

S P E A K O U T !

Writing Journal Spring 2010

“Fill your paper with the
breathings of your heart.”
-William Wordsworth

Pen Scars From Behind the Bars

SpeakOut! Writing Workshop January through May, 2010

Every Wednesday night for the past 14 weeks, a group of men and a group of women at the Larimer County Detention Center spent an hour and a half of their time participating in a writing workshop facilitated by Tobi Jacobi, Vince Darcangelo, Gus Mircos, Summer Whisman and Stephanie Train. Adding to this diverse chorus are two youth writing groups from Turning Point's Boy's House and Girl's House, facilitated by Kir Jordan and Kayla Parry. Throughout the semester, creative energy pushed through the fingertips of these prolific writers and onto the page. Male, female, youth and adult, each writer brought a unique style and voice to the works within.

All four groups explored a variety of creative writing forms: fiction, non-fiction, poetry. Also contained within these pages are artwork pieces created by residents at the Larimer County Detention Center. This is a collection of their work—a unified voice that reaches out into the future and tells us all that perhaps, through the power of creativity, they can be heard from “behind the bars.”

A very special thanks to Dianne Bacorn, the Larimer County Detention Center and the CSU Center for Community Literacy for providing staff and material support. Thanks to the Turning Point Center for Youth and Family Development. We would also like to give heartfelt thanks the Gannett Foundation for their grant support. We give special thanks to Doug Hafer and Publisher's Graphics for their unconditional and much valued assistance in bringing this journal to a new level of publication for our workshop writers.

Winning Cover Art Artist: “Shorty”

Back Cover Artist: Gina A.

Journal Copy Editor: Stephanie A. Train

Pen Scars From Behind the Bars: An Introduction

What does a writing group look like? For 14 weeks, this Spring, writers from all backgrounds came together through the SpeakOut! writing workshop. Each individual had their own motivation for coming, their own story to tell. Each writer maintained his or her personal voice, but together, the workshops were more than a collection of writers. We cried together, laughed together and supported one another's work.

The unequalled support of this writer's community has been able to produce some fantastic and thoughtful art from a fantastic and thoughtful group of people. Every writer in the SpeakOut! program has his or her place. Each voice has been heard and cherished, and every image, every line and word has filled the members and facilitators with a deeper understanding of the SpeakOut! writer as artist, as an individual.

Between January and May of 2010, over 90 writers participated in one of four weekly workshops at the Larimer County Detention Center and Turning Point Center for Youth and Family Development. We met to write and share poetry, short stories, and other pieces of writing inspired by our lives, each other, and examples of published work by writers such as Marge Piercy, Joy Harjo, e.e. cummings, and Billy Collins. Our writing prompts included "a letter to my younger self," the representation of body in the media, senses, passions and even a little absurd poetry to mix things up. Each session opened with writers reading their work and closed with the exchange of writing as writers selected the pieces they wanted more feedback on.

When many of us think about this group of writers, we are struck by their reflective nature, their willingness to turn inward, to consider various aspects of their lives—parenting, love, hope, addiction, and pain—in response to our writing topics. Many of the writers highlight the power of writing and are out to both represent and revise their lives past, present and future.

The SpeakOut! writing workshops allow writers to explore who and where they are in their lives through creative expression. The primary philosophy of this program is that every person has a story to tell; each has words that are valuable and necessary. We encourage each writer to tell his/her own story and represent personal experiences on paper. This work takes the form of individual and collaborative writings. The SpeakOut! writing workshops focus on enacting change through writing experiences and the circulation of this journal along Colorado's Northern front range.

This book is dedicated to the writers at LCDC and Turning Point and to women and men across our globe who struggle against oppression, poverty, abuse, and gender discrimination by writing and publishing their stories.

Advice for Those Just Starting Out

Underneath life's noise, there is a basic rhythm, find yours
Don't allow the opinions of others to dictate your life
Can't rain all the time
In order to succeed in life you must fail first,
 without failure there will never be success
Never do nothing, always do something
Our best legacy is our voice, learn to use it
Someone can only say they're sorry so many times
 before it doesn't mean anything anymore
Do not have unprotected sex, unprotected sex equals children
Open your eyes wide like saucers, your mouth open like your eyes,
 your thumbs in your ears
Do not pass Go, do not collect \$200, and you can never get out of jail free!
Don't pick it up, even if it screams at you, stop, pray, now run
Life is full of smiles and cries, at the end of your life be smiling.

