

InDepth

FALL 2020

iow
InsideOUT
WRITERS

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Dear Students,

On Saturday mornings, boys in the SHU put pen to paper and get caught up between real-life and play. When our boys get lost in their writing, acts of creation give rise to testimonials, manifestos, poetry, letters, raps, and fiction. Recovered childhood selves make their debuts alongside inked selves aspiring for better tomorrows. The writings is not only a discovery of voices, but also a recognition of the joys that come from playing, from playing with words, and from creating a truth, no matter how small or simple—a truth born out of melting pasts, presents, and imaginative contemplation.

We are fortunate to witness the boys give new essence to their words, wanting to tell their stories just right so audiences can catch glimpses of their emerging talents. Some stories, we have learned, are abandoned in heaps of crumpled paper, at times discarded for no other reason than the desire for perfection. We now make a point of rescuing these early utterances and of pleading their cases before their respective authors. Our students regale us and one another with lighthearted and somber writings adorned with ingenious metaphors and similes. These are offerings to the uncertain worlds that have taken their toll on our young writers' short lives.

All of it, all the writing we read, is proof—in rhyme, off rhyme, and prose—that as long as there will there is possibility; proof that just like an old paperback book is more than its tattered cover, our boys are so much more than the charges that box them in. That is why we talk to our boys about the Alumni Program and the opportunities that can be found on college campuses.

Dr. Mary Christiankis and Dr. Richard Mora
Former IOW Teachers

Fellow Writers,

After doing three years in Y.A. (Youth Authority), I was released to a “sober” living facility in South Central Los Angeles. Living on the westside surrounded by dope fiends and all the gang activity, I spent most of my nights, mornings and evenings at home alone.

Living with ex-convicts, crack addicts, schizophrenics and bipolar people -- this, I must admit, was driving me a bit crazy. I joined a local boxing gym, started dating a beautiful girl, then enrolled in college where I studied cinema and acting. I was at crossroads.

Should I just go back to what I know best and make fast money? Or do I keep chasing buses down the streets of South Central to get to school and work? My addictions to cocaine and alcohol came back into my life. The girl I thought loved me, left me... I got knocked out and ended up back in jail. But I didn't stop writing. With InsideOUT Writers (IOW) in my corner, I came back out stronger than ever. Among other positive forces in my life, the Alumni Program supported me.

After a journey to my lowest point, I now find myself on television sets with well-known actors and actresses, in studios discussing music videos and pursuing new projects as I chase my goals and dreams. I learned how to dance, laugh and love life. Life gets along with me pretty well now, even though sometimes it can get complicated and always challenging. Some way, somehow, it knows that I punch back pretty hard by not giving up. So we share that tough love.

I leave you with a bit of advice. When you get out, make sure you give IOW a call and join the Alumni Program. It'll keep you focused and motivated. Also remember:

“If you're going through hell, keep going.” ~Winston Churchill

“The saddest thing in life is wasted talent” ~ from the movie A Bronx Tale

So keep moving forward,

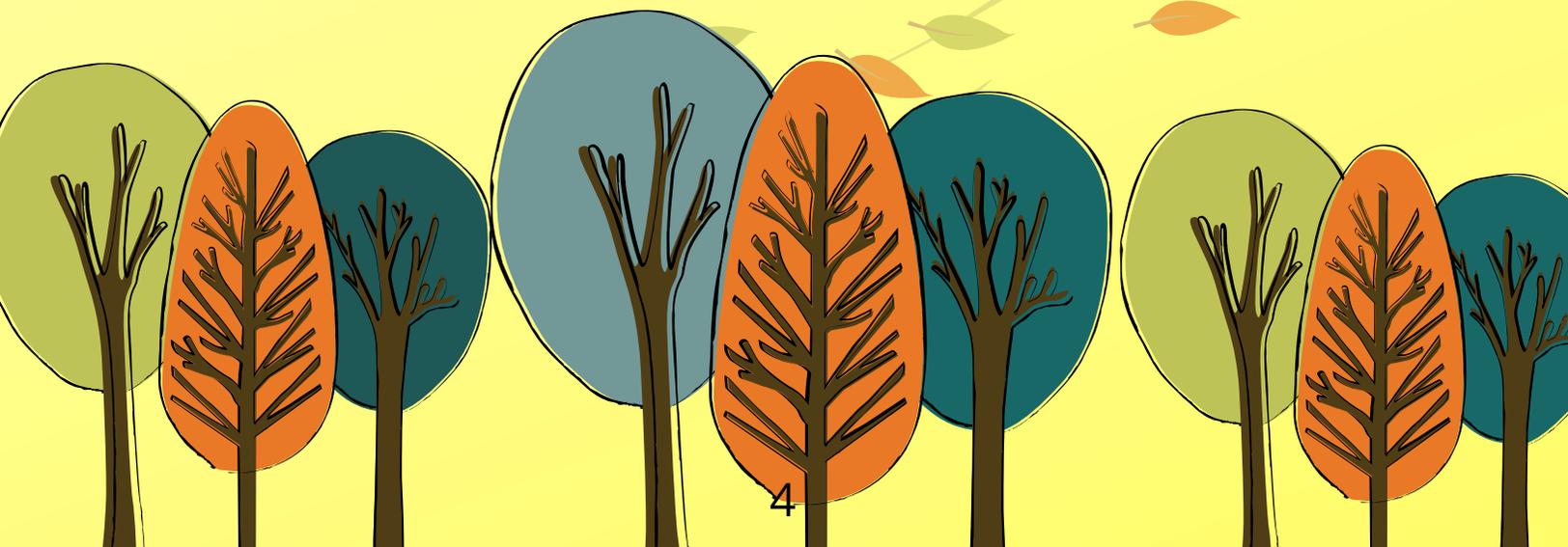
J. Valdez

IOW Seasoned Alum

The background is a bright yellow color. At the top, there are several curved, light grey lines representing wind or air currents. Scattered throughout the upper half are various leaves in shades of green, teal, and brown, appearing to be blowing or falling. In the bottom left corner, there are three stylized trees with brown trunks and branches. The trees have circular canopies; the leftmost and rightmost are blue, and the middle one is orange. In the bottom right corner, there are more curved grey lines and scattered leaves, mirroring the top section.

