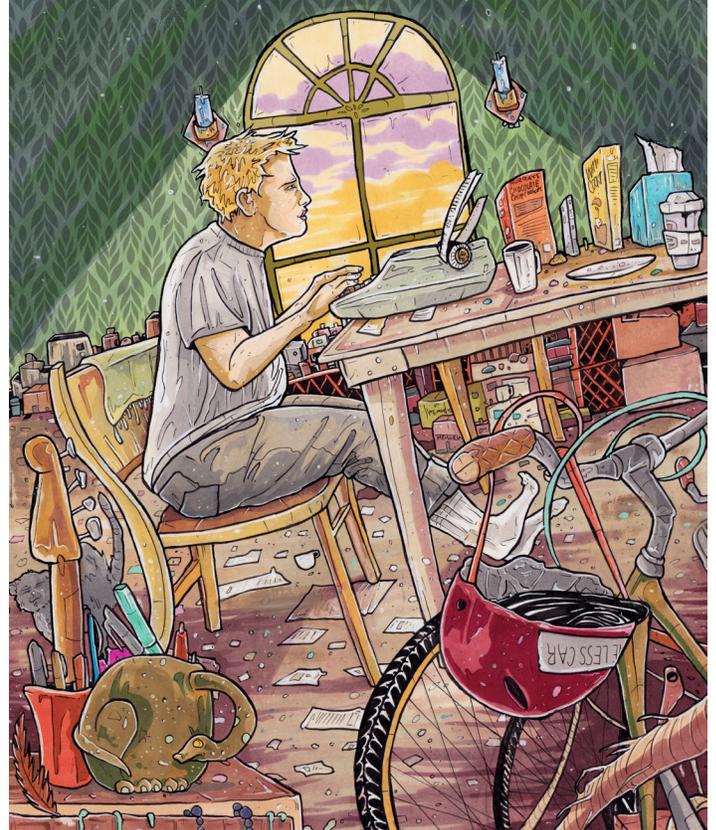


# 2020 IDAHO YOUTH WRITING CHALLENGE: OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE

Idaho middle school/junior high and high school students are invited to enter the 11th Annual Idaho Youth Writing Challenge: Our Collective Future! Stories connect us to ourselves and each other. Stories connect us to ideas and action. Stories connect the past, the present and the future. We cannot become what we cannot imagine?

Stories of our collective future will connect us to the possibilities of a world where everyone is valued for their whole selves, everyone belongs, and everyone can thrive.

Through stories, we are beginning to understand how deeply interconnected we are to each other, to all living beings, and the earth. This gives us hope that violence will no longer be a common occurrence and that collective thriving is possible!



## WRITING PROMPTS

Create an original poem that tells a story in 100 words or less about Our Collective Future: a future where everyone is valued for their whole authentic selves, everyone is safe, and everyone can thrive. Choose from one of the five prompts on the theme of Our Collective Future. (A printable handout of the prompts is also in the Appendix):

- **Collective Thriving** – Who do we need to be and what do we need to do for everyone to thrive? Avoid one-sided stories of our collective future where everything is perfect or where everything is terrible. Instead think how the future will hold both “bad” and “good” allowing us to exist in our wholeness. How will we struggle on this journey? How will we make choices toward our collective humanity over individual benefits? How can we make sure the planet thrives with us?
- **Authentic Love** – How can we love our whole selves and others authentically? Envision a world where we love others for who they truly are. How do we value and celebrate our uniqueness across gender, race, ability, sexual orientation, immigration status, and more.
- **Belonging** – What is required for us to create a sense of belonging for everyone? What is possible if we honor everyone’s true selves, if everyone has a purpose and a role across generations and communities?

- **Cooperation** – What is possible when we support everyone in our community? How can we transform from a culture of competition to cooperation? What would we need to change about our culture?
- **Healing** – What do we need to heal so that we can move toward collective thriving? What will be possible if we heal ourselves first? What is possible when we become aware of and take responsibility for the harms against Indigenous, Black and other marginalized communities? What does it look like to heal whole communities?

