

Ryan is 32. He likes watching TV and movies and playing videogames. “Castlevania” is probably his favorite game. Ryan grew up in Kalamazoo, Michigan and moved to Portland in 2010. He has lived at the Sellwood Center, a Home Forward residence, for about a year now.

Can you tell me the inspiration for your piece, “The Fog Lifted”?

The prompt was “the fog lifted.” The story is mostly true.

What was it like to have your piece published in the Write Around Portland anthology?

Exciting. I’ve never had anything else published.

Have you shared it with people?

Yeah. Two people.

May I ask whom?

Yeah. My psychologist who is mentioned there in the writing and the [Home Forward] Resident Services Coordinator in my building.

What did they think?

They liked it.

It’s such a good piece. I’m glad you shared it at the Write Around Portland reading. What was it like to be at the reading?

It was interesting. It was fun.

Have you ever stood up in front of 200 people before like you did that night?

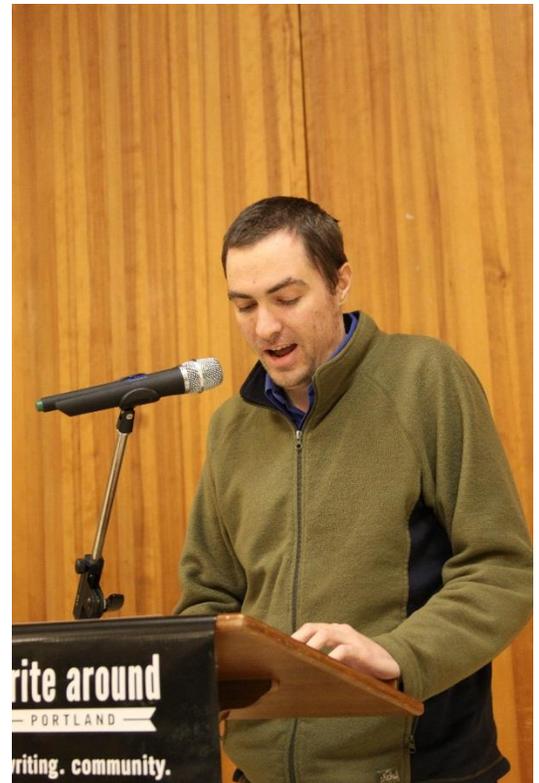
Um, I might have stood up, but not spoken in front of that many people before. Like at my high school graduation. But that’s the largest number of people I’ve talked to ever.

How did you get the courage to read that night?

Because a bunch of other people had done it. Because it was short. If I was the first to go or if I would have had to talk for half an hour or something, it would have been different.

How did you feel after you read, were you glad to have done it?

Yeah. It was fun and something different to do.



Were you proud of yourself?

[Nervous laughter.]

Well, I felt proud of you for getting up there and was wondering if you felt proud of yourself, too.

Public speaking has always made me nervous.

Would you recommend a Write around Portland workshop to someone else? What would you say to someone about signing up?

If they like to write and like to listen to other people they would like it and wouldn't have anything to be nervous about. I would tell them it's not like a writing class. I would tell them not to worry about it. At the very least, they could just not share if they didn't think their writing was good enough.

What did you learn in the writing workshop?

How to listen better.

Would you describe the workshops as a comfortable place?

Yes. People listen. People in the workshop are always nice. No one's ever overly critical or nasty. There's always the assumption that it's fictional writing. If you wrote something that wasn't fiction you could disguise it a little bit.

Can you talk about why it's important that the writing is assumed to be fictional?

Because. So they won't worry or get the wrong idea. So you can feel safer in sharing [your writing].

Is there anything else you would want someone to know about a Write Around Portland workshop?

Just that it's fun.