

Shane, age 43, was born in Fort Lewis, Washington, on a military base. He moved to Portland when he was 2 years old. On February 14, 1994, at 23 years old, Shane was in an accident that has left him legally blind, with severe arthritis, and reliant on his electric wheelchair. Before the accident, Shane was a wildland firefighter. In his spare time, Shane writes songs, which he sings and plays on guitar, harmonica, and keyboards. His other pastimes include visiting family at the coast, playing games, and spending time with fans of his poetry. He is especially grateful to his Aunt Taunie for helping him out so much.



**How did you first hear of the workshop?**

I heard about the workshop from a behavioral social worker. They came in and checked me out and told me about Write Around Portland. I had been sick for so many years and it stopped me from doing all sorts of things. I couldn't pick up my guitar or pen or tablet. The social worker knew Write Around Portland could benefit me so I could get started again.

**What drew you to the workshop?**

Well, I was excited to get my work out there and to work with other people who were just starting out again in life. I thought it would be awesome to just go and give my opinion and help me get started. And I'll tell you something, I really enjoyed being in the Write Around Portland workshop.

**What did you enjoy about it?**

The excitement, the fun, being around people who really have the courage to get up and do something in life. It brought a lot to me.

**How do you feel about being published in the upcoming anthology?**

I'm really excited, man. I've been trying so hard to get something out there. It's really exciting. It's like, I don't know, new life and everything.

**Are you nervous about sharing your work at the reading?**

I am. In the workshop, Jon [a volunteer scribe] wrote what I said. I couldn't read his writing, so he also read my writing out loud. So the reading will be the first time America has ever heard me read my poetry.

**I know that you got to work with Jon most weeks. What has that been like?**

It was excellent. I mean, first time I met him I swear he looked like the guy from Smashing Pumpkins. I thought, "Wait a second this guy looks familiar." He's a good guy I really liked him. Jon writes down what I say. It makes it easier for me to have someone help me out to write my dreams, hopes, goals, what I'm feeling. It's good for my self-esteem.

**What has it been like to hear your writing read back by Jon?**

It was really interesting because I've never heard anyone ever read my poetry out loud like that. I thought it was awesome. How everyone came back with feedback was awesome and made me feel good. It felt like I could help them out too by sharing my work.

**What does writing do for you?**

It's healing. I get my emotions on paper so then it doesn't ball up in my chest and I'm not feeling the anxiety of life. I just put it on paper and then, hey, I got it made.

Writing has played a big role to keep me going in this world. It lifted my self-esteem up. When I hear the class say, "Hey, we like those pieces," they keep encouraging me to keep going.

In 1994 I was hit by a car. When I first had my accident, I started to get arthritis and I was mad at the world. Really mad. I lost all of my 20s. I had one surgery on my leg—it didn't work. Surgery on my eyes—didn't work. Then plastic surgery. I do infusions every four weeks. I lost my marriage and everything, too.

If it wasn't for the fans of my writing, I would never keep on going. It's a lot of love and understanding from people in the world to keep me going. If you don't do things like writing and music you're just going to be lonely and depressed.

**Anything you wish I had asked or that you'd like to share with readers?**

I'm being the most lovable, kind person in the world I can be. Everyone should keep their dreams and goals together and keep supporting the programs in Portland that help "Keep Portland Weird."