



# Beyond the View



*A Shore House Anthology*

## *Intro*

We received this generous grant that made this project possible pre-COVID, when the world was a different place. The idea was to create an anthology of member's stories and celebrate with a reading. We received the grant and literally had to shut our doors the next day. But we didn't stop writing. In fact, we started writing even more. We used to meet every other week, but once we began our Virtual Clubhouse, Project Write Now happily and without question agreed to meet every week via Zoom.

Writing has always been a way for our members to express themselves, and it took on an even greater meaning during the 24 weeks we were sheltering in place. It was a way for us to connect with each other; share our fears, our hopes, our strategies on where to buy toilet paper. Out of this came the most amazing writing. From the most amazing people.

I am forever grateful to the members who show me everyday what resilience, integrity and strength mean.

*Susan Mazzeo, LSW*  
*Executive Director, Shore House*

Working with Shore House has always been one of my favorite things to do. The members are so receptive and willing and open to write and share their deepest truths with me. This is not something you can find just anywhere!

When the pandemic began, I was worried about how we would be able to continue our partnership. Thanks to Susan Mazzeo and the Shore House team, the members were able to quickly adjust to the virtual environment. So we began meeting even more often than before, on Zoom!

Though it's not quite the same as meeting in person, there is still magic and inspiration each time we meet. Being on Zoom, we have been able to have clubhouse members join us from all over the country. I've had the privilege of getting to know a lot more of the incredible writers in this community this way. It is my honor to be able to share their work with you here, in this anthology!

*Lisa Hartsgrove, MFA*  
*Program Coordinator & Writing Instructor, Project Write Now*

***Dyese Davis, Demetria Dupree, Fran Franco,  
Chelsea Gould, Mary Husowech, & Peter Turnamian***

**I Am (A Collaborative Poem)**

I am resilient because I keep going through the ups and downs.

I am that long street.

I know where I am going but sometimes I hit a curve.

Still, I always get back on track.

I am strong as steel gilded with liquid gold.

I am bursting through glass ceilings.

I am a spiritual being growing into a ghostly body.

I am the darkness, but I am still the light.

# ***Maryellen Barrett***

## **Untitled**

It was a sunny day.  
It was a cloudy day.  
It was a rainy day, too.  
I didn't know if I needed sunglasses,  
a jacket or an umbrella,  
so I brought them all.  
Whatever it was,  
rain or shine,  
I was happy to be alive outside.

## **I Want This For You**

I want you to have courageous vulnerability. This means that you are open to what may or may not happen, whether good or bad. Bad experiences can be good if we learn from them. Listen and pay attention to what is said and what goes on around us. We can learn from bad experiences just as much as from good experiences. We must lay ourselves wide open to accept anything that comes to us, regardless of the source. We try to hide ourselves from bad experiences, but good can come from them.

I want you to be open to all experiences, good or bad. It is the only way you will learn to get along in this world. It is the only way we can learn to love.

Our feelings may be temporary, whether good or bad. When our feelings are bad we must remember that they are only temporary. We must try to reach out of our bad feelings and find the good. When our feelings are good, we must build on them so that they last.

## ***Giovanna DaCosta***

### **I Will Be**

I will be mindful  
I will be the best G I can be  
I will be secure within my own standards  
I will be a traveler  
I will always be a mother who loves her children,  
but I will not beg for their love  
I will finish my GED  
I will become a homeowner  
I will become a dual citizen  
I will write for pleasure and journal to free my mind  
I will live to be 103 (3 is my favorite number)  
I have lots of folks to piss off  
I will surpass the limits I put on myself  
I will break all my mental strongholds placed by my society  
I will get the hell out of my own way  
I will stop stinking thinking  
I will  
because I can

## ***Samuel Duval Cofer***

### **Home**

I turn the key  
and I float through the door.  
Solace.

I admire all the familiar smiling faces  
around the room  
as I lay my keys down, I take notice to  
the jolly Buddha statue  
greeting me at the base of a table.  
Peace of mind.