WRITINGS FROM OUR YOUTH

CENTRAL JUVENILE HALL



Unit Boys Care

I miss my big cousin
He was always there for me
He always had my back
He was the roots of my tree

He was always on the streets
Looking for a dad he never had
I think that's why he took care of me
Raising a kid made him glad

He was always in the hood
Constantly putting in the work
He always had to watch his back
In case there were enemies waiting to lurk

He always had to be strong
He was funny like a muppet
I miss my big cousin
My big cousin puppet

Andrew F.
9/28/19

The personality trait I'm most proud of that I know how to advocate for myself. I know how to stand up for myself and people if I have to. I'm also very independent. I'll depend on myself before I'll depend on someone else. If I can't fix my own problem after trying numerous times, then I'll ask someone else for help.

Kyla J.
9/11/19

I hold a firm belief that people deserve a second chance, no matter what someone did, that single action doesn't define them but it should be the person's whole collective actions that define them. What should be taken into account is how they react to what they did... sympathy, empathy.

Kai F.
9/21/19

Dear Ten Year Old Joseph,

I wish you the best in the world but remember not to make stupid decisions. Just remember to listen to your family and don't let kids bully you. Because if you do, you will end up, like me in jail missing out, family, friends, and holidays.

Joseph G.
11/30/19

Hey 10-year-old self,

I got some advice for you. Don't make any threats to teachers and don't get arrested for drugs. Control your anger. Be nicer to other students and stop making fun of kids. Stay positive and don't be down just because your mom beats you. Work hard, study hard, and tell your mom then she was wrong for beating you. It is okay to feel lonely, sad, frustrated, and angry. Just don't let those emotions get the best of you.

David D.
11/30/19

At 10, I started gang banging and got my first tattoo.
At 11, I started using heavy drugs.
At 12, I got expelled from thirteen schools.
At 13, I held my first gun.
At 13, I lost a close family member.
At 14, I started drug dealing.
At 14, I started putting my family through a lot of pain.
At 14, got bailed out of jail
At 15, I saw my older brother shoot someone in front of me.
At 15, I stabbed a rival gang member
At 15, I found a pretty girl to be my girlfriend
At 15, me and my girlfriend talked about the bad stuff
At 16, I got stabbed in front of my girlfriend by a rival gang member.
At 17, me and my girlfriend were talking about having a family.
At 17, I became a dangerous person to my family.

Rafael G.
9/28/19

My baby niece, Iris, was born on September 9, 2017.
I remember the first time I saw her and the first time I carried her.
I remember when my brother, Iris's dad, would help her crawl.
I remember the first time I saw her standing up on her own.
I remember sharing my snacks with her and stealing some of her baby snacks.
I remember walking home from school and went to my sister-in-law's up house.
My sister-in-law told me to stand back so I did. Then she told Iris to stand.
I remember feeling anxious because I didn't know what would happen.
Iris started walking towards me.
I remember my eyes watering. I took out my phone and started recording her.
When she was walking, I was backing up so that she can walk a bit more.
I remember I would ask Iris to give me a hug and she would hug me tight.
I remember when she would be asleep and I would carry her home to bed or to the car. When I carried her, I would see her half awake and she would hug me and fall asleep again.

Armando C.
10/26/19



Unit Boys EF

In the middle of the most dangerous neighborhood in the city, behind a never used dumpster, there lived a beautiful golden cat named Hope. Hope did what she always did. She frolicked around the alleyways or killed a rat or two. There was something about Hope that was different about her. She was a dog at heart. All the stray dogs would heel at her command, bring her scraps of food, and provide protection.

As you may know, dogs and cats are sworn enemies but down this particular alleyway, they lived in harmony. Hope was the leader for she was the biggest cat with 6-inch claws and as big as a panther. She was well-respected due to her leadership. The cat and dog population grew out of hand in the city causing the city council to take action on this rapid growth of stray animals. But the alley which Hope had claimed as her own was a safe haven for animals.

Dogs and cats were being captured in the streets and euthanized in terrible animal shelters, not even given a chance for adoption. Hope understood this problem for her and her family as her family was captured and killed when she was a young kitten. She was left in the dangerous streets to fend for herself. Hope took sanctuary in the dumpster until taken in by a pack of dogs where she learned the way of the dog by eating like a dog. Because of this, she grew at an alarming rate. When she became a young adult, she established her dominance with the other cats. The other cats feared her for she was bigger than most of her peers. The alleyway became a place for strays where everything is shared.

Everyone is protected and taken care of. Dogs licked the wounds of injured cats. The cats groomed the dogs and provide them food. Hope was the puppeteer of it all. She mended the bond between feline and canine for the safety of all. From the smallest of the pack to the biggest -- all were welcomed.

Michael R.
11/30/19

I wonder why I keep coming here.
I wonder when I'm going home.
I wonder what I'm going to do
when I go home.
I wonder will I do better when I go
home.

