

# WELCOME!

## “COPING THROUGH CREATIVITY” A CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP WITH J.L. FIZZELL



J.L. Fizzell – Author, Poet, Mama, and a whole bunch of other titles and hats.



“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.” – Arthur Ashe

### Who Am I?

I’ve been dreaming of being a writer since the first time I was taught how to write a short story in grade four. I realized that you can create just about anything with a paper, pen and some imagination. It wasn’t long after that I chose the pen name J.L. Fizzell, but you can call me Ishmael. Bad joke aside, I prefer Jess if we’re going to be candid. J.L. Fizzell looks cool on paper but is awkward in real life.

I’ve been writing poetry for fun since I was eleven. I won an award and had a poem published in an anthology of young writers in Northern Ontario. That validation from that experience created a lifelong spark, but it wasn’t until sh\*t hit the proverbial fan that I started to cling to it as a coping skill. It was way of helping me process and make sense of the chaos that was my life at the time. It was code in metaphor, which helped me say (and feel) so much more than the words you read.

As things started to settle down, I eventually showed a few important people some of my work. One of them suggested I write a book, and the another (who didn’t like poetry) hung up my work in his office. The encouragement that was funneled into me that led to the publishing my first book “Icarus, Anchors & You”.

It was a surreal moment in my life. I was finally an author and would go on to have a rather prolific year and pen and publish two more books. After a brief hiatus to spend time with my first born, I’ve since developed a passion for combining the arts and my training in mental health into something that I’m excited to share with you... because a little creativity can go a long way into helping you see the world (and YOURSELF) in a new light.

### My Thoughts on Creativity

I catch myself doing this, and I’m sure most people in the creative world have experience it too – getting hung up on your work being “not good enough” or “it just needs one more thing”. I’m begging you – STOP IT!

In a world of art that has been commodified, it can be hard to think that the arts are only for those who do it professionally, or who were born with talent. I’m here to call bull. The arts are for everyone. At some point in the whole growing up process we start to lose touch with the concept that we can just do things because we enjoy them and not because we have to be good or be able to make a buck off of it. I think that’s why I love working with kids. They can show you a picture they drew of their mom, you say what a neat looking potato and the experience doesn’t end with them giving up on drawing completely. Where does that go?

When it comes to creativity, one of the most important pieces is honesty. You need to be true to yourself so that what you feel comes through with whatever you’re doing. It’s like when people cook for you, you can taste the love if they were really enjoying the process. The cool part about using creativity for coping is that by being honest in your work, you’re letting go of all the other B.S. you’re hanging on to and just being yourself in the moment.

a world where we’re told how to dress, what constitutes professionalism and what the expectations are, it can be incredibly liberating to be your own boss for a second and accept the unabridged version of you for where it’s at.

Creativity also gives us a multitude of ways to express ourself and get out some of the stuff we’ve been holding on to in surprising ways. Venting to someone is always great, but there is some serious power in putting those thoughts and feelings into something creative or putting our heart and soul into something. Whether it’s wood work, painting, knitting, or baking a seven layer cakes, you’re finding a healthy release that you enjoy. It helps you be in the moment, and creates a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Everyone has to start somewhere. You’re not going to be Picasso your first painting, not every Gordon Ramsey recipe you follow is going to taste as good as his version, and not every poem is going to make sense when you reread it a few days later. In the words of the Trailer Park Boys: “That’s just the way she goes, boys.” Creativity encourages growth, so just keep at it and you’ll surprise yourself as you learn not just how to paint like Picasso, but do it in your own way.





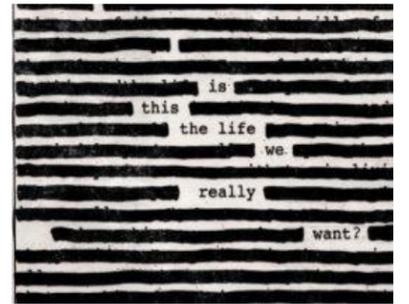
## SOMETHING NEW TO TRY

## Welcome to Black Out Poetry

I was introduced to Black Out Poetry by a friend, cofounder of the Silver Leaf Writers Guild (now Northern Ontario Writers/writingcommunity.ca), and talented writer Veronique Gingo-Robert. It was instant love, and I'll tell you why. Blackout poetry starts with the process of getting rid of everything you don't want/need after you pick out the bits you've turned into something beautiful. You're not holding on to the things that don't serve a purpose and that's what gets me about this style of poetry.

Still don't follow? You start by taking a piece of text and circle (or leave alone depending on your style) the words you've selected to turn into a poem. You then proceed to blackout all the unwanted words (see right for example). You can go as far as blacking out the words to form cool patterns and pictures. The sky is the limit as far as creativity goes. There are also some major bonus points for the whole process being incredibly cathartic.

Give it a shot below!



## GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

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sooner or later, when my sister was vigorously reaping the floors of her establishment.

"And where the deuce ha' *you* been?" was Mrs. Joe's Christmas salutation, when I and my conscience showed ourselves.

I said I had been down to hear the Carols. "Ah! well!" observed Mrs. Joe. "You might ha' done worse." Not a doubt of that I thought.

"Perhaps if I warn't a blacksmith's wife, and (what's the same thing) a slave with her apron never off, *I* should have been to hear the Carols," said Mrs. Joe. "I'm rather partial to Carols myself, and that's the best of reasons for my never hearing any."

Joe, who had ventured into the kitchen after me as the dust-pan had retired before us, drew the back of his hand across his nose with a conciliatory air, when Mrs. Joe darted a look at him, and, when her eyes were withdrawn, secretly crossed his two forefingers, and exhibited them to me, as our token that Mrs. Joe was in a cross temper. This was so much her normal state, that Joe and I would often, for weeks together, be, as to our fingers, like monumental Crusaders as to their legs.

We were to have a superb dinner, consisting of a leg of pickled pork and greens, and a pair of roast stuffed fowls. A handsome mince-pie had been made yesterday morning (which accounted for the mincemeat not being missed), and the pudding was already on the boil. These extensive arrangements occasioned us to be cut off unceremoniously in respect of breakfast; "for I ain't," said Mrs. Joe, "I ain't a going to have no formal cramming and busting and washing up now, with what I've got before me, I promise you!"

So, we had our slices served out, as if we were two thousand troops on a forced march instead of a man and boy at home; and we took gulps of milk and water, with apologetic countenances, from a jug on the dresser. In the meantime, Mrs. Joe put clean white curtains up, and tacked a new flowered-flounce across the wide chimney to replace the old one, and uncovered the little state parlour across the passage, which was never uncovered at any other time,

