

IF I DON'T MAKE IT, I LOVE YOU

Survivors in the Aftermath of School Shootings

*Educational Resource Guide and
Writing Prompts*

CREATED BY
AMY ARCHER
AND
LOREN KLEINMAN

WITH GUIDANCE AND FEEDBACK FROM
DR. AMY SIMOLO,
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

THANK YOU FOR downloading this resource.

The purpose of this guide is to help promote conversation between teachers and their students about the topics, themes, and perspectives in the book *If I Don't Make It, I Love You: Survivors in the Aftermath of School Shootings*.

This guide also encourages students to discuss their own thoughts and opinions about healing and grief in the aftermath of a school shooting, and to support their claims with evidence from the book.

It is the editors' hope that this guide will encourage students to articulate, exchange, and listen to one another's ideas and understanding of the ripple effect of school shootings in America.

This guide can be used for the following:

1. Independent guided study
2. Pairing writing prompts with our digital archive
3. Homework assignments
4. Assessment
5. Student led discussion
6. Information literacy
7. College (including FYE) and high school writing (Grades 11-12)

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ABOUT *IF I DON'T MAKE IT, I LOVE YOU*

THE BEGINNING...

IN THE MONTHS before the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, we discussed ideas for a new anthology. It quickly became clear that gun violence, and those left in its wake, was of particular interest to both of us. For Amye, Sandy Hook changed everything, as it did for many parents across the country. Her twin daughters were the same age as the children murdered on that day, and she has been advocating for change ever since. And for Loren, she'd been writing about trauma for years after her own experience with sexual violence. She's been interested in how individuals recover through the use of personal story, and has delivered many workshops on writing to heal.

So, we started our project with what we thought was a simple question: What happened to those who survived Columbine? We wondered how they moved forward, how they grew up and moved on, and what their lives looked like almost twenty years later. Then, the Parkland shooting happened, and it became clear that the intersectionality between trauma and mass shootings could no longer be ignored.

We faced many challenges when starting this project. The very first was finding a survivor who would talk with us. We started by reaching out to individuals who were publicly telling their stories after Parkland. We got some response, but they were often busy with advocacy work or tired of the media's constant presence. Finally, it was through the Pennsylvania Chapter of Moms Demand Action that we were able to connect with our very first writer: Jami Amo, a student who'd survived the shooting at Columbine High School.

Through Jami, we learned of survivor networks that stretch across the

country and reach back decades. The survivors in these networks, like The Rebels Project, are fiercely protective of one another, and it took many weeks and months to earn their trust and prove our intentions, a task only accomplished with the help of Jami and others who were willing to vouch for us. We spent countless hours on the phone assuring the writers in this book that we weren't media, but teachers, and that our book would be a historical preservation of what it is like to live in the here and now, in the aftermath of school shootings.

We learned that trauma often silences, and many communities represented in this book experienced silence in some way. Some chose to remain quiet after facing an intense media presence in the days after their shooting. Some stayed quiet out of respect for those who didn't survive. A member of the Sandy Hook community told us, "*My child lived. I have no right to speak.*" Sometimes, the silence was cultural, as in the Amish community of West Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania.

This silence showed up often in this project. Especially during those early days. Some communities didn't respond. Others were near impossible to contact. We spent months trying to find a way in, to give everyone a chance to speak their experience and have a voice in this project, but in the end, some were not ready, and we respected their decision.

Silence was also intrinsic in the language. Some people we spoke with refused to be called survivors because they weren't shot. Some who were shot refused to be called victims. We learned not to say "lost." "My daughter was *murdered*," a mother from Northern Illinois reminded us, *murdered*. A student who was at Umpqua Community College during the shooting told us over the phone, "We are all survivors. Even the ones not in the room. Even the ones not on campus that day. We are a community, and we mourn together." There seemed to be rules about who was allowed to carry pain, a hierarchy of trauma—unspoken. We tried to learn the rules.

