



# SHOUT MOUSE PRESS

a nonprofit writing & publishing program

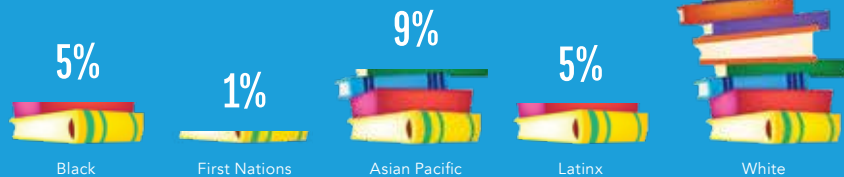
#diversebooks  
#teenwriters  
#ownvoices

[shoutmousepress.org](http://shoutmousepress.org)

# OUR CHALLENGE

Shout Mouse launched in 2014 in response to staggering statistics: in a country where *half* of all five-year-olds belong to a racial or ethnic minority, only 10% of children's books featured characters like them. That meant that all of America's young people were not seeing themselves as heroes with valuable stories—and that limits the horizons of possibility for everyone.

Recently there has been an increase in books featuring characters of color, but nearly all (80%) of book creators identify as white, which can reinforce damaging single stories told by outsiders. This lack of authentic representation is especially damaging in today's divisive climate.



Publishing's Diversity Problem:  
Children's Book Authors and Illustrators in 2018\*  
\*Children's Cooperative Book Center

# OUR OPPORTUNITY

At Shout Mouse, we believe in the power of #OwnVoices. The communities we serve are underrepresented, both as characters and as creators, in the traditional publishing marketplace. By supporting these young people to write and publish their own books, we pass the pen to those who can best represent their communities with authenticity, knowledge, and understanding. Our authors change and reclaim the narrative, adding necessary complexity, empathy, and humanity to the stories of marginalized communities—and prove themselves as powerful thought leaders for all.

Who can be an author? Whose story matters?  
Who benefits from hearing voices that too often go unheard?  
Our answers: **Anyone. Everyone's. All of us.**



**70K+**  
Books in  
Circulation



**20K+**  
Audience Members  
Reached



**400+**  
Authors  
Published



**8**  
National  
Awards Won

# OUR ROLE

Shout Mouse Press is a team of writers, artists, editors, designers, and publishing professionals who are passionate about letting young people speak for themselves—and then making sure they are heard.

We lead writing and art workshops that center youth voices, then edit and design their books, and finally publish and promote their important work. We believe that peer voices are powerful voices, and they can engage audiences in ways that adult authors cannot.



Through our Author Talks program, our youth authors are routinely invited to serve as guest speakers—in school, university, and community spaces—to address issues on which they are truly experts but rarely consulted. We provide training for these public speaking engagements as well as transportation and honoraria.



And finally, we ensure that earned income from book sales is invested directly back into young people themselves: proceeds support scholarship funds for author communities, salaries for author interns, and programs that help young people speak up, be heard, and be taken seriously as leaders in their community.

# AUTHOR PARTNERS

Every Shout Mouse Press book begins with an Author Partner. Author Partners are mission-aligned community organizations who work closely with youth from marginalized backgrounds. In collaboration, we devise book projects that illuminate the lived experiences of the young people they serve. Post-publication, we work together to ensure that our books reach young readers and that our authors have platforms to speak and lead.



Through the **Ballou** Story Project series, students write personal essays that can open doors to college, scholarships, and leadership opportunities as published authors. *Page 14.*



Young writers in **Beacon House's** after school programming write and publish collaborative novels that center the experience of Black youth. *Page 12.*



Incarcerated youth write poetry with **Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop**, and we publish their work to share with a broad audience. *Page 20.*



The young leaders of **LAYC's** Latino Youth Leadership Council wrote a bilingual collection of comic memoirs to share their own stories of immigration. *Page 16.*



The youth of **Next Wave Muslim Initiative** (NWMI) created an anthology of art, poetry, and stories about their experiences being young and Muslim in America. *Page 18.*



Every year, the teen tutors of **Reach Incorporated** write and publish diverse and inclusive illustrated children's books so all kids can see themselves on the page. *Page 1.*

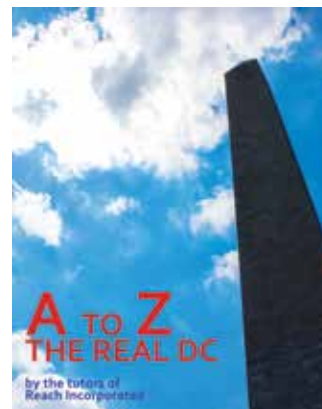


The young women of **Restavek Freedom Foundation** wrote children's books inspired by their own lives about the system of child slavery in Haiti. *Page 10.*



## REACH

As reading tutors to elementary-aged students, the teens of **Reach Incorporated** noticed that few children's books reflected their lived experiences. So they decided to take action and write their own. Now these D.C. teens are diversifying children's literature, *one smart-fun-real-brave-bold story* at a time. Every year, with the support of Shout Mouse teaching artists and emerging illustrators, Reach authors write four collaborative children's books in their #OwnVoices. For ages 5-9. *\*Some titles also appropriate for ages 3-4.*



### A to Z: The Real DC\*

978-0692301616

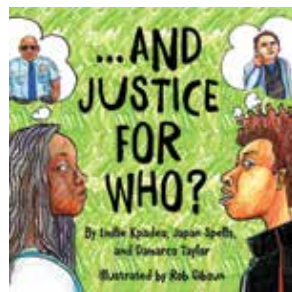
Washington DC teens take readers on an exciting alphabet tour of their city using both photographs and words. It's DC like you've never seen it before. D is for Duke Ellington, G is for Go-Go, P is for the Potomac River, and Q is for Quadrants. Readers will learn the alphabet while learning about the city through the eyes of kids just like them!