Eric D.
10/5/19

I Wonder

I wonder when I'm going to be released.
I wonder how my attitude will be on my
birthday since I'll be spending it in jail.
I wonder how I will be once I get out.
Will I be able to change?
I wonder what's the first thing Imma do
when they let me go
even though I have a clue.
I wonder if it's gonna be house arrest
or probation.
I wonder if I'll be able to spend Christmas
with my family or am I gonna end up back
here or God forbid, dead.

Jahlem G.
10/5/19

Unit Boys GH

I thank myself for doing good through all
the time I've been here.
I'm thankful for the wonderful family I got.
The gods will offer you chances.
Know them.
Take them.

Pedro C.
11/27/19

I felt proud of myself
when I made enough money
working to help my mom get a new car.
Another time I felt proud of myself was when I
saw my daughter for the first time in person.
But they don't see that when I'm alone.
I'm a writer.
They don't see that when I'm alone.
I'm an artist and musician.
What people initially think of me,
when they lay eyes on me
is that I'm probably a criminal or a drug addict.
Truth is I don't smoke or drink but I live in a
country were money is needed to survive and
the way I make money often involves me
breaking the law.

Daniel V.
9/25/19

Unit Boys KL

I could've prevented from coming here by not letting the cops get me.
I could've run but for some reason, I was just tired of running and I let them get me.
I was tired of going from place to place looking for a place to sleep every night
having to make sure there were no cops around so I could see my son.

Javier M.
9/7/19

Love is what you need to have to have a good life.
Sometimes it's hard to find and it may take a while to find what you're looking for.
But everything revolves around love so be patient to find the right love that's right
for you.

David S.
9/11/19



Words are sometimes uncontrolled.
They have a mind of their own.
As you grow, your words will grow with you.
You can't hold them back because they
come from a place that's always changing.
You can literally destroy a person with
words you thought were harmless or you
can give them a sense of love with words
that you can think meant nothing.
Words can be a beautiful weapon

Jeffrey W.
9/15/19

Everywhere around me, there are walls.
The walls could take your freedom
Or the walls could keep you safe
And out of trouble.
The wall makes you think twice
Or set you free and give you privacy.
Walls could make you go crazy
Or it can make you lazy.
When I look out my window here, all I could do is think about what brought me here
and what I would've done differently to not be in this situation.
When I look out the window,
I can't help myself to stop thinking about the people I love.
When I look out the window, all I could see is the freedom I can't have.

David S.
10/5/19

However, you feel
However, strong you are
However, your brain works
No one can allow you to push your ideals except yourself.
It's your ambitions and confidence
That pushes you into doing what makes you happy and allows you to change the world.

Anonymous
9/15/19

All of my rages has been lingering
Aching constantly when I least expect it
Tearing my mind apart when I get angry
Like a random blackout in a Bright City
My life tends to dim until you're blind and can only see darkness
It's similar to the elements, as if there's a forest flame,
Raging tsunami, towering tornado,
or a disastrous earthquake that wishes only for destruction.
Only satisfied when everything is destroyed.

Ezra H.
11/13/19

Unit Boys MN

I was bound to go to jail before I was born. My daddy was in jail when I was born. And his daddy too. So, all I did was repeat and keep the cycle going. All I was trying to do was survive. The crazy part about the police was they were going to let me go but nobody came to pick me up from the station. The things I did for food and clothes, you wouldn't believe. I was bound to go to jail, sooner or later. Even though I served my time, the environment I live in and come from is so bad my judge won't send me with my mom. I'm forced to do time in jail until I'm old enough to live on my own. My freedom was gone before I had it because of my mom and dad.

When I become a dad, I will make sure my kids keep their freedom!!

Isaiah B.
11/20/19

Dear momma, how you doing
You know I'm straight
I wanna apologize
Cause I know you probably stressin'
And I've been thinking about you.
But I can't call on some days.
The judge doesn't want me home.
But you know that I'm prepared.
But you know that I'm prepared.

Ever since 13,
I was raised up on the block
And kids played basketball
But not me, I played with glocks.

Moms were worried sick
Yea she nearly lost her child
And when them bullets grazed me,
I thanked God. I coulda died.

Look into my eyes,
All this pain I can't forget,
Up in my cell alone in my feelings,
I'll admit
Fighting these cases
I pray to God that I come home,
I always think its soon
But can't say 'cause I don't know.

Anonymous
10/19/19

I think my biggest challenge I've ever had
to face was the death of my brother. When
my brother died, I felt like everything else
didn't matter. I cared about nothing or
nobody.

My life was on 'pause'. I didn't feel like
talking to anyone at first, not even my
mom. Because although it hurt me, I
couldn't imagine the pain she was going
through. I didn't feel like going to school.
All I did was pop pills and smoke weed,
trying to make myself numb. It took me a
while to put an interest in other things.

I slowly started to adapt to life again. I had
to face life without my big brother.
Although I feel like I took a big loss, I feel
like I got someone up in heaven looking
out for me. I like to think that he's up there
with god joking and laughing.

Long live my bro.

Maurico F.
11/6/19

Unit Boys P

People always assume I'm the bad guy because of the way I dress or the people I am associated with. I always get harassed by the cops everywhere I go. They pull me overlooking for gun and drugs. In the courtroom, the judge and DA never want to let me go, calling me a menace to society. Everywhere I go, I'm labeled as a gang member. They can push me down all they want but I'll always find my way back up no matter what they tell me. I'm always going to be me.