For any of the prompts, think of a single act that could move us toward collective thriving. When you think of stories that inspire greatness - Greta Thunberg, 16-year-old climate activist, Emma González, March for Our Lives organizer, or Isra Hirsi, 16-year-old co-founder of the U.S. Youth Climate Strike – what do you think made them great?

What would our communities look like in ten or twenty years if that was a reality? Imagine yourself in that future. What do you notice about that world?

### Writing tips!

- **Read other poems.** To find inspiration, read other poems on stories about our collective future in the Appendix.
- **Choose a prompt that’s meaningful to you.** When it comes to choosing a specific prompt, write about what excites you the most — focus on what matters to you.
- **Start by writing down the first words that flow through your brain.** Keep in mind that for your first draft, you don’t have to get it right—you just have to write. Don’t be worried about the word limit for the first draft. It’s easier to take out words to be below the 100-word limit. We want your original work. Trust your own voice. We’re interested in reading what you have to say, not what someone else has written.
- **Add specific details and avoid clichés.** Increase your awareness about everyday life. Drawing from wisdom passed through generations, use your five senses to imagine our collective future. Take several minutes to “time travel” to this place. Is this world something that only exists in your imagination or have you experienced it in some way? What could you do to fully realize this world? What needs to happen? What was the struggle on this journey? What is it like once you’re there?

## SUBMISSION RULES AND GUIDELINES

**Rules:** Writing must be 100 words or less (title does not count) of your original work related to a prompt. You can submit up to three original poems or stories. Write in the language in which you can best express yourself.

### Who is eligible?

Student authors must be in Idaho middle school/junior high school or high school - public, private, alternative school settings, or youth groups - or be a 12- to 18-year-old homeschooled student residing in Idaho.

### Writing Selection Committee

All of the submissions will be read by adult and youth writers. The Idaho Commission on the Arts, Idaho Writer in Residence Malia Collins will assist in the selection of the final top ten submissions.

# AWARDS

Ten students selected to read their story at Tree Fort Music Festival Storyfort. Travel costs covered for student authors and one adult chaperone.

\$100 awarded to each of the top 10 selections for middle school/junior high school and the high school categories.

\$25 gift cards will be awarded for each of the 100 or more of the top writings selected for publication for the middle school/junior high school and the high school books to be released in April 2020.

All published works will list the author, teacher, and school. A book of the published works will be distributed to Idaho's middle/junior high schools and high schools. Make sure your school is represented! Students published in this year's books will be invited to share their writing at the *Stories of Our Collective Future* reading event on Thursday, April 23rd in Boise, Idaho.

## DEADLINE, MIDNIGHT FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2020

- 1) Log on to [www.engagingvoices.org](http://www.engagingvoices.org) and enter your submission online, or
- 2) Mail your writing submission, name, address, cell phone number, school name, grade, and teacher's name to the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence, Linen Building, 1402 W. Grove Street, Boise, ID 83702

Questions? For questions, contact Jennifer at [jenniferm@engagingvoices.org](mailto:jenniferm@engagingvoices.org) at the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence.

# OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE – POETRY TO INSPIRE

## **When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities**

*By Chen Chen*

To be a good  
ex/current friend for R. To be one last  
inspired way to get back at R. To be relationship  
advice for L. To be advice  
for my mother. To be a more comfortable  
hospital bed for my mother. To be  
no more hospital beds. To be, in my spare time,  
America for my uncle, who wants to be China  
for me. To be a country of traffickless roads  
& a sports car for my aunt, who likes to go  
fast. To be a cyclone  
of laughter when my parents say  
their new coworker is like that, they can tell  
because he wears pink socks, see, you don't, so you can't,  
can't be one of them. To be the one  
my parents raised me to be—  
a season from the planet  
of planet-sized storms.  
To be a backpack of PB&J & every  
thing I know, for my brothers, who are becoming  
their own storms. To be, for me, nobody,  
homebody, body in bed watching TV. To go 2D  
& be a painting, an amateur's hilltop & stars,  
simple decoration for the new apartment  
with you. To be close, J.,  
to everything that is close to you—  
blue blanket, red cup, green shoes  
with pink laces.  
To be the blue & the red.  
The green, the hot pink.