Made in collaboration with Shootback, an organization that empowers young people to tell their own stories through photography and writing.



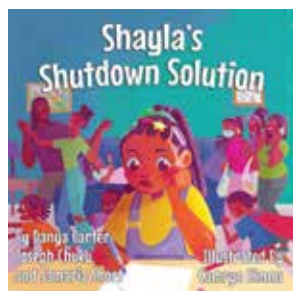
**Breonna Marches Through Time**  
978-1950807079

Breonna is an 8-year-old time-traveler watching the Black Lives Matter protests. She is filled with questions about what is going on and why—and she's determined to do something about it. Breonna travels back in time to learn about the power of speaking out. Can a youth activist from the past inspire her to bring change to the present day?



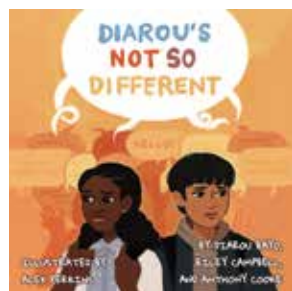
**And Justice For Who?**  
978-1950807093

Cody and Nene have been best friends all their lives. But when the Black Lives Matter protests erupt in response to police violence, they realize they may not be so alike after all. This movement will put their friendship to the test, and may push them into separate corners just when they need each other most. Can they learn to hear each other out and mend their friendship?



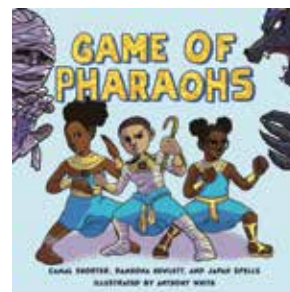
**Shayla's Shutdown Solution\***  
978-1950807130

Shayla loves to draw and be creative. But during the shutdown, she's having a hard time finding a place to do what she loves. Her big, multigenerational family always seems to be in the way! Will a frustrated Shayla figure out how to make space for herself in a very crowded house?



**Diarou's Not So Different**  
978-1950807116

Diarou is an African immigrant starting her first week in a new school, in a new country, speaking a new language... and she feels completely alone. She is determined to make friends, but with her limited English, she's having trouble communicating with her classmates. Can Diarou find a way to connect across language barriers to make a true friend?



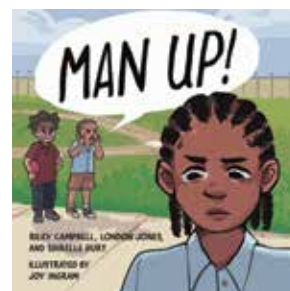
**Game of Pharaohs**  
978-1950807062

Camal, Japan, and Dameona are good kids, but struggling students. They've decided homework is pointless, and they'd rather just play their video game. One night when the kids refuse to stop playing, they are sucked into the world of The Pharaohs, where now they must complete challenges in their weakest subjects in school to make it out!



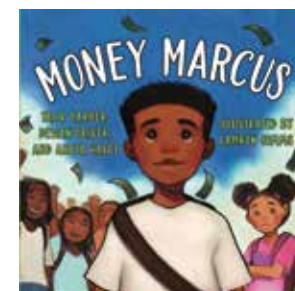
**Georgia in the Jungle**  
978-1950807031

Georgia is having a hard time. A really hard time. Her best friend, Sienna, has passed away. Her mother knows she's hurting and takes her to the zoo to cheer her up. That night, the zoo animals visit her in a dream and share their experience with loss. Can these animals help Georgia open up about her grief and find a path forward?



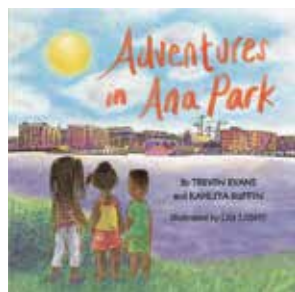
**Man Up!**  
978-1950807055

Aaron is a kind and compassionate kid. But he's got a problem: everyone calls him a Crybaby. His dad, his friends, and his classmates tell him to "Leave that crying for the girls." How can Aaron learn to value his feelings and nurture his sensitivity in a world telling him to "man up"?



**Money Marcus**  
978-1950807048

Marcus isn't the coolest kid in school. The other kids make fun of his old clothes and raggedy backpack, but at least he has one true friend, Taylor, who likes him for who he is. But when Marcus finds a winning lottery ticket on the ground on the last day of school, his whole world changes! Will Marcus get caught up in the money, or can he stay true to who he is?



