

Featured Writer Beverly I. Brazzle

Beverly I. Brazzle is a lifelong resident of Portland, Oregon. She is a mother of four, a social worker and an evangelist pastor. In her free time, she enjoys gospel singing, watching sports and considers herself a person who loves people. She participated in Write Around Portland's Fall 2017 workshop at Catholic Charities McCoy Village, an affordable housing property in Northeast Portland.



I Am Called By My Name

by Beverly Brazzle

I was told my name meant Beaver, so I always thought the state of Oregon's blue flag with the golden beaver represented me. I was in Redding, California at Bethel Church at an evening service. There was a beautiful young woman sitting behind me. I turned to greet her. She asked me, what is your name? I told her. She responded, Do you know what your name means? It means to Lay Down in Green Pastures beside the still waters.

Rest for the weary.

Peace for the soul.

Shalome.

I am called by my name and it does what it means.

I bring Peace.

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Interview with Featured Writer Beverly I. Brazzle

Interviewed by Write Around Portland intern Sophia Merrell.

How did you first hear about Write Around Portland? What drew you to join the workshop?

I first heard about Write Around Portland through the advertisement at McCoy Village. When I was in school, I didn't feel like I had very good writing skills, so I thought, let me see what I can do now. I always felt creative growing up and wanted to see what I could do with that creativity.

What was your experience like in the workshop?

When I first started I was a little fearful. I didn't really know where to start, but I always remained positive. I looked forward to coming even after a long day of work, because it was very releasing for me. Writing helped me to sleep peacefully through the night.

How did it feel to see your work published in a book?

It was very humbling. I am still kind of in a state of shock, because you would think I would have this piece of writing memorized. But, I still have to reread it and refresh. I look back at it and think, "Wow I didn't know I said that, I didn't know I did that." Reminding myself of that feels important.

How did you feel about reading at the anthology release party?

I felt empowered and intellectual. This writing felt like something I knew, it felt true to me. I know this person, this writer, and I want to share this story with someone else.

How did you feel about writing and sharing your experiences with other people? What was it like to hear other people's stories?

First I felt challenged, because in my eyes I wasn't a good writer, and then I would hear others and think that they're more advanced than me. But, our facilitator always encouraged us and kept pulling. She would say, "Just keep writing". Before, I felt like a box, like nothing was in there for me to write, but now I'm coming out of that box. It was hard for me to feel like writing wasn't a competition, maybe because of how I was raised, but by the end I felt more confident.

Did your Write Around Portland experience change your sense of yourself or your sense of community?

I felt so much growth not just in my life, but in me as a person. I can take this story anywhere in my life; my church, my work, to my children. I was hindered by being stuck in that box, but now I'm flowing. It feels like it is time for me to come out and touch other people's lives. I made friends in that workshop. They saw vulnerable parts of me, as well as strong parts of me and I respect them so much. I left feeling like I have won.

What was your favorite part of the workshop?

In the room after sharing our writing, you could feel the atmosphere change. It felt peaceful, tranquil, spiritual and full of excitement. You could feel us enlightening one another. I now know that writing flips a switch in you. Once you get it going, it just flows out.

Would you recommend Write Around Portland to other people? If so, why?

I already do, because I think there are other people out there like me. Writing is a gift, but some people, like me, let other gifts come before it. Writing is transparent. It always comes from you, and it is never wrong. I would tell anybody you need to go with your dreams, and trust your positive dreams. Trust who you are, because that's the uniqueness of you. Nobody is like you, and no one else will be. Whatever you do, you gotta wrap it up with love.