

WRITE ON!

A TEEN 'ZINE

Summer 2015
Volume 5

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WRITE ON!

A TEEN ZINE

**Pieces Inspired by
This Summer's
Teen Writers' Workshop**

**Session One - Middle School
Session Two - High School**

**Santa Monica Public Library
Summer 2015**

Write On! A Teen 'Zine

Special thanks to:

Authors who led the workshops:

Scott Bly

Cecil Castellucci

Rachel Kann

James Mihaley

Kendell Schaffer

**Santa Monica Public Library
Youth Services Department**

Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library

The Printing Palace

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LIBRARY

YOUTH SERVICES

**Your book is like a smoothie.
You put in the ingredients:
plot, character, humor, tension, etc.
Your imagination is a giant blender.**

James Mihaley

Session One

Alexandre Akhavein
Dahlia Carmona
Diya Rao
Isabella Kim-LaTona
Isbjorn "Gus" Kosta
Jason Telanoff
Jenna Jimenez
Natalia Solano
Olivier Velde
Sahara Karki
Shayna Zuckervraun

Session Two

Ben Goldman
Katie Osaki
Jack Taylor
Jacob Rojas
Jasmine Segovia
Joie Toth
Jordan Hadley
Michael Carroll
Peyton Kim-LaTona
Rebecca Hochman-Fisher
Sebastian Hanson
Seraphina Botero
Sydney Chung
Valerie Castro

TEARS OF AN OCTOPUS

By the 2015 Write On! Teen Writers, Session One

[This piece is the result of a group exercise, done with James Mihaley, based on the Activity Room's wall mural, below.]



Some call it Ydgrassil. Some say it was a tree. It was obviously an octopus. You may wonder how it got there.

It arrived there with the help of an owl. This particular owl had oranges as eyes and a honeycomb as its body. You may think that's unique, but wait till you hear what the octopus had: a human foot, a human hand, a world in its tentacles, and a knack for stealing baby carriages.

It all started five years ago when he stole a baby carriage that contained an extraordinary little girl named Emily. This little girl had secret powers. She was an extraordinary artist. The owl noticed it.

One day when the owl was flying over the house, dripping honey, he saw her drawing a rat. His first thought was...lunch! He swooped down and ate the drawing of the rat.

"That was a delicious rat," he said. The owl burped out a real rat. The rat scurried away...

Joie Toth

"I've never really baked before." I laughed as I stirred the sweet-smelling batter.

"Obviously," Francis scoffed.

Any spark that was there had just been extinguished. I just merely stared at my pretentious date.

"Well aren't you nice," I spoke sarcastically through my gritted teeth. He only nodded and grinned.

That's how our short relationship ended and I knew it before it happened. Every time a relationship has opened I've always known how it would close. I get these visions involuntarily at every introduction to romance. I don't know why or how but it's been going on forever. There was Marshall who had stood me up one too many times, Burt who was sloppy, and Davis who was a clown, a literal clown. There was no vision needed for Davis. It was those 3 failures and about 32 more. Romance seemed to be a hopeless game I would never win but I still played.

I walked down the block to meet Ollie at a quaint ice cream shop. Date number 36. The bell rang and he was already there waiting for me. Inside were two families sitting in pink and green chairs. Laughs echoed through the building.

"I'm Ollie," he introduced.

"Livvy," I said.

He took my hand and everything else melted away. We were still in the shop except the cheery atmosphere was nowhere to be seen. Everyone but Ollie and a tall man dressed in all black were crouched under their tables. Mothers held their kids as their cries now filled the open space. The dark stranger held a gun inches from Ollie's face. I wanted to yell at Ollie to do as he said but my throat was dry and I couldn't put my thoughts together.

"I said get down now!" The man continued to scream. Ollie opened his mouth to protest but was silenced when a bullet exited the barrel of the gun. I couldn't tell which of the many screams was my own.

"You alright?" Ollie asked, pulling me out of the vision.

"We have to go right now!" My explanation was cut short when a booming voice shouted, "Everyone on the ground immediately!"