**Adventures in Ana Park\***  
978-1945434945

Where can you go to grill half-smokes, captain pirate ships, shoot hoops, feed ducks, and watch the sun set magnificently over the river? Welcome to historic Anacostia Park, in Southeast Washington, D.C. Join us on an adventure through this local landmark through the eyes of D.C.'s youngest residents, and feel the ordinary become extraordinary.



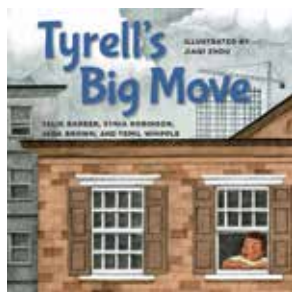
**Finding Mumbo\***  
978-1945434969

Rahim loves his dog Mumbo (and Mumbo loves Mumbo sauce!), but lately Rahim has been getting frustrated by all the chores that come along with taking care of a dog. On the day before his big basketball tournament, Rahim's dad makes him take Mumbo out, but he's running late for practice, so he tries to multi-task...and when practice is over, Mumbo is gone!



**Tiffany and the Two Missing Teeth\***  
978-1945434976

Every day, Tiffany hears that her smile is so bright it lights up the room. But on the morning of her ballet recital, something goes very wrong: Tiffany's two front teeth fall out. Tiffany doesn't want anyone to laugh at her new crazy smile or make fun of her lisp. But how can she avoid attention on the day she's on stage in the spotlight?



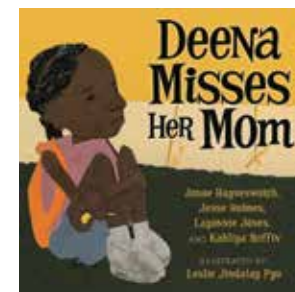
**Tyrell's Big Move**  
978-1945434952

Tyrell loves his neighborhood, but it's been changing a lot lately. One day Tyrell comes home to learn that his building has been bought and everyone must move. It seems like the worst news ever, but Tyrell's cousin Breonna has a plan for making the most of it. How can Tyrell learn how to move on and be OK?



**Carla and the Jazzed-Up Scorch-Torch Funtastic Sneakers\***  
978-1945434068

Carla's mom always buys her the Same Lame Boring Plain sneakers for the first day of school. And this year is no different. This time, though, Carla won't settle for more of the same. With a little advice, a few experiments, and a whole lot of creativity, Carla takes a chance. But what will her classmates think?



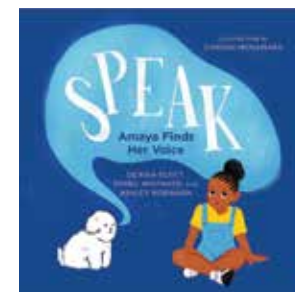
**Deena Misses Her Mom**  
978-1945434075

Lately, Deena has been getting angry. She acts out in school and keeps getting in trouble. Everyone is surprised because she used to be very calm, but that was before her mother went to jail. Her dad, her grandma, and her best friend Josey all do their best to help her out, but Deena doesn't want to talk about it. Will a day at the carnival with her Dad help her open up?



**Madison, Sit Down!**  
978-1945434082

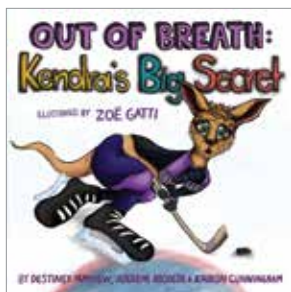
Madison wants to make her teacher like her, but she also wants to jump and scream and play tag with her imaginary best friend, Alex. When Madison accidentally lets her class pet bunny out of its cage during recess, she will have to get creative and form unlikely friendships if she wants to prove to her class that a hyperactive little girl can still be responsible.



**Speak: Amaya Finds Her Voice**  
978-1945434051

At her old school Amaya got bullied for her stutter, but she was finally making friends when her mom got a new job and moved them to DC. The only friend she shares her feelings with is her dog, Journey, who can talk back! If Amaya wants to make friends and stay out of trouble, she will need to start talking.

## REACH 2016



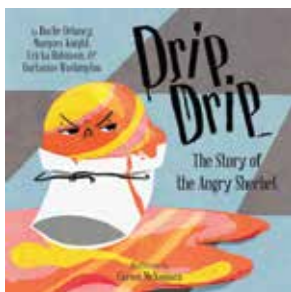
### **Out of Breath** 978-1945434020

Kendra the Kangaroo is getting ready for her hockey team's big game, but there's going to be trouble. Her team doesn't think that kangaroos belong in hockey. Even worse, Kendra is afraid they'll kick her off the team if they find out that she has asthma. Will she tell the truth before she puts herself in danger?



### **Spanky the Pup\*** 978-1945434013

Closing Day is coming to the animal shelter. Spanky, born with only three legs, is excited and terrified. While Pepper the mean chihuahua tries to tear him down, Dorothy the friendly pitbull tries to cheer him up. Can she help Spanky learn to be his own lovable self and finally get adopted?



### **Drip, Drip\*** 978-1945434037

Sherbert the sherbet has serious anger management issues. When he gets mad, he starts to melt. His tantrums are causing real trouble in the candy shop. When Sherbert's best friend leaves him to fend for himself, he will have to learn how to deal with his anger issues on his own—before he melts away!



