



*Presented by Philadelphia Poet
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*& the Office of Arts, Culture, &
the Creative Economy*



WRITE YOUR BLOCK

Activity Guide



In meetings with youth & elders, each of you receives chalk in a different color. Wander around their neighborhood, writing on the sidewalk words or phrases that come to mind at different locales. Note what you've chalked- return to discuss what you've written, where it was, and why you wrote it. Discuss with your group of young people and elders what you've written in each locale. Everyone can work on poems based on the language generated from each of the walks.



Map your neighborhood not by landmarks but by the people who've made memories in your surroundings. Write a poem titled after a person or persons that you consider the embodiment of a particular locale of your environment.



Take a family member or friend on a wander through your neighborhood. Talk about the experiences you've had, as well the experiences of your families & friends.

Share with each other the power of place in terms of its impact on individual & the larger cultural memory. Take notes along your walk, and when you're done switch notebooks. Compose your poem from the notes your family member or friend took & they will do the same.



Write your block through ephemeral architecture. Contemplate temporary fixtures in the neighborhood (shopping cart, water ice stand, etc.), and explore how the object represents a spirit or condition of your surroundings. This exercise will generate poems that are people-free.



From archival photos of your neighborhood, discuss (between elders and youth) what the images conjure. Write down keywords as prompts to create poems based on photos of the neighborhood that span the history of the neighborhood, collapsing past & present.



In community centers, neighborhood maps will be available (maybe 11X14- horizontal) to create visual poems. A kind of word collage with words or phrases at relevant locales will help you form the poems. These pieces can be converted to a media in which they can be projected- possibly on buildings, etc. After, print the poem without the map background, so as to have the text itself become the map.

acknowledgements



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