



WRAP facilitator at SMYRC Cheyenne Tuller reads from the new WRAP anthology

from what I share. WRAP was like a practice round—a place to make mistakes and not get laughed at or punched," he added. While SMYRC has helped him realize the fluidity of gender identity, WRAP has given him an outlet for his voice and has made him feel more confident. "I'm such a better person," he remarks.

For many WRAP participants, the fall workshop series officially ended at the reading, but members of the SMYRC group clicked so well that they decided to continue meeting on their own afterward. Many who had written before found that WRAP opened up a new way of writing, one that allowed them to be more free with their words. The WRAP experience helped them tighten their bonds with one another, improve their writing skills and increase their belief in themselves.

**Out loud and in print**

Frankie is another SMYRC participant. She heard about WRAP from a friend and liked the idea of having a structured yet open-genre writing group. While facilitators provide prompts to help get creative juices flowing, participants are free to take the writing in the direction they want to go.

Frankie observes: "In English class, you get assignments that you have to do. Here, you write about things you care about. Everyone gives their all." She had done some writing before WRAP but

feels more self-assured with her writing now, so much so that she has been inspired to write a book.

For Frankie, being part of the WRAP anthology was very fulfilling. She says her copy is "going to be on my coffee table for a very long time." She also enjoyed the diversity of the big reading and felt the event was a great opportunity to hear a wide variety of people read and to be able to compliment them on their work.

At the reading, group members offered each other encouraging words as each writer stood to make his or her way to the stage. But as each person stepped away from the podium after reading, it was clear by the applause that all of the writers are supported by the larger community of WRAP, where diversity reigns and everyone's voice can be heard. □

*WRITE AROUND PORTLAND will begin its spring network of free creative writing workshops the week of Feb. 2 in various locations throughout the Portland area. Workshops are open to low-income adults, people living with mental illness, people affected by HIV, queer youth and more. Each workshop meets for two hours once a week for a total of 10 weeks. Pens, journals, snacks and bus passes are provided. For more information or to register, call 503-796-9224 or visit [www.writearound.org](http://www.writearound.org).*

*KAREN KUDEJ is a free-lance writer and a former WRAP facilitator.*

**On the Road**

Somebody save me.  
I don't care how you  
do it,  
just save me.

From these claws  
of loneliness that  
plunge me deep  
inside death—

From those gashes  
carved on my face,  
ruining the marble of  
an exquisite corpse.

Reach deep behind  
my barriers  
and wipe away  
my tears.  
Dry them.  
And pop my balloons  
of pain.

Wake me up,  
take my hands,  
and lead me gently  
to heaven.

Kiss me softly,  
nibble my neck,  
and lick away  
the facets of jewels  
that entrap  
my perfection.

Push your fingers  
against my skin,  
and try to reach for my  
bones.  
That's how much I long  
for a presence  
to caress my fading soul

I'd die  
to see a face,  
set in flames of  
passion searching  
for someone  
like me.

I'd die, again,  
and in my death, die  
again  
to know that there is  
another half of me,  
waiting for my pair of  
hungry hands.

Look at me  
and whisper those words.  
Will they lash out  
acid, eating away  
my mind  
or do you plan them,  
like those doves  
with broken necks,  
to quiet my rage?

Imagine.  
In your eyes,  
fire burning me crisp  
bubbling under the sun  
when you pierce  
needles  
on my heart

Tie me up.  
And take out your  
anger.  
The whips, they lash  
out,  
flashing my torments.  
And I scream,  
in pleasure, and pain

Save me.

—Pros Seng (SMYRC)

**NEXT ADVENTURE**

PORTLAND'S ALTERNATIVE SPORTING GOODS STORE



Corner of SE Stark & Grand 503-233-0706