### **Time for Change** 978-1945434044

Lions rule the savanna kingdom and are taught to hate hyenas. Then Mya the Lion and Asia the Hyena both get caught by a poacher and have to work together to escape. When they return home, they have to deal with a face-off between their two species, and Mya has to make a tough decision: rest easy or stand up for her new hyena friend?

## REACH 2015



### **The Blue Spark** 978-0996927413

Max is a super villain in a super villain family. He has the power of invisibility, which he uses to wreak havoc. But Max goes to school with Ronnie, the son of superheroes, who can see in others what no one else can see—even good hearts in misbehaving boys. What happens when these two super-forces square off?



### **Flutterbugs** 978-0996927406

In this imaginative bug world, butterflies are "spectacular," and moths are seen as pests. Caterpillars Cabbage and Spice are friends but are forced into different schools and lifestyles when one grows up to be a moth and the other a butterfly. Will the two be able to overcome these barriers and remain friends?



### **A Little Girl in a Big, Big World** 978-0996927437

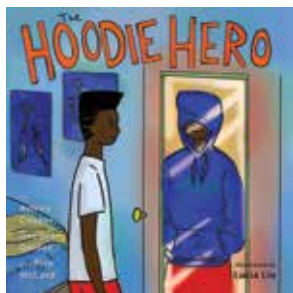
Jasmine wants to make a difference in her community, but she feels helpless in the face of the problems she sees, like homelessness and kids skipping school. But when she begins taking small steps to solve these problems, and recognizes the power of her BIG personality, the impact she makes may surprise even her.



### **Taking Down Ms. Moody** 978-0996927420

An elementary school is moved to a new planet while Earth is under construction. But even their cool new home might not be enough to make up for their awful second grade teacher, Ms. Moody. The students will have to be inventive and work together to salvage their school year and learn something about themselves in the process.

## REACH 2014



### **The Hoodie Hero** 978-0692300787

Da'Monte walks home deflated after watching a friend get bullied. Wishing he had stood up for his friend, he confides in his grandmother, who provides a powerful surprise. With a magical hoodie, Da'Monte becomes brave and bold. The bullies better watch out.



### **Khalil's Swagtown Adventure** 978-0692300800

Khalil is tired of hearing his parents fight. One day, he retreats to his closet and writes a letter to his future self, dreaming of escape. To his surprise, this future self—called Bruh—shows up to provide support. Together, they visit a fantastical place called Swagtown and learn how families can communicate better.



### **Mariah Finds a Way** 978-0692300824

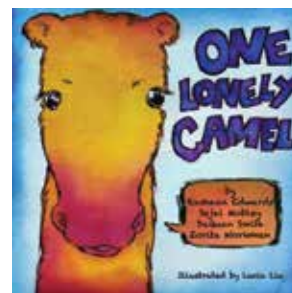
Mariah really wants to take over her parents' fruit shop one day, but they don't think she can do it. Why? Because she's blind. When her parents leave on vacation, Mariah gets her hands on the keys to the store. With the help of her parrot sidekick, Blue, Mariah must find a way to get the job done.



### **The Princess of Fort Hill Shelter** 978-0692300763

Meet Princess McKenzie as she shows you around her castle, the Fort Hill Homeless Shelter. McKenzie shows the power of imagination in overcoming difficult circumstances. Missing her mom, Princess McKenzie leaves the shelter in search of the queen and finds something far more important.

## REACH 2013



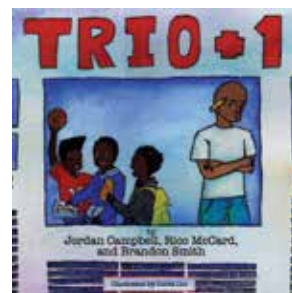
### **One Lonely Camel\*** 978-0996927468

How often do children's stories explore sadness, loneliness, and disruption? While these stories are rare, the reality is all too present for many of our young people. Teen authors Rashaan, Sejal, DaQuan, and Zorita took on this challenging topic through the eyes of Larry, the lonely (rapping) camel.



### **The Gloomy Light** 978-0996927482

Ernie and Sal are best friends. Ernie is a multi-lingual llama, and Sal, a color-changing frog. When aliens kidnap Ernie to help them fly their spaceship—they need a translator! Join teen authors Joshua, Za'Metria, Dana, and Kyare on this fantastical voyage.



### **Trio Plus One** 978-0996927499

Jealousy. Envy. Loneliness. We've all felt these emotions. In this story of frustration and friendship, teen authors Jordan, Rico, and Brandon share the silly things we do when feeling bad about ourselves. Bobby, the editor of the school newspaper at Reach Middle School, is jealous of a popular threesome. His plan: break up the trio. Does it work?



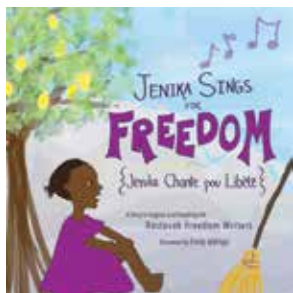
### **The Airplane Effect** 978-0996927475

Teen authors Marc, Sasha, Angelo, and Sean understand one of the most important aspects of childhood: play. But what if play is taken away? In *The Airplane Effect*, we meet a young boy fighting cancer and dreaming of fun. Frustrated, he throws a paper airplane out the window. What happens next? You'll have to read to find out.



