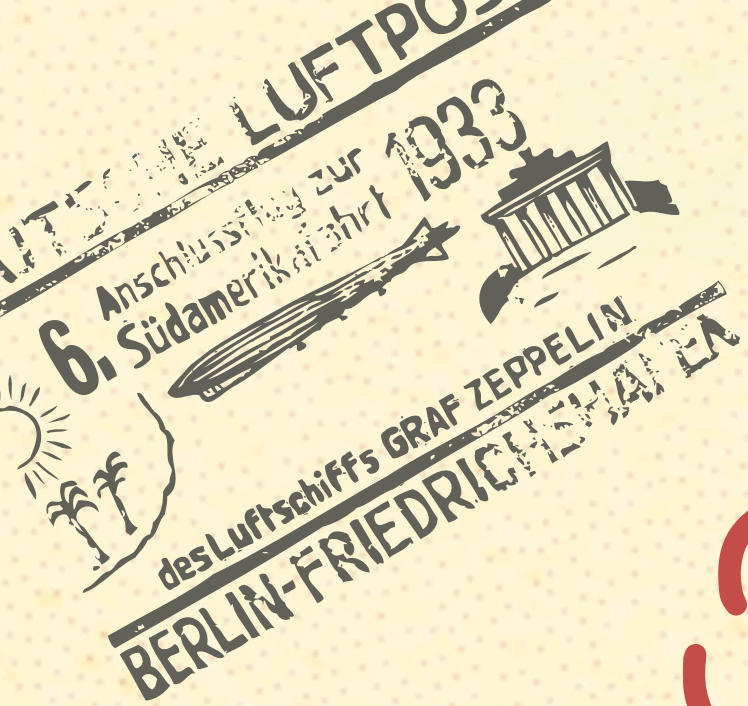


EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION 2026



Threading the Needle: Reading, Writing & Resistance



SANJIDA YASMIN & TANIO MCCALLUM

What is Resistance?

SOMATIC JOURNAL WRITING PROMPT

PRESS THE PALMS OF YOUR HANDS TOGETHER
OR
LINK YOUR FINGERS AND TRY TO PULL YOUR HANDS APART

- **WHAT** does physical resistance feel like in your body?
- Does it hurt? Where? Describe the feeling.
- Does it feel enjoyable? Where? Describe the feeling.



Resistance for me is...

JOURNAL WRITING PROMPT

- **WHAT** does resistance mean to you on a personal level?
 - Jot down a few words that come to mind.
- **WHAT** is something you want to do or have, but are resisting?
- **WHAT** temptations would you like to resist, but can't?
 - What does it feel like to give in to temptation?
 - What does it feel like when you don't give in to it?
- **WHEN** have you experienced or witnessed resistance?
- **HOW** would you like to show up for civic resistance?
- **WHY** do you think resistance is important?



Writing & Resistance

SOMATIC JOURNAL WRITING PROMPT

IMAGINE YOU ARE GIVEN THE BIGGEST, HARDEST, WORST WRITING ASSIGNMENT YOU CAN IMAGINE AND TOLD IT'S DUE IN ONE HOUR...

GRAB A PEN. IT'S TIME TO START!

- **WHEN** you sit down to write, do you feel Resistant?
- **WHERE** does resistance show up in your body? (shoulders, etc.)
- **HOW** does it show up for you? (distractions, snacks, etc.)



Writing & Resistance

DISCUSSION & INTRO TO LETTER WRITING

Is resistance important as a civic responsibility?

**In what ways can we show our resistance
to something we think and feel is wrong?**

How can we use writing as a form of resistance?

What types of writing can we use as forms of resistance?



Dear Resistance,

I am writing this letter to ask for help...from the one thing that is most challenging for me when I try to sit down and write...you!

Oh, resistance, why do you show up every time I sit down to write, no matter the topic? Even when I want to write something fun that I enjoy, like a poem or story, you show your face.

I want to lean into you instead of run away from you and from what is so important to me - my writing! But what will happen if I lean into you? What do YOU have to teach ME by showing your face? Tell me!

Forever Yours,
Me

PS: I'll write more later

Dear Resistance,

] PURPOSE
To connect with the topic on a personal level, establishing a relationship to it before or during further exploration through reading and discussion

] FORMAT **] TONE**
letter Informal

] PROMPT
Write a letter to resistance. Imagine it is a person challenging you but that you want to befriend. What do you want to tell it? What might you learn from it? What might it have to tell you?