Castellanos B.
10/12/19

Unit Boys RS

Who am I
Somebody that wanna get out of pain.

Who am I
A person that has a deep talent and
wanna use it to put a smile on my
mother's face.

Who am I
A person that has deep in these gangs
and just wasting to make a change.

Who am I
A person that's trying to make a better
future for themselves and not look
back

Who am I
A person that's trying to make hella
cash and make sure baby mama , my
kids, and mom are always happy.
That's how I feel deep down in my soul.

Revontae P.
11/13/2019

I want to be remembered as a community
leader, father, mentor, brother, king,
good friend, homie, successful person,
dream chaser, all of the above. I feel I
can't just leave this earth without
completing these things. People should
remember me so I'm striving to be
remembered.

Malik C.
11/13/19

I want to be remembered as a true
example of change. I want to be the
person you use when you talk about
taking advantage of a second chance. I
want to be remembered as a king who
chose his own path. I want to be
remembered as a super hero to my
little sisters. I want to be known as coal
that became a diamond.

Anonymous
11/13/19

Unit Girls CARE

Take me back to the days we were all innocent
Where joy and happiness existed
When we were blinded by hate that surrounds our existence.
Take me back to the days when safety was a guarantee
When life was a blessing
Where death was a stranger
What if we could bring those days?

Journey R., Age 16
9/4/2019

Just because I'm quiet doesn't mean I'm weak.
Just because my life is bad doesn't mean I can't turn it around.
Just because I'm white doesn't mean I don't get judged.
Just because I smile doesn't mean I'm always happy.
Just because I'm in jail doesn't make me a bad person.
Just because you can't see my heart doesn't mean I have one.
Just because the worlds are not perfect, you still make the decisions and choices.
Just because I'm heartbroken doesn't mean I'll give it out again.
Just because you're a jerk to me doesn't mean I'll be one back.
Just because I have a small family doesn't mean there's not a lot of hurt.
Just because I look innocent doesn't mean I do wrong things.
Just because I'm here doesn't mean I'm lost.

Skylar P.
11/6/19

Sometimes I would be in my room talking to myself.
What if I ran to the wrong person and die
What if my dreams never come true
What if I fail and never become anything
What if my family and friends get tired of me
What if the love of my life never comes
What if everything I don't work
What if I don't make my momma proud that if the world mute me out
What if the weed don't help me with my problems no more
Yea, alot of what if's
What about if I was worrying about all the negatives will never get me nowhere so I'm
stuck on the positives that's gonna take me higher

Sacoria G., Age 16
9/4/2019

I got the devil on my left
and, I got the angel on my right
fighting with these demons inside
So every day, I push myself to walk
by faith not by sight

Alyah M.
9/4/2019



I would be Carrie from the scary movie so I could have powers.
I would also scare people.
I would like to be Winnie the Pooh
So I could get a lotta honey.
I would like to be Barack Obama so
I could be the President and continue ObamaCare.
I would like to be Judge Campos
So I could free all the homies.
I would like to be Sleeping Beauty
So I could sleep all I want.
I would like to be Rihanna
Cause she fine as hell and has a beautiful voice.
To be honest
I would like to be nobody
Cause I like to be myself.

Samantha H., Age 18
9/18/19

The anger inside me tends to build up
and burst like when you shake a soda and open it up. Pop!
The silence inside me no longer exists
my each and every thought comes out with meaning and emphasis.
The hardness inside me is a brick wall that's been put up by everyone who hurt me
they donate a brick each time... how lovely.
The beauty inside me is ready to come out
but she's struggling to realize she's already there.
It's not always what's in the mirror.
The fear inside me is always on the lookout ready to shut me down
when something unpredictable or unfortunate thing comes my way... past.
The courage inside me is standing tall amongst the other things barricading it.
The frustration inside me reaches dangerous levels...98...99...100.
The wisdom inside me is there and will always be there
even when it's rarely being used.
The hope inside me meeting with all the others inside
letting them know it's all temporary!

Jamie P.
10/2/19

If there was no juvie
us kids would be free & happy
just like a fairytale movie.
If everybody was rich,
there would be no need for
the poor to hit licks.
If we all had the same skin color
the racists would call us sisters and brothers.
If there was more rehabs,
perhaps,
there'd be less homeless.
If there were no deadly weapons,
there would be no need to look
behind our backs for protection.
If not all models on magazines were skinny
Girls wouldn't be making themselves throw-up
to get their mini waist.
If boys were to be taught how to love
they wouldn't be dating girls just for fun.

Sammy H.
10/16/19



The real me is sweet and caring. I don't like to be judged by what I do. I am emotional and strong. I haven't been like that for long. I cry-- some of the time. I don't know why I am independent and wise. I know that's who I am deep down inside. I am a girl with a lot of troubles and fears. I've been like that for many years. I am me and free. No matter what happens, I don't let it get to me. I am smart and I like to make the right choices. I keep telling myself to listen to the voices that I hear inside of my body. I am unique in my own personal way. My attitude is crazy and wild and that's here to stay. To me, I am who I am and I know that's right. You see me differently but in your only sight how I am is how I am.... That's me. That's who. I'm happy to be a human being and I learn from my mistakes. I live my life with risks to take. So who I am is who I am that's who I am and that's who I will be.

