



Why I Rise | Media Guide (2021)

// GETTING STARTED:

This toolkit provides content for supporting and promoting Why I Rise, an online hip-hop and spoken word competition in collaboration with the Los Angeles Department of Mental Health. The competition will take place from April 13th to May 17th on WeRise.LA. Five local (LA-based) and one international winner will receive \$1,000. Five runner-ups will receive \$100. We encourage you to see these as guidelines and not instructions - spread the word as you see fit!

// WHAT IS GET LIT - WORDS IGNITE?

Get Lit – Words Ignite fuses classic and spoken word poetry to increase teen literacy on the page and in visual media. We cultivate enthusiastic learners emboldened to inspire social consciousness in diverse communities. Get Lit's poetry and film curriculum engages young people by providing a creative outlet, community, and real-life work experience, transforming students into artists, activists, scholars, and stars.

// WHERE + WHEN

April 8th, 2021 - May 8th, 2020 Submissions via WeRise.LA

May 9 - MAY 17 Voting opens (Top 20 poems move on to judges + 10 special merit poems)

MAY 19 - MAY 26 Judges pick top 5 SoCal poems + 1 National/International + 5 honorable mentions

May 28th, 2020 - Winners announced!

// EXPERTS

- [Marianne Williamson](#), [Jamie Tworkowski](#), [Dr. Lindsay Granger-Weaver](#), [Jonathan B. Singer](#), [Samantha Paige](#), [Danah Williams](#), [Juan Gavidia](#), [Kaveh Akbar](#), [Hanif Abdurraqib](#), [Shira Erlichman](#), [Amanda Gorman](#)

// WHY I RISE 2021 JUDGES

- [Azure Antionette](#)
- [Kelly Grace Thomas](#)
- [Malik Yusef](#)
- [Tiana Clark](#)
- [Tonya Ingram](#)
- [Yesika Salgado](#)



- [Jeremy Radin](#)

// SOCIAL MEDIA + CREATIVE

- [Promo video](#)

The poster features a blue brick wall background. At the top left is the Get Lit logo. To its right is the We Rise logo, which consists of the word "WE" in a stylized font above the word "RISE" in a smaller, all-caps font, with the website "WERISE.LA" below it. The main title "POETRY COMPETITION" is centered in large, bold, white capital letters. Below the title is a white rectangular box containing the text "APR 13TH - MAY 3RD" in blue. To the right of the text is a black microphone on a stand. Below the microphone, the text "6 WINNERS" and "\$1,000 CASH AWARD" is displayed in large, bold, white and blue letters respectively. At the bottom, there is another white rectangular box containing the website addresses "WERISE.LA/CONTEST" and "GETLIT.ORG/WHYIRISE" in blue capital letters.

EXPERT AND JUDGE BIOS

EXPERTS:



MARIANNE WILLIAMSON is a bestselling author, political activist and spiritual thought leader. For over three decades Marianne has been a leader in spiritual and religiously progressive circles. She is the author of 14 books, four of which have been #1 New York Times best sellers. A quote from the mega best seller *A Return to Love*, “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure...” is considered an anthem for a contemporary generation of seekers.

Williamson founded Project Angel Food, a non-profit that has delivered more than 12 million meals to ill and dying homebound patients since 1989. The group was created to help people suffering from the ravages of HIV/AIDS. They have since expanded their service to any person battling critical illness. She has also worked throughout her career on poverty, anti-hunger and racial reconciliation issues. She has advocated for reparations for slavery since the 1990's and was the first candidate in the 2020 presidential primary season to make it a pillar of her campaign. In 2004, she co-founded The Peace Alliance and supported the creation of a U.S. Department of Peace. In addition, she advocates for a cabinet level Department of Children and Youth to adequately address the chronic trauma of millions of American children.

JAMIE TWORKOWSKI is the founder of To Write Love on Her Arms and the New York *Times* bestselling author of *If You Feel Too Much*. He was born in Morehead City, North Carolina and grew up in Melbourne Beach, Florida, where he fell in love with surfing.

In 2002 at the age of 22, Jamie was hired by the clothing brand Hurley to be their Florida Sales Rep. Jamie's life changed in 2006 when he met Renee Yohe and wrote a story called “To Write Love on Her Arms.” He posted the story on MySpace and began selling TWLOHA t-shirts as a way to help pay for Renee’s treatment.