I take a breath and inhale  
as I look out the window  
and survey the park nearby.  
A few thoughts scurry across my mind...  
Sanctuary.

I think, should I take a walk later  
and flex my freedom?

I move towards the window,  
and glare at my reflection in the glass.  
My focus is only broken  
when my puppy licks my ankle,  
welcoming me home.

I pick him up and move to the chaise.  
I sit him on my lap and gaze  
out the window. I light my incense.  
Calm.

I inhale...  
Security.

### **Do Not Remember Me**

I am NOT the same person  
locked away in the chambers  
of your mind.  
I've grown bigger,

deeper beyond those confines.  
I have lived, experienced  
beyond what you see  
and have matured sweetly.  
Even better than a bumblebee.

No, I'm NOT the person you think you know.  
I'm ever so much more:  
I am Love, Compassion,  
and ALL that you cannot ignore.  
SET ME FREE! SET ME FREE!

That's all I plead,  
and this one thing I do ask:  
Please Do Not Remember Me.

### **Ocean in a Box**

I want to be free like the ocean  
I want to run rampant like its waves  
I want its knowledge of  
    when to be gentle or rough  
along the banks  
I want the Ocean's command  
    to beckon for what it wants,  
when it wants  
I want to swallow my captives' hearts  
    Like the Ocean swallows souls  
I want to drown  
    in its ambivalent solitude  
But realizing, when I look at my reflection  
in its waters,  
    I see myself; free

## ***Fran Franco***

### **Hope**

Hope is a blackbird that perches on the lamppost every night  
wishing he was yellow.  
He wanted to pretend that he was a world leader  
if he was yellow.  
He sets his hopes for tomorrow and tries to sleep.  
But when he wakes up, the raven finds the entire sky  
is not yellow, but green.  
Green like the sky in a Giorgio de Chirico painting.  
A thought crossing his mind is leaving  
to fly the green sky  
and travel with his lovely wings to the forest,  
Cheesequake State Park.  
There he will pray and have hope that maybe soon in the woods  
he'll find the yellow of his dreams  
and become it.

### **Grace**

Grace is always around when the heavy scent of pine trees permeates the  
forest.  
To go and navigate through the trees requires care and beauty  
and all the characteristics of grace.  
Or maybe the trees and smell are on the other side of a window.  
It is grace that opens up the window  
so I can be happy again.  
And even more, the eagle is out there among the expanse of nature  
carrying grace with it, a message in its talons.  
I love grace as it softens my perception of trees and air.



## ***Martin Fried***

### **Bella**

The number one dog name is Bella.  
She is not a fella.  
She is *beautiful* in Italian.  
When we say goodbye, we say *ciao bella*.  
There are also portabella mushrooms  
and Bela Lugosi who played Dracula.  
My bella is my Bel Ami because she is my good friend.  
She has a special marking like an apple on her side  
which makes her an i-dog.  
Bella was also a part of MA Bell  
before the break up became ATT and other mini bells.  
Babybel is cheese  
and Bella likes bananas, yams, chicken, and salmon.  
In the backyard, she eats apples and peaches off the ground.  
She chases rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, birds, and squeaky toys.  
Bella is getting older now  
and her patella on her hind leg is arthritic  
but she is still mobile.  
She gives the paw and she never ignores her food.  
Her treats are rawhide  
and she sheds her german short hair everywhere.

## ***Marilyn Gordon***

### **Fireflies**

Fireflies are bad they can bite you  
If you wear a scent  
They come out at night so  
Don't look at them cause  
They are scary to watch  
I never saw one but think  
I would try to be a little  
Braver than that  
And swat them  
Cause they kind of are  
The dark  
The sky  
And that  
Is what it is

### **Things We Carry**

I have a big load to carry,  
It is heavy and whole and  
all the stuff  
comes out of the bottom so  
that makes me mad.

But I did my good deed for the day:  
to carry it out.

### **The Shore**

I am a woman who likes the shore.  
The wave of it makes me feel good and alive.  
I like the shore, the ocean breeze.  
It sounds rough, but gentle on my mind.  
Coming here makes me feel so serene.

