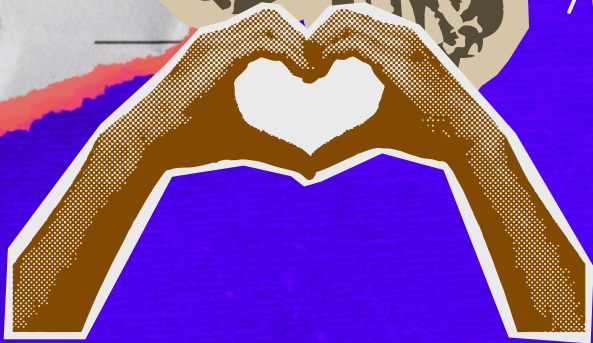


Young Playwrights' Theater

# Resilience PLAYlist



An interactive zine of joyful words  
by YPT's young playwrights  
...and you!

**DEAR YPT COMMUNITY MEMBER,**

*In dark times, creative writing can be a tool to fight despair and build imagination and resilience —important skills for architecting better futures. We know that many members of the Young Playwrights' Theater community are hurting right now, so we want to send a little care and inspiration your way.*

*The YPT Resilience PLAYlist is an interactive zine that includes a curated selection of monologues, poems, and other dramatic writing by young playwrights from throughout YPT history. These pieces are accompanied by invitations to build your own resilience through creativity.*

*In moments of grief, fear, and righteous anger, it is too easy for messages of despair to play on repeat in our heads. Let's add a new tune to the mix: the wisdom of young people discovering their voices and teaching us new ways to practice resilience, joy, and care.*

*This PLAYlist is for you. Read each piece in order, or "hit shuffle." Click linked content to watch this writing come to life. Find a new favorite poem or monologue, and read it whenever you need it. Accept creative invitations to make your own resilient "music." And then share this PLAYlist with someone else who needs it.*

*With love,*

**YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS' THEATER**



FROM (HANGING TIDES: JUDGE ME GENTLY, 2011

by Amber Faith Walton

I am a root  
An undeveloped beauty  
With an unknown fate.

Life is a journey  
Not for the fittest  
But for the bravest.

I bloom in the spring  
Where life itself is reborn  
With strength from the sun  
To see the light in everyone's story.

Lay against my tree trunk  
Feel weightless from pain

Life is a journey.  
You must forgive what hurt

Burdens your view,  
And mend in my soils  
Where growth begins.

Trust in your tears

That pain is real

Trust is in my palms,  
I will never let your story go.



**FROM THE 524 PROJECT, 2012**

*A collaboration between Young Playwrights' Theater in Washington, DC and InsideOut  
Literary Arts Project in Detroit, Michigan*

**MY ART IS SO LOUD**

*by Felix Lee*

*My art is so loud  
it looks like a shiny sun at noon.*

*My art is so ocean,  
deep.*

*Unlimited like the numbers,  
burning as the sun,  
clean and white  
snow before it falls down and touches the ground.*

*So tall  
like the mountain Everest, and  
hot like when a volcano spits out its lava.*



## **MY ART IS SO LOUD**

*by Callie Bizzell, Emoni Lowery, Sharhonda Lewis, Tanisha Phillips,  
and Tiana Minter-El*

*My art is so loud...*

*It has to catch your attention.*

*It feels like alcohol being poured into a wound.*

*It feels like an old witch is scratching her nails on a blackboard.*

*It feels like an earthquake cracking the ground.*

*It feels like a loc being pulled out by its root.*

*It feels like musical bass without decibel restrictions.*

*It feels like drops of water creating an oceanic wave.*

*My art is so loud...*

*It feels like the sweat of Curtis Mayfield baptizing me in soul while he sings  
"Superfly."*



# A CREATIVE INVITATION: BODY SENSORY PROMPT AND EMOTIONS ACTIVITY



## Body Sensory Prompt

What body of water do you feel the most connected to or the most similar to? For example, are you a river that goes with the flow, always on the move? An ocean who likes routine and taking up space? A lake who is calm and steady?



