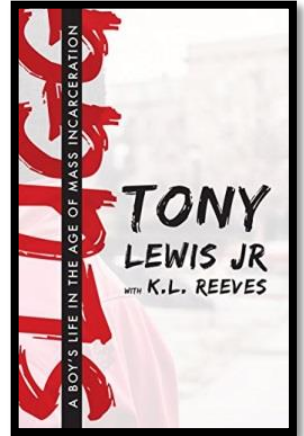


Books Across the Miles (BAM!) Discussion Questions

The second BAM book of the year is *Slugg: A Boy's Life in the Age of Mass Incarceration* by Tony Lewis Jr. Here are some discussion questions for your reflection. Write us with your answers and your reflections—we're looking forward to hearing your thoughts!



1. Why did Tony Lewis Sr. choose the drug game? Do you agree or disagree? What impact did this have on his community and his family?
2. What happened to Tony's mother after his father's arrest? Can you relate to what she was going through? Do you know anyone who has been in a similar situation? Why do you believe there is such a stigma (*stigma*: a sense of shame or disgrace) around mental illness in our society?
3. On page 61, he writes, "my lonely internal life began." What does he mean by that? What did your internal life look like when you were a child? What does it look like now?
4. Tony gets into a good high school, and eventually college, but he says that his life is a contradiction. What does that mean? Have you ever felt like your life was a contradiction?
5. How did Tony and his father maintain their relationship despite his incarceration? What do you think are the most important things for a parent to do to maintain a relationship with his children while incarcerated?

Send responses to
Free Minds Book Club
2201 P Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

WRITING OPPORTUNITY: PEN America Writing for Justice Fellowship

PEN AMERICA
WRITING
FOR JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP



FM Members, check out this opportunity from PEN America! Write them at the address below if you have any further questions. PEN America's Writing for Justice Fellowships seeks six writers to create written works (poetry, novels, memoirs, and more) sharing the stories of incarcerated individuals, their families, communities, and the wider impact of the criminal justice system.

Proposed projects may include — but are not limited to — fictional stories; works of literary or long-form journalism; theatrical, television or film scripts; memoirs; poetry collections; or multimedia projects. The most competitive applications will demonstrate how the proposed project will engage issues of reform, fuel public debate, crystallize concepts of reform, and facilitate the possibility of societal change.

Currently and formerly incarcerated writers are highly encouraged to apply.

Deadline to apply: July 1, 2018

Send works for consideration to:

To be eligible for this Fellowship, the applicant must be 21 years of age or older, an individual writer, and a US resident.

Writing For Justice Fellowship
588 Broadway, Suite 303
New York, NY 10012

Next Issue's Theme: Communication (Volume 7, Issue 4)

Have you ever felt misunderstood? Have you ever misunderstood what someone else was trying to communicate to you? For this issue, we're looking at *healthy communication*—how do we express our thoughts, feelings, and ideas to the people in our lives? How do we communicate our ideas to the world? How do we listen to others? Communication is the key to success in our relationships with family and friends; it's also essential for a strong work environment (we know a thing or two about that in the Free Minds office!). Communication is how we share the things that matter to us—our values, our goals, our vision—to the world around us. How can we use our words (or music, or art) to make people understand us? How can we understand others?

Send us a poem or essay of your own, or try our prompts!

Communication: What I Don't Say

A Poem by _____

When I say _____

You hear _____

When you say _____

I hear _____

What I can't say is _____

What I mean is _____

When you say _____

Do you mean _____?

What I wish I'd told you is _____

What I want you to know is _____

Conflict: Before & After

A Poem by _____

When I have an issue with someone I _____

When I was younger I used to _____

Now I understand _____

If you take the time to talk to me _____

Using words for certain situations can _____

Actions and words go hand and hand because _____

One situation I wish I could go back to is _____

I would make it better by saying _____

EXAMPLE: Conflict, Before & After

by James

When I have an issue with someone, I try to analyze the situation before reacting
When I was younger, I used to get angry easily and want to bring harm to people all the time
Now I understand, I can't put out a fire with fire
If you take the time to talk to me, you will know I'm not a bad guy only misunderstood at times
Using words for certain situations can stop people from getting into physical confrontations
Actions and words go hand and hand because one without the other can easily be misunderstood
One situation I wish I could go back to is the argument I had with my good man
I would make it better by saying, *we're better than this. It's all love from here on out*

And a preview of Volume 7, Issue 5: We want to make sure people have time to write in with their submissions, so here's a heads up for the Fall 2018 issue! We'll be writing about *Parenthood*, our relationships, hopes, and dreams for our children (or future children).