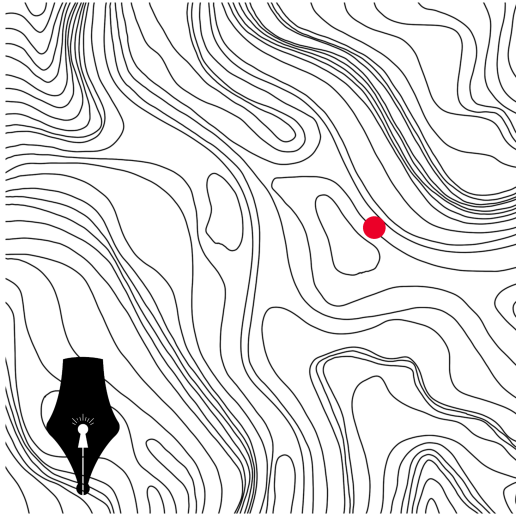


Underground Writing - Newsletter

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Geography of the Heart

December 28, 2023

Greetings, Friends.

We hope this finds you and yours having a good holiday season as we head towards the turn of the year.

One of the most unique things about writing is how quickly a bit of space, reflective silence, and the movement of a pen or pencil across a piece of paper allows access to one's heart.

Consciously or not, this terrain—so often unmappable in the rush of daily life—is where a majority of our lives are formed. And it is this type of generative space—the writing workshop—that forms the very core of our organization.

DONATE

At the beginning of our board retreat in November, we spent time reading student writing aloud to each other. This was followed by a time for our own writing, reflection, and sharing. The results were emotionally apparent, and immediate. We felt more connected to the students and to one another. We felt a renewed energy for the ongoing work of Underground Writing.

Here at the end of 2023, **we invite you to experience the power of our students' writing firsthand through your own participation in a brief at-home writing activity.** Our students' voices expressed in their writings not only empower the students, they have the generative ability to assist in our own growth, and to facilitate an awareness of our shared humanity. We hope that by doing this simple writing activity, you'll gain insight into our students, the work that Underground Writing continues to do, and your own life.

Amidst the year-end busyness, gather some paper and a pencil/pen and find a quiet space. Then **follow these steps** to connect with our students.

1. Once you're sitting down, **allow yourself to be still and quiet.**
2. When you're ready, **write for 5 minutes.** The point here is to warm up, so give yourself the freedom to write about anything that comes to mind, without worrying about literary merit, grammar, or mistakes. No wrong or right, just write. 5 minutes. Go!
3. **Read the student writings below** (aloud if possible). Then choose one of them that you'd like to respond to in writing.
4. **Write something for 10 minutes in response to the piece of student writing you chose.** No wrong or right, just write. 10 minutes. Go!
5. Read your piece aloud. Reflect on the experience, then **write down a few things you enjoyed or learned through our students' writing + your own writing/reading process.**
6. **BONUS** opportunity – reach out to us and tell us about what this activity generated within you, and consider sending us something you wrote during it.

STUDENT WRITING SAMPLES

As I look through

As I look through the chipped paint
on my bared windows, I see the leaves
blowing in the rain, pavement
with the shine of glass, the tinkling
of a falling barricade. I wake
hearing the horn of a steady

moving train. Another season
on a county bunk locked away!

Max
Skagit County Juvenile Detention
—*after* Tomas Tranströmer, “Tracks”

A life is to live

Time passes
Actions change
Life passes
People advance

Changes are difficult
But they are not always bad
We will miss what was
But growth is human nature

Minds will change
Alongside with people
We do not know what is coming
Perhaps they will be beautiful things

One can't know if they will be good
But they can't be all bad either
It's good to challenge fears
We can end up succeeding

Juli
Migrant Leaders Club

Have Hope

Have Hope. Have Strength.
It's just another day.
The sun will shine and fall
and the moon will take its place.
Then the sun will rise and show you a way.
It's just another day.
Have Hope. Have Strength.

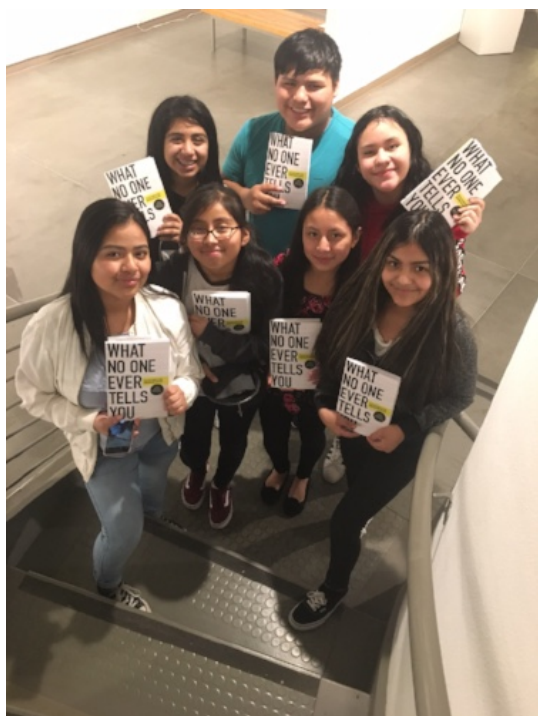
Anthony
Skagit County Juvenile Detention

It's been a good year for our ongoing work. We have so much to be grateful for—including you and your support. **If you have not done so already, we invite you to make a year-end donation.** (And, within the next 24 hours, please consider sharing this newsletter with one friend or family member who doesn't know about our work.)

Your support not only helps our students map the terrain of their hearts, it allows our generative work to continue.

A peace-filled and joyful holiday season and turn of the year to you and yours. We're grateful for you.

DONATE



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