Tamika
10/23/19

Unit Girls C

Dying Before I'm Done

In case somebody shoots me
In case somebody does me in
Here's what you should know about me
I am a loyal, dependable friend

I eat ice cream with a fork
I love bacon, but I'm allergic to pork

Cookies with sprinkles are my favorite treat
I know it's gross, but I like to smell my own feet

In the sixth grade, I made all As
By eighth grade, I was more into dudes

There's a secret only my mother knows
Every Mother's Day, I polish her toes

There are lots of things I plan to do
Spend the summer working
Take my daughter to New York on a train
Convince my dad to ride an airplane
Show my brother how to have a good time
Start playing chess instead of drinking wine

Only some things end sooner than you want
Like your first kiss and fourth period lunch
So if I die before I'm done
Don't let them forget that while I was here,
I had fun

Gwen
December 2018

The sweetest sound I've ever heard is laughter. The sound of my little brother's laugh, the sound of my mom's. Knowing that life isn't easy for anyone, yet people still find a way to laugh is the best thing. Laughter is beautiful to me because it's the one thing that's hard to fake, successfully, at least. Unlike a smile, you can tell when a laugh isn't genuine. The best thing about laughter is knowing you were the cause of it. It sparks something like joy inside of you, something unexplainable. Laughing can also help cure a lot. For example, yesterday I was really going through it, but after getting some genuine laughs out I couldn't do anything but feel great. Laughing is one of the best medicines imaginable. It's just often taken for granted considering it happens so many times a day.

Amari B.
December 2018

The Most Beautiful Sight

Brown
Baby
Girl
The beauty of the world
my daughter
Here's another kiss
a poem
a hug
Words to show the world
Just how beautiful you are

Gwen
December 2018

Waiting

I'm waiting to have a real mom to care for me as much as she cares for herself.
I'm waiting to find my father that was never a part of my life.
I'm waiting for someone to be a real friend.
I'm waiting for my sister to realize what she's doing as a fourteen-year-old is not right.
I'm waiting to get my freedom back again. I'm waiting to relax on a soft bed.
I'm waiting to be me again.
I'm waiting to go back to my old life.
I just want my regular life back.
I'm waiting to feel like I'm finally not making someone dislike me because of the small dumb things I do.

Alexis H., Age 17
November 2018

The Sweetest Sound

I miss the sound of the rain when you're inside watching a movie.
I miss the sound of my boyfriend sleeping. He snores but it's light and peaceful because I know he's there.
I miss the sound of silence.
I miss the sound of my dad's voice.
I miss the sound of the cars. As crazy as that seems it means freedom.
I miss everything outside of here.
I miss the sound of McDonald's employees calling numbers.
I miss the sound of my puppy barking.
Being here has made me appreciate everything. Every little detail.
I miss walking. I miss my only girlfriend.
I miss the fresh air. I miss the sun.
I miss writing music or trying to.
Because it was something me and my boyfriend did together.
I miss the sound of my brother's voice. Both of them.
I miss real food. I miss the money. I miss my life.

Skye G.
December 2018

Separated

Being separated from you gave me time to think and time to breathe. I know now that you don't deserve me and you can't hurt me if I don't let you. Probably felt like I was wrapped around your finger, but since we separated I learned how to be without you. It might hurt but you'll learn how to be without me too.

Kyah S.
December 2018

Unit Girls D

Brother and I
Walking down a block
Around 6 o'clock
Walking and laughing
Reminiscing and talking
Gunshots around the sky.
Running for our lives
Turn around and see
My brother bleeding.
My heart drops and I'm screaming
Carry him and cry
Hoping he won't die
Looking at the suspects running
Knowing that I'm karma who's coming
'I love you' is what he said.
Not a good-bye because this is not end.
Looking at that shining star
that is me knowing that I'm protected.

Isabel F.
10/2/19

My safe place is when I listen to music.
I like it when I'm alone and I can bump
it and enjoy being alone. I can't enjoy
my music with people like I can when
I'm by myself. When I'm alone I can
really sit there and get lost. I'm not
worried about nothin'. No struggles,
no worries, and no judgement.
Something about being in a whip,
bumpin' ... I could really get addicted
to that. Feelin' the bass and relating to
the lyrics. I love it.

Reina S., Age 18
11/17/18

You don't know how it feels...
To grow up in their walls,
To get released and still have nothing at all.
You don't know how it feels...
To get recruited into the gang
At a very young age
Because nobody told you differently.
You don't know how it feels...
To stay on the streets,
Have nothing to eat,
But still expected to sell drugs
and make money.
You don't know how it feels...
To be kicking it with the homies
And a car comes by real slow
And next thing you know,
your homies have been shot, dead.
You don't know how it feels...
So don't try and act like you do.
Until you've lived, seen, and heard
what I have been through,
Don't tell that you do.

Sayannah
10/16/19

Ci en el mund, todo guera facil
Y no uviera.
Violencia, dogas y crimenes.
To dente no teminara en la carcel
Y todo fuera diferente
Pero en el mundo al tropiesos y
La jente y el mundo por no tomar
Buenas deciciones todo acava mal
Ai que cambiar para que el mundo y la
Jente fueran diferente y fuera todo bueno

Noredeith P.
10/16/19

Where I'm From

I'm from the east side of South Central. To everyone, it's the worst place in L.A., but to me, it's a home sweet home. The Rally's and Subway down the street, my two top places to eat. The liquor stores on every block and Tam's on every other main street. Talking to everyone everywhere I go. Going wherever I want to go because I know my streets so well. If I need hair supplies, I can walk to any corner and I'll find a beauty supply. Everything is perfect on every street around me. It's not the place I want my kids to grow up, but it's where I grew up so I make the best of it.