123 Anywhere St.,
Any City, ST 12345
October 27, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to address a very important issue of great concern to both myself and my fellow students.

It has come to my attention that...

My hope is that this letter will...

Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you about how this matter can be better handled in the future and what measures will be taken to rectify this.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Hann

Formal Letter

FORMAT

a formal letter

TONE

business

PURPOSE

To connect with the topic on a civic level, identifying an important and current issue that calls you to take action

PROMPT

Write a letter about something you feel and belief to be wrong on a civic level. Be specific - who should you write the letter to? Can you get others to write letters, too? Give researched information about the relevance and importance of the issue.

Reading & Resistance

DISCUSSION & INTRO TO READINGS

How have authors used writing as a form of resistance?

Let's see...



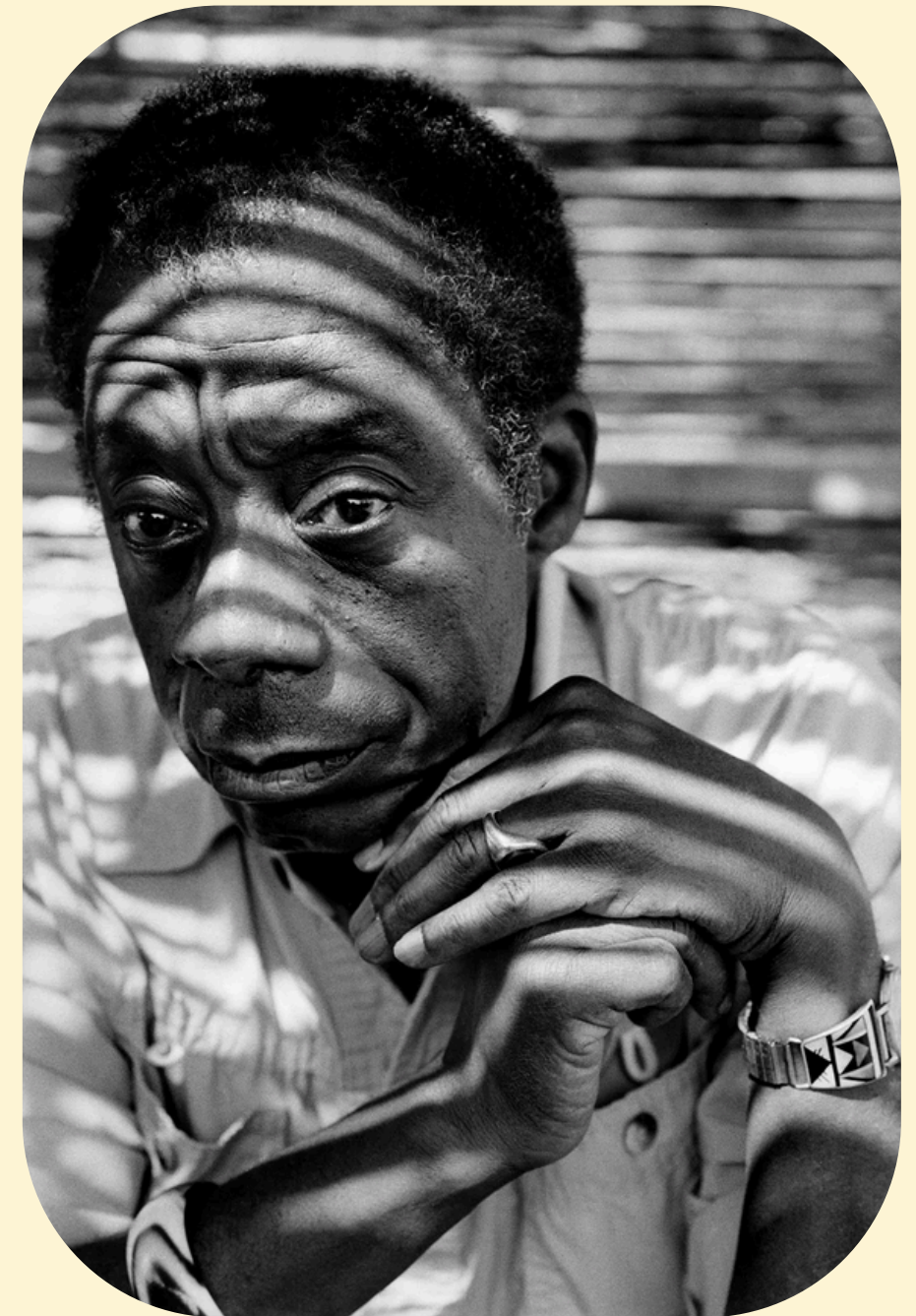
Voice as Resistance

- **Who gets to speak?**
- **Who is heard?**
- **What happens when voice is suppressed?**



James Baldwin

- **Born in Harlem in 1924**
- **Black, queer writer navigating systemic racism**
- **Lived in both the U.S. and abroad**
- **Writing as survival, truth-telling, and resistance**




A Guiding Question: What Are They Resisting?