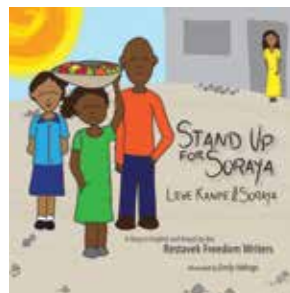
## RESTAVEK FREEDOM

Fifteen young women from the **Restavek Freedom Foundation** in Port-au-Prince wanted to use their voices and stories to end childhood slavery in Haiti. Through writing workshops lead by Shout Mouse teaching artists and Haitian college students, these young women wrote #OwnVoices stories about their lived experience with the goal of expanding empathy for exploited children, creating outrage at the injustice, and inspiring others to stand up, speak out, and make a change. For ages 7-11.



**Jenika Sings for Freedom**  
978-0692321515

One day Jenika lived in the countryside with her mother and ten siblings, and the next she moved with her aunt to the city, where she was promised an education but was instead forced into a life of cooking, cleaning, and despair. Read this inspiring tale of a girl who overcame the odds, written by girls who understand her struggle.



**Stand Up for Soraya**  
978-0692329627

Soraya dreams of the life she once knew: a loving mother, school, hope for the future. But now that her mother has died, her father has re-married, and her step-mother treats her as a slave, she feels alone and invisible. One day, she meets a little girl named Anita, who's courage and sense of justice could change Soraya's life.

"These books will help kids gain confidence. They will help our young black boys in particular not be afraid to read anymore. These are teenagers doing this? Tell them they are doing the right thing."

— **Ryan Griffin**,  
owner of barbershop  
"The Fuller Cut"



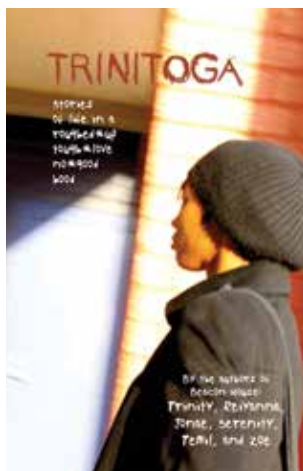
"This is just what we're looking for...The more kids see themselves reflected in books, the more they're going to be interested in what they're reading."

— **Kate Mester**, Library Specialist,  
District of Columbia Public Schools



## BEACON HOUSE

As young people from the Edgewood neighborhood in Northeast D.C., where generational poverty is persistent, **Beacon House** storytellers wanted to share their unique and underheard perspectives. Through weekly after-school writing workshops led by Shout Mouse teaching artists, cohorts of youth authors write imaginative, collaborative novels that center the experiences of Black youth. For ages 12+.



### **Trinitoga: Stories of Life in a Roughed-Up Tough-Love No-Good Hood** 978-0692266335

This novel-in-stories by middle-school authors explores the complex relationships between an endearing cast of characters who live in Trinitoga, a fictionalized DC neighborhood. You'll meet Rude Girl, Shoota, Baquisha, and many others whose challenges, hopes, and heartbreaks you won't soon forget.

## REVIEWS + IMPACT for THE DAY TAJON GOT SHOT

"It's one thing to engage young writers and give them the space to explore ideas, but it is altogether different when their work becomes published professionally and shared proudly with others. This is the act that turns writers into authors, and that change in language can mean a change in identity."

— **Pamela Brier**, Beacon House,  
Former Executive Director



"This smart and courageous YA novel will open up a dialogue started by young voices who deserve to be heard."

— **School Library Journal**, "10 Books To Read After 'The Hate U Give'"

"I could go on and on about how cool, honest, and brilliant [this book] is...Shouts to the good folks at Shout Mouse for putting the pen, and the power, in the hands of the kids."

— **Jason Reynolds**, award-winning and best-selling author



### **The Day Tajon Got Shot** 978-0996927451

What happens in a community when a black youth is the wrongful victim of police violence? By exploring the perspectives of all involved—not only the youth and his friends and family but also the police officer and his loved ones—these young writers aim to understand the complexity of how and why this happens in our world, and what we can do to seek both healing and justice.

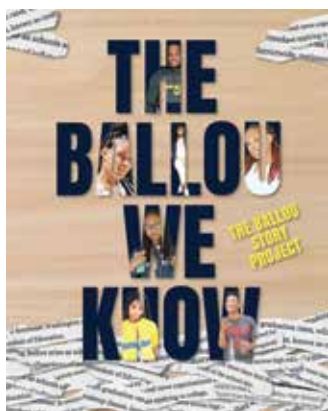


2018 "In the Margins" Top Fiction Prize  
2017 Foreword INDIES Book of the Year  
(Young Author)



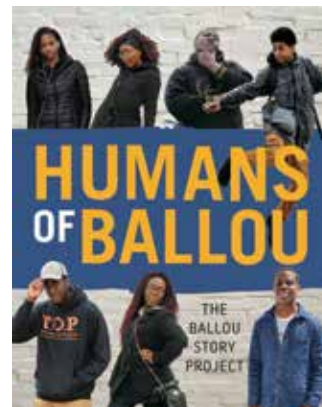
## BALLOU STORY PROJECT

The writers of **Ballou High School** in Southeast D.C. want to change the narrative about young people of color in the U.S. and ensure their voices are heard by local leaders and readers. Through the Ballou Story Project, Shout Mouse teaching artists coach Ballou juniors and seniors to write their memoirs, which are then published by Shout Mouse and/or used by students in their college applications. Their voices highlight the dedication, perseverance, heart, and joy of their community and their books are used as platforms for change. For ages 12+.