How does your body feel when you are at your best? At your worst? When you feel safe?



What do you do when you feel overwhelmed? How do you self-soothe and calm yourself down?



Fill in the blanks below in the following prompts.

When I am happy, my body looks like

When I am excited, my body looks like

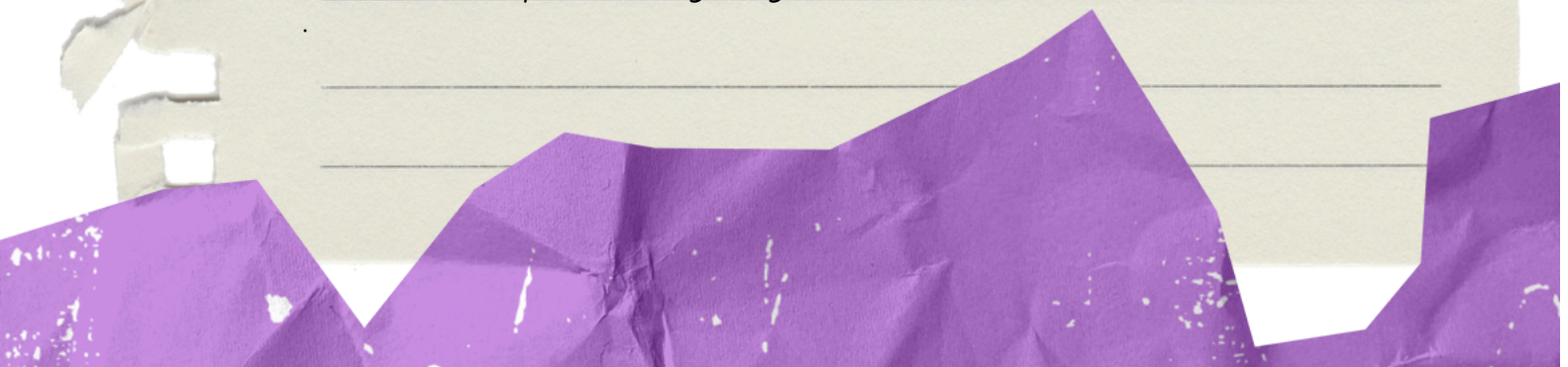
When I am sad, my body looks like

When I am sleepy, my body looks like

When I am energized, my body looks like .

When I am upset, my body looks like

When I am empowered, my body looks like



## FROM OVATION: MY SELF, 2024

Script compiled by Jared Shamberger, with content written by Breakthrough Montessori Charter School Intersession Program students, 5th grade students at John Lewis Elementary School , 5th grade students at Garfield Elementary School , 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students at Washington School for Girls , 7th and 8th grade students at Hardy Middle School, Afterschool Drama Club students at SEED Public Charter School , 4th and 5th grade students in the Polite Piggy's afterschool program at Maury Elementary School

### **THIS SKIN**

*This skin*

*This skin*

*This skin*

*This skin is beautiful*

*This skin is tough*

*This skin is more than just skin*

*This skin is mine*

*It covers me*

*It carries me*

*It teaches me*

*It teaches others*

*I feel safe in this skin*

*I like that my skin is like my mom's*



My skin gets ashy sometimes  
When I get nervous, sometimes I pinch my skin  
It isn't perfect  
I'm not perfect  
Perfect isn't the goal  
I am grateful  
I am humbled  
I am excited  
For my family  
For my next adventure  
For my future  
For my self.