# ***Chelsea Gould***

## **Resilience**

I am strong and bitter  
like a dandelion  
pushing up through the sidewalk cracks.  
So strong, so focused on  
reaching the light and spreading my leaves.  
Maybe I'll be plucked by a child  
and have a short second life as a dandelion crown  
and if that child tastes her fingers,  
she'll taste my bitter sap.  
Dandelions don't stop  
because of bad politicians or stock market crashes.  
Dandelions grow wild  
in patches of overgrown grass  
and up through concrete sidewalks.  
One time, in college, I saw the resilience of a single dandelion  
growing up through the thick slabs of Philadelphian concrete  
and my heart burst open at its simple beauty and determination.  
My heart opened so wide tears came to my eyes  
and I still remember that moment 20 years later.  
The dandelion feels like a good metaphor for me:  
I keep going.  
I push through with gentle yet persistent pressure.

## **Swimming in the Rain**

Slipping into the river from the muddy bank with tall grasses,  
the cool grey water envelopes me.  
The sky, a much lighter shade of grey, hosts burgeoning rain clouds.  
My friends and I risk the danger of swimming in a rainstorm  
and delight in the cool water.  
One by one, the droplets begin to crash onto the surface of the river.  
We splash around, laughing.  
The rain falls harder and harder until it is a full-blown storm,  
and we run to the safety of our towels on the shore.

# ***David Tucker Havens***

## **Grace**

Grace is Happy, Beautiful, Calming, Touching, Pleasant, Loving, Hope and Peace.

What Grace is to me:

1. It can be a woman's name. It was my great grandmother's name.
2. When my stepfather stopped drinking, I felt grace.
3. A duck named Stretch on a farm I used to work at.
4. When I saved a boxing turtle.
5. When I save frogs.
6. When God helped me get over my parent's divorce. Grace is in God.
7. Delilah, who I listen to on the radio.

## ***Mary Husowech***

### **The River**

With every breath I take  
With every step that is made  
With every song that is song  
Are there these words to believe... ah, to believe  
What was written on a page  
What was written in the past  
Feels like holy water that flows  
Flows though my heart and veins  
And that's something to know... ah, something to know  
In all this mess  
there was something... ah, something  
The words never came  
But my heart still remains  
And the river still flows  
Ah, the river will flow, ah, still flows  
The river still flows  
Like holy water in a dream  
Spirit questioning a soul  
Asking a question from above  
A cardinal still shows  
The storm may still come  
And I'm finding my way  
My path that is walked  
With every step that is made  
Is there something of we?  
Is there a feeling still left?  
Do the words ever come?  
Will you find me at the end?  
Will I be the one?  
And there's something that I need  
And there's something I see  
I'm becoming myself  
There's something more to we

The words never came  
But my heart still remains  
Somehow you're still at my side  
And the river still flows, ah, the river still flows  
Ah yes, the river still flows  
The river still flows  
It's my faith to believe  
And the river still flows  
The river still flows... ah, yes the river still flows  
Within me

### **The Light**

There are tears that fall into the ocean  
that some may never see  
trials of desperation  
Are they from me?  
Sometimes I do not know  
the feelings that are within me  
since it feels like I'm hanging on the edge  
waiting for forever  
When it feels like all words instead  
Are you waiting for forever?  
Are you waiting for the truth?  
Are you waiting for those feelings to come through?  
Everybody has a time  
Everyone has a way  
The feelings are there  
Do you believe instead?  
Ah, do you believe instead?  
Believe in a way to find... forever, ah forever  
Forever to unlock the door  
Are you waiting for forever?  
Are you waiting for the truth?  
Are you waiting for those feelings to come through?  
Forever to find the way  
and through the cracks of the door there shines a light  
that's where forever is waiting, ah, waiting  
And at the end it's name shall be Faith... ah, Faith

# ***Timothy Matthews***

## **Untitled**

My name is Timothy Richard Matthews and I love music. I play the guitar and keyboard. Over the years, I've gotten really good at both.