Heidy P., Age 17
12/15/18

Leadership

Leadership is leading the way, taking charge with pride and integrity. To be a leader you have to set an example so others around you see it and hope later down the line, they'd do the same thing. I pay attention to people who hold their ground and stand alone. I respect those who know how to act and speak to others respectfully. I consider myself a leader because since I've come to Central, I've been minding my business, running my program, and repeating for almost two weeks now. And, regardless of the drama around me, I haven't involved myself - not once.

Kyah S., Age 16
12/15/18

The mystery began when she lost herself. She was confused.
Her whole life was one big question mark.
The mystery began when she followed the darkness in search of the light,
stumbling in her path, trying to keep herself up.
The mystery began when her soul broke down,
in search of joy from all places but not knowing where to look.
The mystery began when she finally pursued her journey alone.
The mystery began when she fell in love with herself
and didn't know what to do from there.

Amari, Age 17
12/12/18

Following your dreams
Looks like a mother holding her child for the first time
Joy, nerve-wracking, excitement
A baby whale swimming all over the sea with its momma
Loving, beautiful, and special
Like your first time performing in front of your entire school
Scary, but ultimately, relieving.

Melina R., Age 18
12/12/18

Unit Girls ESU

Outside or inside,
Wherever you are.
Anything can look innocent,
Like a star.
Rapid noises in mid-air,
Damaging your eardrums, is that fair?
Triggers in your head can make you go nuts,
But, would you follow your brain or gut?
Enter a cave and never be found,
It's your choice, do you want to be around or under.
Get in maze and you can get confused for days
Think more and you can have tons of ways.
Anywhere you go, you got to look out,
And stay safe so you can live on and about.

Holiney B.
10/30/19



Unit 0/xy

The type of person I am is helping the kids that have been through the storm. Kids that have no hope. Just like me. I am there for the kids that walk the same path. I helped them change lanes. By that I mean, I help them change mindsets, understand what they go through, give them advice. Tell them I was, and have been, in their shoes. I let them know they're not alone. They are not going to be alone or feel alone no more because they might not believe it now. But I'm going to stay by their side through everything. Give it time they want to feel loved. I got that. They need clothes, I got that. They are hungry, I got that. They need to shower, slid up to my pad. You need money, I'll give you money. They want to work. I can get you to work. They ain't alone anymore.

Joel R.
10/5/19

I'm in these dirty juvenile clothes and I see my momma, she gives me the biggest hug. She kisses my forehead and tells me to stay strong. She says she believes in me and tells me she believes in me and tells me she loves me. She has been saying she loves me but this time, I felt she really means it. After she left, I shredded so many tears. I miss my momma so much. I just won't be in her arms again and forever.

XiHaly D.
10/19/19

Sometimes all I do is take stuff for granted. Sometimes I don't pay attention to everything surrounding me. Even when there's many things to look forward to. I don't pay attention to all of that when I'm out having fun. I don't choose to live when I have the chance to. I'll be thinking the only thing that's there for me is my homies and the streets. I don't see what I have until I lose it.

Aneth S.
11/9/19





Yellow
Yellow is bright
Yellow drops sparks
Yellow is the color
Of the sparking stars
That pops in the summer.
Yellow is the color of the
Fall and the nice leaves that
Drop in the dark cloudy
Sky. In the months of late
September and October
November and December
Yellow is the color of happiness
Now I'm sitting in juvenile hall thinking
while looking at the big yellow sun
I lost my freedom but not
For long.

Areth S.
11/2/19

Chains in my heart
In my neck, arms, and legs,
My eyes are blind.

Won't let me go
Tears keep falling
In the dark

Days later she comes back
Not knowing you changed

Years later you realized that life isn't important
You want to end it then she realized it was happening
But too late that old feeling won't come back

Amelia A., Age 13
10/19/19

Blue
Blue is the sound of water.
Blue is the way I explain
how I feel when I'm sad.
Blue is the color of the sky.
Blue makes me feel happy.
It might make you feel sad
but if you think about it
Blue is the color of so many beautiful
things besides sad.

Amelia A.
10/12/19

Allow Yourself
Allow yourself to stay calm
and you will live a much better life
Allow yourself to live life
and not worry about what nobody says
Allow yourself to stay strong
and keep it pushing.
Allow yourself to dream good things
and make them good things come true
Allow yourself to ignore the negative
energy and keep doing you.
Allow yourself to love your life
and live your best life!!

Trinity S.
11/9/19



Trick or Treat

You walk down an eerily dark hall. At the end of the hall, you hear wailing and screaming. It sounds like someone is being tortured. The screams are unnerving. Your heart skips a beat. You see red and you run, run, run! He's coming. You find yourself at a crossroads. Left or right? Right or left? He's closer. You start sweating. You feel the liquid trickle down your face. You make a left. The screaming gets louder and louder. Your heart is racing. You stop. It hurts. The pain. You can't breathe. You grab at your throat, falling to your knees crying. He's near, closer and closer and closer. The footsteps... THE FOOTSTEPS. You hear it. You hear him! It stops. He's here. Then it stops. It all stops. It's eerily quiet... then it happens... BINGO!!!!

Kai F.
10/30/19
CJH, Unit Boys Care

The devil comes in many forms. It could be the people closest to you. You could be blind to the devil standing right in front of you. Sometimes the devil could make you believe his intentions are good and he will show you his true form when it's too late. And you tricked with no treat.

