

Louisiana State University Writing Project

an official site of the National Writing Project



Invitational Summer Institute 2019 Anthology

Table of Contents

Co-Directors' Introduction 3
Margaret-Mary Sulentic Dowell & Sassy C. Wheeler

Where I'm From..... 4
Alexandra Chenevert

Where I'm From..... 5
Anna Maria Broussard

The Journey of Name..... 6
Chiquita Ollie

Beautiful Frustrations..... 7
Joanna Gill

09.08.2016..... 8
Kayla Stansbury

2019 Participants.....10

“Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on.” ~ Louis L’Amour

2019 LSU Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute

Introduction to the Anthology

The foundation of the National Writing Project is the Invitational Summer Institute. Since 1985, Louisiana State University has been a site of the National Writing Project and in its tradition, again offered an Invitational Summer Institute in 2019. Sassy and Margaret-Mary, 2019 co-directors, worked with six diverse educators who came together, coalesced as a community of writers to share their expertise, develop as writers, and build knowledge about writing practice that will ultimately impact students from college-level students to early elementary students.

Building rapport and creating community within a group of distinct educators who come together for two short weeks during a summer requires mindfulness, responsiveness, and understanding of the individuals are the group. Creating community means you honor difference, and use the diversity within the group to play to strengths while promoting respect of the worldviews of others, and as facilitators, you attempt to silence your voice to encourage the development of others. In such an intimate setting, we feel all of us stretched ourselves and grew as writers and teachers of writing. Learning to listen to one another in a temporary shared space while promoting personal writing growth based on the National Writing Project tenet that teachers should be writers themselves before being teachers of writing. Through participation in the Louisiana State University Writing Project, another leadership cadre of teacher consultants was advanced, teachers who in turn, will promote and facilitate writing at their schools, districts, and university jobs.

As a site of the National Writing Project, the Louisiana State University Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute 2019 was an accomplishment. In these pages, we share writing from 2019 Institute attendees. We invite you to enjoy these pieces and the writers they depict.



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Where I'm From ~ *by Alexandra*

I am from sewing machines,
Antique and new
Curtains and dresses
Things made for the mantle too

I am from lectures and speeches about education
And how it is “the only thing you can have for yourself”

I am from Tony's Seafood
Where crawfish prices are always skyrocket high

I am from hot Spring days
At Louisiana Nursery because
My mother “needs more green in the garden”

I am from Lydia's arms
Where the dangers of the world
Are always shielded

I am from sweat and tears

I am from strong genes

Where I'm From ~ *by Anna Maria*

I am from Louisiana cities:
New Orleans, Baton Rouge
Southern but not country

I am from card players and fortune tellers:
gin rummy, blackjack, poker, tarot
Mom taught me to read fortunes.
Dad taught me to count cards.

I am from the theatre:
onstage and off
a performer, a director, a stagehand, a teacher
I've built communities and played with poets.
Speak the speech, I pray you...

I am from collaboration:
whether it be sharing stories or recipes
cooking together or performing together
improvising, roleplaying, reading, chatting
creating shared fantasies with friends and getting lost in other worlds
sharing experience and loving together

I am from loud women and men:
Italians who came to this country almost a century ago
We aren't quiet; we don't know how to whisper.
You can hear our laughter through walls and down hallways,
saying the wrong thing at the right time.
When I yell, their voices mingle with my own.
That chorus is where I'm from.

The Journey of My Name ~ *by Chiquita*

Sweet Memories..... Chiquita, Quita moe meta, Banana Nana Fo Fana Phe Phi banana, CHIQUITA

As a little girl, my mother would sing this sweet melody to me. It made me smile, dance, and I felt so good inside! Chiquita Ollie was my name and my name was that song. Every morning I awake, I would ask, "Mommy, would you please sing my song?" On the way to the sitter, I would ask, "Mommy, would you please sing my song?" As she tucked me into bed at night, I would ask, "Mommy, would you please sing my song?" My mom gave my name "POWER" and to hear her sing it calmed the depth of my soul.

Reality Nightmare..... Chiquita, Quita moe meta, Banana Nana Fo Fana Phe Phi banana, CHIQUITA

As an adolescent, the sweet memories was buried deep, deep in my soul. I began to realize my name is not that great. Allow me to introduce myself, Hi. My name is Chiquita. Chiquita I would say. Strangers would always say, "Wait, how do you pronounce that?" Then, they responded, "Ohhhh, I got it! Your name is in the grocery store on the banana."

I am who I am..... Chiquita, Quita moe meta, Banana Nana Fo Fana Phe Phi banana, CHIQUITA

As an adult, I questioned my mom's name choice. How, Why, and What could she have possibly been thinking about!? I often wondered should I use my middle name to land the "perfect" job. Should I pretend to be something I am not? But, then I realize my name is nothing but great! You see my name does not make me, I make my name. I am who I am and knowing that makes me GREAT!!

Beautiful Frustrations ~ by Joanna

Traffic, stress, roommates, expectations, homework,
demands, weight, what to eat, waking up early,
what do they think, what do I think, what does God think, why am I not
married, will I ever have kids, insecurities, fears, what ifs,
thoughts, jealousy, gossip,
are they talking about me, will I get caught talking about them, justice,
anger, the value of life, how people feel, how I feel, does it matter, do
they care, do I care, why did I do that,
surprised, disappointed, let down, ashamed, embarrassed,
hiding, ignoring, running,
running away instead of to, will His arms be folded, will His back
be turned, will I be left alone, will I be forgotten?

No!

I will rise up,

I will keep moving,

He never left,

He's not ashamed,

His love runs deep, peace, trust, faith, hope, purpose,
arms wide open, smile on His face, be still and know,

I never left, you're stronger now,

your dreams are coming,

be patient and rest,

be patient and trust,

you're where I'll use you,

mistakes are beautiful,

frustrations are beautiful,

because they lead you to me.

09.08.2016 ~ by Kayla

“I just don’t know
on how many fronts
we can fight a war.”

West Wing stays on
the TV during the school year.

I’ve got zucchini and rice
in a white bowl in my lap
legs crossed on the couch.

“I just don’t know
on how many fronts
we can fight a war.”

Joshua Lyman says to Toby Ziegler
the camera zooms
in on their taught and tired faces.

I feel outflanked.
temperatures inch higher
and the AC in my classroom can’t keep up.
I check my phone to see
which of my former students
was pepper sprayed at the rally

yesterday.

I wasn't there because

we needed groceries

and Matthew was working a double.

My lesson plans are due

Monday morning

but half of my students are still in transition from the flood.

This is my first year teaching.

"I just don't know

on how many fronts

we can fight a war."



“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”
Maya Angelou

Louisiana State University Writing Project 2019 Invitational Summer Institute Participants

From left to right (*write*)

*Kayla Stansbury, Alexandra Chenevert, Chiquita Ollie,
Joanna Gill, Anna Maria Broussard*