At year 20, I was diagnosed with schizophrenia. I've been to a few programs and I now don't hear voices. I take prescription pills called clozaril and effexor.

In the future, I want to be a rockstar. I could pull it off.

I exist because my parents wanted kids and I don't mind being born.

I could make the world a better place.

## **Fireflies**

I see the flash of fireflies  
In the summer night and  
It looks neat. It's yellowish in  
Color and it only stays light  
For a second or so.

# *Kevin Reilly*

## I Grow

I grow from what I know.  
I grow because I love it so.  
I grow to attend to my mental health needs.  
I grow because I have so many darn seeds!

I grow because I care  
so much about Mother Earth,  
so you will be able to see a much cleaner planet  
from the very moment of your birth!

I grow to enjoy so much—  
ALL the seasons of the year.  
I grow to enjoy any kind of weather,  
so there is nothing I may fear!

I grow to make our local towns clean and neat,  
near and far, so they all  
look great as you pass through them,  
either on foot, by bike, or in your car!

I also grow to enjoy  
all the holidays of the year,  
And so I shall now prepare my New Years' resolution  
as the time draws near!



# ***Sherone Rogers***

## **Soul Mate**

I have stood for over one hundred years  
on an ever-shrinking plot.  
It is down to an acre now.  
Not such a bad size  
by today's standards.

I have heard many voices  
laugh, sing, and argue within me;  
felt many feet  
run, skip, and pace my boards;  
had many beating hearts  
come, mark time, and go.

They have all felt different.  
They have all left me to stand in solitude.

Last month a couple, their baby, and their little girl  
walked through my halls,  
wandered my hollow echoing rooms,  
touched the doorknobs that have seen me  
through presidents and revolutions.

Today that family is back with a large truck  
and men in mover's coveralls.  
I smell the sweat and cigarette smoke  
that clings to these men.  
I hope it doesn't linger long.

I once had a man  
who enjoyed a pipe  
in his wingback chair  
with a glass of scotch.  
I did not enjoy the pipe.

Sadly, I could still smell and feel  
faint traces of it  
two years after he had died.  
It had embedded itself  
in my wallpaper and floorboards.

This family today,  
I have hoped for  
for generations.  
The little girl had seen me  
that first day  
with wonder in her eyes.  
Had truly seen *me*—  
not the ghosts  
of who I had been in the past.  
And certainly not my hidden  
cupboards and passages,  
but she would be  
the One to find them.  
I knew it. I felt it.

For a moment on that day,  
we had been one.  
I had sensed her sensing me  
sensing her curiosity.  
Her determination  
to unlock my secrets.  
Her appreciation  
of the fact that I *had* secrets.

I had intuited her relief,  
knowing that I understood and approved.

Today I am looking forward to a long relationship  
of mutual admiration and understanding.

Understanding between two beings  
alone in their individuality.  
No longer alone in the world.

## ***Darren Rose***

### **I Will Take**

I will take you  
In my heart  
I will take you  
With me in dark  
In the morning  
I wake  
How many chances will  
It take to  
Have your heart  
Be mine?  
I will take you  
Far away  
Where love can't  
Be separated  
How many chances will  
It take to  
Have your heart  
In mine?

### **Every Day is a Black Day**

I wake up every day  
And I want to see her face  
And I talk to her the next day  
She keeps looking away  
And I feel the pain  
And I feel ashamed  
Every day is a Black day  
Every day is a Black day  
I go to my room all alone  
Thoughts racing through my mind  
I want to escape and I want to hide  
Walls are closing over me  
And only her soul can save me

But she won't take me  
Every day is a Black day  
Every day is a Black day  
There was a time I thought she would be my bride  
But that was a lie  
She was my heart and my soul and my mind  
Today I have died  
I have died too many times  
It is dark now and I'm in despair  
Every day is a black day  
Every day is a black day  
Now I see my grave  
And I will go to sleep tonight  
Everyday is a black day  
Everyday is a black day

### **The Lonely Bike Ride**

I see everyone walk by.  
Alone, I must ride.  
With the wheels turning in the road,  
the rain clouds start to appear.  
Everyone was there, and now everyone is gone.  
My wheels keep turning and my life is always the same.  
I wonder when someone will ride with me,  
when it will stop being so cold,  
when it stopped being simple.  
My life is a lonely bike ride through town.  
Everyone else drives by.  
I'm on bike  
by myself.

