

WILMA

SUNDAY BREAKFAST RESCUE MISSION

Writings from Within The Portable Studio



Feb 2021-May 2021

Dedicated to Fred

WHAT YOU WILL FIND

Hello, and thank you for picking up this collection of writings from the residents of the Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission, and their collaborators from the Wilma Theatre.

Following this page is an amazing account of reflections and responses to our weekly discussion sessions. Some pieces are simply from the writers checking in on themselves. Some are celebrations of things that bring joy. All of them act like a breath or a meditation on the breezes and turbulence of life. Writing can be a powerful act to name emotions that might be difficult to process. Before we know it, our pain is releasing onto the page. Whether we keep it close or share it to be read is one thing, but when we share it, our personal journaling has the power to inspire reflection for others and help bring them closer to clarity. The pieces you'll read are a great representation of that.

We are incredibly thankful for the time between February-April 2021 where we read poetry, and traded thoughts about Philadelphia, the World, and ourselves. And to think, it all started with the question,

“How’s it goin?”.

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DERRICK JOE SR.

My Goal 4-16-21

Hello, my name is Derrick Joe Sr. I was born Oct 15th, 1964. I'm 56 years of age, I was born in Philadelphia, PA born and raised.

I was a foster child but yet and still had a good childhood but there a time when things go wrong.

I'm currently in the Philadelphia shelter system in search of urgent housing, I want to educate the young crowd about how life could be and make a difference in their life.

ERIN HALL

First Bee Sting

Warm ground, full vibrant
green grass

Little girl sitting, picking
And flicking broken flora

Little girl jumps in
Pain, sharp, instant.
Looks around confused
Seeking comfort/answers

Old woman rushes over,
Red dress covered in tiny
Pale yellow, almost white, dots
And scoops up the little girl.

ERIN HALL

Things That Comfort You

Crisp fall leaves crunching underfoot

Air pressure shifting as a storm approaches

Wrapping up in a blanket fresh from the dryer

The way a fresh cup of coffee

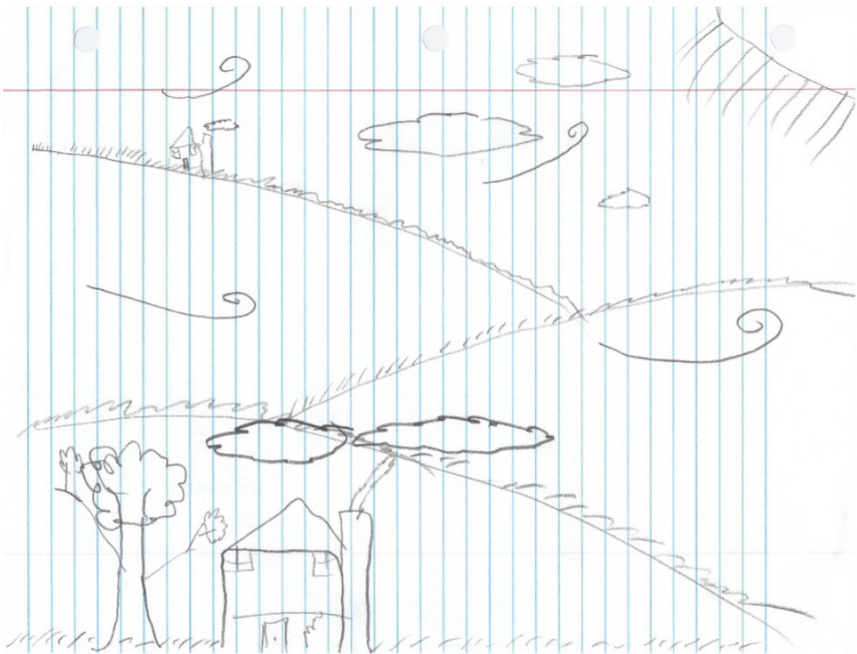
Wraps itself around your senses

Warmth to the touch

Complex taste, often smooth + slightly sweet

Participants often created visual response to our prompts.