Dahlia Carmona Valdivieso

The Amazing Adventures of Luli and Dali

Forward

There was once a time where everyone could time-travel, but now humans could only travel in time with their id or superego. Too many humans broke the rules of time-travel. The world is not the place it used to be...

Chapter 1

Our story begins with me, Dali. It all started when I turned 14 years old and my superego, Tita, was misplaced, I have no idea how or when or why she is no longer with me. That memory is all blurry in my mind. The only thing she left behind was a golden locket which had a picture of a young woman, very elegant indeed, and a young man who was ever so handsome. As I looked to the right, with the locket there was a note.

"What's this?" I said when I started to wonder.

"Dear Dali, sorry I left unexpectedly...Help...Luli will help you...come quickly...Tita." Don't think I am the kind of person that likes suspense, but, sadly, the note got wet with chamomile tea and those were the only words I could understand.

"Luli!" I shouted. "Oh gosh, who is?!?!?" I started feeling nervous and even more when I saw two little sky blue shoes popping out the window of my bedroom. I jumped back and hit myself against the wall. Right before losing consciousness I saw a small shadow coming towards me. ...



The insignificant **UNIVERSE**

Bland **PLANETS**

The **GRANDMA** of **CONFUSED**.

Each molecule, the molecule of **SADNESS**.

The emptiness of **ART**.

The **MICROWAVE** of death is

FUZZ,
UPSET,
GRUMPY.

Like a **TORNADO**.

Mocking my sensitive **HEEL**.

You are naked

You are **HELLO KITTY**

You are **JACKSON**

sliding through the **FRENCH DOOR** of life.

Jordan Hadley

Calm

I am holding calm in my hands.

Calm is a plum.

A smooth, sweet, cool plum.

It smells of nothing,
with a small hint of sweet.

It feels even and firm, cool to the touch.

It looks perfect and purple,
a stem peeking out the top.

I dig my fingers into the skin,
with no resistance from the fruit.
The inside feels soft and squishy.
I see the inside is a deep yellow,
with a small-shriveled pit in the center.

The inside smells sweeter,
without being too strong.
The taste is just as sweet,
with juiciness being added.

I throw it at the wall and the only mark it leaves
is a circle of juice,
a tiny stain.

Now I feel sad for the plum.

Calm is a plum.

The Trick of the 5 Stair

He tried to hold in the pain, firmly pressed his ankle, maybe he could walk it off, it was only a five stair. He heard a voice call his name. It was his friend Carlos.

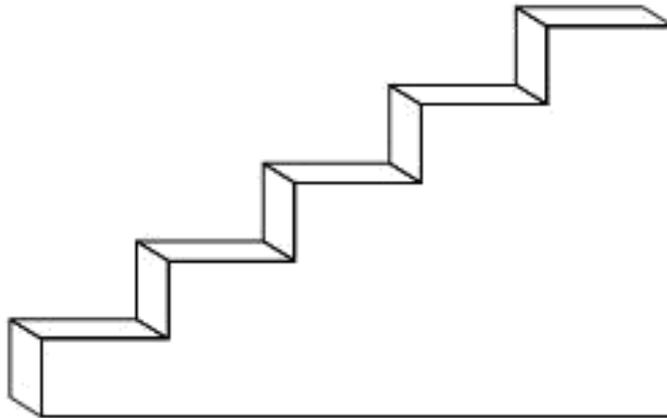
“Oh my God, dude, can you move your ankle?!”

Jacob tried but it hurt too much. Getting up was even harder. He needed to see a doctor, but his mom would know that he didn't ask her permission to go skateboarding. His ankle hurt a lot to even finish his thought.

“We can take the bus to the hospital. It's not that far,” suggested Carlos. Jacob knew that would not happen because getting up hurt enough.

“Nah, dude, I'll just call my mom to pick me up,” he said worried.

“Alright, I'll call you later, cause I also got to go.” Carlos left in a great hurry. Jacob called his mom. She was furious. Waiting 10 minutes on the third stair, he could only wait for the worst to happen.



