

# telling it



Arts-based interventions  
for change



**Ypsilanti Community Middle School  
7th Grade • Spring 2024**



# WELCOME

## to the Spring 2024 Telling It Anthology!

What a treat it has been to serve the 7th grade students! They have grown over this past year to be such a creative, sensitive and caring group of students. They support each other and dive into everything we explore together with enthusiasm and an amazing spirit of creative inspiration using their vivid imaginations.

Some of the themes that you see in this anthology are about the metaphor of death and rebirth, ways to interrupt bullying and fighting, learning how our emotions serve as a barometer for our feelings, identifying the aspects of self that are confident and proud and those that are hurt and sad. The students have shared their triumphs and their challenges with us and have formed close bonds with each other and with the Telling It team members, especially our Resident Artist, McCrea Deezer and Lead Social Worker, Kelly Kundrat.

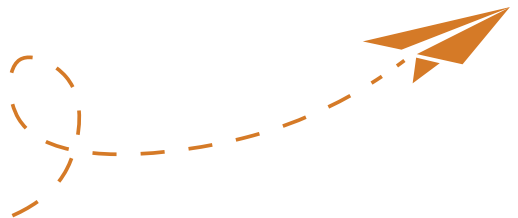
The following pages showcase some of the students' creative writing and their portraits. There are photographs of candid moments from one of our sessions when we were using the solar eclipse as a metaphor to hold the lightness and darkness of our world. There are some photographs of the beautiful clay masks that the students created that reflect aspects of their identity.

The mission of Telling It is to prioritize the needs of young individuals by offering safe, uncensored, and judgment-free spaces. We strive to cultivate resilience, empower personal strengths, and provide an outlet for processing emotional struggles. We are grateful to the faculty and staff of the school. These include Dean Irvin and Mr. Olds, the custodians who help us set up the cafeteria each week, Mrs. Miller and the 7th grade teachers. An especially hearty thanks go to Principal Davis who has supported our vision throughout this year. Most of all, an enormous thank you to the 7th grade students. We hope to see you next fall when you start your 8th grade year!

We hope you enjoy this collection of the creative writing and artwork of the 7th grade group. It is truly an honor to know and be inspired by them.

Wish all good wishes,

Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel  
*Founding Director*



# Hellfire

## *Conflict and perspective script*

The mean and powerful King arrives to the small and poor village, Hellfire.

King: Hello peasants, I am here to collect my portion of your gold and valuables.

Villager: My King, we have to save it for ourselves, it's all we have to feed our families and children.

King: I demand that you give it to me or else I will destroy a village. You have two days to bring it to my castle.

The King returns to his castle and a day passes...

Punisher the Knight: I am still healing from my last fight. I cannot go fight the King, I can barely stand!

Villager: You have to! You're our only hope!

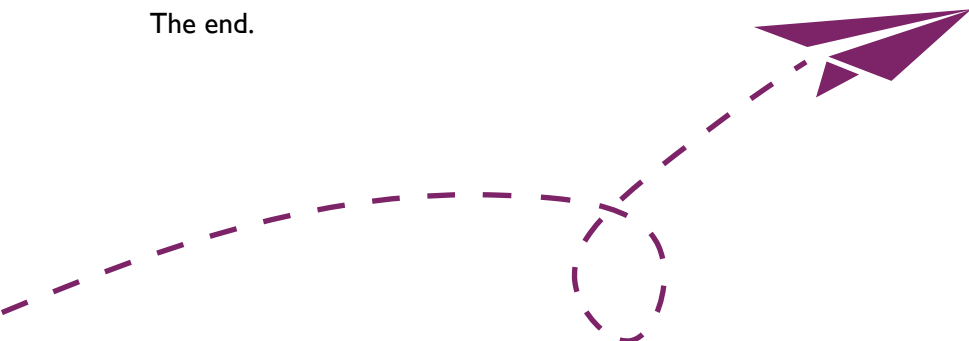
The Punisher mustered the strength to journey to the King's castle. He was pushed into the lava by the King. The Punisher fused with the lava to gain elemental abilities.

King: That's not possible, no one has ever survived or fused with the lava!

Punisher: Give me our gold back or else! I do this for my village and my people!

