

ONE DAY I'LL RISE

SARABANDE WRITING LABS, VOL. 11

SARABANDE WRITING LABS

An Arts Education Program from Sarabande Books

Sarabande Writing Labs is an arts education initiative created by Louisville-based nonprofit publisher Sarabande Books. We partner with social service organizations to promote writers in under-resourced communities through free workshops and literary events.

Visit our website for photos, updates, and upcoming events:
www.sarabandebooks.org/swl

ABOUT THIS VOLUME:

Sarabande Writing Labs partnered with public health researcher Tasha Golden to provide poetry workshops for young women at Louisville Metro Youth Detention Services. Golden is a poet, songwriter, and doctoral fellow at the University of Louisville, where she researches how the arts can affect public health by amplifying marginalized voices.

For more information on Project Uncaged, visit www.tashagolden.com/juvenilejustice

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Louisville Metro Council and Fund for the Arts, University of Louisville's Youth Violence Prevention Research Center, Tasha Golden, Hound Dog Press

Sarabande Writing Labs, Vol. 11
Summer 2018

Program director: Kristen Miller
Interior design: Marcee Wardell
Exterior design: Hound Dog Press

Sarabande Books is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, independent press based in Louisville, KY.

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INTRODUCTION

by Tasha Golden, Project Uncaged

Nationally, the voices of justice-involved girls often go unheard: their stories and needs lost in a system designed for boys. In response, a new partnership was begun in 2018 between Sarabande Writing Labs, Project Uncaged, the University of Louisville, and Louisville's Youth Detention Services (YDS); we're working together to fill a gap in programming while also helping ensure girls' voices are heard, honored, and shared. I've had the privilege to write with girls in YDS two days a week this year, and it's an immense privilege to share some of their words with you.

In *One Day I'll Rise*, young writers ages 13–17 lay claim to identities and aspirations; they define and describe emotions; they share their stories and ask difficult questions. Honest writing is not easy work, particularly in spaces like detention - where the risk of vulnerability acutely felt. The

threads sewn throughout these poems of grief, resilience, and uncertainty are a testament to girls' courageous drive to be heard and understood. Their hope is that their words could lead to changes in resources, policies, justice, their own futures. I believe they can—if we listen and respond.

To the writers: Thank you for sharing pieces of your story with us. We're better for it.

Rising together,

Tasha Golden

ONE DAY I'LL RISE

after Maya Angelou

J. C.

You may talk down about me,
but I'll never let it stop my process
You may think my life is nothing but trouble
but my life has great opportunities coming
You may shoot me with your words
but I won't shoot back with mine
I'll say thank you, because one day
I'll rise

TODAY

V.C.

Today I'm feeling scared of what will happen next.
I sometimes wonder where am I,
who am I?
Sometimes I feel as if I'm invisible
but I'm NOT.
I realize I mean more than what people think.
I AM ME!

I'M A WOMAN

T. J.

I'm a woman,
born a powerful queen
Won't let nobody take that from me.
I'm stronger than I seem,
I found the strength inside of me,
and when I fall down, I get up with a smile
won't go out of style,
forever be inspired.
I'm a woman,
I have more balls than a man ever has,
so I walk around with sass
I stand up for myself,
and don't trust nobody else.
When it's time to fight,
I do with all my might
to show the world who I am,
and let haters know I don't give a damn.
I am a woman,
you may not understand
but I still take my stand.
Won't let you break me,
I won't let you see,
I am a woman—
and that I believe.

I AM LOSS!

J. C.

I am loss
I dress in regular clothes
just like everyone else
I need to find myself
only ever in time I will

People just don't realize that I feel this way
because I don't show it
My job is to hide it
Sometimes, I go on vacation
when I need a break

What makes me happy is my daughter
But the worst I when I can't just look into her eyes
& fall in love all over again.

(UNTITLED)

L. T.

I have a brother named A__ who was killed
And now as I get older
I try to let the situation go,
to face that fact that he is dead and gone.

But things get so deep
when I go to sleep
he visits me and tells me
what happened, how he died.

Most of the time I wake up out of my sleep
and cry
because I get scared
that his soul is around me.

I love that he visits me
but hate when he has to leave me.
I just want my big brother back!

I BELIEVE

A. A.

I believe in love...
because not everyone has it
but everyone deserves it.

I believe in hope...
because it's not hard to find
but hard to keep in mind.

I believe in appreciation...

THE REAL ME

C.

If you really knew me
THE REAL ME
you would know that I am sick of life
I'm done
I'm ready to give up
I've seen and done too much
just to be 17, for real.

I've had to worry
about when I'm gone eat my next meal
and whose house I was gone lay my head at!
Like, no kid should have to be worried about all that.

I understand that some kids
bring this on themselves
But I didn't sign up for this
nor did I ask for it
and I am completely miserable!

