just that, lies. In the 2024 Right to Write cohort, I was honored to get to be a part of the process of holding space for peoples' stories and deeply listening. Stories about heartache, music, home, waterfalls, dogs, all still hold my mind captive even in just remembering them. As a note to this cohort of writers, thank you for trusting the space to share your stories. Your stories are worthy of being told and you are worthy of being listened to. Keep writing. The world is better with your stories in it.

Syd

Marcus “HD” Byrd

Blinding Lights

When I was a small kid one of my best memories was when my aunt took me to Times Square as a child, it felt like everything was in a light show. There was everything from people dressed up as superheroes to the delightful smell of food trucks cooking your favorite food. But what stood out to me was the smile on my aunt's face. She took me to all the candy stores, even McDonalds, but just seeing her happy was enough for me. She really enjoyed taking pictures with the superheroes for some odd reason, but I guess it was to make me happy since I was too scared to do it myself.

Throughout that day I learned a lot. To be more in detail, you see the different types of people from the ones who woke up agitated that morning, to the kind good hearted people. But what I noticed being there was the humidity of the air, the people moving in big groups like a stampede, and the smell of the food; I could just taste the salty McDonalds fries.

The view of the constant changing lights were blinding if you stared too long. Not to mention the loud cries of the passing cars.

Zombie Breakout

Zoey: It's a little scary after sunset, do you think it's safe to go out?

Brad: Who knows what's out there, but it's only one way to find out.

Jake: Get the gear ready Brad we're heading out.

Brad: But what about Zoey?

Bella: Hello? Am I not here?

Jake: Brad, we are running low on food, and we still need clean water, we'll come back for them.

Bella: Well, I have a idea. Why don't we all go?

Jake: Just be quiet and don't slow me down.

(To be continued.)

Mario Chávez

Recowata

En verano en Recowata el cielo es nublado y gris. Las montañas sobresalen de las nubes. El clima es caluroso y a la vez fresco. A los alrededores se escucha como descende el agua de las montañas. A lo lejos se puede ver animalitos pequeños y un poco de mosquitos. El olor a tierra mojada es lo mejor, los pinos un poco mojados con ese olor rico. El camino está apimentado y adornado con rocas. El agua de un río corre por el lado del camino y en el medio unas albercas con el agua caliente que sale de las mismas montañas. Un cerco de tubo azules cubren las albercas. El agua de las albercas es azul y caliente y el agua cae de un par de rocas que están pegadas a las montañas. Cuando era niño, nos llevaban de visita por el día. Del niño desde entonces, es mi lugar favorito.

Recowata

Translated by Arianna Erraez

In the summers of Recowata, the sky is cloudy and gray. The mountains stand above the clouds. The climate is hot and fresh at the same time. In the distance, you can hear the water cascading from the mountains. In the distance, you can see little animals and some mosquitos. The smell of the moist earth is the best, the pine trees slightly moist with that rich scent. The path is peppered and adorned with rocks. The water of a river runs to the side of the path and

in the center in a reservoir, filled with hot water that cascades from the same mountain. A blue tube fence covers the reservoir. The water in the reservoir is blue and hot and the water falls from some rocks glued to the mountains. When I was a kid, we'd take day trips there. Since then, it has been my favorite place.

Simón

Una vez tuve un perro. Su nombre era Simón. Era un Border Collie. Era el perrito más feo de la manada pero el más juguetón. Me costó 500 pesos mexicanos, como 50 dólares estadounidenses. Iba conmigo a todos lados. Me sentía feliz y un día un amigo me dijo que se lo prestara a su perra para que tuviera perritos. Se lo preste y como 3 días después que fui por él dijo, que se le había salido del patio de su casa.

Simon

Translated by Arianna Erraez

Once, I had a dog. His name was Simon. He was a Border Collie. He was the ugliest dog of the litter, but the most playful. He cost me 500 Mexican pesos, something like 50 American dollars. He went with me everywhere. I felt happy and one day a friend asked to borrow my dog for his female dogs so that they could have puppies. I let him, and about 3 days later I went to pick him up. My friend said that Simon escaped his house from the patio.

Andrew Constantin

Central Park Zoo

The sidewalk is still hard beneath my feet, but what I see and smell quickly changes as I enter the temporary escape of the Central Park Zoo. I enter the Tropical Bird room and the concrete floor gives way to a wood planked one. The climate changes as rapidly as the material did at my feet. Instead of the stale, hot New York City air, it is replaced by damp air with a constant fog. The noise of sirens, cars, and motorcycles is quickly replaced by the unique sounds of birds from all corners of the planet. As I exit that room, I am reintroduced to the similar feeling of pavement on my feet as I walk over to the outdoor enclosures. I watch as a bear relaxes by lying down on a rock, on the next enclosure a seal does the same before it rolls over into the water, splashing the window with water. Before I leave, I walk into the dark room, which is so dark you cannot see your hand in front of you, but you can still make out the outlines of bats hanging upside down. Once I leave, I am immediately reintroduced to the reality of New York City.

Ode to Riding my Bike

The highlight of my week,
my Sunday drive.

The sun is out,

but it is not too hot

nor too cold.

Riding my bike is

always best on days like this.

I take in my surroundings,

all 5 senses fully awake and in use.

Shifting to neutral

as I coast to a stop.

The gentle heat of the engine

keeps me warm from

the chilly wind,

which cuts through my jacket.

I pull into my garage,

and find the kickstand

with my left foot.

I turn off the engine,

remove my helmet and gloves.