- ***Silence***
- ***Oppression***
- ***Internal struggle***
- ***Disconnection***



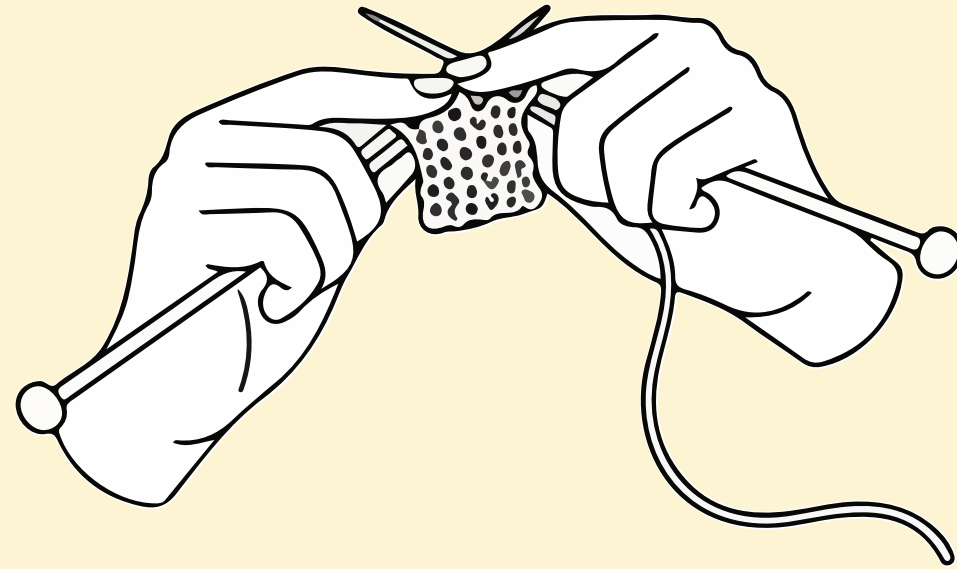


Writing as Necessity

- **To confront injustice**
 - **To process personal & collective pain**
 - **To give voice to the unheard**
 - **To resist silence**
- 

Two Ways of Speaking

- **Fiction → storytelling, symbolism**



- **Nonfiction → direct confrontation**





Sonny's Blues

- **Two brothers in Harlem**
- **Struggle + disconnection**
- **Music = expression**



Fiction: Sonny's Blues

**“Freedom lurked around
us...he could help us to be
free.”**

(Baldwin, 1957)



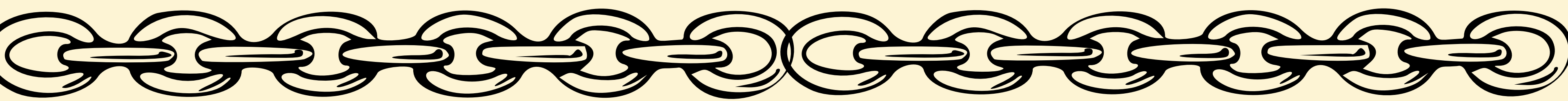


Transformation

**“It was no longer a
lament... it was
triumph.”**

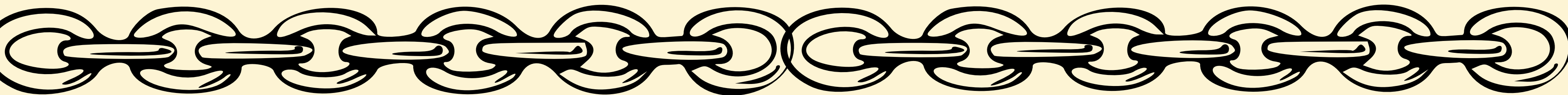
(Baldwin, 1957)