This was an exploration of "A place or Thing That Comforts You." Smell that brings anticipation



Participants often created visual response to our prompts. This was an exploration of "A place or Thing That Comforts You."

ANONYMOUS

Rage Feels Like...

Rage feels like a hot summer day, like the hottest summer day but all on the inside of your body.

It's when something brings you past the point of anger and you feel a certain sadistic calm come over you, but as u feel it it's only the calm before the storm!!

You lose all sense of purpose, preservation and logical thought. And then...

ACTION!!

9 times out of 10 the worst part of rage is the feeling of guilt and disappointment in self.

BRIAN

Being With and Around Musicians

The look to the left to figure out what must be right:

This is a process of the direction,
Of the way we look to the left,
Or to do what must be right.
A thought in my mind that never changes.
You might want to keep peace,
Just say goodnight.
Forget about the "or,"
And the "maybe."
Later, or sooner,

The process of man and a woman could also include a baby.
Life does go on no matter how we as more than one think.

RYAN COMBER

A Strong Memory You Have, 03-29-2021

Regardless of being in a shelter, every day that I wake up is a gift. The shelter is a plus over that as well & shower, meals, safety, bed -- it's all better than the alternative.

What is a strong memory that you have?

Renting my 1st home and subsequently losing it 2 years after. I have kind of been ungrounded ever since. I have learned lessons from the experience as well, both positive and negative ones (2011-2013).

That is what popped in my head first, but I'm not sure if I can say I have ONE strong memory. I have tons.

A miscarriage.

Homelessness.

My mom passing away.

The love of my life so far passing away.

Family gatherings.

Buying my 1st car.

1st trip out of country.

And I could keep going and going. We are all full of memories, good ones and bad ones. They are a HUGE part of what makes us who we are.

RYAN COMBER

What Do I Want In Life, 03-22-21

What do I want in life?

I want a lot of things. That's just being honest. Mostly though I never want the feeling of hope to disappear. I love seeing others do good because it keeps that hope alive that one day I WILL be where I want to be. It is not too late to get where I need to be.

Right now, the primary goal is to move forward with the housing process. Then step 2, 3, & so on & so on.

ANONYMOUS

How's It Going?

How it's going? I would say, I could want things to be better. I hope I don't make mistakes in my own way. I do have goals. I believe that a job will get me somewhere. Yes, art beyond rage. This is something to me. So art is good to me rage is outrageous. Demons to me are involved in my life. Maybe that art will cause me to fail. The best thing for me to do is focus. Art is a good thing I would say I have to be mindful of other things. Also I have to just keep my head up.

A life event for me has to do with my life. My life if, I get in a whole conversation is deep. A few small words. My mind is on my life. I have been thinking about. My brother my sister. Also things that I need to grow on at times, I feel weak so, I know! I need strength to be stronger. For all the right reasons.

SANDRA CISNEROS

from I Can Live Sola and I Love to Work

"I do want to create art beyond rage. Rage is a place to begin, but not end. I'm not as wise as my work, but I know if I take the writing deep enough, something larger and greater than myself will flash forth and illuminate me, heal me. I do want to devour my demons—despair, grief, shame, fear—and use them to nourish my art. Otherwise they'll devour me."

RYAN COMBER

How do I Feel Today, 3-29-21

How do I feel today?

Better than I have been feeling. I believe as early as a week or 2 ago I hit a point where I might have experienced true depression and it was hard. Crying at nights. Confusion. Anger. Rage can turn to happiness with smaller things that can be nicer to an extent.

The same as the quote I too would like to devour and erase those particular emotions. I believe that we need these emotions though without them how do we know how to act and react? Or what to feel and for which reason?

Without these outlets & emotions we, I believe, will fall apart to an extent. Maybe even to a state of disrepair. And what happens when something falls into disrepair? We knock it down and rebuild it anew, right? Or it remains a shell forever until one day falls down or burns that.