The King refused to give back the gold and the Punisher punished the King!

The end.







# Adrian

## **The Death of the Brave Knight**

*Story of death & rebirth*

There is a castle that lies right over a volcano and is surrounded by lava. The knight travels to the castle from a village, Hellfire, in order to find the treasure, which the legend says is guarded by a dragon. The knight traveled many days through mountains and countryside to reach Death Mountain. He finally reaches the destination, and he crosses the bridge into the castle. He had to spend some time rebuilding the bridge because most of it was burnt down from the lava. He carefully walked through the door of the castle, and he set off a trap that alerted the dragon guarding the vault in the basement. The dragon grabbed and burnt him alive. Then, a hero was born with elemental powers to defeat the dragon and bring the treasure to the poor village.



# Alanah

## Real Story

A time I felt cozy was in the car with my dad because I only knew him since I was 8. So only 4 years now.

A time I felt exhausted was hanging out with all 7 of my siblings. They wear me out physically and mentally.

## Poem

I'm a tower  
When I am a transmission tower  
Knocking over things  
Like my brother's A, B, C's.

## Maga Ruth: Six Senses Poem

*Senses profile for a character*

I see dead bodies.  
I hear screaming of victims as they die!  
I touch my victims' animals to kill them!  
I taste their flesh in my teeth!  
I feel no remorse as I break their bones.  
I smell the stench of rotten flesh!

## The Death of Henry the III

*Senses profile for a character*

In the ballroom at midnight. A woman cried out, "Someone stole the statue!"

"It's the middle of the room and it weighs 200lbs!" Henry yelled.

"So how could it be missing? Who could have stolen it?" said King Henry III.

Just then, we hear a loud scream. It was his wife, Margaret. Her water broke. She was pregnant with their first child. She had a boy, Bartholemue. After she gave birth to their son, King Henry started looking for the statute again. There was a loud bang in the dining room. King Henry ran to the loud noise. There was a man there with a black mask and black suit with a shotgun. Bodies were everywhere. The men ran after the king and shot him before he could get away.

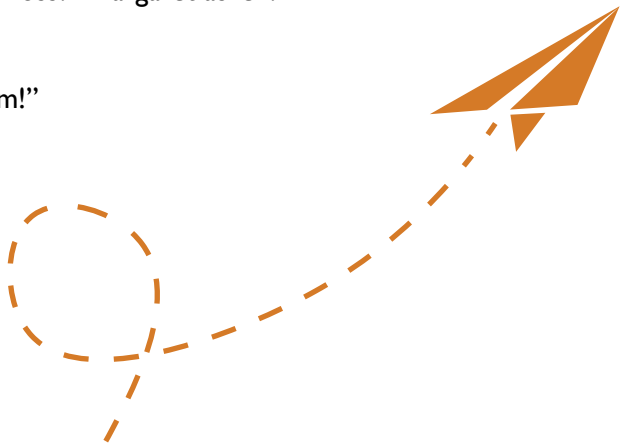
Then he was reborn into his son Bartholemue.

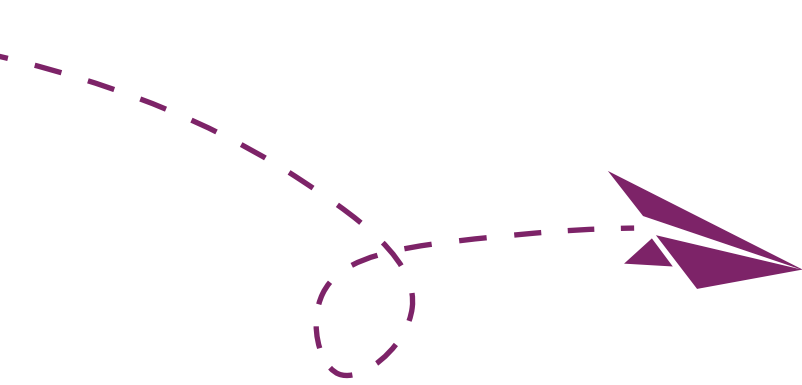
"Did he die from blood loss?" Margaret asked.

"No!" said the chef.