**Nonfiction: Notes of a
Native Son**

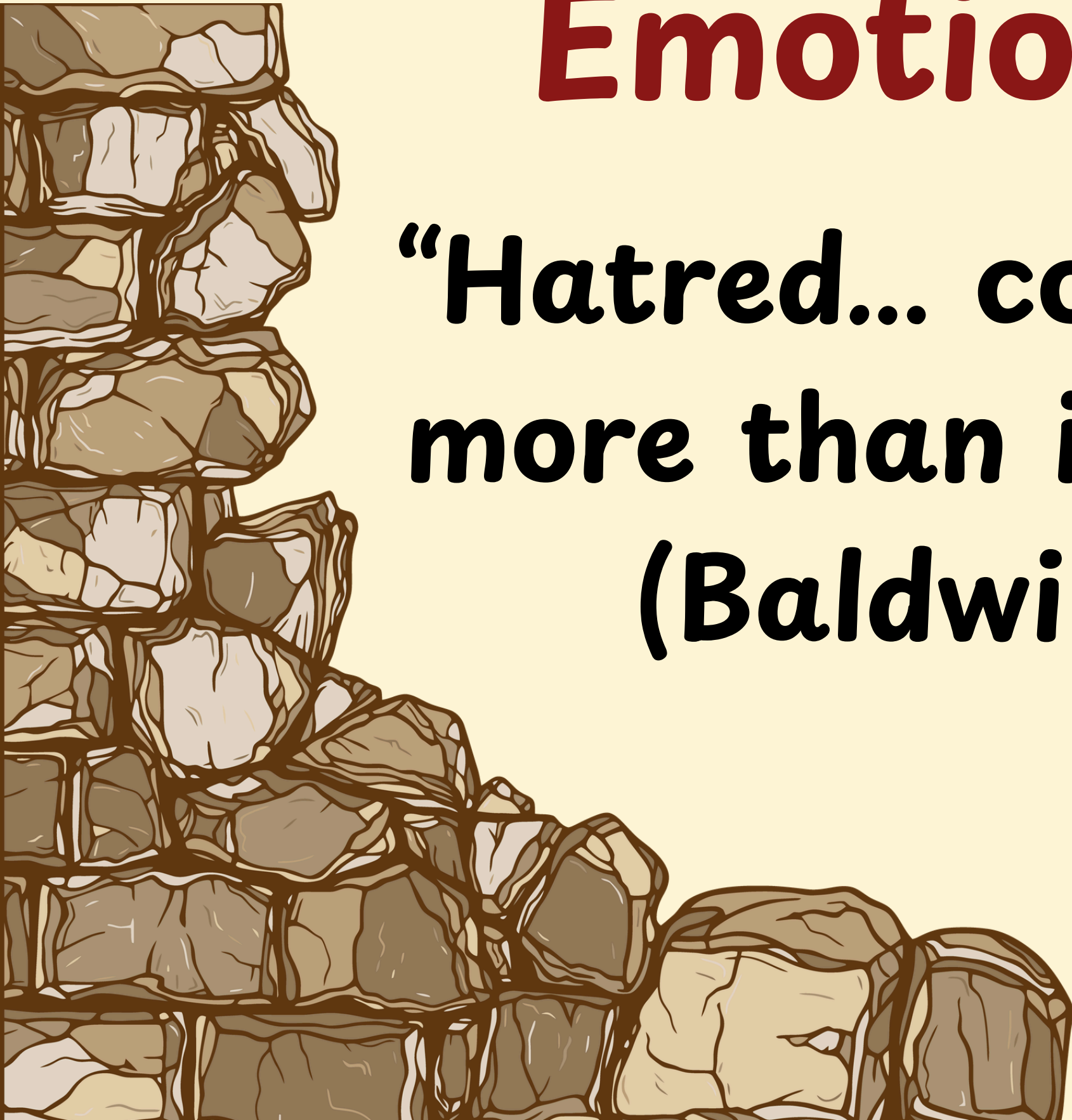
**“I had discovered the weight of
white people in the world.”
(Baldwin, 1955)**



Emotional Control

**“Hatred... could destroy
more than it created.”**

(Baldwin, 1955)



Baldwin's Synthesis

- **Fiction** → **expressive, symbolic, communal**
- **Essay** → **direct, analytical, personal**
- **Both** → **acts of voice against silence**



Breakout

- Which form of resistance is more impactful—indirect or direct?
- Where do we see these forms today?





Thank You!