## **MINE**

This belongs to me  
It's all I have  
The only thing I can never leave behind  
Misplace  
Throw away

This is what I'm taking with me  
I'm not giving it away  
Or trading it for something else



You can't borrow my walk  
You can't steal my handshake  
You can't duplicate my smile  
This belongs to me  
All of it

From the way I say "good morning"  
To the way I never dance in public  
It took me a while to find it  
I thought I lost it once or twice  
But there it was  
Right where I left it  
Right where it always was  
This is my body  
This is my story  
This is my work  
This is my self  
And this belongs to me

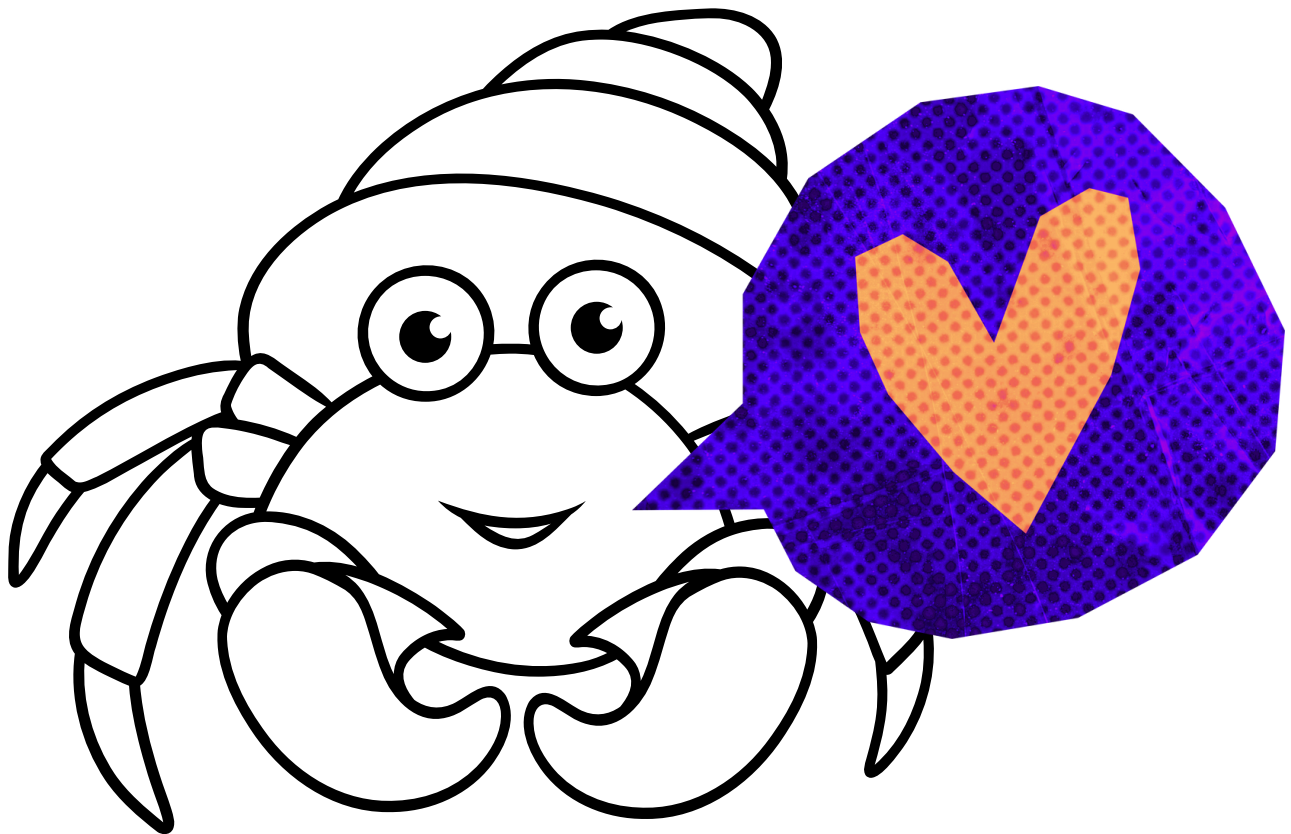


# A CREATIVE INVITATION: THE HERMIT CRAB PROMENADE



*Hello, captivating crustaceans, and welcome to the annual Hermit Crab Carnival! We're about to start the celebration so finish decorating your shell in your most exceptional and glamorous get-up! We can't wait to see your sincere selves walk that promenade!*

*-Originally completed by hundreds of community members at the 2023 Takoma Park Street Festival*





I decorate the outside of my shell with \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_.