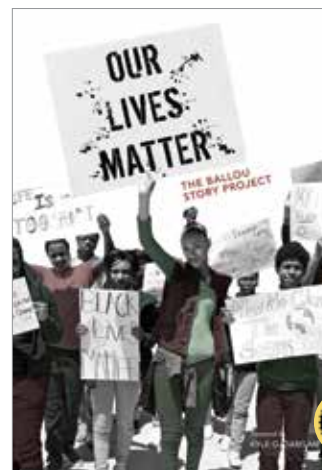
### **The Ballou We Know** 978-1945434914

This book was initiated by the Class of 2019 in response to a challenging year for the community. They wanted to illuminate the Ballou not often represented in the media—one full of love, hard work, and transformation. Most importantly, these young people wanted to speak for themselves, not to be spoken about. They remind us that there are many sides to every story, and that all voices should be valued and heard. "This is our last line of defense," they write. "These are our stories. This is the Ballou We Know."



### **Humans of Ballou** 978-1945434006

The students of Ballou High School know a different Washington, DC than the tourists who visit our nation's capital each year. Some travel guides call the communities East of the River "areas to avoid." But the statistics about poverty or crime in this community paint a picture that is profoundly incomplete. With style and humor and ambition and charm, Ballou students and educators tell their own stories on their own terms, through intimate conversation and photography.



### **Our Lives Matter** 978-0692455388

Through the course of a historic year of civil unrest and the emergence of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement, thirty teen writers from Ballou High School in Washington, DC came together to take part in this national conversation about race, inequality, violence, and justice. These writers want more for themselves, more for their community, more for their generation. This riot of voices must be heard.



2015 INDIEFAB Honorable Mention  
for YA Nonfiction Book of the Year



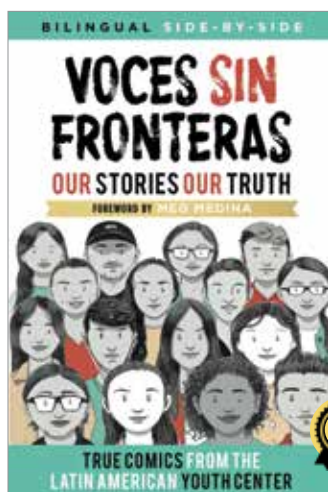
### **How to Grow Up like Me** 978-0692309568

"Your Story Is Your Strength." This is the mantra that emerged from a six-month writing project at Ballou High School in Washington, DC, in which eleven freshmen and six seniors told their stories of ambition and struggle in what came to be known as The Ballou Story Project. Together their poignant, powerful voices come together to tell a collective story of *How To Grow Up Like Me*, a kind of instruction manual for determination, grit, and daily acts of hope and courage.



## LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH CENTER

As immigrants and activists, the Latino Youth Leadership Council of **LAYC** recognized the urgent need for #OwnVoices stories to provide a human face to the U.S. immigration debate. With few youth-focused books reflecting their personal narratives, they decided to boldly share their own. Our team of teaching artists and comic coaches worked with these youth leaders to share their memoirs about immigrating to the U.S., and now educators across the country are using their stories to educate, affirm, and inspire their students. For ages 12+.



**Voces Sin Fronteras**  
Our Stories, Our Truth  
978-1945434921

*Voces Sin Fronteras* is a bilingual collection of 16 self-illustrated graphic memoirs by teen immigrants from Central America and the Caribbean. These thought-provoking and powerfully honest stories address themes of poverty, family, grief, education, and, of course, the pain and promise of immigration. This book is an opportunity to hear directly from youth who are often in the headlines but whose stories don't get told in full.



Foreword by Newbery Medal winner  
Meg Medina

2019 "In the Margins" Top Nonfiction Prize

## REVIEWS + IMPACT for VOCES SIN FRONTERAS



"This powerful compendium amplifies teens' understanding of the young immigrant experience—facing fears, overcoming sadness and the temptation to give up, learning a new language, and being left by parents who migrated first, then forgiving and reuniting with them decades later. Contributors share the wisdom gained from shaping their identity through storytelling... VERDICT: Spotlighting underrepresented voices, this work is highly recommended for all communities in their efforts to promote empathetic, inclusive discussions around immigration."

— *School Library Journal*, Starred Review

"The compelling stories shared by these students... signal their desire to serve as beacons or lifelines for other young immigrants. Their testimonies, as Newbery Medal winner Meg Medina points out in her foreword, are ultimately about courage. The courage needed to leave behind the familiarity of their home environments—El Salvador, Cuba, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala—is evident throughout, as the stories showcase the many reasons migrants have for coming to the U.S., including seeking better opportunities, fleeing violence, and reuniting with family after years of painful separation. Enlightening and inspiring #ownvoices accounts by young activists."