"I, Charles poisoned him!"

Dramatic Gasp!!

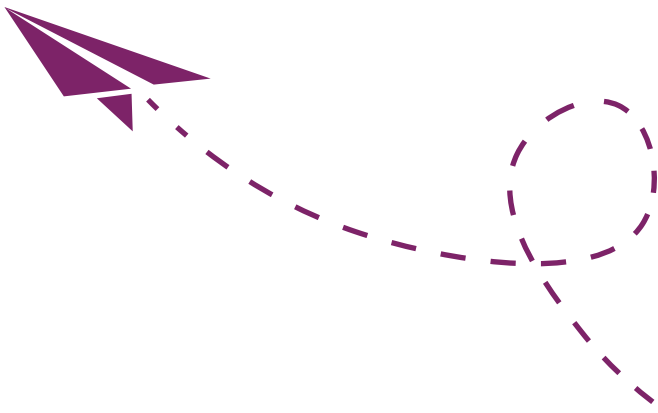




## **Mooski: A Six Senses Poem**

*Senses profile for a character*

Her name is Mooski.  
I see old people with good candy.  
I hear little kids at her home.  
I touch the candy at her home.  
I smell candy.  
I taste very old candy.  
I feel mad cuz I got no candy today.







**Da'mina**

# Devin



## Rebirth

*Story of death & rebirth*

All technology becomes self-aware then some radios started to speak to the players at the track and multiple players fainted due to shock. They had to rush the players to the hospital, but the hospital was on a mountain, so they had to fly up to the mountain on an airplane. While they were on the plane someone had a baby then the plane started talking ...

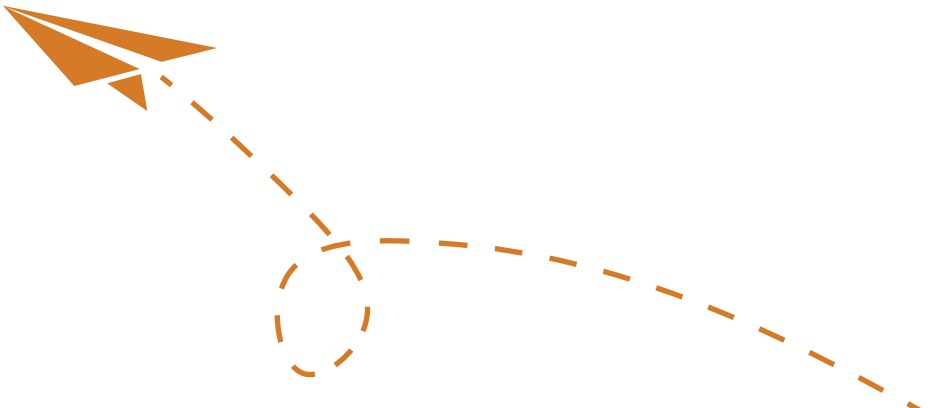
## Inspiration

When I first saw Stephen Curry shooting threes, I felt inspired and wanted to become an NBA player just like him. So, I practiced basketball to hopefully become an NBA player. I felt energetic and happy, so I went outside and played basketball, watched clips of him, learned to shoot and play like him. I hope someone sees me playing one day and is also inspired.

Also, my family inspires me to become my dream. Hopefully, they see me out there. They watch me, cheer me on and buy me equipment.

## When I'm

I get turned on when my music turns on.  
I am strong when my family cheers me on.  
I feel at home when I'm at home.  
I'm sleepy when I stay up all night.  
I feel alone when my Auntie Glenda died.



# I Am

I am annoyed because I'm not home yet.

I'm joyful because Telling It helped me escape my boring math class.

I didn't want to go to school because I'm tired and there's no school tomorrow.

I find it useless to come to school.

Joyeux Lutins was my school in the Congo. I loved the people there, everyone speaks French and I miss that we wore uniforms.

We wore white shirts and blue skirts.

I walked to and from school, without danger.

We could buy what we wanted without credit cards.

I already knew fractions in 2nd Grade!

The teachers here understand that I'm advanced, but I suck in language arts – even in French!

I hope to return to my country one day and then I'll be happy and joyful.