Some decorations are just for me.

The inside of my shell is decorated with \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

I like it that way because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Sometimes my shell makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_

and other times, my shell makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_.

If my clothes were armor, like a hermit crab, they'd protect me from \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



I decorate the outside of my shell with pink and  
purple stripes  
because they're my favorite colors.

Some decorations are just for me.

The inside of my shell is decorated with secrets

I like it that way because nobody gets to know  
my secrets!

Sometimes my shell makes me feel beautiful

and other times, my shell makes me feel cozy

If my clothes were armor, like a hermit crab, they'd protect me from mean hermit crabs



I decorate the outside of my shell with lots of colors

because I like how fun they are

Some decorations are just for me.

The inside of my shell is decorated with more colors, sparkles, and dog pictures

I like it that way because It keeps my brain active

Sometimes my shell makes me feel shy and sad

and other times, my shell makes me feel happy and excited

If my clothes were armor, like a hermit crab, they'd protect me from being hurt by other people

FROM SILENCE IS VIOLENCE: WISH ME WELL, 2024

**I AM MYSELF**

by Ayanna Fowler

*I find that I am myself when I can sit in my thoughts.*

*Be present in the moment.*

*When I can experience the world and all its intricacies.*

*See the sunrise,*

*Listen to the waves.*

*Taste the salt of the sea.*

*I find that I am myself when I live up to the expectations that only I make.*

*When I cook a meal for my family*

*And hear the rhythm of the spoons, forks, and knives hitting the plate.*

*Where the happiest sound to me is the laughter of my child.*

*When I can get in my truck and*

*Just drive for a while.*

*Let the windows down,*

*Turn up the music,*

*And get lost in the sound.*

*When it's like this,*

*I am truly free.*

*When it's like this,*

*I find that I can be unequivocally*

*Me.*

## PART I

by Savannah S. Miller

I see myself a cat at the window.  
I watch the people as they pass by,  
And imagine I am a lion out a cage,  
Rolling in savanna grasses amid the  
Baked brown earth.

I see myself a cricket in the grass,  
Grounded and lovesick with song,  
Music that comes from within me  
That was grown in and birthed from my heart,  
Too long silenced.

I see myself a bird on the branch,  
Supported by the trunk of an oak,  
Sturdy and ringed with laughter lines,  
Tension in my outstretched claws as I am  
Mid-taking flight.

I see myself a bee on a flower,  
Collecting what is necessary for  
A life well lived. Amongst the tulips  
And lilies I find myself grateful for  
Regeneration.





I see myself a drop in the water  
Of the rushing Mississippi River,  
The same river that sheltered generations  
And feeds them still to this day,  
A great Mother.

I see myself the hand on a watch,  
Reminding people to cherish the seconds,  
To show up on time for the things  
That matter, and to devote as much  
Time to themselves.

I see myself Polaris in the sky,  
Bright with eons-old dying embers,  
Guiding the lonely through a maze  
They simply call their life,  
Helping hopeless.

I see myself a person in the mirror,  
And my face carries the weight of years,  
But also the brilliance of love  
Carved into the lines around my mouth—  
I have to smile.



# A CREATIVE INVITATION: TO ME, FREEDOM FEELS LIKE...



*Put on your favorite playlist and free write to each of these prompts to explore what freedom looks like to you.*

*My name is...*

*I woke up feeling..*

*3 words to describe me are...*

*My greatest strengths are...*

*My biggest challenge is..*

*When I am well, I feel..*

*If I couldn't fail, I would...*



I hold these truths to be self-evident:...

To me, freedom looks like...