That won't be me.

I believe as long as we do good and make it through our trials & tribulations, learn to forgive ourselves we can always rebuild given time.

ALI-DOW

My Uncle's Rage

I see the rage in my uncle's eyes
cloudy blue like thinned out milk
Piercing into me as I stand.

It is a rage that passes with the wind
a rage I'm not sure even he understands-
a man who has been left out in the rain
and exposed to pain on pain on pain
This man unsettles something in my spirit;
I feel for him but fear the cloudy haze he walks through
What does he see that can stir up his rage?

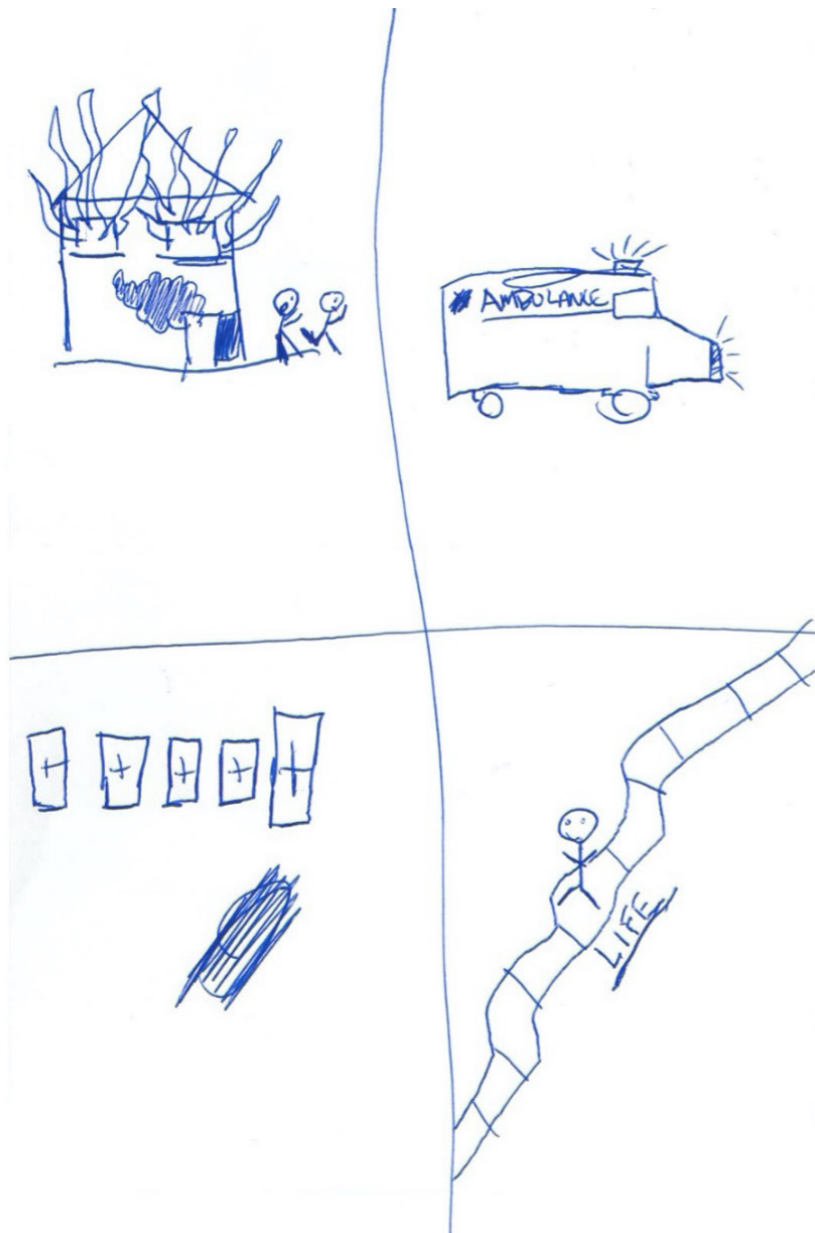
A rage that in his eyes turns to tears
but he can't recall what makes him cry
or why he brought it up...