The surprising response to both the story and the shirts led to TWLOHA becoming a non-profit organization. Fast forward 11 years and the TWLOHA team has responded to 200,000 messages from people in 100 countries, in addition to giving two million dollars to treatment and recovery.

Jamie spends much of his time on the road, sharing a message of encouragement and hope with audiences at universities, concerts and conferences across America. His work has taken him to Australia, the United Kingdom, India, and Iraq. Jamie has been interviewed by CNN, NBC Nightly News, CBS Sunday Morning, and Rolling Stone Magazine. A proud uncle, Jamie is also a lifelong surfer, basketball fan, and music lover. He continues to live in Melbourne Beach, Florida.



DR. LINDSAY GRANGER-WEAVER is an equity-minded education professional with a desire to increase access to high-quality future-focused programming for underrepresented students. After graduating from Columbia University in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Comparative Ethnic Studies, she got a Master of Philosophy in Education (MPhilEd) in Professional Counseling & Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.

While working as a high school counselor in Philadelphia, PA public schools, Lindsay developed a passion for career-readiness upon witnessing the high stop-out rates of her alumni. This prompted her to attend New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, where she earned a Doctor of Education (EdD) in Educational Administration. Her studies combined critical pedagogy and developmental theories with urban educational policies, specifically focused on the meaning-making experiences of Black girls. In her current work, Lindsay uses this background to engage one-on-one with students and to create inclusive advising resources and programs.

JONATHAN B. SINGER, Ph.D., LCSW is Associate Professor of Social Work at Loyola University Chicago. He is the 2012 and 2016 winner of the National Association of Social Workers Media Award. He was a 2014 Visiting Scholar at Fordham University, the 2017 Lucille N. Austin Scholar at Columbia University, and the 2018 Distinguished Lecturer at Weber State University. He is the President of the American Association of Suicidology and coauthor of the 2015 Routledge text, *Suicide in Schools: A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention*.

Dr. Singer is a sought-after international speaker who has given hundreds of continuing education workshops, keynote addresses, and presentations on youth suicide, ethics, technology, adolescent development and attachment-based family therapy in the USA, Latin America, and Europe. He is the author of over 65 publications and his research has been

featured in national and international media outlets like NPR, BBC, Fox, Time Magazine, and The Guardian. A pioneer in the integration of technology and social work, Dr. Singer is a founding member of the online suicide prevention social media community #SPSM; the Treasurer for the international human services Information Technology association (<http://husita.org/>); and co-lead for the Social Work Grand Challenge initiative "Harness Technology for Social Good."

Dr. Singer is the founder and host of the award winning Social Work Podcast (www.socialworkpodcast.com), the first podcast by and for social workers. The Social Work Podcast has over 37,000 followers on social media, listeners in 208 countries and territories, and a million podcast episode downloads per year. He lives in Evanston, IL with his wife and three children and can be found on Twitter as @socworkpodcast and Facebook at facebook.com/swpodcast.



SAMANTHA PAIGE is an artist, writer, and parent with a passion for life. While she's earned degrees in History, International Relations, and Culinary Education, been a jewelry-maker, lived abroad, and reached fluency in multiple languages, Samantha credits her health challenges as her greatest teachers. Those experiences shaped her worldview and the manner in which she has learned to give back as an artist and entrepreneur.

Samantha models vulnerability and self-inquiry in her life. She continuously asks herself and others through her Last Cut community, "How can I own my life and make my life my own?"

As a young adult cancer survivor and BRCA1 previvor, Samantha has learned to use life experiences as fuel, generating raw dialogue with others about these life-changing moments through her speaking engagements, original podcast series, Last Cut Conversations, her book, LAST CUT, and LAST CUT workbook.

Samantha is committed to supporting individuals and organizations that are working on racial justice platforms, youth empowerment programs, and BRCA and other cancer research. Samantha modeled in the powerful 2017 "Commit to Something" campaign for international gym brand, Equinox, freely displaying her scars from her preventive double mastectomy performed in 2008 after testing positive for the BRCA1 gene mutation that indicates a heightened risk for specific cancers, including breast and ovarian. Samantha has been featured in Elle, Glamour, New York Times, Shondaland, among others. She has given inspiring talks at the Girl Boss Rally and Cycles+Sex in Los Angeles, as well as workshops for Get Lit Literati, Girls Rock Santa Barbara, and Goals for Girls. Samantha serves on the Executive Board for Get Lit - Words Ignite and lives with her daughter in Los Angeles, California.