**TO ME, FREEDOM LOOKS LIKE**

*by Joshua Leggett*

*Freedom, to me, looks like...*

*Yeah, freedom, to me, is to be... just be.*

*Free of all that I "could" be, so that I can be all that I will be.*

*That's freedom to me.*

**TO ME, FREEDOM LOOKS LIKE**

*by Alexis Anosike*

*abandoning fear when it steps into the room*

*running at night*

*not doubting myself, my thoughts*

*being authentically who I am*

*moving out of my parents' house and being independent*

*washing away the stench of self-doubt and fear*

*saying what's in my heart*



## FROM SILENCE IS VIOLENCE: WHAT NOW, 2016

by YPT students at Sitar Arts Center

As students we're taught to be leaders, and that leaders work to make things better  
And our most important leader is the President, who brings our country together.

For eighteen months we had a debate, on what leadership qualities are "normal"  
And on November 9th, that debate continued, since the opposite of what we're taught  
is now "normal."

Even to this day, leaders represent us, and know who we are  
But is our next leader ready, because President-elect is doing the wrong stuff so far.  
With the campaigns over, voting is done and the election for president conceded  
What will happen to voting rights, the environment, or health care for people who  
need it?

It seems the past has been forgotten, and our history is being ignored  
But our history will be a mystery, if laws we fought for aren't restored.  
The contributions of our culture to history include our music, our style, our dress.  
But when I listen to our next President talk, does he care about our progress?  
There are many who feel we're going back to a place where race again is a problem  
But, in a post-racial America of what we thought were eight years, maybe kids should  
take over and solve them.

It will be a different time for us, but there's no silencing or taking our voice  
And when I turn 18, you best believe I'm voting and exercising my choice.  
What was past has become present, but the present is not the past  
There is still hope and truth when the words of Dr. King are said,  
"Free at Last, Free at Last".



We know on November 9th you cried, and your eyes began to rain  
And the challenge we face is to keep our country free from hardships and chains.

That's why we fight, and why our glory ignites.

We will rise to impossible heights, to light the darkness of the night  
Let us stay in the present, so the majority is not silenced and treated as peasants.

Our situation is dire, but we will stay cool in the fire.

We are ignited and never divided.

Like a torch that never burns out, even if some use extinguishers of doubt

We all need a spark to light up the dark

Although we're young, we're growing up fast, and soon our time will come.

For once in our life, we need to stand strong and follow the beat of our own drum.

Rise up and take a STAND.....For your beliefs and your views!

Be willing to LEAD a movement.....Of several million who thought they were few!

Keep struggling and fighting for CHANGE.....And never accept the status quo!

America is GREAT already.....But let's continue to make it grow!

We are leaders not followers, so let's rise and stand strong

Let's work together to make this a country, a place where everyone belongs.



# A CREATIVE INVITATION: DEAR UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



If you could write a letter to the United States of America, what would you say?

Dear United States of America,

Today I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I appreciate \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I wish \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

(Your name)

Escribe una carta a Los Estados Unidos.

Estimados Estados Unidos,

Hoy yo \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Me gusta \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Espero que \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Saludos,

\_\_\_\_\_

(Tu Nombre)





FROM SILENCE IS VIOLENCE: NEW NORMAL, 2023

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A DREAMCHASER IN 2023

by Ashakilah Fenn

*Perseverance*

*I can't give up.*

*Nor can I look at those on social media who show only what they want others to see. I don't know what they went through to gain their quick success. So for this year, I vow to only focus on me. My mind often wanders, about me being a director on a movie set with a pink megaphone, I see in my right hand as I sit in a black director's high chair that has gold letters "A.M.F." embedded into the back.*