Ben Goldman

War

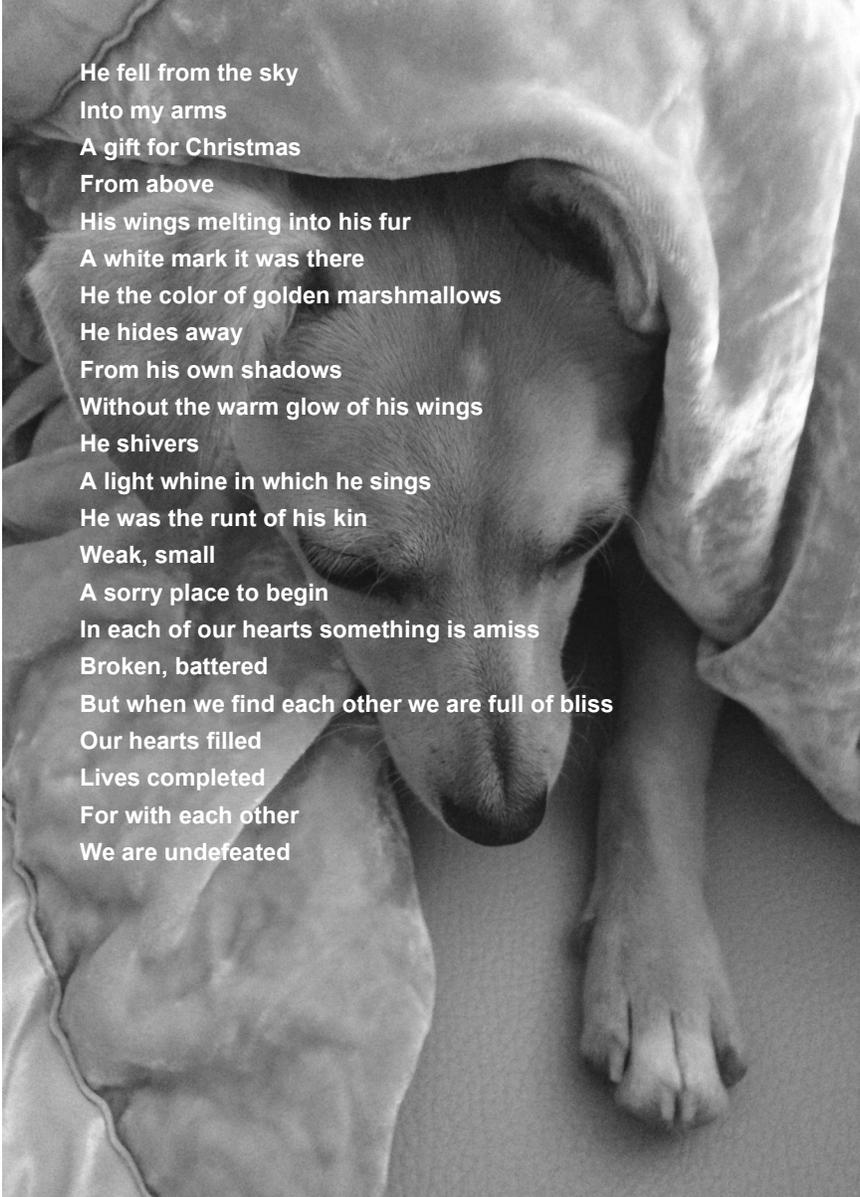
I was awoken by the sound of gunfire. My eyes snapped open as bullets pelted my bunker like rain. My hand scrambled across the floor, reaching for a weapon, a Kevlar vest, anything at all that could prove useful in what had suddenly become a battlefield. Right when my fingers finally felt the cold metal of a sniper rifle, the windows of my room were blown apart.

It was almost silent. The only sound that I could hear was the crunch of glass beneath my boots. As I moved slowly through the narrow corridors of the house, gingerly stepping over the corpses of allies, my heart began to beat like a drum. Visions flashed through my mind, scenes involving enemy gunners leaping around corners, shouting and aiming their guns straight at me, and visions of the walls exploding inwards from C4 or tank rounds. I nervously ran my fingers up and down the length of my sniper rifle, but every bit of dirt that I rubbed off the cold metal was replaced with sweat from my brow and the gritty mixture of glass shards and dirt that covered my hands.