The memories are there but they come unevenly
No forecast for when the storm will break or come again.

I see the rage in my uncle's eyes
A rage which sometimes is joy
a scary type of joy but a proud type of joy
a funny type of joy that couldn't name itself.
I don't get the joke, but it's funny so I laugh
Frozen by the rage, Swept away by the pain
For him I cry
But then need my distance
Knowing I'll welcome his rage in again.

ANONYMOUS

Four Moment From Your Life



One of our prompts was to describe four distinct moments or images from any point in your life.

MICHAEL

No Need to Start & Not Stop

No need to start and not stop life can get the best of you
at times so sometimes there is no poetry in my words.

Maybe because my heart has no rhymes.

We could look at the big picture and say how deep.

Just how, or ask yourself can you go as far as me.

RYAN COMBER

What was a moment that you felt great pain?

3-29-2021

One of the most painful experiences I've had was when my girlfriend Heather passed away. The last image I have of her is her face. She was terrified. She had an infection and the antibodies the hospital was going to her weren't working and they caught it too late. They rushed her into intensive care and she never came back. I still to this day think about her a lot and it's almost always happy memories. I have talked about the whole thing after and that has helped me get through it. Just remembering her and keeping her memory alive helps as well. Basically I tried many of the coping skills that I was able to get me through the initial pain. Nov. 2017.

THE CURTIS INSTITUTE & WILMA'S PORTABLE STUDIO AT SUNDAY BREAKFAST RESCUE MISSION

*A Celebration of Partnership
May 20, 2021*



Portable Studio Teaching Artist, Ezra Ali-Dow, shares poetry from the 2020-2021 residency accompanied by Curtis Teaching Artist, Justin Goldsmith, on Cello in an improv exploration of text and music for the residents and partners of Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission.

MICHAEL

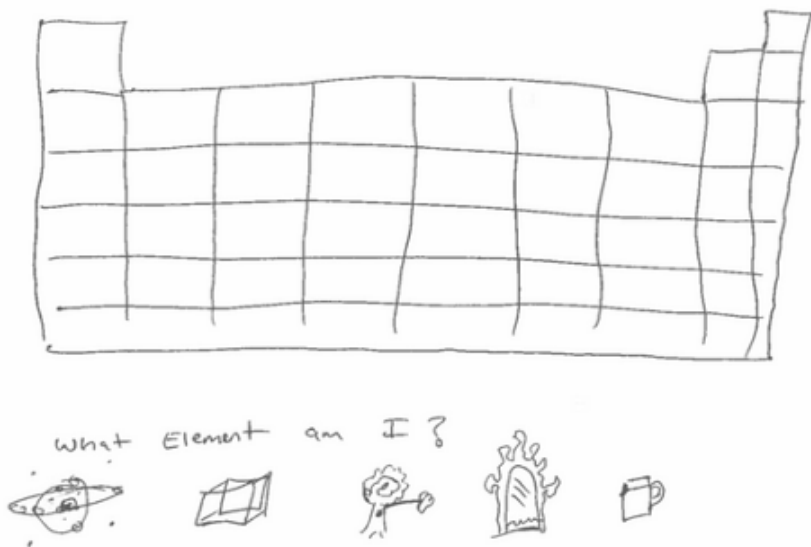
A place or thing that comforts you?

For me, a place that comforts me would be a forest. Because its peaceful, serene and tranquil. I can think a lot easier, and the forest air clears my lungs as I inhale and take everything in better.

So, a forest would be my comfort zone for all-time.

ANONYMOUS

What Element Am I?



Anonymous drawing, reflecting on the elements.

MICHAEL PAUL PEARCE JR

Author of My Poems Of My Most Innermost Feelings

"Strong mind and strong body...is like calm water,
and flowing lotus."

