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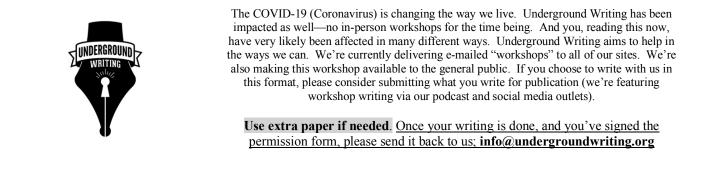
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Underground Writing Workshop | Hope in These Times

1. *The Decameron* is a series of stories told by a group of women and men who are quarantined in a large house outside of Florence, Italy to escape the Black Plague. The book was published nearly 700 years ago, far in advance of the Coronavirus. **Prompts**: 1) If you were to write a tale of these current times in 2020, what would it be, and why? ... 2) What would you want people to know? ... and 3) Write the tale.

2. Read "What Issa Heard" by David Budbill and follow the prompt suggestions.

3. Read "won't you celebrate with me" by Lucille Clifton and follow the prompt suggestions.

#2 – Hope in These Times workshop

What Issa Heard

Two hundred years ago Issa heard the morning birds singing sutras to this suffering world.

I heard them too, this morning, which must mean,

since we will always have a suffering world, we must also always have a song.

David Budbill

Prompt:

What does this poem say about pain? What does it say about joy ("song")? How are these two items interwoven in your life in this current moment of crisis in our world? What is giving you hope these days?

*use extra paper if needed

won't you celebrate with me

won't you celebrate with me what i have shaped into a kind of life? i had no model. born in babylon both nonwhite and woman what did i see to be except myself? i made it up here on this bridge between starshine and clay, my one hand holding tight my other hand; come celebrate with me that everyday something has tried to kill me and has failed.

Lucille Clifton

Prompt:

Whether you are a woman or a man, and no matter your racial or cultural background, there's plenty you can likely relate to in this poem. What would you say you've been shaped into? In our Coronavirus context, have you experienced any re-shaping? Clifton suggests that she's had to improvise at life . . . do you feel this way? If so, how have you needed to improvise? What do you make of the final four lines, and how do they speak to you?

Then: Write your own version of a "won't you celebrate with me" poem / piece of writing.

*use extra paper if needed