



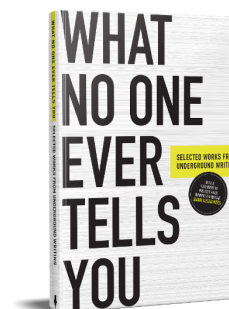
Essential Business

Friends,

I am writing to you with a complexity of emotions during this current moment of crisis. As a world community, we have lost many of our sisters and brothers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two days ago the governor of Washington extended our community’s quarantine until May 31. Everything, everywhere, seems different, changing day by day. In fact, many of the daily and weekly rhythms that orient our lives have—at least temporarily—vanished. For many, this is a time of isolation, anxiety, and waiting. For our incarcerated students in lockdown, this is doubly true. Here’s what one student said in response to a prompt asking, “What do you want people to know?”

I would want people to know that I’m still here in jail and that life goes on no matter what, whether you like it or not and even after the pandemic comes to an end. Those whose loved ones died will move on and the year 2020 will be remembered as the “Coronavirus year,” when everybody sat on their couch for awhile and the rest of the world will forget about it. I’m still stuck in here and it seems everyone else I knew just moved on and forgot about me too.

C.
Skagit County Community Justice Center
April 17, 2020



[Order our anthologies of student writing.](#)



The writing above reminds me of the need for connection. We need community in many different ways, and now more than ever. We need to remember each other. With such connection hope grows anew.

Thanks to those of you who have reached out to us—checking in, sending goodwill, leaving voicemails, continuing your regular donations. All of these have deeply encouraged us, and we are grateful for each of you.

When businesses and non-profits shut down mid-March in accordance with county, state, and federal guidelines, Underground Writing was immediately affected. All programming inside jails and juvenile detention facilities was placed on hold. Soon thereafter, schools moved online for the rest of the 2019-2020 academic year. Our other sites, held on the premises of local non-profits, placed external programming on hiatus as well. In brief, the core of our organization's programming shut down. We were also forced to cancel or postpone multiple events: *Hidden Truth* (with the Migrant Leaders Club) and *Finding Home* (a film event about foster care), as well as scheduled student book readings. All of this has resulted in the loss of community building, revenue, and the raising of student voices.

As you know, our work involves amplifying student voices through writing workshops, collaboration, and publication. This is essential. And I'm writing today to let you know that we're still open for business.

DONATE

**You make a difference.
Your donation changes lives.**

Like many writing programs around the country, we have adapted. Our administration and communications work continues forward in relatively similar modes. Our projects—including the *Dear America* chapbook and the *Letters to a Young Inmate* initiative—remain on schedule for later this year. I am also pleased to tell you that we are now regularly sending out e-deliverable workshops to all our sites. It is less than ideal, but we are seeing that students seem eager for an outlet for their voices and concerns at this time. This week I picked up our first batch of student writing from these workshops. They are by turns beautiful, whimsical, heartbreaking, and hopeful. Keep us in your online community—we'll be publishing these writings via social media in the coming days and weeks.

I send this with hopes that you and yours will stay safe, observant, and healthy in these challenging times. Thank you again for your continuing interest in the work we're doing. Your interest, your donations, and your encouragement embolden us in this current moment. Above all, rest assured that you are changing lives by helping our student voices continue to be heard.

Take good care,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "m. malyon".

Matt Malyon
Executive Director | Teaching Writer

OTHER NEWS & UPDATES



We are sending out e-deliverable workshops to all our sites. If you are feeling the need for an outlet during these challenging times, we'd like to offer you a workshop as well. Send us an e-mail asking for the "Hope in These Times" workshop. We'll

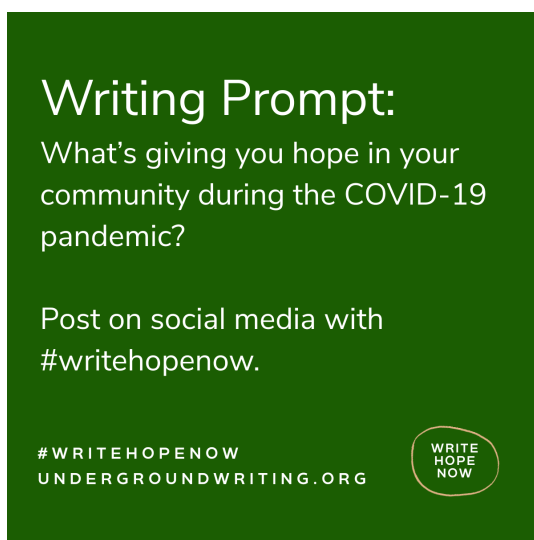
deliver it directly to your Inbox. Please contact us here:
info@undergroundwriting.org