ALI-DOW

Ode To A Tree

Like a tree house
I've always wanted a tree house
Ah so cool just soaking
soaking up rays
from in Between the leaves,
In between the leaves
 like Between the Lions type vibe
just good thoughts and Earth tones
I'm down to earth yo.
That's why I'm up here
w/ no shoes
Like a tree house where I'm hanging w/ Amber again
Somewhere in the woods
Where time passes

And the greens and reds and yellows really stunt on me!

BRIAN BELCHER

What is something that you miss that you would want to get back?

If I had a choice, or a pick. I sometimes miss myself, the good old me. This may be selfish, or a little different. I just wish that I could have done everything the right way, or in a good way. If I wasn't always treated different because of age also being just plain outrageous.

MICHAEL PEARCE

Classical Music

Keep playing classical
And I'll end up
Looking for ya'll. Lol.
Love classical music,
My favorite are:
Yo-yo Ma
And
Keiko Matsui.

(Music of the soul)



(L A ~ "♥" ~ L A ~ L A)

During the Portable Studio, we were lucky to share time with The Curtis Institute of Music who helped inspire some of our work!

ERIN HALL

What fascinates me?

...that this is such a difficult question to answer.

What does that say about me?

Simply an in-the-moment block, or do I not take the time to truly wonder?

What fascinates me?

What is fascination?

- To attract and hold attentively by a unique power, personal charm, unusual nature, or some other special quality; enthrall
- To arouse the interest or curiosity of; allure
- To transfix or deprive of the power of resistance as through terror
- To bewitch (obsolete)
- To cast under a spell by a look (obsolete)

WILLIAM MCKEAN

Bed #79

I'm here to try to improve my life. By being a positive person, learn as much as I can.

I'm seeking help with my addiction

Trying to obtain housing...

I'm 57 years old.

I don't want to die in the street....

I'm willing to do whatever I have to make it.

Thank you.



William explores all that is William.

ALI-DOW

Serenity

Serenity to me is a field I can sleep in
small leaves of grass to scratch at my beard
Serenity is a patch of sun on my chest
but the shade of a cloud is my blanket to
cover my eyes.
Here I can rest and forget my troubles
for a spell;
I hear the crickets chirping, calling up the evening
I feel the wind blow slightly cooler

Soon I'll have to get up and get moving again
but I'll hang here for 10 minutes more.



Erin Hall, the Volunteer and Community Relations Manager of Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission, welcomes residents and guests to the first in-person event following 2020 Covid restrictions with partners from the Curtis Institute and Wilma's Portable Studio.

GREG MOBLEY

[name]

My [name] is Greg Mobley, Bed 80. I am get me job and place and myself fit my goals.

I think the staff and the volunteers are doing outstanding job Mr. Daniel / me & J also Ms Sam and Mr Mike and Kelly.

BRIAN BELCHER

How's it going?

How it is going to a certain degree the fact that it is going. Time is still moving and life goes on. I as a person just want to live and do things the right way and be honest with life in general for myself. Growth is good and experience to see something. There you can listen and learn go through possibly get a chance to build something. Living, and learn. To me, I got a lot of that in life. Live, be happy, and learn from mistakes. Try to get my life better learn some things, and get somewhere.

Get somewhere, hope is good, but pay attention to exactly what is going on in your world today. Just don't lose something. Speak your mind get your eyes together, look to see something like, which is life. Figure out how things are going. Keep things just moving along. The world is something else different. I would love to learn from it. So that the simple question in the first place. How's it going.

This turns into a lot especially when you are trying to figure yourself out.

CHRIS DAVIS

TO FRED (5-17-21)

Down near a creek
lies a green glade
and in this glade
is a tower of rocks
one placed on top of
the other rock
all on top of
a very big rock
It is I, Chris, who constructed
this tower of rocks
at this green glade
down near this creek
the day after Fred
passed away.

