

## Workshop Title: Working with Emotional Memory

Level: Novice Writers, **Developing Writers**, Experienced Writers

Duration: **1.5 hrs**

---

### (15 mins) Check in:

- Write for 5 minutes after reflecting on the following quote:
  - “You know, they straightened out the Mississippi River in places, to make room for horses and livable acreage. Occasionally the river floods these places. ‘Floods’ is the word they use, but in fact it is not flooding; it is remembering. Remembering where it used to be. All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was. Writers are like that: remembering where we were, that valley we ran through, what the banks were like, the light that was there and the route back to our original place. It is emotional memory—what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it appeared. And a rush of imagination is our ‘flooding.’ - Toni Morrison

### (15 mins) Resource Building:

- Answer the following questions in writing:
  - Describe 3 memories you think of with fondness
  - Fill in the blank : When I was younger, I believed \_\_\_\_\_, but now I know that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - What were you afraid of before you knew better?

### (20 mins) Example poem:

- Imani Davis - “The Recital”
  - <https://www.muzzlemagazine.com/imani-davis.html>
  - Discussion
    - In what ways does Imani use imagery to center the reader in their memory?
    - What role does self-reflection play in this memory?
    - Who is the hero in this story? The villain? Is there one of either?
- Eve Ewing - “Three Retellings”
  - Discussion

# City Wide Poets

A Program of InsideOut Literary Arts

- <https://www.guernicamag.com/three-re-tellings/>
  - What images center the reader here?
  - What do the hand-written portions do for the poem?

## **(20 mins) Prompt:**

- Rewrite one of your memories - in this telling, give it the ending it deserved. Lean into imagery as a tool to fully flesh out the event.

OR

- Reflect on a memory in which you were the hero. Rewrite the memory with you as the villain, or at the very least, the anti-hero.

## **Online Sharing Options**

- (10 mins) allow 2 - 3 students to share their work
- (10 mins) create share-groups of 3 or 4 students. Students should share work among themselves privately (email, google drive, text, etc.)
- (10 mins) allow all students to share 1 - 3 lines from their writing. Speed is key!

*Celebrating the power of youth voice since 1995.*

[www.insideoutdetroit.org](http://www.insideoutdetroit.org)