

Frank McKinley, 56, grew up on a farm in Scotts Mills, Oregon, and learned about hard work at a very early age. When he lost his parents a few years ago and the farm was sold, he decided to move to Oregon City where he now enjoys living in his own apartment. He spends his time going to restaurants, bowling, and going to FolkTime in Oregon City. He has always been drawn to the arts activities offered at FolkTime, and while initially hesitant to join the group, he was pleased when he learned Write Around Portland was holding a workshop there. Frank's interest in writing has been nurtured over the years by his desire to analyze and examine subjects deeply. His observations and reflections from days spent hunting and wandering around wooded trails often provide the fuel for these deeper explorations.

How did it feel once you started writing and sharing in the Write Around Portland workshop?

I didn't think that I knew what I was doing, but as we got started writing, the prompts, the [postcards] that [the workshop facilitator] Kellie sent in the mail, and the suggestions all helped me a lot on whatever I was writing about.

What was your favorite thing about the workshop?

Oh, listening to the stories when someone reads something. Because there were some pretty good ones that were funny and, you know, really good. I liked them. We really got to know one another a little better, too.

Did you participate in the anthology reading?

No, it was too far away, but [Write Around Portland] came to [FolkTime in Oregon City] and had a reading here. It was exciting and fun. I thought it was really neat. There were quite a few people here. I enjoyed it. I didn't believe that my name was going to be in the book or that I was going to even get a book until I saw it. I was really happy about it. I wanted to buy as many copies as I could. I've also been wanting to go up there to Portland and actually see it on the shelves, but I haven't gotten up there yet (*laughs*).

What do you feel like you've gained from the workshop?

Well, I think I gained how to make stories and how to put it on paper and how to begin to write. I can write more about myself and my story: how I was raised, who I grew up around, different jobs I have done, and being outdoors.

Your piece, "My Pen and Me," seems to reflect some of your story. Would you like to talk a bit about that?

Well, I kind of figured "My Pen and Me" was a good title for it, for the story I was telling. I kind of made it rhyme. I kind of got [the idea] from my brother because he used to try to write poetry. I like to read poems, and I really enjoyed poems. But I really didn't get to read them much as I got older, so I kind of just remembered some of that. I don't know if I got there, but I



tried to make it like that. Things just sometimes pop into my mind. If I had more time, I'd probably add a lot more to it. I think I'd add more ocean to it. And more about the sky and the clouds and the different shapes the clouds are. All kinds of stuff.

Is there anything you would like to say to your readers?

Well, stories don't get written by themselves. They actually have to be written, so you have to actually just do it. (*laughs*)

Would you recommend a Write Around Portland Workshop to others?

Oh, yeah, I have. I actually added the link on my Facebook [page]. I don't know if they take it to heart, but I know one person is. I think she's writing her own story now.