

SUMMER 2017

THE DORNSIFE CENTER CONNECTOR

I | WRITE



Rahkinah Laurel

WHO | I | AM

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Warm greetings, friends and neighbors,

People write for different reasons. Writing can give voice to the voiceless. It can serve as a powerful tool of liberation and social change. More simply, but perhaps more importantly, writing facilitates the creative expression of the self - to write who you are.

The Dornsife Center's neighboring communities may, on the surface, seem very different, but they share a common interest in telling their stories. In the Writers Room members of the university community meet neighborhood residents across vast differences in life experience and opportunity, but find commonality in the stories of the human experience.

The Dornsife Center is proud to serve as a space where neighbors - old friends and strangers alike - can read, write, think, and be together. We are delighted to dedicate the entirety of this issue to the Writers Room in celebration of the creativity of neighborhood writers, working together to create poetry to tell important stories, and in honor of the courage to share.

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PARTNER PROFILE

<i>Name:</i>	Rachel Wenrick
<i>Job:</i>	I teach in the Department of English & Philosophy and am an Associate Director of the University Writing Program
<i>Hometown:</i>	Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
<i>Current Residence:</i>	Bala Cynwyd
<i>Favorite foods:</i>	Steak and cake
<i>Favorite books</i>	James Baldwin's <i>Going to Meet the Man</i> and Maureen Howard's <i>A Lover's Almanac</i>
<i>Favorite albums:</i>	Prince's <i>Purple Rain</i> and Marvin Gaye's <i>What's Going On</i>

What is your role at the Dornsife Center?

As the director of Writers Room, I work with neighbors, students, and faculty to co-create all of our programming: individual writing sessions, workshops, side-by-side classes, and special events.

Where can we find you at the Dornsife Center?

I'm usually in the Lindy House's Learning Terrace.

What is your favorite thing about the Dornsife Center?

The diversity of people and the time and space to be together. We get to exchange stories and connect in ways that aren't always possible in the rest of my work.

What do you do when you're not at the Dornsife Center?

Hang out with my family. Do projects around our house. Think about going to yoga.

JOHNGELINE FERGUSON WHY I WRITE WHO I AM

Because I like to think about so many words
Because they are a representation and my interpretation of who I am
Because of the dictionary and the thesaurus making me increase my vocabulary
Because the words develop into my most intimate mental processes
Because I see the sky as grey minus its brightly shiny star
Because at night I still can go into deep delta sleep and dream about who I am
And to be quite candid, who am I “me” just a peaceful soul--Ashe!



NORMAN CAIN FROM SPARK TO INFERNO*



So they enslaved us
Beat us down to a
Spark but the wind of perseverance
Turned the spark into an inferno
Fired us up to become Vesey,
Toussaint, Harriet, Turner -
We sang “Go down Moses”
“We shall overcome”
Sculpted our dignity
Created blood plasma
Saved a waning agricultural
South with multiple ways to use the peanut

* “So they beat him down to nothin’ but sparks
but each little spark had a shine and a song”
-Zora Neale Hurston

ROSALYN CLIETT
EARL HACKETT
I WRITE WHATEVER I THINK
BECAUSE I AM A CHOSEN VESSEL

I write whatever I think
because I am a chosen vessel.
I write how I feel whether imaginary or real
because I am hopeful.
I write to make it right when it's really wrong
because I like unity.
I write to protect the weak from the strong
because I love to help people.
I write past the mental blocks
because I am running out of time.
I write until it's time to stop
because the world has changed so much.
I write times four so I can be done
and because the world is in trouble.



RAHKINAH LAUREL
MISTY, MURKY DAYS...

The rain poured down on the wooden, blue cabin. The cold air blew against the brown trees. The clouds moved swiftly through the skies like a leopard moving through the forest. The rain was like Australian crystals or diamonds shimmering throughout the atmosphere. The cabin windows reflected a rainbow that spanned to the heavens. As the cold air whistled like a tea pot, a gold pigeon flew from one rooftop to another. Misty, murky days. . .

VICTORIA HUGGINS PEURIFOY TURQUOISE IS A MOOD



Turquoise is reflective love.
Give it to fabric, jewelry, rings
or a needy wall. There is a joy
In calmness that sings melodies
of praise, smooth jazz, and spirituals, hummm.
Turn turquoise loose to fly to the sky;
to climb a mountain high. To
Forge through war and bring tranquility
and peace, as if it were star lights.
Turquoise shifting between a gray
spindle on my cranium and light blue
energies, Aztec bungalows
and a glimmer of sunlight's love.
Oooh, Turquoise come and change
sullen moods. Headache, sink into
the core of a Doberman's play
toy. Soft sounds of life I need... now.

CHANDA RICE AUNT HAZEL'S STEAK AND NOODLES

Your ingredients are:

- 2 packs of Ramen Noodles
- Bread crumbs
- Onion
- The packet of seasoning that come with the noodles
- And a Steak
- Salt and pepper

Directions:

Now the 1st thing you do is, "Get up and go to the market."
Don't draw attention to yourself by walking too briskly, pace yourself.
Scope your surrounding as you enter the meat section.
Look around inconspicuously and shove the steak down your pants so it doesn't fall out.
And then walk out briskly.
When you get home put on the water on for the noodles.
Take the steak out your pants and cut it into cubes.
Then coat them in the bread crumbs.
Saute the onions and take them out.
Fry steak in the same pan.
Mix together at the first sound of a siren.
Eat up fast, 'cause they are coming for you!

At least you got your good "Last meal" on the street because you are going to jail !!!



CAROL RICHARDSON MCCULLOUGH

SHADOW AND LIGHT

He'd moved in on the opponent, faked deep and low,
Slapped the spherical ball right out of the guy's hand --
On the move now, he zigged and zagged down the court
Just at the key he had a space so he pivoted then dipped
Collected his energy knees bending, then ascending,
He sprung from the balls of his feet through his toe tips,
Gaining lift-off, heels rising toward his glutes, he'd pushed up hard at an angle, a beautiful angle
With grace and style and power-- Taking flight,
Arms inward, rising, he was poised in mid-air, positioned to take that shot -- Then
Boom! He made it. He scored. Perfection.
I'd freeze that frame in time at the moment right before
He thrust the ball out into the air
To capture an image of all the work, the beautiful work
That went into achieving the outcome
Shine a light on that body, toned and athletic
Strong calves, muscular arms
Glimmer of sweat glistening at the effort
Exertion in mastery of form ---
Yeah - I'd want to save that image
Send it forward---
I'd hold onto that
Without a shadow of a doubt.



YONIQUE MYRIE

DEAR SUN



Embrace me
Gently caress my face
Let your warmth seep
Into my pores
Fill me with the energy
To ride your rays
Out to the edge of time
Hide me from the dark clouds
Hovering over my eyes
Save me from the rolling thunder and
tides
Rise up and wake in me blossoms of hap-
piness
Set in me a bed of roses
Whose colors change with your kiss
So that I can taste just like skittles.