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“Find freedom in the context you inherit”

HUM, THE HUMANITIES 101 Community Programme, is part of communities in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, Downtown South (DTES/South), at UBC’s Faculty of Arts, across Canada and afar. Hum offers four free, dedicated courses with low-income residents of the DTES/South: two are hands-on writing courses that touch on thirteen genres in thirteen weeks; and two are wildly interdisciplinary, delving into over twenty disciplines with Hum faculty and invited teachers over a full academic year. Prerequisite-free, Hum’s courses value participants’ own situated knowledges and desire to join in – they are people from around the world, and between 18-85 years of age. Each year Hum courses have a different theme, such as *Where there’s walls there’s holes*, *No carrots no sticks*, and *Find freedom in the context you inherit*, a quote from Stó:lō feminist writer Lee Maracle. Students write poems, reflections and essays that gather in yearly publications, the source of the two essays here. About seventy-five people graduate from Hum courses each year, and all alumni are invited to be members of the Steering Committee that guides this eighteen-year-old Programme. Hum alumni also initiate and run free weekly public programmes at Carnegie Centre and The Gathering Place, two of the six downtown community centres Hum works with closely.

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