My darting eyes landed on an old, dilapidated staircase. I ran as fast as my legs could carry me, taking the steps two at a time. I emerged onto the roof and into the day. I looked down and scanned the ground, squinting against the light, trying to see where the attack was coming from. Almost immediately, I noticed a man, face obscured by a bandana across his nose and mouth, pointing an AK up at me. Reacting almost on a reflex, I whipped out my sniper rifle and aimed it at his head, staring into his blue eyes through the scope. A plethora of emotions swirled in his eyes: anger, pain, defiance. But the one that stood out most of all was fear. He seemed almost terrified of me, though he was trying very hard not to show it.

I stared up at the man, decked out in military camo, and aiming a sniper rifle straight at my face. I muttered curses through my bandana to my commanding officer for making me attack this bunker, and I cursed him for forcing me to take the lives of others. I will remember their screams until the end of time. I dropped my AK, letting it clatter on the desert floor. It was empty anyway, a bluff to keep the man with the sniper from attacking. As he loaded a bullet in, I thought of my family, my daughter, my home. The last thing I heard was the crack of a gunshot.

Ode to Angel



He fell from the sky
Into my arms
A gift for Christmas
From above
His wings melting into his fur
A white mark it was there
He the color of golden marshmallows
He hides away
From his own shadows
Without the warm glow of his wings
He shivers
A light whine in which he sings
He was the runt of his kin
Weak, small
A sorry place to begin
In each of our hearts something is amiss
Broken, battered
But when we find each other we are full of bliss
Our hearts filled
Lives completed
For with each other
We are undefeated

Olivier Velde

**INCOMPLETE
AND
EVENTFUL,
GOOD THINGS AWAIT**

Isabella Kim-LaTona

**OCEAN LOVE:
RUSTLING OF WIND
BLUE SO FAR THE EYE CAN'T SEE
THE MIGHTY OCEAN**

Katie Osaki

De Tuin

I remember it like the stars remember where they're supposed to go every single night. I remember the bright gleaming light that bounced off every green leaf. Yes, I remember it, but that's all I can do now. I can't go back to revisit it. I wish I could, oh how I wish I could. It wasn't just any place, it was our place. It was the place where I could go to escape. I'm sure anyone can understand. When I was born, my mother and father slept in separate rooms, on opposite sides of the manor. They wouldn't look up at each other at dinner, much less when they passed each other in the halls. He had his mistresses and she had hers, but it didn't seem to hurt them. On the rare occasions they did talk, they only yelled. It was like listening to two continental plates collide. I found the garden when I was two. I had just learned how to walk and I was eager to explore the world. A world without the earthquakes and storms. A world that was mine, and mine alone.

Seriously, why so serious?

**Session One
with
Scott
Bly**



**Session Two
with
Rachel
Kann**

**Session Two
with
Cecil
Castellucci**



OK, that's more like it!



**Session One
with
James
Mihaley**

**Session Two
with
Kendell
Shaffer**



**Session One
with
Scott
Bly**

Sahara Karki

An Adventure In a Dream

I was struggling to fall asleep, the night was warmer than usual and I had a long day of playing and biking with my sister Sienna. Ten minutes later an image came. I looked around and saw a glowing door. And of course I had no choice but to get up, and open the door. And light shot out of it and some kind of force was pulling me towards it. I screamed and panicked but I was dead quiet when I opened my eyes.

It was an amazing place. The air was very sweet. It was a place with cotton candy clouds, gingerbread houses with candy canes and mints, trees that had chocolate wood and gummy leaves, and my favorite part was the chocolate waterfall, or should I say chocolate fall. And I had known this place my whole life: CANDYLAND! Obviously. Suddenly the ground started shaking and then turned into grey rock.