— *Kirkus Reviews*

"This is why I share my story, even though it is painful... When I tell my story, it heals what it is in my past.... If you never share, the pain will never leave, it will always be there...[Telling your story] will help you to heal inside, to be who you are, to speak out."

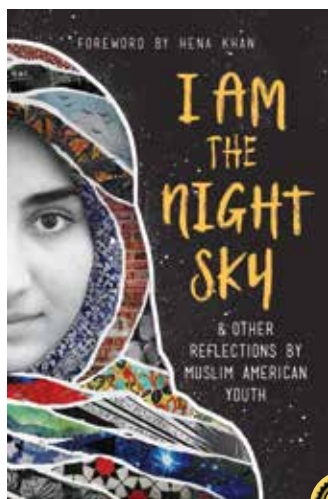


— **Erminia**, author of *Voces Sin Fronteras*, on the power of sharing her story after her visit to DC's Central Detention Facility for an Author Talk



## NEXT WAVE MUSLIM INITIATIVE

The young Muslim American writers of **Next Wave Muslim Initiative** wanted to dispel stereotypes and expand understanding of the diversity within the American Muslim experience. With few youth-focused books addressing widespread Islamophobia, NWMI youth decided to change the narrative. Through intense art and writing workshops with SMP teaching artists, these bold teens produced this award-winning anthology of poems, essays, artwork, and stories. For ages 12+.



**I Am the Night Sky**  
& other reflections by  
Muslim American youth  
**978-1945434938**

During an era characterized by both hijabi fashion models and enduring post-9/11 stereotypes, ten Muslim American teenagers came together to explore what it means to be young and Muslim in America today. These teens represent the tremendous diversity within the American Muslim community, and their book, like them, contains multitudes. Through poems, essays, artwork, and stories, these young people aim to show their true selves, to build connection, and to create more inclusive and welcoming communities for all.



Foreword by Award-winning author  
Hena Khan

YA Best Book of 2019 by Kirkus Reviews

## REVIEWS + IMPACT for I AM THE NIGHT SKY



"Captivating and uplifting... This collection presents the work of young people who reflect on their experiences as members of a marginalized and misunderstood faith coming-of-age in the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Iman Ilias' "How To Be a 14-Year-Old Paki Muslim American Girl" and Leyla Rasheed's "Moments I Remember I'm Muslim" unpack the social pressures on Muslim teens to simultaneously fit in and retain their sense of self. Other themes explored include relationships to prayer, perceptions of the hijab, and what it's like to be an observant Muslim guitarist navigating the American teen party scene. The varied text layouts, font styles, and exceptional art enhance the reading experience."

— **Kirkus Reviews**, Starred Review

"This is a necessary collection and important addition to the #OwnVoices movement, giving these young individuals an outlet to write about their experiences as young Muslim Americans. VERDICT: A great response to many false narratives that readers may have been exposed to. Recommended for libraries seeking authentic voices in their collections."

— **School Library Journal**

"Without Shout Mouse I definitely would not have been able to share my thoughts and find a voice. It's helped me to be more confident in myself and be comfortable with who I am."

— **Leyla**, author of  
*I Am the Night Sky*



# FREE MINDS

As part of **Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop**, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth use books, creative writing, and peer support to share their lived experiences. Too often, youth caught in the U.S. justice system are spoken about but not heard from; by publishing their work, we aim to amplify these critical voices. For ages 12+.



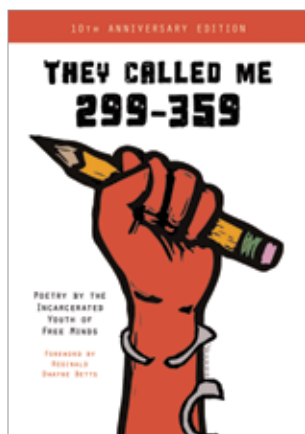
## REVIEWS for THEY CALLED ME 299-359

"The extraordinary writing in this collection is an invaluable gateway into the minds, lives, and hearts of incarcerated young people. Their stories are full of anguish, love, yearning, and hope....Read these poems. Sit with them. Remember the names, the stories, the humanity. Don't look away."

— **Clint Smith**, author of *Counting Descent*

"Theirs are the forgotten voices—the ones some of us would like to lock away and silence. But to do so would be a grave mistake. The words within [this book] are beautiful, at times eloquent, and often painful. If we ever hope to elevate our society, it is critical that we stop to listen!"

— **Etan Thomas**, Poet and Former NBA Player



**They Called Me 299-359**  
Poetry by the Incarcerated Youth  
of Free Minds  
**978-1950807154**

*They Called Me 299-359* is an anthology of poetry and essays written, edited, and compiled by incarcerated youth of Free Minds. Through moving personal testimony, these young writers explore the challenges of incarceration as well as family, forgiveness, redemption, and dreams. This 10th anniversary edition includes updated forewords from Free Minds poet ambassadors as well as from award-winning formerly incarcerated poet Reginald Dwayne Betts.