(collaborative poem by the SpeakOut! Men's Group)

“Do not pass Go...”

“Put down your wall...”

Love entirely. It is the all of everything. Word and hand commands. Read the Bible daily. Learn how to take care of one another. When you feel stressed out, watch *Lawrence of Arabia*; when you feel really stressed out, watch *Aladdin*. Keep your head above water. Put down your wall and open your heart because you might not ever find love like this again. Learn to ride expertly. Never take anyone or anything for granted. Sift the dirt lightly through your fingertips. Prepare all ingredients. Anything and everything is okay for prayers. Never look back because you might turn around. Relax and don't worry about sounding stupid or silly because everyone does. Be gentle. Hugs and kisses touch intimately but not always sexually. Always give what you can because a smile, kiss, compliment, or hug in return is the prize of love, a prize worth waiting for. Give yourself fully and don't hold back; love with all your heart. Have patience. Become good friends with your Middle Eastern history professor, perhaps babysit his kids. Ride with friends. Practice safe sex. If you have it to give, then give. Have all proper utensils. God hears everything. Commit to good character; you are their role model. Look at good memories and compliment the beauty in life. Love as many people as you can.

(collaborative poem by the SpeakOut! Women's Group)



DrewDiamond

Remember the Stars

By Laila S.

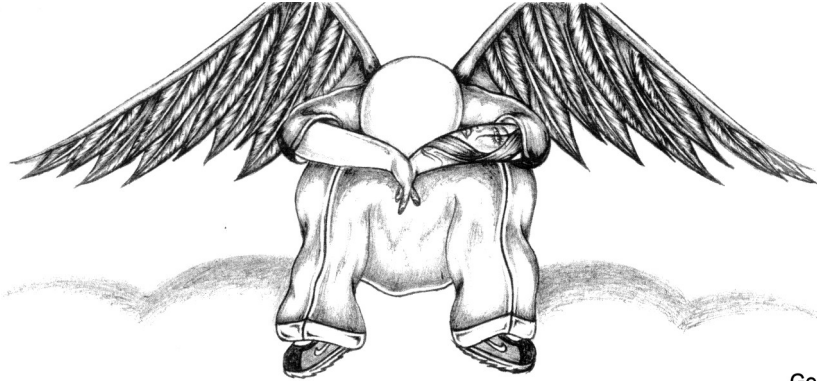
Was I foolish not to see the signs?
 Were there signs?
Or did you plan it this way,
 to wait until I was just starting
 to get comfortable with this love,
 just starting to trust you
 starting to let go
I wonder if you even had a calendar
 next to your bed with the date circled
That date that you quietly tip-toed
 across my sky
 and gracefully blew out the stars
 one by one
You did it so carefully that I didn't even notice—
 until I was screaming in the dark
 by myself
I screamed until my voice went hoarse,
 calling for you,
 believing that maybe you just
 got lost and would soon return
 to explain the missing stars
I grew old in that darkness
 And still, I sit and wait
My voice is gone
 I cannot even remember
 what the stars looked like

Time's a Test

By Princessa

Time is but a test for true love,
True love is but an enemy of time,
A quest for thoughtfulness is sought through
 loyalty,
Loyalty must prepare for the encounter of
 betrayal.
Honesty is based on truth. Truth is faced by lies,
Devotion can only bring happiness,
Yet happiness with one day cross bad times.
Time is but a test for true love.
Yet true love is but an enemy of time.

Fearing the worse, I find opportunity.
By Sharon M.



Gordo

Woe to Thee Whom Earn'th Not Wings
By G-Kitts

Woe to thee whom earn'th not wings,
For thou shall search in vain,
From where'th death sings.
Ye shall seek yet never find me,
For I lurk in the recesses of despair,
I'll show thee only darkness, and misery,
Give thee no one whom shall care.
I shall seduce thee,
And make thee mine slave,
I hath sent stronger than thee,
Straight to thine grave
I shall show thee compassion,
Friendship, and trust,
But when ye reach'th to grab it,
T'will all turn to dust.
Now I am thy master,
Ye be but a puppet on strings,
Thy should hath been better on Earth,
Woe to thee whom earn'th not wings!

Ghostly Apparitions
By BooBoo

Ghostly Apparitions
chipped away at the wall.
Packed, confused,
The height of the wall
chiseled away.
Reality—socialite appeal
Confess it all to me.