DANAH WILLIAMS is a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist in private practice in Santa Barbara, CA and President-Elect at the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT). She holds a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology and a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Leadership. Danah helps adults, adolescents and children overcome depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and interpersonal conflict. Danah teaches life-transforming therapeutic interventions using Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Positive Psychology. She galvanizes people to build self-worth and promote resilience in adversity. Prior to opening her private practice, Danah served Santa Barbara's

abused, neglected and at-risk youth at Casa Pacifica: Centers For Children and Families, The Family Therapy Institute, and Recovery Road Medical Centers. Danah is Past-President of Santa Barbara California Association of Marriage and Family (SBCAMFT), and served on the Board of Directors for the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) for two terms.

Danah increases mental health awareness and reduces mental health stigma through CAMFT's Public Outreach Committee. She also plays an integral role on CAMFT's bipartisan Grass Roots Advocacy Task Force; meeting with local, state and federal legislators on a variety of mental health initiatives, including protecting patient rights, increasing access to mental care, veteran mental health, and medicare. Danah has been



involved with Kiwanis International Santa Barbara, Downtown Business Association, Santa Barbara Young Professionals, NAWBO Santa Barbara, SB Women's Political Action Committee and Women in Communication Santa Barbara.

Danah has performed in feature films on Netflix, TBN and Amazon. Her most recent appearance was on Comedy TV's, Funny You Should Ask. She is currently writing a memoir and working on an original screenplay inspired by her experiences being Black in Santa Barbara. Theatrically, Danah aspires to work with Oprah Winfrey, Ava Duvernay, Regina King and Lena Waithe.

JUAN GAVIDIA is a board Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and a doctoral candidate at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology in Los Angeles. He specializes in working with pre-teens, teens, adults who are experiencing psychological conditions ranging from anxiety, stress, depression, grief, and sudden behavior changes. He also works with people who are experiencing the weight of life transitions that are part of the aging and growing up experience. He has been in the field for ten (10) years in various roles and has learned from working with a diverse group of individuals in private practice, community mental health, schools and other settings. Most recently, Mr. Gavidia has been elected to the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapist (CAMFT) Board of directors and is excited to continue to be an advocate for the expansion of mental health access and education in underserved communities.

Juan Gavidia has been a therapist since 2014, licensed in 2016, having worked his way from a case manager, to pre-licensed therapist at a community mental health clinic, to fully licensed and in private practice. His experience working with low income families, monolingual Spanish-speaking families, refugees and other marginalized communities ignites his passion for the work he does, love for the people he serves, and respect for the profession he is proud to continue his work in.

2021 JUDGES:

AZURE ANTIONETTE is in high demand as a poet, corporate and leadership training consultant, speaker and workshop facilitator. She has been commissioned to write for Maria Shriver, The Gap, Johnson & Johnson, Beats By Dr. Dre, Girl Scouts of America, The Documentary Group, California Arts Council, American Cancer Society's benefit Art 4 Life and more. Azure is an official partner of TD Ameritrade seeking to bridge the worlds of finance and art, as well as an official Clean & Clear Ambassador for their "See the Real Me" campaign. Azure served as the closing speaker for the 2013 TEDWomen Conference in San Francisco and has spoken at numerous TEDx events across the country. In 2014, Azure and her work was the focus of a short film produced by The Gap Foundation for their "One Stitch Closer" campaign.

KELLY GRACE THOMAS is an ocean-obsessed Aries from Jersey. She is a self-taught poet, editor, educator and author. . Kelly is the winner of the 2020 Jane Underwood Poetry Prize and 2017 Neil Postman Award for



Metaphor from *Rattle*, 2018 finalist for the Rita Dove Poetry Award and multiple pushcart prize nominee. Her first full-length collection, *Boat Burned*, released with YesYes Books in January 2020. Kelly's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in: *Best New Poets 2019*, *Los Angeles Review*, *Redivider*, *Muzzle*, *Sixth Finch* and more. Kelly is the Director of Education for Get Lit and the co-author of *Words Ignite*. She lives in the Bay Area with her husband Omid.