Crystal T.
10/30/19
CJH, Unit Girls ESU

My sleep feels eternal,
My dream feels never-ending like a nightmare on Elm Street.
My soul longs to walk out of it but kept back by invisible chains.
Demons jumping out at me every moment or so
My mind wants to just turn off but feels taped open like it's a Saw victim.
Parents only miles away but unable to save me until a certain day.
My friends have escaped this nightmare long before me but they're still with me.
In a secret place, I go to play hide and seek
When I'm there, I feel like magic running down a sleeve.
The timer is ticking but there's no ring.
My body a vessel but without a destination once my day comes my soul shall be back in
its vessel powered up heading towards the destination... along as it's free.

Kyla M., Age 17
10/19/19
CJH, Unit Girls D



Trick or Treat

I look out my school window and I see kids walking to the houses getting candy having fun in their little outfits but I think to myself and say, "I remember me being a little kid going Trick or Treating, smiling, eating candy, running to doors, waiting to get candy to take back home".

Kahlil W.
11/2/19
Unit 92

Giving Thanks

I'm thankful for my grandparents that take care of me. I thank my parents who look out for me everyday. I'm also thankful that I have probation officers that look out for me and protect me. I thank God for blessing me everyday with food and shelter. I thank God that he gives me courage to move on. Next Thanksgiving, Imma celebrate with my parents.

Larson P.
11/27/19
CWH, Unit Boys RS

I am grateful for my family. I am thankful for my family because not a lot of people have parents or family at all. I'm grateful that I don't have to grow up on my own. Who I am most grateful for in my family is my mom. I am most grateful for her because she was always been there for me even when I was in the wrong so I will forever love her. When I get rich, I will make sure she doesn't have to work anymore and she is happy for the rest of her life. I am also grateful for myself. I'm grateful for myself because I push myself and get through the things other people might not be able to. I am grateful.

Ryan P.
10/5/19
CWH, Unit Boys Care

I'm grateful for still being able to wake up every day after everything I've been through and after everyone I lost. I am grateful for my mom even though she's not in my lifelife that but she never turned her back on me when I needed her. I am also grateful for my boyfriend because when I had no home he put a roof over my head and when I had nothing, he gave me everything. He truly changed my life and showed me the game instead of running it on me. R.I.P to all my fallen angels.

Melina C.
11/23/19
CWH, Unit Girls C

I am very thankful for God giving me the chance to get up every morning and be able to eat breakfast. Even though I'm locked up, I am still thankful for the 10-minute phone calls we get. I'm super thankful for my mom and dad being able to make it during visit time and spend some time with me and being able to talk to me of my little brother and how he's doing. I'm just very grateful for all the things and times my mom pray's for me even though all the things we've been through.

Luis S.
11/27/19
CWH, Unit KL

I'm thankful for waking up every day
I'm thankful for our amazing man above
I'm thankful for my mama's love
I'm thankful for being alive
I'm thankful for all those nights I survived.
I'm thankful for my daily bread
I'm thankful for the wise mind I have.
I'm thankful for all the people I hold close to my heart.
I'm thankful for my mama being there for me from the start.
I'm thankful for all the chances I've gotten.
I'm thankful for Jesus that has given my homies and homegirls peace now that their gone but not forgotten.
I'm thankful for being a real one.
I'm thankful for having a big heart.
I'm thankful for people who have taught me lessons.
I'm thankful for having a beautiful personality.
I'm thankful for being straight up
I'm thankful for the qualities
I'm blessed with
I'm thankful for so many things but let me tell you what touches my heart the most
Our Lord & Savior
My family and the fact that I'm still alive.

Aliyah M.
11/27/19
CWH, Unit Girls CARE

I'm thankful for having a good family that cares and supports me. I'm also thankful for having food on my plate every day. I'm also thankful for IOW bringing snacks for us and keeping us company.

Xavier S.
11/27/19
CWH, Boys RS

I am glad for everything I have been given in my life. Mainly, I am glad for all the books I have and the pictures of my cats. I think one thing I couldn't live without is my pencil and paper. The pen is mightier than the sword.

Kai F.
10/5/19
CWH, Unit Boys Care

I'm grateful that even though I'm locked up, my family still loves me and that I wake up every day even though I'm locked up. I still thank god I'm alive and breathing and that I have someplace to sleep and to eat and I'm safe even though I'd rather be home. I'm grateful that my boyfriend's family are praying for me and they're wishing nothing but the best for me at court. They're sticking my side when they don't have to. I'm grateful for every little good thing that comes my way. I'm mad at the way my life has been going but I'm grateful that I even have a life to live. I'm grateful for everyone that has stuck by my side up until now.

Jalissa P.
11/23/19
CWH, Unit Girls C

Thankful

The statement

“I’m thankful for” is so powerful

I’m thankful for the littlest things and the given things.

I’m thankful for the biggest things like my life and food
to the smallest things like this pen and paper,

All these things have a background to it and a story on how it got here.

I’m thankful for my coaches/teachers.

I’m thankful for my health. I’m thankful for my rights

I’m thankful for my education.

I’m thankful for everything because many people have absolutely nothing.

Give thanks every day because every day

You’re breathing on your own

Christopher P., Age 15

11/24/18

Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall, Unit EF



The background is a dark blue gradient. The top half is filled with numerous stylized leaves in shades of teal, light green, and yellow, scattered across the space. The bottom half features a row of stylized trees with brown trunks and rounded canopies in shades of light green, teal, and yellow. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

BARRY J. NIDORF
JUVENILE HALL

Unit T/V

My passions are about being a teacher and supporting younger pupils. I want the future to be better by explaining step-by-step helping kids to understand better about their education. I feel like our future needs to be better by teaching the next generation step-by-step by making lessons understandable. My plan is to get out of here, go back to school, finish high school, go to UNLV just like Suge Knight. After getting my Master's degree to be a teacher, I'll start teaching elementary then middle school. After, I'm going to teach high school. I'm going to teach all my students the way they're supposed to be taught. I want to support my little sisters the way my mom never did. Treat them to have the best life they haven't gotten yet. Support my brothers and sisters every single step of the way.

