

Beginnings XII

A PUBLICATION OF ADULT STUDENT WRITING OF THE

Ohio Writers' Conference

OHIO LITERACY RESOURCE CENTER

Foreword

I write this Foreword with an odd mixture of embarrassment and pride. Until I was asked to speak at the Ohio Literacy Resource Center's 11th Annual Ohio Writers' Conference, I confess I was unaware of the noble and exciting work done by the OLRC and ABE programs. But to have spent the day with young and seasoned writers from all corners of Ohio brought me unbridled joy and pride—pride in realizing the magnanimity of all those involved in the undertaking and pride at having shared the dais with so many gifted voices.

Each person who submitted one of the seventy-two entries in this book, as well as those nearly five hundred writers who offered their work for consideration, deserve our applause. I have been to many writers' conferences in my life, but I know with certainty that I have never seen such enthusiasm for the written word as I found at this OLRC event. I like to think I was present at the opening salvos of many great writing careers.

The British poet Charles Causley once wrote: "We need art to remind us not to spend too much time in the office or on the factory floor caring about things that on our deathbeds will mean less than nothing." Here are people, many getting their GEDs, who have already learned that message and taken it to heart.

So, to all of the budding poets, short story writers, and novelists who are toiling at the writer's trade, I tip my hat.

Never fear failure. Failure is your friend. Embrace it, for nothing succeeds like failure. Know that you can never be a writer unless you promise yourself to be a rewriter. Revise, revise, revise: the only mantra for us all.

J. Patrick Lewis