[MALIK YUSEF](#), the WordSmyth, is an avant-garde spoken word poet—with timely lyrics that address and bring attention to national and global issues. Born and raised in Chicago's south side amongst a humble and sometimes troubled beginning, Malik rose out of those surroundings to become a 24x Grammy award-nominee, 6x Grammy award-winner, and 7x ASCAP award-winner for both pop and R&B. Other credits include Emmy, Peabody, and Tony awards. Malik is signed to the world's largest music publisher, Universal Music Publishing, and is part of Kanye West's G.O.O.D. Music label and affiliated with Wiz Khalifa's Taylor Gang. It is his pure talent, unparalleled work ethic, and ability to be a trusted advisor that has allowed Malik to build and maintain incredible industry connections and relationships with the likes of JAY Z, Drake, Katy Perry, Common, Jennifer Hudson, Rihanna, The Band Perry, Wiz Khalifa, and Adam Levine.

[TIANA CLARK](#) is the author of the poetry collection, *I Can't Talk About the Trees Without the Blood* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018), winner of the 2017 Agnes Lynch Starrett Prize, and *Equilibrium* (Bull City Press, 2016), selected by Afaa Michael Weaver for the 2016 Frost Place Chapbook Competition. Clark is a winner for the 2020 Kate Tufts Discovery Award (Claremont Graduate University), a 2019 National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellow, a recipient of a 2019 Pushcart Prize, a winner of the 2017 Furious Flower's Gwendolyn Brooks Centennial Poetry Prize, and the 2015 Rattle Poetry Prize. She is a graduate of Vanderbilt University (M.F.A) and Tennessee State University (B.A.) where she studied Africana and Women's studies. Her writing has appeared in or is forthcoming from *The New Yorker*, *Poetry Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *VQR*, *Tin House Online*, *Kenyon Review*, *BuzzFeed News*, *American Poetry Review*, *New England Review*, *Oxford American*, *Best New Poets 2015*, and elsewhere. She teaches creative writing at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

[TONYA INGRAM](#) is a poet, Cincinnati native, Bronx-bred introvert, mental health advocate, kidney transplant hopeful, Lupus legend, cat auntie, and lover of Tom Hardy and "The Office." Tonya has graced the stages of The Getty Museum, Madison Square Garden, San Francisco Opera House, Nuyorican Poets Café, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Lexus Verses and Flow's variety show, and "The Price is Right*," the online and physical pages of The New York Times, Vice i-D, Bustle, and Marie Claire, and the classrooms of schools in the United States and Ghana, just to name a few. her viral collaboration with BuzzFeed, "An Open Letter to My Depression," has reached over 4 million views and counting. A friend, creative, daydreamer, and Virgo, Tonya's writing explores the necessity in taking care of ourselves, especially on the days we feel unworthy. She is a graduate of New York University and Otis College of Art and Design. Tonya currently resides in Los Angeles, CA.



YESIKA SALGADO is a Los Angeles based Salvadoran poet who writes about her family, her culture, her city, and her fat brown body. She has shared her work in venues and campuses throughout the country. Salgado is a two time National Poetry Slam finalist and the recipient of the 2020 International Latino Book Award in Poetry. Her work has been featured in the Los Angeles Times, Teen Vogue, Univision, CNN, NPR, TEDx, and many digital platforms. She is an internationally recognized body-positive activist and the writer of the column Suelta for Remezcla. Yesika is the author of the best-sellers Corazón, Tesoro, and Hermosa, published with Not a Cult.

JEREMY RADIN is a poet, actor, and teacher. He's appeared on several television shows including *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, *CSI*, *ER*, and *Zoey 101*, in films such as *The Way Back*, starring Ben Affleck and directed by Gavin O'Connor, Terrence Malick's *The New World* and *Wrestlemaniac*, and in many plays. His poems have appeared in *Gulf Coast*, *Grist*, *SideKick Lit*, *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *Nailed*, *Sundog Lit*, *Union Station*, *Winter Tangerine*, and elsewhere. He teaches acting at The Beverly Hills Playhouse. He is the author of two collections of poetry, *Slow Dance with Sasquatch* (Write Bloody Publishing) and *Dear Sal* (not a cult press). He lives in Los Angeles with his four plants and refrigerator.



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// SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS TO TAG + FOLLOW

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- We Rise LA (@werise_la)
- Marianne Williamson (@mariannewilliamson)
- Jamie Tworkowski (@jamietworkowski)
- Samantha Paige (@lastcutproject)
- Hanif Abdurraqib (@nifmuhammad)
- Tiana Clark (@tianaclarkypants)
- Tonya Ingram (@tonyainstagram)
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- Kelly Grace Thomas (@kellygracethomas)
- Malik Yusef (@malikyusef100)
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// SAMPLE GRAPHICS





THANK YOU.

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