



A Program of InsideOut Literary Arts

Workshop Title: Pledge of Allegiance to the Self

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

Duration: **1.5 hrs**

(15 mins) Check in: Share one fact about your name (who named you, what it means, etc...)

(15 mins) Resource Building:

- Design your own “logo”, or an image that represents your name. Allow us to see something that is uniquely you. When designing, consider adding:
 - Words
 - Your name
 - A phrase you often use
 - Images that represent you
 - Color
- Share these out with the group!

(20 mins) Example poem:

- **Watch all before discussion**
 - Danez Smith, [“Alternate names for black boys.”](#)
 - Sandra Cisneros, [“My Name.”](#)
 - Zachary Caballero [“When You Say My Name”](#)
- Discussion
 - What is the power of a name? What is the power of YOUR name?
 - What did we learn about the authors OTHER than their names or the names they were discussing?
- Additional Reading
 - Poem by student Yumna Dagher, “Creation Myth Suite” (attached)

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(15 mins) Prompt:

- Take your logo and write about it. Create your own pledge of allegiance to the self.

OR

- Build upon the logo you have already started. What pieces of you are missing? How can your name be visually represented?

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!

EXAMPLE WORK

creation myth suite

by: Yumna Dagher (CWP Student)

i.

split from myself

from gemini forms

mirrors of the body

from the ruddy clay

the creation god dipped me

swirling her spit and salt

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City Wide Poets

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in the shallow pool
slipped from the fallow of the womb/
unsown uncharted untouched/
from magma and crust/
from the crack of coal/
the dust and wind/
sprung from xylem, shot from
pistil and petal
as we clipped rosebuds with golden shears in
teta's garden
our feet muddied with pillowy earth
from my mother lightly frying garlic on
the polished metal hearth
from the songs we used to sing
that still ring in my ear.
that she hums when she is alone.

ii.

you see, i always thought my mother was nothing short of divine
in her eternal mercy she could turn a girl to water
with ripples slipping through fingers so deftly
(you would think of them to be plump drops of rain)
the remnants of mischief
the scraps of my sharp laughter
in perfect celestial anger strange men to stone
in the most pristine alchemy
plates of turmeric spiced sfouf
crystallized honey drizzled on dough
no elixirs for immortality but
concoctions for coughs
no spinning gold from mercury it was all
warbling lilts to tend to tender heads
tender hands caress tender heads after nightmares
and

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the purr of her song lulls me in
closer and closer.

iii.

i have become tired
my body is weary
i can no longer command
the rain like i used to
the silk ribbons tied to my altar
have slowly disappeared
oh ocean, take me in
i have nothing to give
but my hands sewn together with string
but my wrists that smell of sandalwood
but my feet that leave trails of fire
but my simple shroud of muslin.

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