We also bore witness to the vicarious nature of trauma. Before starting, we knew this collection process wouldn't be easy. So, we prepared. We reduced our

teaching loads, started exercising and practicing meditation, started journaling, and found therapists. Despite our best efforts, the trauma from these stories and those telling them, found a way to seep into our daily lives. We cried a lot. We turned to our spouses, co-workers, and family members for emotional support, but in the end, no one knew what we were going through better than us. We spent countless hours on the phone with each other listening, talking, sometimes sobbing. We held one another's pain when the weight became too much.

After a year of cultivating these personal narratives, we returned to our original question: What happened to those who survived Columbine? While the section in this book on Columbine reveals many answers to this question, we realized our project expanded beyond our previous scope. What seemed so defined from the beginning, flowered into a desire to know more, which took us back more than fifty years to University of Texas-Austin where we then worked forward. And what we unveiled through this expansion was a timeline of generational trauma told by those that lived it either through the lens of student, parent, daughter, son, best friend, neighbor, doctor, lawyer, husband, wife, etc.

This timeline provided answers, many of which can be found in these personal stories of letting go and moving on, managing survivor's guilt, forgiveness, shame, denial, healing from physical and mental injuries, self-destruction, addiction, anger, love, and more. Yet, there is still so much left unsaid. So it's our hope that as you read these stories, you'll be as moved by them as we've been in order to find more answers to one of America's greatest public crises.

Amye Archer and Loren Kleinman, Editors
November 28, 2018

BOOK DETAILS

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COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED FOR GRADES 11-12

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.2

Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3

Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in Federalist No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.5

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS:**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7**

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

RANGE OF READING AND LEVEL OF TEXT COMPLEXITY:**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.10**

By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

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QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS ABOUT USING THIS GUIDE?

If you have any questions or concerns about using this resource, please email Amye and Loren at info@ifidontmakeitthebook.com.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND WRITING PROMPTS BY CHAPTER

FOREWORD

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Describe the importance of survivor networks in Fred Guttenberg’s “The Final Seconds.”
2. What role does memory play in Fred Guttenberg’s story?
3. Describe the events leading up to Fred Guttenberg’s move towards activism.

INTRODUCTION

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. What is Dr. Roger S. Friedman’s connection to school shootings? How does his experience inform his understanding of the aftermath of a school shooting?
2. Explain what Dr. Freidman might mean when he says gun violence is a “public epidemic that demands a public response.” Who is the audience? What might the public response be?

SANTA FE HIGH SCHOOL, SANTA FE, TEXAS

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Rhonda Hart’s story was created by selecting only a few tweets from the hundreds available. Chose one image, one tweet, and discuss why the editors chose that specific image.
2. What does Bree Butler mean when she says, “I wish I could appreciate the good times before they were taken away without any warning?”

Writing Prompts for the Santa Fe High School Chapter

1. Write about a time your hometown or your school came together as a community to support someone or something.
2. Write a rhetorical analysis of two or three of Rhonda Hart’s tweets. Where do we see evidence of the rhetorical appeals?
3. Compare and contrast the visual and textual displays of grief. How does reading Bree’s story compare with the visual story from Rhonda Hart?

GREAT MILLS HIGH SCHOOL, GREAT MILLS, MARYLAND

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the role details play in Mollie Davis’ story. Why are some so specific, yet some so vague? How does that add to the tone of the piece?
2. Explain what Mollie Davis mean when she says, “When I tried to wear that sweatshirt again over a month later, my back broke out in hives, like my body was rejecting it.”

Writing Prompts for the Great Mills High School Chapter

1. Explore the role of adults in this chapter. What is their relationship to the author, and how are they portrayed? Are these roles traditional?

MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL, PARKLAND, FLORIDA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. How does Rachel Bean learn there has been a school shooting at her high school in “Here’s the Funny Thing About Tragedy: It Never Really Goes Away”? Explain how learning this information affected her.
2. Explain what Lori Alhadeff means when she says “As a mother, you birthed your child. You raised your child. When your child dies, it’s your job to make sure she’s buried.”
3. Discuss the differences between Part One and Part Two of Dara Hass’ “Room 1216.”
4. What challenges do you expect Mitchell Dworet might face as, “...the only parent with two children, one killed, and one wounded by this shooting?”
5. Examine the use of sound in Keely Owen’s “Learning to Trust My Instincts.”
6. What is the role fatherhood plays on grieving in Andrew Pollack’s “Daddy, Keep Going”?