# ***Stefanina Samuel***

## **What is Grace?**

Grace is my two aunts, my mom's two younger sisters: Aunt Mary and Aunt Antoinette.

They are both petite yet have strong arms and legs.

Bright shining eyes and beautiful smiles and flowing hair.

Although my cousins have been married for many years,  
they both look like angels of Grace in their gowns at their weddings.

Wherever they go, they offer helping hands by tending to the children,  
cooking a meal.

They grow vegetables and flower gardens.

They faithfully bring the flowers to the family members in the mausoleum.

My Aunt Antoinette knits and crochets blankets, scarves, and hats for all  
family members.

Aunt Antoinette even sews masks.

They say long live the queen. I say long live Aunt Mary and Aunt  
Antoinette.

## **What Makes Me Happy**

A drink of ice water makes me happy.

Sharing a home cooked meal that I made for someone makes me happy.

Taking a long walk and talking with a friend or family member makes me  
happy.

Exercising for an hour and working up a sweat makes me happy.

Talking with my son and sharing the day with him makes me happy.

## **What Poetry Is To Me**

Poetry to me is a form of affection

Placed into words and put down on paper

Poetry to me reminds me of a younger time of innocence

When I was much younger lady

A young man wrote poems to show me how much he cared for me

So poetry means to me

A chance to express deep inner feelings

# ***Danielle Scott***

## **Imagine**

Imagine each day has a smile.  
Imagine the solution came before the end.  
Imagine communication was understood before committing sin.  
Imagine a high did not require a low.  
Imagine a teacher that really taught.  
Imagine a mother was allowed to sin.  
Imagine a fighter that never fought.  
Imagine a rainbow had no tears.  
Imagine I could paint the sky without a lie.  
Imagine you lived to hear me.  
Imagine a human had no tears.  
Imagine life was able to face all fears.  
Imagine no stigma or gossip.  
Imagine and dream in every second you catch the gold ring.  
Imagine we finished everything we started.

## **Communication**

Imagine communication wasn't learned; it was earned.

What a beautiful girl baby. I know she'll get through this, they will fix her eyes, one patch at a time.

Listening again as they walk right by.

As a child, she could see with her ears then her smell, oh my. The sound only gets better when her heart combines with her eyes, what style she had then, who should have her.

This subject was so silent I don't even think they could hear her cry.

She really wanted to listen.

Then 50 years later, her shoes would soon own her as communication smiles.

After 28 years of a fight in sin, she cries a slap so hard she flies right out of her own legend and simply dies.

Communication for her became her illusions. False linking of life, even the wool is a lie.

Hiding in other's rainbows to the point of surgeries and sedation.

Did anyone ever really want her to know how it's done? How to love and be loved. Have hope without a joke. To have faith and communicate.

My luck, they found a place that ripped her life out of her own space, right out of her blessings and lessons, even her favorite safe place now gone. No dresses, no messes.

The pain was so brutal she was drowning in place.

Communication, you see, has a great deal of teaching for me. It defines the dictionary, it binds your body's lines sealed with purpose.

So now a few years down the line, I jump in with purpose to grow with you. How fine.

To define my person and become alive, to not hear the boring, and to not live a lie.

## ***Jace Spector***

### **Dear 10th Grade Jace**

Hey, how's it going? I know it's been awhile since I wrote. It has been awhile, but I've got a few questions that I really gotta ask ya.

Why did you do it? Why did you bring it that day? What was going through your head?