It felt like a 5.0 earthquake and the land started turning into a whole different world! A world of lava and rock! I ran to a gingerbread village nearby to ask what was happening to the land. Some parts were Candyland other parts were... well, Horrifyingland. I knocked on the door of the first house. There was a lady holding her daughter, who seemed to be my age. I asked, "Um, excuse me, I was wondering why the land is turning into another kind of land whenever there's an earthquake?"

The mother did not answer but the daughter whispered to her mom then said, "Follow me." I was confused at first but I knew that she was helping me.

"So where exactly are we going?" I asked.

"We're going to the castle of Candyland. That's the only place where we can both stop the changing land and if we don't stop it in time the land can spread to your dimension! Oh, and by the way, my name is Lola."

"My name is Sahara," I replied. Lola and I arrived at the castle. It was a beautiful castle made out of gingerbread and candy and frosting.

"We need to get past the guards without getting caught," Lola whispered.

"Ok," I replied. Lola seemed to know exactly what she was doing. Somehow we got past the guards and got the stuff we needed.

...make up the rest of the story and see how you can save the world :)

Sebastian Hanson

THERE ONCE WAS A GIRL FROM NORTH SPAIN
WHO MET TWO YOUNG MEN IN A LANE
SHE WAS EASILY LED,
AND DID AS THEY SAID,
AND THEY ALL JUMPED OFF A TRAIN.



Inspired by *One Piece*

Rainy,
misty sharks swiftly command a lively,
stormy gull.

Golly gosh, death!

Sunny,
warm mainlands roughly fight a cold,
rainy tide.

The luminescent moon quietly pulls the mast.

Jason Telanoff

There Is In But No Out - Book One

The Secret

“What are you reading?” I looked up from my book and saw my friend. It was the third day of summer vacation and I had never looked at a screen or seen daylight the whole summer, and was now reading a book during summer vacation.

“A book,” I replied.

“Why are you reading when we don’t have a summer reading list?”

“Well this is a book my great-grandpa gave me before he died. He told me that somewhere in the book there is a secret not to be told. He looked in every place, but he never found it. The secret could be hiding.”

I gave him a little information before he asked a lot more random questions.

“Well if he looked everywhere, why are you looking?”

“Dang, he’s still asking questions,” I thought. I considered going to my room and shutting the door, but he was my friend and I gave him the truth.

“My great-grandpa said he looked in every secret place, not in any regular places.”

“Sooo, you’re looking in the text.”

“Yup.”

“You won’t find it, no one is dumb enough to hide something in plain sight.”

“Yeah, you’re right,” I said, sadly. I was out of luck. I threw my book on the floor. “You wanna play pool?” I asked.

“Sure,” he replied.

Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t introduce myself. My name is Zaptriz, I’m 12 years old, and an average student, but great at solving puzzles. My friend’s name is Xendor. I thought that I was a normal kid, but I didn’t know what was yet to come.

When the book fell Xendor saw something slide out. I examined it and found that it was a page, but on that page I found bold letters that spelled “Zaptriz and Xendor, meet me at 4381 21st Street at 4:00 p.m. on June 28, 2020.”

“How does it know our names and the date?”

“That’s creepy.”

“Let’s do what it says, after all, whoever wrote it has to be smart.” ...

Natalia Solano

Holly – a Character Sketch

Holly had sky-blue eyes, rosy red cheeks, and hair in a straight sleek high ponytail that she was proud of. She had side bangs that fell straight down the side of her face and glimmered in the sun. Her hair was a rich creamy brown color with pretty blonde highlights that brought out her eyes. She had light skin. She was wearing a top with roses printed all over it, and white skinny jeans. She had flower earrings and she wore purple Converse. She was beautiful, yet she was lonely.

Holly had a brother who was obnoxious and mean at heart. He was always playing cruel tricks on Holly. For example, he stuck several toads in her backpack. Then later Mrs. Rosemary sent her to the principal's office and her backpack got taken away, so she wasn't prepared for the next day.

She also had a mother, Isabelle, who had a job in a bakery. Most of the time Isabelle stayed up at the bakery overnight making more bread. Perhaps that was the reason her brother was always so cranky and cross. She would often come home at 3 a.m., then at 4 a.m. go back to the bakery. So they never saw their mother much.