## **This Morning I Pray for My Enemies**

*Joy Harjo, U.S. Poet Laureate*

And whom do I call my enemy?  
An enemy must be worthy of engagement.  
I turn in the direction of the sun and keep walking.  
It's the heart that asks the question, not my furious mind.  
The heart is the smaller cousin of the sun.  
It sees and knows everything.  
It hears the gnashing even as it hears the blessing.  
The door to the mind should only open from the heart.  
An enemy who gets in, risks the danger of becoming a friend

## **This is what was bequeathed us**

*Gregory Orr*

This is what was bequeathed us:  
This earth the beloved left  
And, leaving,  
Left to us.  
No other world  
But this one:  
Willows and the river  
And the factory  
With its black smokestacks.  
No other shore, only this bank  
On which the living gather.  
No meaning but what we find here.  
No purpose but what we make.  
That, and the beloved's clear instructions:  
Turn me into song; sing me awake.

# 2020 IDAHO YOUTH WRITING CHALLENGE: OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE WRITING PROMPTS

Create an original poem that tells a story in 100 words or less about Our Collective Future: a future where everyone is valued for their whole authentic selves, everyone is safe, and everyone can thrive.

Choose from one of the five prompts on the theme of Our Collective Future. (A printable handout of the prompts is also in the Appendix):

- **Collective Thriving** – Who do we need to be and what do we need to do for everyone to thrive? Avoid simplified stories of our collective future where everything is perfect or where everything is terrible. How will we struggle on this journey? How will we make choices toward our collective humanity over individual benefits? How can we make sure the planet thrives with us?
- **Love** – How can we love our whole selves and others authentically? Envision a world where we love others for who they truly are regardless of inherited identities of gender, race, ability, sexual orientation, immigration status, and more.
- **Belonging** – What is required for us to create a sense of belonging for everyone? What is possible if we honor everyone's true selves, if everyone has a purpose and a role across generations and communities?
- **Cooperation** – What is possible when we support everyone in our community? How can we transform from a culture of competition to cooperation? What would we need to change about our culture?
- **Healing** – What do we need to heal so that we can move toward collective thriving? What will be possible if we heal ourselves first? What is possible when we become aware of and take responsibility for the harms against Indigenous, Black and other marginalized communities? What does it look like to heal whole communities?

For any of the prompts, think of a single act that could move us toward collective thriving. When you think of stories that inspire greatness - Greta Thunberg, 16-year-old climate activist, Emma González, March for Our Lives organizer, or Isra Hirsi, 16-year-old co-founder of the U.S. Youth Climate Strike – what do you think made them great?

What would our communities look like in ten or twenty years if that was a reality? Imagine yourself in that future. What do you notice about that world?

## Writing tips!

- **Read other poems.** To find inspiration, read other poems on stories about our collective future in the Appendix.
- **Choose a prompt that's meaningful to you.** When it comes to choosing a specific prompt, write about what excites you the most — focus on what matters to you.
- **Start by writing down the first words that flow through your brain.** Keep in mind that for your first draft, you don't have to get it right—you just have to write. Don't be worried about the word limit for the first draft. It's easier to take out words to be below the 100 word limit.
- **Originality.** We want your original work. Trust your own voice. We're interested in reading what you have to say, not what someone else has written.
- **Details.** Add specific details and avoid clichés. Increase your awareness about everyday life. Drawing from wisdom passed through generations, use your five senses to imagine our collective future. Take several minutes to "time travel" to this place. Is this world something that only exists in your imagination or have you experienced it in some way? What could you do to fully realize this world? What needs to happen? What was the struggle on this journey? What is it like once you're there?