Sincerely Signed,  
You from the future

### **Dear Future Jace**

Did we do it? Did we ever become an engineer like we've wanted? Who did we marry? Do we have kids? What have I done to change the world? Did I create new technology? Did I help end the war? Did I ever figure out a reason to exist?

I guess I did, because you're reading this. Thank you for living on.

Sincerely Signed,  
Twenty-year-old You



## ***Laura Yudof***

### **Untitled**

Do not remember me  
as the fat person that you see  
as a person that is blind in one eye

As you can see, I'm doing fine

Do not remember me  
as the grumpy person who doesn't laugh or smile  
but as a person that gives hope to everyone  
across the miles

Remember me as a person of knowledge and strength  
I offer compassion, and go to great lengths  
By my spirit and hope  
and all the ways I can cope  
as a good friend  
whose giving  
never ends

## ***Kerri Zeblisky***

### **A Lesson in Love**

Imagine if the world would love more and hate less, what a world it would be! There would be less, if not no, wars. People would get along better. The fight for inequality would be lessened, if not go away, as people learn that what divides us is less than what unites us. The world would be more peaceful and at ease. We'd be able to enjoy our world more and our neighbors too. Hate crimes would not exist. All of that would be in the past. We, as a united human race, wouldn't erase that part of the past. We would use it to teach each other, especially future generations, so it doesn't happen again. For when we forget the past, or don't learn from it, we are doomed to repeat it.

### **Home Sweet Home**

My home is not a place of wood or brick or mortar. It's not a house, or an apartment, or a room. My home is beachfront, or more specifically, the ocean. She is my home, my place of comfort. Her push and pull of the water, from a calm glasslike blue hue that when the sun hits it sparkles like diamond off the surface, to the dark gray of when she's stormy with white foam hitting the jetties where the sea meets the land. When the seagulls fly above looking for food that's left behind. The sound of the pounding waves. The briny, salty scent of the sea is my peaceful calm place, where I can meditate to become one with heaven, earth, sea, and sky. One with nature and all of her majesty, and one was God. I can remember and walk with my beloved aunt—though she's only here with me in body. When I walk along the shore, she's with me in spirit. I love to take off my shoes and walk in the cold water along the edge of the shore where the waves break and the sea foams up. Get too close to deepwater, close to the breakers, and run back to the shore. The footprints are covered over by the waves—my feet, wet sand. Sometimes I just stand in ankle-deep water feeling the wind blowing offshore, blowing my hair around and the waves lapping upon my feet. Becoming one with myself, letting go of what troubles me. This is the only town where I can fully let myself go and be wild and carefree. The only place where I feel safe. The ocean will always be my home, where I can return in times of trouble or joy. That to me is home.

## ***Acknowledgements***

We would like to acknowledge the Monmouth Park Charity Foundation and New Jersey Natural Gas for making this Anthology possible. Their “Accomplish More Together” Grant supports agency collaboration that builds on each other’s strengths to increase service capacity and innovation.



We would also like to acknowledge the Grunin Foundation, and especially Heather Barberi, Executive Director, for sponsoring our Zoom subscription. Having access to this platform allowed our members to connect each week, to not only hear each other’s voices, but to see each other’s faces while they wrote. They did not feel isolated or alone, they knew they still had their community.



We would like to acknowledge Elaine Katz, Executive Director of the Kessler Foundation, for granting us funds to purchase chromebooks. This gave more of our members access to the internet and Project Write Now.





Shore House, an Accredited Clubhouse, is a unique recovery program offering meaningful social, educational, and employment opportunities to restore hope, independence, and self-worth for people living with mental illness.

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Project Write Now began its writing partnership with Shore House in the summer of 2016 with monthly workshops that encouraged expressive, reflective writing. In March of 2020, we moved to weekly workshops on Zoom.

Our work with Shore House is part of our community programs, which are made possible by generous donations from individuals, grants, businesses, and organizations. To find out more or get involved, please visit our website at [www.projectwritenow.org](http://www.projectwritenow.org) or email [info@projectwritenow.org](mailto:info@projectwritenow.org).

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