I met Fred two times
and only on Zoom
an online platform
that connects peoples' images
with other people's images
we were talking
like a phone but with our faces
our cameras on our computers
It's 2021 after all--

I taught a writing course, or a poetry
course with another co-teacher
Ezra and together

we wrestled with big poems and big
ideas

CHRIS DAVIS
TO FRED (5-17-21)

and there was Fred
sitting back with his glasses
tilted down slightly,
along the bridge of his nose
and Fred held court that day,
talked about the love of his life
Linda,
talked about Philly in the 70's and the 80s
the three second rule, look at anyone
longer than three seconds on the street
then you have to fight

Fred asked if I was sitting in
my bathroom
because my curtain looked like
a shower curtain
but it wasn't, it was
the front of my house

We laughed

Fred talked about breaking

out of cycles

he was afraid to enter the cycle again

and he wanted out,

he said over and over

again, I just want out of this cycle,

I don't want to go back,

to years in jail, to stealing or robbing

or anything else,

I just want to break out of

this cycle,

and we all listened, not knowing

that at that very moment

Fred's time was very short

and Fred not knowing either

that his time was short

We all sat there not knowing

and yet time was short

and none of us knew

what the hell Emily

Dickinson was talking about

except Fred kept saying

she's lonely she needs

that MAN

she needs that MAN

We laughed

because it was a funny moment

We laughed

and I thanked Fred at the end

CHRIS DAVIS
TO FRED (5-17-21)

saying thank you for
telling me all this stuff
I did not know about this city
and about your life

Thank you Fred
I sincerely learned a lot, I said

To him thank you, I sincerely
learned a lot today and I want
you to know that
and why is it that death
always makes these moments
clear and stark and brilliant

Fred was a smart guy who had
dealt with a whole ton of shit in
Philly and he was still here,
He was still fighting,

trying to break out of the cycle,

and truth be told,

he fought to the very end.

ALI-DOW

Some Thoughts on Sunday B

When you cherish time in a place, that place itself becomes significant. That's a magical science to me. Not significant like, now it's worth something, but significant like the way it hits your eyes whenever you see the place forever after you've had your worthwhile stay.

Those blades of grass aren't just green. They're fresh, new, emerald uprisings that took the weight of your footsteps every morning as you had your coffee on the back lawn. Or when you lost your dear friend and laid flat to the earth searching for her spirit. They're those same blades of grass, or their descendants at the very least.

And that parking spot isn't any parking spot. It's where your mother parked, not long after you came into this world, eager to get into the house so she could go to the bathroom. But she ran into an old friend who surely wanted to talk about the baby. And as the unwelcomed and unpleasant conversation went on, the situation became more dire. And it ended with someone... relieving themselves. It's that same parking spot!

There is no one who can see that parking spot, or that grass as I do.

Places hold weight. And I think that while they become significant to us - we also become significant to them. I suspect! The time and energy we invest helps a place earn its own "vibe," as the young people and the hippies say. And numerous other folk.

This is all to say, I have a twinkle in my eye for Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission, and I have a hope that it also has a twinkle in its eye for me, or people like me. Those who have an interest in spending good time with good people.

And when I say twinkle, I do mean “vibe.” I hope Sunday B carries the Vibe of spending good time with good people... I hope, and yet I know it does. And this was clear before I spent my cherished time here. “Good times with good people” means a lot of things. I can’t explain it except in a poem:

Good time is like, damn I fucked up
 but damned if i’m not gonna try to recover
Good time is like, shit I fucked up again
 but I recognize getting better is an arduous battle
Good people got scars. Good people got stories.
 Scars are stories.
Some people start good and get bad- -
Some people start good and stay- -
 But as long as We breathe, I know there’s hope to get
good if I want it
 Or if I need.
Good time is like, damn I fucked up AGAIN
 but I know God has my back
Good people point out to me it might not have been me
that messed up
Good people are gonna help me recover
and forgive me when I lose my balance
Cause good time with good people is nice, but it’s tough
times too.
Good people feed me breakfast,

and Good people tend the earth,

Good people ain't doing any of that shit but they'll sure
make you laugh though

Some good people are boring and they just wanna watch
grass grow

But watching grass grow is a good time sometimes.

