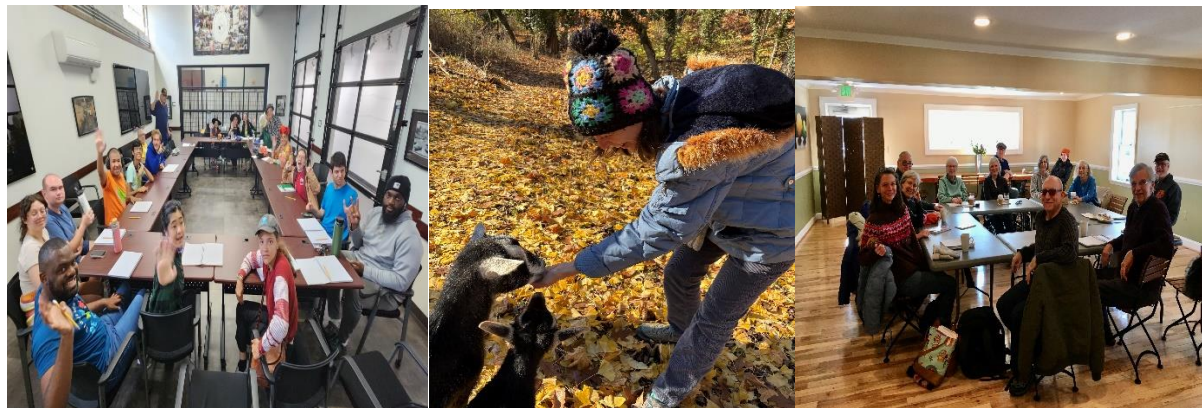


Freewrites



Four years ago, I began Freewrites and Coffee in a small upstairs room at Atwaters Coffeeshop in Catonsville. Since then, this freewriting community has evolved like Dylan's music. As Dylan's music evolved with a street vendor's whistle in "Highway 61" and an organ opening "Like a Rolling Stone", so to Freewrites and Coffee has evolved to include Goat Walks and Freewrites in Irvington with BGiftE Urban Homestead reforestation project. This is where my grandmother grew up- in Irvington in the wind tunnel off Montastery Avenue where as a child for every dandelion she found she was paid a penny by a neighbor who made dandelion wine in the summer.

Freewrites and Coffee has also evolved to include the neurodivergent community of My Life Learning Center, an Autistic Adult Day program that joins us at Oca Mocha coffeeshop in Arbutus twice a month. When we Freewrite, we use a prompt, a line from a poem or prose and everyone writes from their own experience. It's as though we are all looking out of one window and everyone is telling what they see from this view. When we Freewrite, it becomes visible that we are a shared humanity. When we Freewrite, it becomes known that we have more that connects us than that what tries to separate us. Having published authors, poets, and playwrights, come together and write with this neurodivergent community is transformative and incredibly beautiful to me, and probably my most proud community writing work since I am a mother, and care giver to my 22- year- old autistic daughter.

"something very deep and mysterious, very holy and sacred, is taking place in our lives right where we are..." Henry Nouwen

Freewrites and Coffee continues to meet twice a week, Mondays at Catonsville's Atwaters behind the cocktail bar and Saturdays at Oca Mocha in Arbutus 10-11. This is where I hold space for people to "be able to confront an experience and resolve it as art," as Eudora Welty beautifully said.

