

# Featured Writer Jason Marrow

Jason Marrow participated in a Write Around Portland workshop through Innovative Housing, Inc. at the Erickson Fritz Apartments. He spends most of his time working on completing his novel. His novel shares the many adventures and details of his life experiences, mostly focusing on his 30 years spent in Portland. A detail of his novel is the funny coincidence that he currently lives in an apartment building that now resides in the same building where he worked as a bartender in 1995. When he is not working on his novel, he is practicing his standup comedy at local open mic nights.

## ***Strange Bedroom***

Jason Marrow

When I was in college one of my roommates' bedroom was one of the strangest bedrooms I've ever been in. We lived in a four-bedroom house just off campus. His name was John and he was from Oklahoma. He was a black belt in judo and a weight lifter. He had all this martial arts paraphernalia scattered about his room—Bruce Lee posters, nunchucks, samurai swords, throwing stars, you name it. He called his room "the lion's den." He was weird. Funny, but weird.

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## **Interview with Featured Writer Jason Marrow**

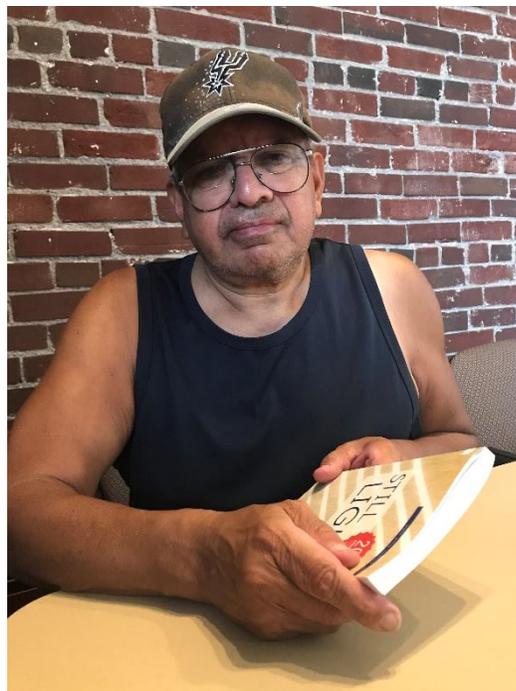
*Interviewed by Write Around Portland volunteer Gabri LaFratta*

### **How did you first hear about Write Around Portland?**

They had a flyer in my building and that's why I went. I'm a writer and I thought "What the heck. I might as well go." They had the workshop in one of the common rooms down there [in the Erickson Fritz Apartment] and that's why I went to it. I don't like walking too far away from where I live and that's pretty close when it's in your building.

### **How did that first workshop go? Was it what you expected? Were you nervous?**

Oh, no! No because I used to be a professional standup comedian. I used to work with a couple of people from Saturday Night Live. You ever heard of Saturday Night Live? You ever heard of Chris Rock? I worked with him back in San Antonio back before he was famous. Have you heard of Dana Carvey? I worked with him too.



I went to Boise State University and back then there was no comedy club in Boise. I had to move to San Francisco to do comedy and then I moved back to Boise and then to Texas. Texas is where I got really good and became a professional comedian. That was where I worked with Chris Rock. It was his first time in Texas. I quit for 20 years and now I'm getting back into it. I'm working on being a professional comedian again.

**Were you able to use the confidence it takes to get on stage in your writing group?**

Oh yeah!

**What would you say is the best thing you got out of participating in a Write Around Portland Workshop?**

Being able to meet people.

**To ask you more specifically about your piece that got published, what inspired you to write about your college roommate?**

I went to Boise State and I wrote about that roommate of mine. He was pretty funny. He was different that's for sure.

**It made me chuckle when I read it.**

Oh, did it? That's good! That's good!

When I first moved here, I lived on NW 21<sup>st</sup> and Everett. This section of my book takes place on Halloween in 1995. I would go on a collective. So, what people do in that neighborhood is they have Halloween parties at their apartments, and we would walk from one party to another because they are all only a few blocks apart. We would start off with 20 people and by the end of the night we would have 50 people. Everyone was in Halloween costumes, so you didn't know who anyone was. It was a lot of fun. That is one of the chapters in my book.

**It sounds like you like to draw on a lot of stories from your own life and use that to inspire your writing?**

Oh yeah. I've been doing that for so long. After I got out of college, I made a living doing standup. I did make a living as a writer, but as a comedy writer for myself.

**Would you recommend a Write Around Portland workshop to other people?**

Oh yeah! Sure!