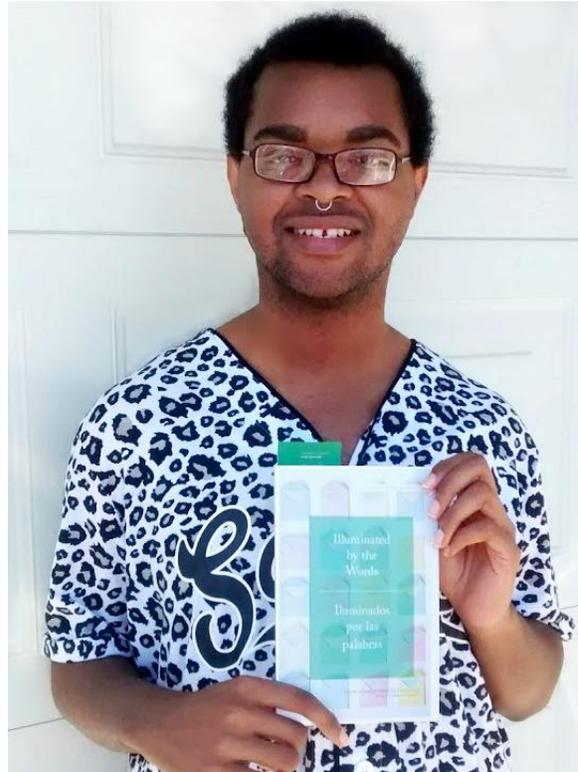


Featured Writer K.C. Rodgers

K.C. Rodgers, 19, was born and raised in Portland, though he lives in Hillsboro these days, sharing an Albertina Kerr group home with other young people with developmental disabilities. He believes writing is art and writes every day. A big moment in his writing life happened in 2014 when an Albertina Kerr administrator read a piece he had written about his father called “Daddy” and told him how deeply moved she was by his writing. It was only natural that one of his program managers suggested he participate in this spring’s Write Around Portland workshop.

K.C. is proud of achieving his goal of seeing his work in print when it was published in Write Around Portland’s spring 2017 anthology, *Illuminated by the Words / Iluminados por las palabras*. His achievements also include writing a novella, and he hopes to write a novel.



José

K. C. Rodgers

Is this what it has come down to? Is this really how it’s supposed to be? I don’t think so. I never thought I would be alone with no husband. I wish someone would ask me to marry them and just say I do in my wedding. No, my future wedding because I am single. Even my friends say that I am marriage material. If you don’t know, I am actually in the process of being the one who is just gonna give up on life and never live again. Someone said that I will find true love one day. But that didn’t happen, did it? José was the one I truly loved. My first kiss, my first date with him. I guess it wasn’t meant to be. Now I know I should pick a better man.

Bianca! A man called my name from a distance. But who was it? *Bianca!*

There it goes again. Then I called out *José?*

No. It’s me, John.

What do you want? I asked unhappily.

You’re not gonna like it, but José is dead. I know it’s not what you want to hear. I’m sorry. My deepest condolences.

When he told me that, I screamed.

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Interview with Featured Writer K.C. Rodgers

Interview by Write Around Portland volunteer facilitator Cara Olexa.

Why did you decide to join this spring's workshop at Albertina Kerr in Hillsboro?

One of my old program managers was telling me about a writing class. I was kind of hesitant a little bit, but then I was like all right, fine, I'll do it. And when I started, it was kind of cool.

What was the tipping point that made you actually decide to join?

Because I really like writing, and for me I just hope—I *did* hope—that people would enjoy my writing.

What was your experience like in the workshop?

It was kind of nerve-wracking [but] overall I enjoyed it.

What was the most nerve-wracking part?

The fact that everybody was looking at me while I'm reading my pieces.

You joined this workshop to share your writing and because you hoped people would enjoy it, so how did you get from the nerve-wracking part to the good part?

I just took deep breaths.

What was it like to hear people share their written stories?

Other people's writing really inspired me to come up with more stories, and I just want to be inspired.

What was your favorite part of the workshop?

Hearing people's stories—and of course my own stories too.

What was it like to see your writing published in the anthology?

I was really proud of myself. I didn't know what it was going to feel like to have my writing in some kind of published book, and then when I looked at it, I'm like, "That's my writing," and I felt honored.

How was attending the anthology release party?

I was pretty nervous. [But] I really like hearing other people's writing. You never know when it's going to be romance, maybe horror, or maybe comedic. [The anthology release party] made me feel special.

What was it like to read your work from the anthology?

It was actually really good, because I get lots of compliments on my writing, and it just really felt good. One writer said that I did a good job, and I was like, "Aw, thank you."

In addition to your piece published in the anthology, was there a special piece you wrote during workshop?

Yes. I don't think I titled this, but it was a story about a rose, like when you pick off the petals, *he loves me / he loves me not*, it was kind of like that. Imagine if you had a rose, and all you hear is wind, and the wind is coming at you and washes every petal off of it, and if that last petal is still there then you might get a chance to have true love, and if that petal doesn't stay, then you won't have anybody else. I can relate to that a lot.

Any final thoughts about writing?

I think writing is art. It's like the colors of the rainbow, and each color represents an emotion or a genre of writing, and I think that's what writing is all about.