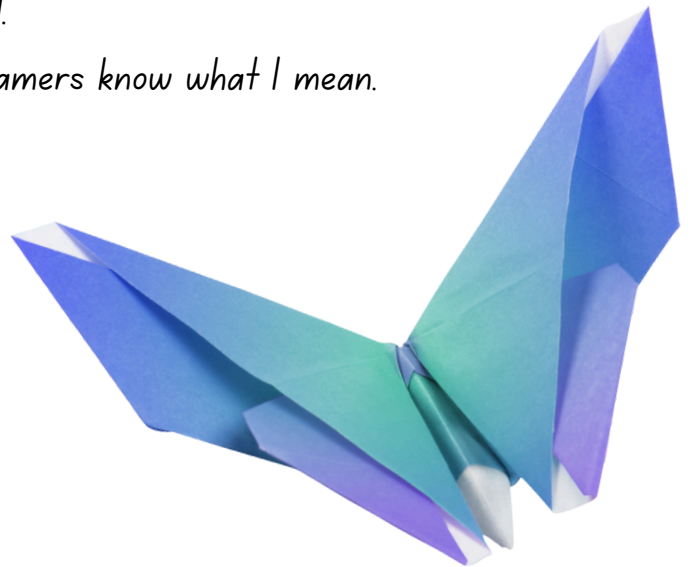
*The joy I'm feeling brings tears to my eyes because my dreams have come true.*

*Looking up to the heavens*

*being thankful for my prayers that  
made it through.*

*But soon, I hear an alarm and wake up from another dream and realize everything is in my head and what I thought was, was never what it seemed.*

*Guess I'll keep working, real dreamers know what I mean.*



## DEAR 2026

by Debkanya Mitra

I think I suffer from something called maladaptive daydreaming.  
Where I sit with myself and my thoughts while the Metro zips by  
from station to station.

Because I chose my past and now the future will  
just happen. Knocked over the first domino and now  
I've got to brace myself for every single little collision  
that's gonna result.

Because there's only anxiety in uncertainty. Easier to  
shelter my pain in these words, until these words turn into  
the source of pain itself. So in that web, that den of toxicity...

Dear 2026, I imagine.

In 2026 my baby boy will turn 4. In 2026 I will graduate college.

In 2026 I'll either get married or move the fuck on.

In 2026 I'll learn control.

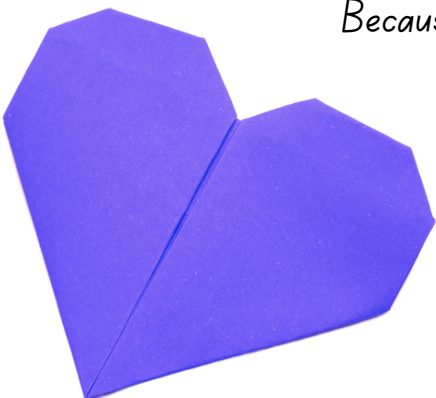
In 2026 I won't let anything break me.

In 2026 I will survive what is unimaginable.

Because here in 2023, I am choosing my present.

Because there's more to life than men, liquor, and money.

Every moment of love I share with my baby  
will live forever in my mind.



Every lecture I sit through will meld into artistry  
that will melt into my soul.  
And every regret I have now will be just a shadow of  
a shadow of a memory that I won't miss in 2026.

There's too much life in me to let go of it.  
Too much power that God has given me.  
I've got to carry it with me, can't let go, got to hold on, hold on to what's only alright.  
Understand I will shape this empty imperfect space into my own joy-scape.

Because sometimes you've got to say it out loud  
Because nobody asked and you can't wait  
You can just barely survive in the darkness, you have that tenacity,  
But it's human to stretch and reach out  
And grasp every crumb of light  
Cling so strong  
That each beam trembles  
In your grip.



**DEAR ME 2026**  
by Maia Edmondson

Dear me in 2026,

I hope you've become a star, I hope you're getting money, I hope you're becoming stable or getting closer to being able to take care of others the way they took care of you.

I hope you can travel back home. I hope you learned so much of the things you want to learn. I hope you're completing or making all the art you want. I hope you're away from people who won't give you peace.

I hope you become a butterfly.