## The Rebirth

### *Story of death & rebirth*

In the 1800s there was an old house where a serial killer grew up. It was haunted because he killed both his parents, but his sister escaped. He was sent to a mental institution and the house was left abandoned because there were no parents. He came back to find his sister, but she was with a foster family and didn't remember him. He decided that any ghost hunter that came would be killed by a chainsaw.

He got discovered so he left the house. On his way to a cave he got shot by a shotgun by someone who recognized him. But he didn't die because when he was a baby his parents were in a cult and they sold his soul, which made him the living dead.

He brought terror to the town. He would get into a house looking for his sister. If she wasn't there, he would use anything to kill them. He would take a light bulb out and shove it down their throat. All this time, his sister wasn't in the town. All these people died for nothing! His sister returned to the town to kill him. She didn't know he was her brother. As she was fighting him, he killed her and she was lying in his hands and he was crying.

He couldn't take the pain anymore so he killed himself and so he was taken back to when he was eight and killed his parents. He could not be killed so he was reborn in the past and he decided to change his past but still, he killed his parents.



# Elovie

## Lululele: A Six Senses Poem

*Senses profile for a character*

I see a beautiful limb to cut and eat.  
I hear music and dance to the sound of loud.  
I touched a baby to eat it, delicious.  
I smell beautiful blood to drink.  
I tasted the meat of my victims.  
I feel so good it was a big meal from this fat \*\*\*\*.

## When I'm

I feel big quand je écoût a des la music music.  
I feel calm when je suis seule.  
I am strong when je mais sent forte quand je course  
ou fais du sport.  
I feel at home when je suis a la maison  
I feel alone when quand ma Meilleur ami nest pas la  
I'm sleepy when I don't sleep  
Je me s excite quand je mange  
I feel smart when I get goods grade  
I feel failed quand je des mauvais grades



















# Ethan



## **The Time I Got Reincarnated In A World of Magic**

*Story of death & rebirth*

What! Where am I? What are you doing with that axe? Ahhh!

Where am I? Ahhh! A dragon, you have magic. The last thing I remember is getting my hand chopped off.

He got transported to another world. It's very dark and gloomy. He didn't spawn on as a regular human but as a dragon born. He notices that he's really strong. He still has to train; at this point he couldn't beat the demon lord, but he doesn't know this. He has magic – just like everyone in the world.



## The Conflict

### *Conflict and perspective script*

Regular kid named Ali. He's in a cult club in high school.

They are currently about to open a box with a single seal. They open box and take out its contents.

Ali goes to the hospital to see his grandad who has died.

A mysterious guy asks Ali about the box. Ali throws the box to guy. He says, 'Where is the thing in the box?'

Cut: Back to the cult club.

Cut: Back to the high school and mysterious guy runs in and tries to save kids.

They unwrap something a finger falls out.

Ali gets taken over by curse and he eats the finger.

Tattoos take over Ali's body and a third eye opens under his eye.

Mysterious man starts to fight him because he has been taken over by a demon.

Mysterious man sits on Ali in the middle of the fight cause he's tired.

Mysterious man is involved because he wants to protect the World from this Evil that has taken over Ali.

## When I'm

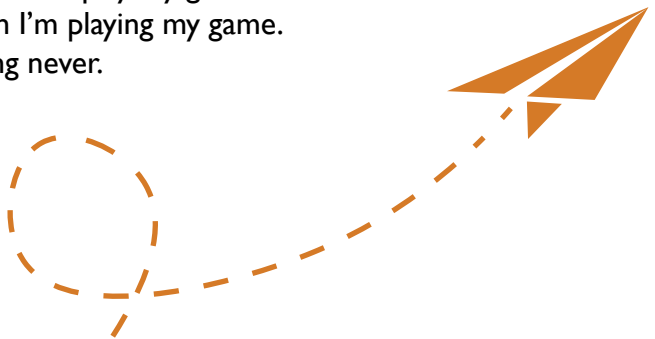
I feel smart when I get a good grade.

I feel overwhelmed when m class is loud.

I feel in my zone when I play my game.

I feel excited when I'm playing my game.

I feel big and strong never.



## When I'm

I feel big when I go to bed.