Gancy A.
9/7/10

Tonight I write the saddest lines
While the cotton of the blanket pokes me at night
and the wind blows in the cracks of my life
God tells me it's okay that they're no longer insight
But every birthday that passes I think of that night, February 9th
how it would have been different
if I was there
Only God knows
Murder raided the air
I miss your hugs and your love
I miss our talks
about not becoming thugs.

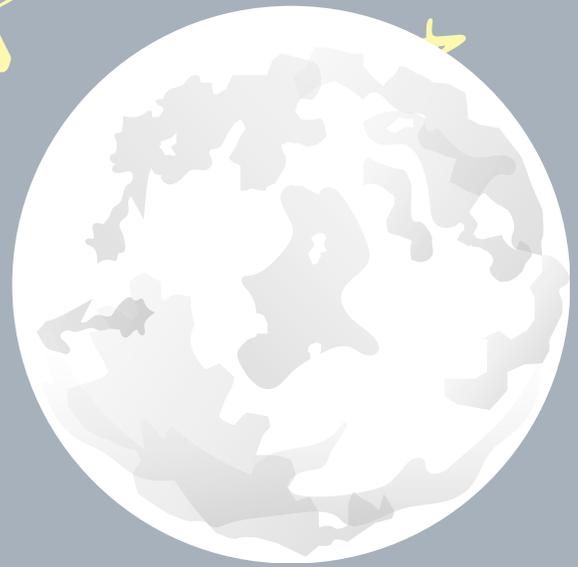
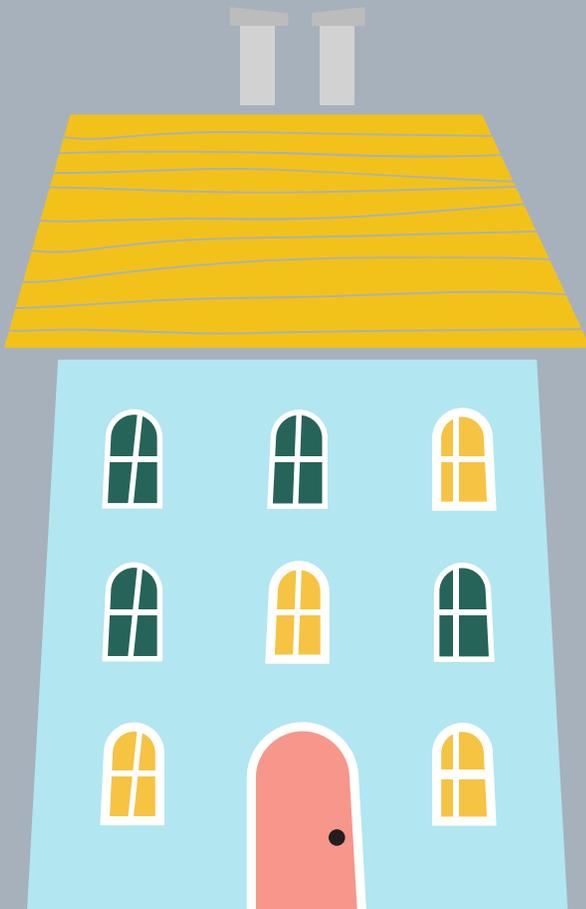
Alana J.
11/2/19



Unit Y2

Day by day, night by night
Trying to figure out a way to apologize.
I said sorry too many times but my
apologies mean nothing.
You said you will never forgive me so now
I would move on.
Now would I forget?
Day by day, night by night,
I'm being traumatized every day
I'm being haunted by my wrongs
always blaming myself
because I always cause harm.

Agustin G.
11/2/19



Unit Z2

The Needing
The day my mom married my stepdad,
I was about 2 years old.
I don't remember much but my mom wasn't
giving me any attention so I remember
crawling under the table and crying.
My godfather picked me up and carried me.
I stopped crying 'cuz I think I didn't feel
alone anymore.
A year later, my godfather died in a car
crash.
I don't remember how I felt.
I can't really remember.
This was a time I felt alone at a party.

Carlos A.
10/5/19

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

We extend our gratitude to the staff at Probation headquarters,
Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall, and Central Juvenile Hall.
... and to our current teachers who continue to inspire, guide, and
encourage our students to express themselves one word at a time.

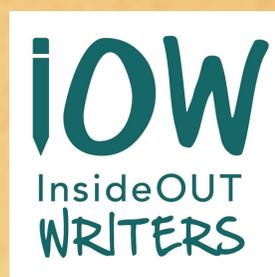
our current and past teachers

Fax Bahr
Ana Lilia Barraza
James Becerra
Aaron Bergman
Alessandro Canon
Anna Carey
Elizabeth Cooper
Jason Cruze
Susan Cuscuna
Davion Davis
Shelley Diamond

Jacques Edeline
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iOW InsideOUT WRITERS

This mission of InsideOUT Writers is to reduce the juvenile recidivism rate by providing a range of services that evolves to meet the needs of currently and formerly incarcerated youth and young adults.

Using creative writing as a catalyst for personal transformation, these young people are empowered with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully re-integrate into our communities becoming advocates for their future.

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