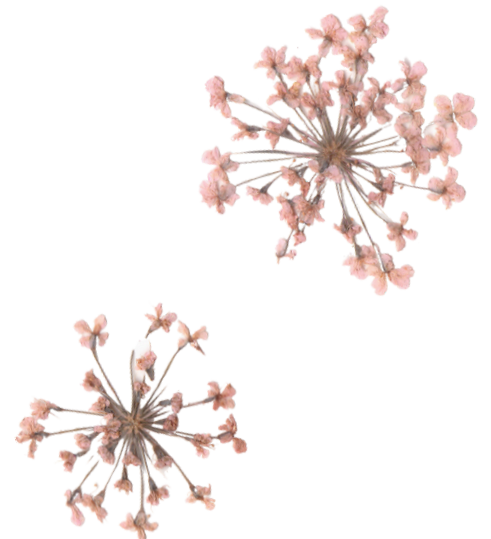
**DEAR ME IN 2026**  
by Dreamm

I hope you realize that you accomplished so much these past years. But your job now is to keep moving forward, and not look back. Whatever comes your way don't think too much about it. As long as you keep your head in the game, you will win. Period!...

Also I hope you accomplish your goals and now got a home of your own. You know we really wanted that.

**DEAR 2026**  
by Lakeya Callaway

Thank you for looking out for me,  
You've never let me down,  
You've worked so hard to  
finally let your hair down,  
You are free,  
free of all expectations & limitations  
Grounded as a tree.  
You can be, me.





**CLOSING MONOLOGUE FROM AYO'S AUDIENCE, REMOUNTED FOR YPT GIRLS WRITE OUT, 2015**

by Kaitlin Murphy

"Why I Write"

I write poetry because it's what I've always dreamed of

The words are spoken

The spoken words

Each and everything I've ever heard

Everything I see or seen is why I write poetry

Before I could walk or talk they called me Black China Doll

And before I started writing I started identifying the words that touched or bruised

Any of the words that I used became fused to my memory

So now I put pencil to paper so you can see

What I can do or be with words that are heard

That can elate or disturb

That can inspire or if left to lay grow tired

And expire or even stagnate

I write as a weapon of mass destruction against inhumanity

I would rather write than die

Having never expressed or shared a word in prose

Having come so close to succeeding

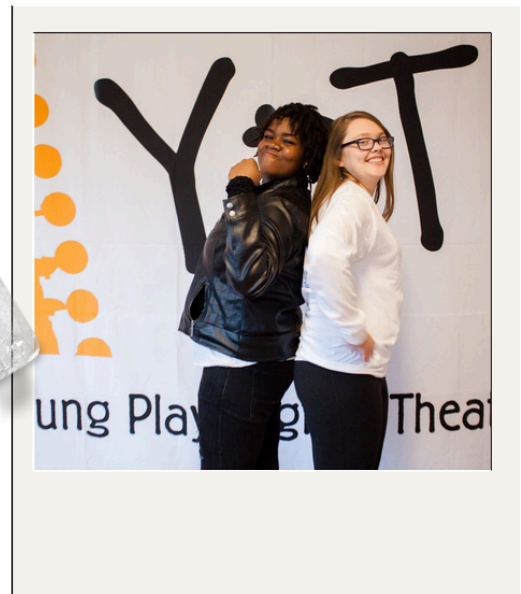
Thereby leading a revolution against ignorant thinking

And as we fight that good fight

It's all the reasons I write



*I'll write if you be my muse  
If you stand up and refuse to be silent and instead be vigilant  
While speaking your peace  
Because at the very least it is something  
And something is always better than nothing  
I am a writer and I have a story to tell  
You can ask anyone who knows me and they'll tell you  
I'll tell you that story in detail  
I am me  
I'm all that you see  
But not all that I can be*



# A CREATIVE INVITATION: A CLOSING POEM



*Read your responses to the previous Creative Invitations. Circle five words from your writing that you find particularly compelling. Write an original poem – in any style – that includes those five words.*







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