I just want to go to bed.

I feel calm when I get to sleep.

I am strong when I go work out.

I get along when my sister says FNAF is good.

I'm in my zone when I'm playing video games. I play video games all day, I play horror games.

I feel at home when I'm at home. I don't feel at home anywhere else. I don't like leaving home unless you have \$1,000,000 and take me to McDonalds.

I don't feel alone because I want to be alone. I don't get scared.

I'm sleepy when it's daytime b/c I'm afraid someone's going to break into the house.

I feel smart when I beat Minecraft for the first time.

When I grow up I want to be a Minecraft streamer.

I'm in disguise when I wear a disguise. You can put on a wig and a mask.

I am a tower when I only felt tall when my sister is shorter than me.

## Scarlet: Six Senses Poem

*Senses profile for a character*

I see death, blood, guts.

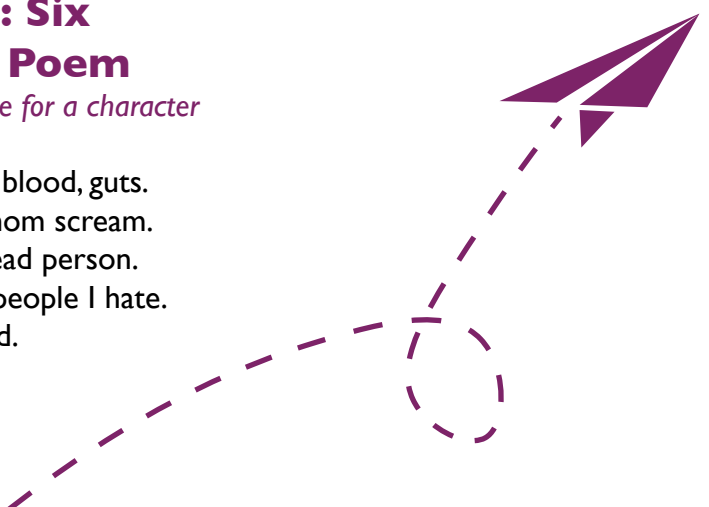
I hear my mom scream.

I touch a dead person.

I smell the people I hate.

I taste blood.

I feel happy.





# Madisyyn

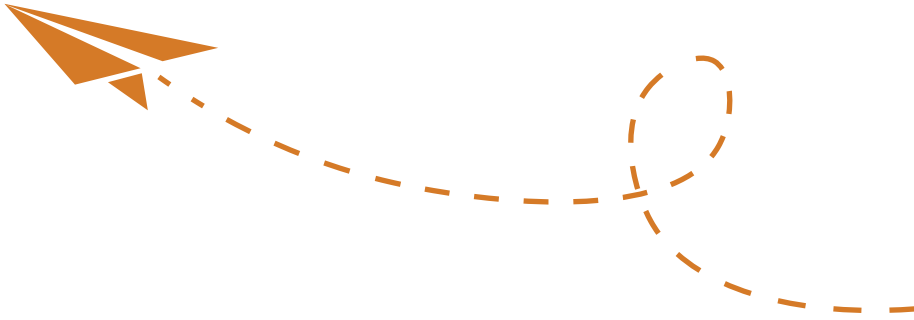
## **Death & Dying Story**

*Story of death & rebirth*

It was Halloween and the sun was high in the sky. I woke up and was immediately hungry. I made a pop tart, the cinnamon frosted kind, I toasted her. My sister broke in. She didn't live with us anymore. I was scared. She had a weapon, so I grabbed a bat with needles I from the basement after watching Stranger Things. I threatened her to leave but she stole my bat and then she threw it against a table. A thousand-dollar vase hit her in her head and she died.