Good times is like writing down my thoughts
and "damn I didn't realize I felt that way!"

And good times is sitting, spitting all kinds of philosophies
with homies I never met before

And I wouldn't have if I didn't come to this good place

Good time is when we say "I feel that"

To someone's story whose story isn't our own
cause good times connects us

But also makes us realize we were already connected.

...

Good people is like happiness:

you always gotta work at it

and it's not black and white, you can be happy and
sad and scared all at the same time

So "Good" ain't exactly true

It's highs and lows, it's goods and bads

Good times sometimes comes with punches.

But you gotta take what you can and Do What You Can Do.

Cause good time is investing

And Good people make investments

So ima invest some me in me

And ima invest some me in you

I'm honored to have spent time at Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission. And I hope I was helpful while I was. I believe writing and discussion are powerful tools to work on ourselves, and aid in the healing process. But here's the thing! I forgot about that a long time ago. But Sunday B brought it back for me.

In the residency with Chris and me, I learned so much from the discussions. And I needed the time to write and reflect for myself as well. We all do, but it's extremely difficult to give ourselves the time. And it can be nervous or uncertain that "good time" will be had in such a room. But time and time again we found it's a delightfully energetic room to be a part of. So I wholeheartedly encourage joining in if the opportunity comes again. It helped me pivot around my own life, and I can't speak on behalf of anyone else, but I know this is true for many others.

And we must remember that our ability to pivot, to find happiness, to be good, is temporary. It is hard because it is worthwhile. And Sunday Breakfast is amazing in my eyes because they have shown support over that process. I thank you for holding space to write and reflect.

Sunday B and my partnership through the Wilma found me at a time in my life (mid-2020, the cursed year!) when I didn't realize how much I was going through. In February

I lost a friend, who I now live for. Four friends -who I'd equally live for- lost a parent in the span of two years, each who I now live for. And I lost a Grandmother, who lived for me and for who I now live for. Amidst this we were all losing people together, through the virus, through racial injustice, and through many other events. It has been a tough tough year, and I- as many were/are- was lost. But my time at Sunday B has brought me hope. (I caught the vibe!) And I am thankful that the Wilma allowed me to bring a bit of myself to Sunday B.

My life still has, and will have, its ups and downs. I'll be lost and found again. But I'm making the commitment now to keep writing, or exchanging stories, whatever I can to help me through it. And I hope that y'all and we all will do the same.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



Portable Studio Teaching Artist, Chris Davis, shares poetry with guests of Sunday Breakfast.

The Wilma Theater's Portable Studio offers inclusive programming for adults who are curious about theater, performance, and their own creative expression. In 2020, amid the global pandemic and socio-political uprisings, our friends at Asian Arts Initiative introduced us to Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission who hoped to offer creative programming for their houseless and food insecure guests as they sheltered in place.

And so, a collaboration began.

Guests, Staff and Artists from all three organizations folded 1,000 origami cranes with the help of Philadelphians from across the city. Portable Studio Theater Artist and Designer Ezra Ali-Dow used these cranes to create a Senbazuru as a symbol of hope that hangs in the Mission's dining room.

Ezra then co-lead writing workshops with Playwright/ Performer Chris Davis that produced this Zine - inspired by the poetry and personal stories of the people in the room. Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission fostered further collaborations between the Portable Studio and Curtis Institute resulting in performed readings of these writings underscored by live music in May of 2021.

We are so grateful to everyone who contributed to the creation of this Zine. And now that YOU have experienced this generous, creative, and brave writing, we hope you will join us. We leave the last pages blank. An empty space for you to fill, and if you are inspired, to share as an inspiration to others.

With gratitude, we'll end the way we began:

"How's it goin?".



WILMA
PORTABLE STUDIO