

# Barrio Writers

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**Briann Allen**

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## **Briann Allen**

Briann Allen, 19, is an upcoming sophomore at Stephen F. Austin State University. Born in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, she is pursuing a major in Creative Writing to become a librarian when she graduates.

### **Stress on the Headlines**

Wake up,  
rise from your thousand-year sleep that only felt like five minutes.  
Get dressed,  
throw on those wrinkled garments, your armor against daily anxieties.  
Step out,  
leave safety in Sanctuary and brace for bombardments as you march to the battlefield.  
Stay guarded,  
you have no allies here in this every-man-for-himself world.  
Don't speak,  
any cry of outrage will bring forth the merciless, uncaring,  
deceitful, and power-hungry pack of wolves,  
with cameras strapped to their backs,  
to eat you  
whole.  
Breathe.  
Take a moment to recollect your thoughts, because tomorrow  
you'll do it all over  
again.

### **Literary Respiration**

Why do I write?  
Well, why do you breathe?

Obviously, the answer is out of necessity. Not one multicellular creature can live without some form of respiration, and much like breathing, I cannot exist without writing.

An impulsive action the body controls to keep itself functioning.

My mind plays stories on repeat, slowly suffocating my thoughts until I write them down.

When you breathe, you do so to live.

When I write, I do so

to be.

### **The Moment Before Tragedy**

If I could capture a moment to share with every human being, I'd capture the moment you had realized what you had done.

When your feet left the ledge and you realized you could have solved everything.

When you downed the handful of pills and cried because you realized no one would be able to feed the pets over the weekend.

When your vision began to fade out as the belt around your neck cut off your oxygen, and you realized you broke your promise to play that new video game with your sister that she had been wanting.

When your arms were sliced and your head felt light and you realized your best friend was going to call you to talk about the newest book from your favorite series that night.

When you realized just how much you wanted to live, and that any reason would have been enough.

### **Writing Activity**

1. Why do you write? Compose a short piece like the second one above that communicates to readers why you write.
2. The first piece talks about a routine and the feelings and experiences involved in that routine. What stresses you out in your daily routine? What do you love? Write about how your daily routine includes challenges and shining moments and how you cope with those events.