# Nina

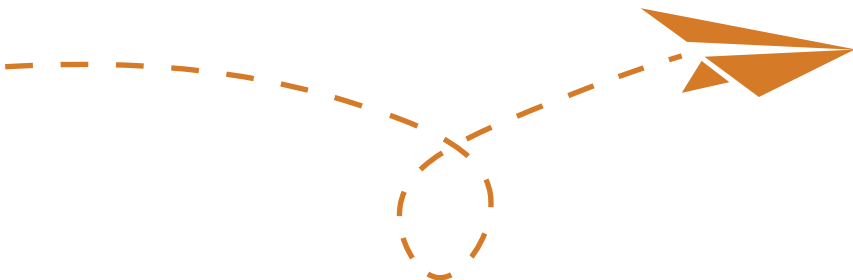




## **Nina and Da'mina's Conflict and Perspective script**

Background sounds: People talking in a lunchroom

After the fight we're in the office. The principal calls our parents and says Bonquisha, Quisha, and Victoria are suspended for 3 days and John is only suspended for 2. We have more because we jumped him. The 3 got sent home but John's mom was at work all day so he got to stay. John changed schools, we stay at the school and boss people around.





## Bob's Snacks

### *Conflict and perspective script*

Bob was really kind and gave snacks to other people at the school because Bob was the snack giver. Mackenzie and Kimberly were annoyed at Bob because no one else shares their snacks at school.

Mackenzie and Kimberly: "Bob is so annoying! Why does Bob share their snacks at this school? Nobody shares their snacks!"

They turn around and see Bob. Bob is counting his money he got from people for his snacks.

Mackenzie and Kimberly: "Look! There he is! We should go up to him and pretend we want to buy his snacks. But then, we should jump him and steal his snacks. That way he doesn't give his snacks to other people."

They go up to Bob.

Mackenzie and Kimberly: "Hi Bob!"

Bob: "Hi guys! How are you guys doing today?"

Mackenzie and Kimberly: "We're doing pretty good! Can we buy some snacks from you?"

Bob: "Sure! You guys can buy some snacks from me! Let me show you what I have!"

He opens his bag and there's a whole bunch of snacks in there. They take out some snacks.

Bob: "Do you guys like these kinds of snacks?"

Mackenzie and Kimberly: "No, can you show us more?"

He shows them more, and they keep saying "No" and then...

Mackenzie and Kimberly: "We are going to jump you!"

They jump him. Right after they jumped him, they stole his snacks and left the scene while Bob was knocked out.

The End!



# Teliah

## **Birthday Party**

*Story of death & rebirth*

Once upon a time there was a birthday party. Everyone is celebrating the birthday kid, Timmy, who is getting presents. He gets one present from an unknown person. When he opens the present, his head explodes and confetti comes out. Everybody is shocked, scared and afraid. Once everybody looks inside the box there's a baby with a card that says, "Happy Birthday Timmy!"

# **A Girl's Worst Nightmare**

*by Alanah and Madisyn*

*Conflict and perspectives script*

Narrator: Enters classroom

Kris: Oh look if it isn't the freak of the school!

Ciara: Yeah! She's kind of a weirdo.

Ally: \*Sits quietly\*

Narrator: This is the girl's backstory...

Kris: Kris isn't experiencing enough attention at home from Mom, dad is MIA and dad has been gone for 10 years.

Ciara: Home life is hell. Mom and dad are always fighting.

Ally: Mom is sick and dying while dad is out of the picture.

\*\*\*Back to the story\*\*\*

Kris: Oh not going to defend yourself?

Ally: I don't have anything to say to you.

Teacher: Kris and Ciara- Be quiet-we're in the middle of a lesson. Face the board!

Ciara: (whispers to Kris) She's a sussy imposter.

Ally: \*starts crying\*

Teacher: Kris and Ciara- principals office now!



**Team Leader**

Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel

**Lead Social Worker**

Kelly Kundrat, LMSW

**Resident Artist**

McCrea Deezer

**U-M MSW Intern**

Natalie Quinn

**U-M Student Interns**

Karena Mansour

Jessica Eyster

**Volunteers**

Jacob Stein

**Funding & Support**

United Way of Southeast Michigan  
Washtenaw County Sheriff's

Office - *Jerry L. Clayton, Sheriff*

Michigan Arts and Culture Council

- *Telling It is supported in part by  
an award from MACC*

**Anthology Credits**

John Fornoff, *Graphic Design*

Leisa Thompson, *Photography*

telling it



Arts-based interventions  
for change

**For More Information**

Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel

*Telling It* Founding Director

734-649-3118

[www.lsa.umich.edu/tellingit](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/tellingit)