This made it even harder for Holly because her father had died of a heart attack. This happened when she was only five and her brother James was just turning eight. Holly had the best relationship with her dad. He came home with surprises and he was there at night when her mom wasn't, giving them both 20 to 30 kisses before going to bed.

Another reason why her brother was so cross was because it was the day of his birthday, an early September morning, September 9th to be exact. James shared his birthday with Dad so it was a day they all dreaded. James never liked his birthday. He never had parties. He just locked himself up in his room.

So, Holly was often stuck with the maid, Lizzie. That's me. Sometimes Holly would watch Spanish soap operas with me. I would cry at the happy and sad parts. I didn't clean up after the kids or do the laundry or the dishes like any maid was supposed to do. Instead I'd plop on the couch munching on sour cream and onion Pringles, that were supposed to be for the kids, and cry a river. So yeah, I admit I'm probably not the best maid ever, but back to the story. I kept my eye on that Holly. She was somewhat interesting.

Of course Holly had friends, but none of her friends invited her over to playdates, parties or group hangouts. That's why Holly was lonely.

Alexandre Akhavein

Mary's Cave: Chapter 1 – The News

Mary liked Christmas Eve. She would wrap gifts, cook, and decorate the whole house. She didn't know why her owners, Jordan and Janet Smith, always picked her to do the fancy work. It must have been because she was the most educated out of all the slaves.

Wrapping gifts was easy. She would just put the gifts in a box and fold the homemade "wrapping paper" over it. The wrapping paper was either made of old wallpaper, or it was made with natural materials such as thin tree bark. The hard part was making the right wrapping paper for every child. If you didn't use the right one, the kids would think that Saint Nick didn't really care about them and have a fuss about it. For example, Anna always wanted exactly 7 red rose petals on her gift wrap. But Mary had a good memory, it was fine.

Next was cooking. This was her favorite part of the day because she saw her boyfriend, Robert. He always told her stories about the outside world while she was cooking, but today was different. Today, Robert came up to her and said, "Come with me."

Mary was surprised, but it wasn't the first time he had done this. She followed him into the pantry, where it was very dark, except for one candle. Her boyfriend told her he had met a man in the meadow that had shared with him a plan to escape. Mary was interested, but at the same time, she was sad. She didn't know why, but she just felt an emotional connection to the house. She liked baking the cakes and cleaning up after the kids, even though they didn't appreciate her. She told Robert to go on.

He told her that they had to leave tonight because no one would see them during the party. First she packed her bags with the few clothes she possessed, then arranged her religious statues and other belongings. When this was done, her room was empty. Robert said that he would not be staying with her, but would visit and bring her utensils and weapons she needed to survive. Robert had a bigger job than Mary did, so the owners wouldn't realize Mary was gone until long after they would've realized Robert was.

It didn't take her long to sneak by the party, since slaves were always passing by. She was accompanied by Robert and Will, the man with the escape plan. Mary said goodbye to the beautiful green grass, tall trees, and the open space of the main house.

...

Tanka Poems

SUNSET

QUENCH THE BURNING SUN
COOL THE FLAMING FIRES OF DUSK
DIP BENEATH THE SEA
THE WORLD CALMS, THE STARS RELAX
SET EARTH INTO A DEEP SLEEP.

DICE OF LIFE

HOLD THE DICE OF LIFE
CAST THEM OVER THE MOONLIGHT
CHERRY BLOSSOM SLEEPS
LUCK GIVEN TO DRAGON'S PEARL
IT IS NOW YOUR TURN TO ROLL.

Kuare

Little Lamb

The smell of fear and moldy hay filled the old rotting barn. The patter of the rain and the roar of the thunder masked the frantic bleats of an ewe. Moments later, the headless body met the muddy ground with a slap, the rain washing away any trace of blood and grime. The ewe's head had been placed in a trough to drain, alongside a bloodied axe.