I just wanna go home
and be surrounded by my family.
There's no place like home,
and I mean that literally.

LETTER TO MY FAMILY

H. W.

Every time I'm in jail, I feel
like I'm crawling and not flying
I feel helpless,
I can't help other people when I'm in jail.

I wish I could help my momma
and my brothers
and my sisters
I would be there for them
I would ride for them.

ANGER

K. C.

I am Anger
I dress in Red
I need to let it out and not hold it in
I only ever hurt people.

People don't usually realize
that I'm more mad at myself than others
My job is to destroy lives.
Sometimes I go on vacation
when Sadness comes and relieves me

What makes me happiest is being around certain people,
but the worst is when I'm high and drunk
and everything comes out.

YOU TOLD ME

I. T.

You told me to trust you
and don't worry about my past.
You told me you loved me
but my heart is broken even more.
And now I lost contact with you,
I lost all respect for you
and I wish I never met you.
You used my kindness for weakness
Now my faith has left.

I BELIEVE...

J. C.

I believe in time,
time that it takes you to believe in yourself
or time to do right by yourself before others.

I believe in the promises that I've kept,
the secrets that've been told to me.

I believe in the love and affection
my loved ones have shown me.

YOU MAY...

after Maya Angelou

V. C.

You may be mad at me
but I will forgive you.

You may put me down
but I will always grow.

You may say I am ugly
but I am pretty.

I will grow up.

YOU DON'T KNOW ME

H. W.

You see that I am a skeezer
You see that I am a thot
But you don't know me.

You *would* know me if you spent a couple years wit me
Or if you knew how hard it was to feel loved.
I wish you knew how I feel sometimes, like being unloved.

What you see is that I am attracted to everyone
You see that I fall in love wit everybody
But you don't know me.

You *would* know me if you gave me a chance
if you knew how I want to feel loved
if you knew how I love to be loved.

I wish you knew how it felt.
But you don't know me.

(UNTITLED)

C.

If I could go back in time
I would go back to birth
And start all the way over
Even change my name
So nobody would be reminded
of the old person that was there before.

I need help
It's like I'm screaming but nobody hears me.
I wonder what my friends think of me.
I wonder why I go through the things I go through?

I miss being a kid
I'm only 17
but I had to grow up too fast.

AM I CRAZY?

J. C.

I go to sleep looking at the same
dirty white walls I wake up to
When I shower,
I sit on the cold tile floor
while the warm water runs over me,
a million thoughts running through my mind.

Does it make me crazy
that I feel alone or even empty?
There's people around me
but I still don't see anyone.
The TV plays but I hear nothing,
when I talk I hear an echo in my head.
I know I'm not alone, but I feel it.
Now does that make me crazy?

(UNTITLED)

T. J.

I Always Have to...

Be a good role model

Be there for people

Be a perfect daughter

Be caring and loving

Be a gangster

I Want to...

Make mistakes and learn from them

Have people there for me

Let people know I'm not perfect

Be who I want to be

Have people love and care for me.

SOMEONE

T. S.

I need someone

who is courageous and strong

Someone who's loyal,

I can keep around for long

I need someone

who I can depend on to tell the truth

Someone with high standards

I'll never want to lose

But to me, it's impossible to find

I wish all the pain could be left behind

So now I am determined to focus on me,

Because being happy with myself

makes me feel complete.

IF YOU REALLY KNEW ME YOU'D KNOW...

J. C.

I'm not a bad person.
I don't mean to come off as mean
but sometimes I do.
If you really knew me
I'm actually a kindhearted person.

Sometimes I have my days
just like everyone else
Just because I've done things
doesn't mean you should judge me for them,
because I don't judge you for yours...

If you really knew me you'd know
how I feel, and now you see.

DEPRESSION

K. C.

I am Depression
I dress in pain
I only ever cause misery
People don't usually realize that depression is a lot more
complicated than just sadness
My job is to give a sense of hopelessness
Sometimes, I go on vacation
when my victims take their meds
But the worst is when nobody cares.

(UNTITLED)

NPH

Done got pregnant at 16
So much stuff I dreamed
of doing
now it's ruined
Sitting in jail looking real clueless
Don't know what to do
staring at the ceiling
thinking of my dreams
I wanted to be something in life
guess it's not meant for me
guess this the plan god got for me
Granny sick, mama stressing
soo much shit happening
I can't even think

QUESTIONING

J. C.

They all say it's a part of "God's" plan
or everything happens for a reason.
But what's next in "God's" plan?
Is there even a God or a plan for me?
And what's the reasoning?

Everything in life is questioned,
so now I have a question...
How do I ask for help
if I don't believe in any?
How do I believe in something
I don't have faith in?

Are my cries or questions being heard?
Because I hear myself over and over
but who's to say
I'll ever hear something back...