Before any stay-at-home orders were in effect, Elizabeth Riley joined us in the studio to talk about her research project, the high school classroom vs leading a creative writing workshop with us, and how she navigated a love of reading/writing into a career. Elizabeth is a graduate student at Gardner-Webb University, researching the effect/outcome of Underground Writing's workshops on both individual students and our site at the Skagit County Community Justice Center.

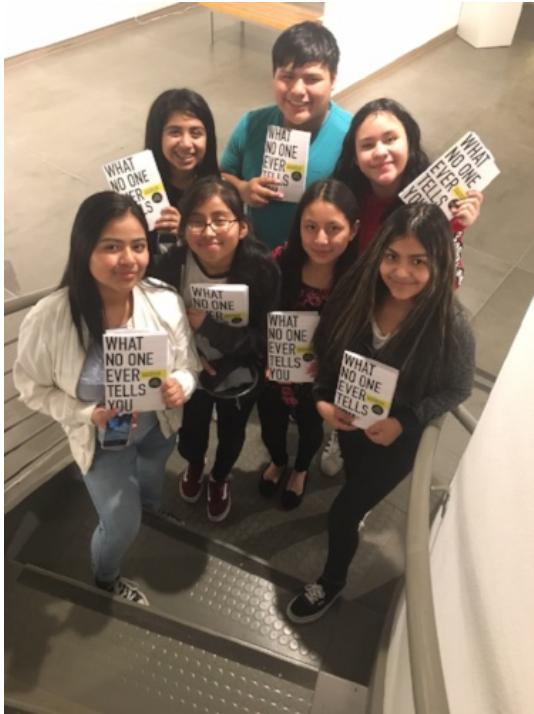
Listen via most podcast outlets, or [on our website](#).

And stay tuned—we'll be releasing a new podcast this week.



We've started a hashtag & writing prompt for the Covid-19 era.

Please spread the word by e-mail, word of mouth, and sharing / posting this image on your social media. Writing can't solve everything, but it can go a long way towards generating hope in these times.



[Students | Migrant Leaders Club]

Underground Writing is a literature-based creative writing program serving migrant, incarcerated, recovery, and other at-risk communities in northern Washington through literacy and personal transformation. Underground Writing facilitates generative readings of literature spanning the tradition—from ancient texts to those written in our workshops. Honoring the transforming power of the word, we believe that attentive reading leads to attentive writing, and that attentive writing has the power to assist in the restoration of communities, the imagination, and individual lives.

Our newsletter is published every other month, along with special editions and updates throughout the year. For 2020, we'll be sharing stories/reflections written by our faculty of Teaching Writers, featuring our various workshop sites in Skagit Valley, Washington.

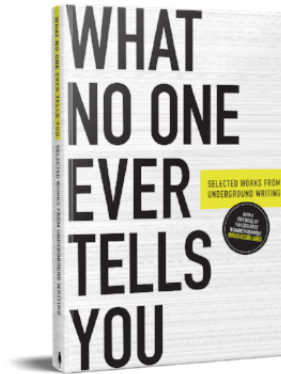
Underground Writing sites:

- Skagit County Juvenile Detention (Youth)**
- Mount Vernon Migrant Leaders Club**
(Youth - Mount Vernon School District)

Skagit Valley Recovery Community (Adults)
YMCA Oasis Daylight Center (Youth)
Skagit County Community Justice Center (Adults)

**You make a difference.
Your donation changes lives.**

DONATE



Copyright © *ICURRENT_YEAR* *ILIST:COMPANY*, All rights reserved.
IIFNOT:ARCHIVE_PAGE *ILIST:DESCRIPTION*

Our mailing address is:

IHTML:LIST_ADDRESS_HTML *IEND:IF*

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

IIF:REWARDS *IHTML:REWARDS* *IEND:IF*