

2021 Idaho Youth Writing Challenge: Living in Mutuality in Our Relationships

Idaho middle school/
junior high and high school
students are invited to enter
the 12th Annual Idaho
Youth Writing Challenge:
Living in Mutuality in Our
Relationships.

Healthy relationships help
create a future where we
can thrive together. We get
to choose both who we
want to be in a relationship
with, and how we want to
be in a relationship. When
we consider the how, we
can live in mutuality in our
relationships.



Mutuality is the sharing of our authentic selves that allows for us to recognize each other clearly, interacting with each other and all living beings in ways that are balanced and supportive. Mutuality is a connection that works for the benefit of all involved.

The connection between healthy relationships and living in mutuality looks like this: it is seeing a light turn brighter in another person, it is feeling our interconnectedness to each other, the earth and to all living things. It is recognizing the world we want everyone to thrive in and the choices we need to make for that world to happen.

Through the writing we generate for this year's writing challenge, we begin 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 living in mutuality is possible!

Time to write!

Create an original poem or story in **100 words or fewer** exploring what living in mutuality means to you. Use all of your senses. Think about your relationships with others, with the earth, and with all living things.

Getting started

Once you choose from one of the prompts on the theme of Healthy Relationships and Living in Mutuality, think of an image and describe it, or turn what you imagine it's like to be living in mutuality into a poem and write it, or settle in and tell its story.

Writing Prompts on the theme of Healthy Relationships and Living in Mutuality

In collaboration with Idaho's Writer in Residence, Malia Collins

- Write about what mutuality means to you. What does it look like or feel like in this time we're living in right now? For example, during the global pandemic, how have you noticed your connections to your family and friends, to your teachers, or to the place where you live? Have you seen ways people are taking care of themselves and each other? Have you noticed acts of love or kindness?
- Write about mutuality in healthy relationships to one another. For example, we all need other people. And they need us, too. Write about a time when your needs were met and you also met another's needs.
- Write about mutuality to all living beings and the earth. For example, consider a person or place and your connection to it. Describe it and what makes that connection so special.
- Describe a moment you felt you were living in mutual relationship with yourself, another person, a place, or something in the natural world. For example, write about how in a healthy relationship there's a balance and harmony of power and influence. And how you're there for one another and everything around you. Write about how it feels to take care of a place you love, and how you feel cared for by that place in return. Show us this place vividly, using your five senses, so we can see it and feel your connection to it.

Writing tips!

- To find inspiration, read other poems or stories about living in mutuality 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 already written.
- Add specific details and avoid clichés. Increase your awareness about everyday life. Drawing from wisdom passed through generations; use all your senses to imagine what it looks like to live in mutuality. 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: The work you submit must be your own original work. 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 home schooled student residing in Idaho.

Writing Selection Committee: All of the submissions will be read by adult and youth writers. Idaho's Writer in Residence, Malia Collins, will assist in the selection of the final top ten submissions.

Deadline to submit: midnight Friday, February 26

How to Submit Your Work:

- 1) Log on to 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 Dalton Tieg at dalton@engagingvoices.org at the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence.

Awards

\$250 awarded to each of the top 10 selections for middle school/junior high school and the high school categories.

\$25 awarded to each of the 100 selections for middle school/junior high school and the high school categories.

All authors selected for publication will also receive a book of the selections to be released in April 2021 and a t-shirt featuring the artwork of Ashley Dreyfus.

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 Living in

Mutuality in Our Relationships virtual reading event on Thursday, April 22nd.

Poetry to Inspire

“blessing the boats”

By Lucille Clifton
(at St. Mary's)

may the tide
that is entering even now
the lip of our understanding
carry you out
beyond the face of fear
may you kiss
the wind then turn from it
certain that it will
love your back may you
open your eyes to water
water waving forever
and may you in your innocence
sail through this to that

“Eagle Poem”

By Joy Harjo, U.S. Poet Laureate

To pray you open your whole self
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon
To one whole voice that is you.
And know there is more
That you can't see, can't hear;
Can't know except in moments
Steadily growing, and in languages
That aren't always sound but other
Circles of motion.
Like eagle that Sunday morning
Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky
In wind, swept our hearts clean
With sacred wings.
We see you, see ourselves and know
That we must take the utmost care
And kindness in all things.
Breathe in, knowing we are made of
All this, and breathe, knowing
We are truly blessed because we
Were born, and die soon within a
True circle of motion,
Like eagle rounding out the morning
Inside us.
We pray that it will be done
In beauty.
In beauty.

Lucille Clifton, “blessing the boats” from *Blessing the Boats: New and Selected Poems 1988-2000*. Copyright © 2000 by Lucille Clifton. Reprinted by permission of BOA Editions, Ltd., www.boaeditors.org.

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Joy Harjo, “Eagle Poem” from *In Mad Love and War*. Copyright © 1990 by Joy Harjo. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press, www.wesleyan.edu/wespress. Source: *In Mad Love and War* (Wesleyan University Press, 1990)