

Nancy Hawver, 64, has spent her life among books working years as a librarian. It was relatively recently, however, that Nancy discovered creative writing after being referred to Write Around Portland from one of her case workers. Nancy's life circumstances and deaths in her family inform her writing. She has attended Write Around Portland workshops at McCoy Village and in our downtown groups. Nancy now participates in the *Write On: Returning Writers*, an advanced workshop for writers who have participated in at least two Write Around Portland workshops. Her poem, "In One Year," was published in the spring 2014 anthology, *A World Where the Rules Were My Own*.

How did you first hear about Write Around Portland?

One of my [case] workers at Cascadia Behavioral Health referred me. I was going through things, and this was a good way to channel my thoughts.

What was your experience like in the McCoy Village workshop?

In the first workshop I took, I had no idea what I was doing. By the next workshop, I loved it, and how you could write about things you've thought about but never really wrote down. I could hear what other people wrote down and see how so much would come out in one piece.

How did you feel about writing and sharing with other people in workshop?

We took turns sharing around the table. Everyone was sharing, and it was a comfortable experience. We all had created something.

How did you feel about being published in the book?

I'd written before, but this was a creative thing, which made it so special. It came out of my head. The book was something creative, not an assignment. That a whole book could come out of so many people in different workshops in eight weeks was almost magic.

How did you feel about reading at the anthology release party?

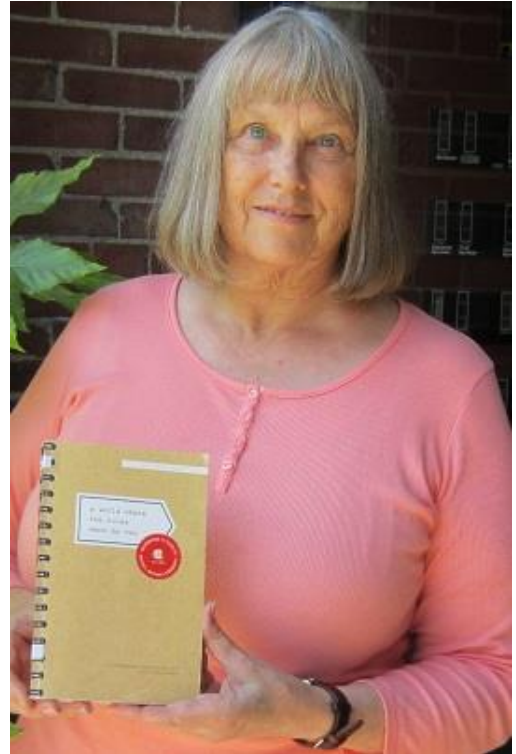
[The reading] was an opportunity to share the book with family, to show that you had something published. When they saw it, they thought "wow." It brought you full circle.

What specifically did you get out of the workshop experience?

I wasn't getting out a lot, so to be in the same place, at the same time, was a commitment. I felt like I needed to be there at a specific time, which gave me a commitment that I found important. I *wanted* to be there, and it was something I looked forward to.

What was your favorite part of the workshop or a memory that stands out?

I loved getting feedback [from the facilitator] on postcards [after the workshop every week]. It is so cool that there is follow-up [on writing]. In *Write On*, we are doing a lot of feedback, which makes you attentive to comments and pieces.



What is your experience like in *Write On*?

It's a different format. After the first introduction, I realized that we ourselves would be coming up with the prompts. I came up with a prompt about postcards, and another person did an audio prompt. [Write On] is a transition from the instructive workshop to a primarily participatory workshop.

Would you recommend Write Around Portland to other people? If so, why?

Yes — especially to friends going through life difficulties. To those who say “I can't write”, I would encourage you to try.

Anything else you'd like to tell your readers?

Write Around Portland gives you a chance to keep going forward. It's not just workshops but many opportunities to volunteer and continue writing.