

Felecia Padgett, age 25, was born and raised in Portland and is of Italian and German descent. In addition to writing, she loves singing and dancing as well which she finds therapeutic. Felecia struggled with drug addiction and homelessness for about seven years before hitting a turning point when she told herself that she wanted something better for her life, to have dreams and succeed. Because of her struggles, Felecia feels she's become a more giving person and has found the tools to be more at peace with herself and others. She works as a Community Building Assistant for Central City Concern (CCC), the organization that helped her turn her life around, and she loves her job. She participated in our workshop for participants of CCC's Recovery Mentor Program.



**What role did writing have in your discovery that you wanted a different life and your ability to make that happen?**

Well, I've always been a very creative person. I've always loved writing. In school, it was my best subject. When I was 8 or 9, I had a diary and would write poems. It was a huge part of me turning my life around — I had just gotten clean, and I was at a women's shelter, and a woman there told me, "It's really important that you journal. Just remember to journal." And I took that to heart. Later on down the road I can look back on that and see how much I've grown and see how I've succeeded. It's been two years since I've gotten clean, and when something comes up and there's no one there for me to talk to, the first thing that comes to my mind is writing — it's what I do.

**What was it like for you to be in the Write Around Portland workshop?**

It was an experience that I've never had before. I had no clue there were workshops out there like that, and I miss it. I miss interacting with people, hearing their pieces, getting intimate with them — I love that human connection. It was almost like therapy.

**Did that experience have an affect on your writing?**

Yes. Now instead of just writing whatever's on my mind, I'll pick a topic and then as I'm writing, I notice that other things come out, not just about the topic, but something I might never have even thought about before.

**What was it like for you to be published in the Write Around Portland anthology and share your piece at the community reading?**

It felt like I was a part of something way bigger than me. I was excited to show off the book to my mom and my friends. Being at the reading and seeing people from the burn clinic and other groups, I felt like it was something that not very many people get to be a part of.

I love diversity and seeing people who have gone through really hard times do something good for themselves. I cried, just because people come from messed up places and it's really hard for people to get up there and read. I was nervous and I'm sure everyone else was. It was amazing. It was good for everybody there.

**Tell me about your poem that was published in the anthology.**

My poem is called “Weightless,” and it’s about yoga and meditation. It was me describing how I felt when I’m meditating and doing yoga. The poem is so me. I’m such a spiritual and emotional person.

**Is there any connection between your yoga and meditation practice and writing?**

They’re both ways to get me out of my head, to stay centered. Writing, meditation, yoga and prayer are the four things that I do to stay grounded.

**Is there anything else you’d like to say to your readers about your experience with Write Around Portland?**

It was just an awesome experience. I looked forward to it every Wednesday—I didn’t miss one. I told my volunteer workshop facilitator and everyone in the group that I was committing to write every single Wednesday on my own, after our group ended. If it’s going to make me feel better inside, then why not do it? Sometimes I miss a week, but it’s always there. I keep writing.

**Do you have any aspirations related to writing for the future?**

I want to do another Write Around Portland group at some point in the future. I wouldn’t mind being a workshop facilitator as well.