## REVIEWS for THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE REAL ME

"The literary collection you hold in your hands is a testament to the vitality and spirit of the young poets whose work is presented in these pages, proof in print that books and reading can change and save lives. The pieces showcased here are moving and real."

— **George Pelecanos**, novelist, writer/producer of *The Wire*

"These pages — they are vibrant with urgency. Tragedy and pain and loss and that one thing that distinguishes them from so many others: hope. Each one of these chapters is a journey from the birthplace of the grit and gristle, the tenacity and hunger for life that makes the Free Minds Book Club meaningful."

— **Reginald Dwayne Betts**, author of *Felon*



**The Untold Story of the Real Me**  
Young Voices from Prison  
**978-0996927444**

*The Untold Story of the Real Me* is a collection of poems written by young people who were charged and incarcerated as adults while teenagers. Their work explores themes of parenthood, love, pain, identity, race, and freedom. The collection also features profiles of Free Minds members who are home from prison and are using poetry to spark conversations around youth violence and the justice system. Used in classrooms across the country, this book shines a light on the untold stories of incarcerated youth.



**2016 "In the Margins" Nonfiction Finalist**



"You know they say if children don't read about people who look like them or sound like them they feel invisible. This is an opportunity for them to see that they're visible and that their voice does count—not just me telling them because I am their teacher, but somebody else telling them. Someone else showing them it's true."

— **Ms. Pierre**, 5th grade teacher

"During this experience I realized that my story impacted everyone I came across. To have college students and professors admiring me because I continue to persevere shows me that despite my age I'm teaching those older than me that everyone's story matters."

— **Litzi**, co-author of *How To Grow Up Like Me*, *Humans of Ballou*, *Khalil's Swagtown Adventure*, and *Flutterbugs*, reflecting on giving Author Talks at Denison University



"It's good to see that the young kids read our books. I think they think of us as role models. The best compliment I've heard is that we have made a big impact on our readers."

— **Rose**, co-author of *The Day Tajon Got Shot*

## MEGAPHONE BOARD

Shout Mouse Press is proud to announce the formation of its first-ever Megaphone Board to amplify youth voices. Composed of award-winning authors and advocates for diversifying youth literature, Megaphone Board members will lend their platforms to elevate the voices of Shout Mouse Press's authors.



From left to right, top to bottom: Jason Reynolds, Meg Medina, Wendy Shang, Elizabeth Acevedo, Hena Khan, and Clint Smith.

"My life is one of service. That service happens to be rooted in the idea that every human is not only valuable, but also adds to the value of other humans. The way this value is exchanged is most obviously through action. But there's a more implicit vehicle that I believe to be equally as potent, and that's the exchange of story. What Shout Mouse does is create the opportunity and environment for currency of story to be passed back and forth, from hand to hand, heart to heart, which in turn helps to make each of us more human and the world more whole."

— **Jason Reynolds**, National Ambassador for Young People's Literature and author of more than a dozen award-winning, *New York Times* bestselling books for young people

"I feel called to support Shout Mouse Press because it gives young writers a way to share their own narrative and points them toward the power of words to effect real change in their lives."

— **Meg Medina**, Newbery Medalist and *New York Times* bestselling author of children's and young adult books such as *Merci Suárez*, *Changes Gears* and *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*

"I believe deeply in Shout Mouse Press's commitment to expanding, reimagining, and upending traditional ideas around both who should have access to literature, and who should be able to create it. Its work is one that is guided by empathy, shaped by generosity, and devoted to using stories to build a better world."

— **Clint Smith**, staff writer at *The Atlantic* and award-winning author of *Counting Descent* and *How the Word Is Passed*

# ABOUT SHOUT MOUSE PRESS

Shout Mouse Press is a nonprofit writing and publishing program dedicated to amplifying underheard voices.

Through writing workshops that lead to professional publication, we invite those from marginalized backgrounds to tell their own stories in their own voices and, as published authors, to act as leaders and agents of change.

In partnership with other nonprofits serving communities in need, we are building a catalog of mission-driven books by under-represented authors. These authors include incarcerated, immigrant, underserved, and otherwise marginalized youth in greater Washington, DC, as well as exploited children in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. We have produced original children's books, comics, novels, memoirs, and poetry collections that expand empathy, advance social justice, and increase understanding of underheard perspectives.

**#DIVERSEBOOKS #TEENWRITERS #OWNVOICES**

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## HOW TO SUPPORT OUR AUTHORS

We encourage you to order books directly through Shout Mouse Press in order to best benefit our authors and nonprofits partners. All books are available individually or in discounted sets online at: [www.shoutmousepress.org](http://www.shoutmousepress.org)

For bulk orders, educator inquiries, and nonprofit discounts: email [orders@shoutmousepress.org](mailto:orders@shoutmousepress.org)

Books are also available through Bookshop, Amazon, select bookstores, and select distributors, including Ingram, Follett, and Mackin.

Shout Mouse Press can bring speakers to your class or event. Email [authortalks@shoutmousepress.org](mailto:authortalks@shoutmousepress.org) or call us at 240-772-1545.

Support our writing and publishing programs directly by becoming a Shout Mouse donor: [shoutmousepress.org/donate](http://shoutmousepress.org/donate)



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