I hope next Sunday

it will be just as sunny,

but not too hot

nor too cold.

Dwight “DJ” Harris

The night crawler

The red figure moved swiftly, so fast it looked like a red blur. It smelled like spoiled cabbage and eggs to the point it made my stomach turn. It made a weird growling noise that was hard to describe. Once it stopped long enough for me to properly see it, the creature opened its mouth and it had teeth like a shark and had more fur than a lion's mane. The eyes were beady and yellow tinted, very similar to a sick human's eyes.

Naseem “90” Harris

I-South Chronicles

Microwave hot like a summer day.
The timer stops and sounds like sirens.
People running at the sound of the sirens
and at the aroma of the spicy chicken.

Stomach rumbles like a train;
you may think we're at a comedy session
with all the laughter going on.

The Thing

A big red creature with 3 black eyes and orange hair that looks like fire, he has 8 arms and 2 legs and walks around stepping on people because he's a giant and doesn't like humans on his territory. The grumpiness reminds me of my grandfather. The growls of its stomach would make you think there is a pack of wolves around. You can tell The Thing has personal issues with humans because the animals are living peacefully.

Ayden “Glo” Hendricks

Globoy

My name is Ayden. I like my name because my mother gave it to me. My nickname is Glo. My friends gave me that name and it turned into my rap name. I never understood why people called me that but I got used to it. To me I think Glo means shine so I think Glo means shine So I think people call me that because I’m a young shiner.

Studio: Dark, Quiet, Relaxing

The studio is dark, quiet, and relaxing. I get peace of mind when I’m there. I can feel the bass when the music is loud. I’m there with my friends. Everyone isn’t invited, females are invited; good vibes only.

Khaliek Hite

Khaliek

In Arabic, my name means creator. When I was growing up, nobody had the name “Khaliek” so I felt like it was different, so I liked it. I got my nickname from my friends when I was younger, cause they used to tell me I was a happy person, and I used to live everyday like my birthday.

I recently looked into being Muslim, and I really felt it. And when I got into jail, I turned Muslim.

When I was younger, I wanted to change my name, cause my dad wasn’t in my life, but I had to grow out of it.

I really changed my mind about changing my name. I want to keep it.

Dog

Years ago, one summer I was with my friends. We was coming from the park, and I had a fight with my old friend Javon, and right after the fights, the dog bit me. The dog had a lock jaw on my leg. I tried everything to get the dog off. I went to the hospital to get stitches. Ever since that summer day, I was scared of dogs, and I will really kill a dog if they dog try me.

Dear Michael Jordan

I know sometimes you think I'm tryna get at you, but it's all jokes bruh. When. You joke about me, I never get mad. I just don't like how you was joking all day about me, but when I joke about you, you get in your feelings, but it's good. Ima check you later.

Jeremiah “Jay J” Hughes

My Dream Life in Houston

The One Time I Was In Houston I Felt Free. I Didn't Have to Wear A Ski Mask. I Didn't See

People That I Knew. The People Was Really Attracted To Me Especially The Women. It Was

Always Hot Even During The Night Time. It Was A Good Hot. I Loved the Highways It's Like 6 Lanes So I Could Get Sturdy. The Food Was Amazing Also.

Ode to Ladies

I

Love

All

Ladies

They

Bring My

Energy Up

Smell

Like Victoria Secret

I

Always

Keep My Ladies

Secrets

Cecil “3” Kelly

Collective Poem, Boot Camp Vibes

No matter what you go through never give up
Even if you sick and go to throw up
Someone will catch you.

At two in the morning
I stare at the stars
Are they up there watching? Looking down?
If they are, I hope they miss me frown.
A smile is only as valuable as the clown
So you can turn that frown upside down
Look to the mountains, the suns coming round.

Jeremiah “Jay Dee” Malcolm

G5 Fly High

My first show!!! Nervousness ran through my whole body. “5 minutes left Jay Dee,” yelled the arena worker. 5 minutes passed in a blink of an eye. I could hear the crowd roaring. Sweat & goosebumps ran down my body “Phew. Here I go.” I felt the energy of the crowd; it sounds like about twenty thousand and counting wanting me to perform.

[Inhale, exhale] Helped me face stage fright. The director gave me a microphone and my earpiece. Here I go... I walk out, fans cheering my name, “Jay Dee, Jay Dee, Jay Dee!!!” I sang like I never sang before. I felt so good, so alive. The fans recited every word of my music.

The crowd roaring, the people jumping sounds like a stampede of elephants. At last, an encore for me to perform once more. I had thought to myself like, “wow. I’ve impacted a lot of peoples’ lives including mine.” I stood on my grind and if it wasn’t for my fans, I wouldn’t be here. Thank you!!!

Xavier “X” Rice

Xavier

My name is Xavier, which my mom gave to me. I never knew what my name actually meant until now. Bright. When I think about what bright actually means, I think smart mental wise, or a shining star. But I got a mind set or what my name means to me. I look at my name as a general, someone who can lead a heard through a storm. Someone who can sink the last shot with 3.3 seconds on the clock. I also look at my name as a savior, someone you can count on, someone who can help you in the worst situations, someone you can depend on.

Plane Crash

3: My leg broke

X: I can't feel nothing

Ari: I don't think I can walk

3: Why you feel like you can't walk?

Ari: My foot was crushed

3: How bad is it?

X: 3, it looks real bad

Ari: How are we gonna get out?

X: Do anybody still got their phone?

3: I got my phone right here

Ari: Do you got service?

3: Yea

X: Ari, call 911

Ari: OK, let's get out of here