A woman's uniform with the name tag 'Mary' sat neatly folded on a table. The woman laid trembling in the hay, wrapped and bound up to her shoulders in a large white sheet. A man hummed a nursery rhyme while pouring a strong solution into a porcelain bath tub, a dust mask muffling the tune. After it was halfway filled, he gathered the woman in his arms and placed her in the tub. She hissed and glared at him from above her gag; he ignored her while continuing to fill the tub. The chemical stench and burn of the bleach made the woman squint her eyes and squirm. He dabbed some chloroform onto a scrap of cloth and held it over her nose, waiting patiently for her jerky movements to subside. Taking off the mask he softly sang, "Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow." With a gloved finger, he brushed a lock of chestnut hair from her pale cheek. He pushed her limp form slightly forward till she was neck deep in the bleach, then began to sharpen the axe as he waited.

She awoke to the grating of metal on metal, the screech making her wince. She felt woozy and her skin was itchy and irritated. Trying to move her bound limbs made it worse and she whimpered softly, the nausea worsening. The man took a lantern and walked over to the tub, easing her up a little and looking at her shoulders. She couldn't see them but the smell of bleach made her nose hurt. She sneezed, and he took out the gag and used it to wipe her nose.

The alarm clock suddenly went off, its shrill buzzing startling them both. As he went to silence it, she tried to sit up and rub her nose. Hearing her struggle, the man whipped around and yelled "Mary, STOP!!" She froze, scared by his sudden anger. Stalking toward her angrily, he pushed up his sleeves and violently shoved her head into the solution. He could feel her bound body thrashing around, slowly and calmly counting to ten. At ten, he yanked her head up and wiped his wet hands on his pants. The woman writhed and cried, the bleach burning her face and eyes. He dumped a bucket of water on her to shut her up, and she quieted to hiccups and sniffles. He gently gathers her hair into a wet ponytail, shushing her and dabbing at her puffy eyes. "Mary...", he whispers her name over and over again.

...

Peyton Kim-LaTona

Sticky Hands

I am holding fear in my hands

Fear is a pineapple

A spiny, bittersweet, firm pineapple
A pineapple with a curious tangy aroma

Heavy and awkward, digging into my palms
With bright and wild scales between razor-sharp, slender thorns

I slam it onto the black rocks below
And it explodes like a sweet sticky firework

The insides are lumpy

The sugary nectar coats my hands as I squeeze it into slime

One lick is enticing
Two licks is too much, the fruity buzz makes my lips pucker

Taking handfuls of the pineapple goop
I smear it into one word: free

Now I feel brave

Fear was a pineapple

And it is no longer in my hands

Valerie Castro

I Am Here Now

I am here now. What has already happened happened. What will happen will happen. I am here now.

The past is invariable,
And the future is a frightening uncertainty.
I'm unable to rewrite the past,
I cannot predict the future.
I must make now memorable because it will soon be over.
The past resurfaces in my mind constantly, reminding me of all that I've done.

It follows me like a shadow that never leaves, while
Future awaits me with its open arms and holds promising hopes in the palms of
its hands.

The future is a pressuring unknown, something I cannot foreshadow.
The past is like an ocean; it burdens me and weighs me down until I can no
longer fight back.

The present is like the ground, solid, dependable, and erratic.
The future is like the sky, endless with possibilities.
I must make the most of now; in hope the future is what I want it to be.

The past defined who I was.
The present symbolizes who I am.
The future will represent who I will become.

There is no future without the present, and no present with/without the past.
Past is a teacher to the present; it teaches me lessons and helps me with the
choices I make.

Now is not the time to dwell on the past,
Nor is it the time to wish for the future.
It is time for me to live life to the fullest, to have no boundaries.

I am here now. What has already happened happened. What will happen will happen. I am here now.

Write On! Writers In Action



A note from the editors:

Write On! A Teen 'Zine, volume 5, is a publication of writing by participants in the Summer Teen Writers' Workshop 2015 at the Santa Monica Public Library.

We hope you enjoyed these pieces, inspired by creative writing exercises, author visits, and teen life experiences. We felt honored to work with these talented young voices.

**Myleen DeJesus, Ann Wagner, Ivy Weston
SMPL Librarians**

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