Writing Prompts for the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Chapter

1. Explore the role of communication in these stories.
2. Compare and contrast the differing points of view presented in this chapter. How does word choice, detail, and other literary devices change when the POV shifts?

3. Watch Emma Gonzalez’s speech at the March for Our Lives gathering. Compare her use of rhetorical appeals with one other essay from this chapter.

MARSHALL COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, DRAFFENVILLE, KENTUCKY

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. What does Cloi Henke mean when she says, “I don’t think we are preparing kids properly for a shooting”?
2. Discuss Hailey Case’s use of rhetorical questions in “Feeling Safe.”
3. Why does Heather Adams choose to treat Mary with kindness, even after she learns her true identity?
4. How does Dr. Sterling Haring’s personal story regarding his son inform the larger narrative in which he describes the emergency room the day of the Marshall County shooting?

Writing Prompt for the Marshall County High School Chapter

1. What do you remember about the Marshall County Shooting? Spend a day or class period researching coverage of the shooting. Explore why and how the media responds to school shootings in our current culture.

UMPQUA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ROSEBURG, OREGON

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Explain what Melinda Benton might mean when she says “the sadness is perpetual.”
2. In “Behind the Story: Journalistic Responsibility When Reporting a School Shooting” by Lori Shontz, why do journalists need to have a “sophisticated understanding of trauma” to report on mass shootings?

3. In the comic, “Perpetual” by Kindra Neely, explain how she uses art to explore the grief process in the aftermath of her school shooting.

Writing Prompts for the Umpqua Community College Chapter

1. What are the similarities between Melinda Benton and Kindra Neely’s ideas about grief and sadness being perpetual in nature?
2. In Lori Shontz’s “Behind the Story: Journalistic Responsibility When Reporting a School Shooting,” what is the importance of practicing ethical behaviors when reporting on a school shooting?

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA BARBARA, ISLA VISTA,
CALIFORNIA**

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. How would you explain Sky Serge’s description of Isla Vista as a “snow globe”?
2. How did Carina Sarabia’s school shooting experience lead to her sense of numbness after the shooting?
3. Why does Dr. Andrea Slominski note that “a mass shooting and the trauma that follows it are rites of passage”?

Writing Prompts for the University of California at Santa Barbara Chapter

1. Write about your own understanding of a rite of passage. Have you experienced a moment in your life that could be described as a rite of passage?
2. What is the importance of ritual in your life?

NEW RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE AT THE NEW RIVER MALL, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Explain why Taylor Schumann’s baby is “already affected by gun violence.”
2. Why does Megan Doney need to “know what had happened to all the people who had been burned in this fire” before her?

Writing Prompts for the New River Community College Chapter

1. How do Taylor Schumann and Megan Doney write about healing after a school shooting? Are there similarities in their writing about healing?
2. Explain why Megan Doney might write a letter to teachers affected by gun violence rather than an essay?

EPISCOPAL SCHOOL OF JACKSONVILLE, JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. In the poem “March 6, 2012” by Dorothy Poucher, explain what she means by the lines “a girl sobs beside me,/but i can’t even hear her/fear drowns out her cries.”
2. Describe how Zach Kindy’s day went from normal to chaotic. What did he learn from the events that unfolded during his school shooting?

Writing Prompts for the Episcopal School of Jacksonville Chapter

1. In Dorothy Poucher’s poem “March 6, 2012,” she repeats the line, “i am a kid in a dark room.” How does she use repetition as a rhetorical device?

2. Explain Zach Kindy's argument for not arming teachers in schools. Do you agree or disagree with his point of view?

SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. In "Before and After," Abbey Clements writes, "There was nothing I did out of the ordinary that day. Even pulling two kids from the hallway, when I first heard the shots. No active drill, no lock down drill allowed us to escape. He turned left and we were on the right." Do you agree with her assessment of her own actions that day?
2. Discuss the title of Susie Ehrens story, "The Road Back." What challenges do you think Susie faced as a parent? How is Susie's story different from the others in the chapter?
3. What does Cindy Clement Carlson mean by "I felt neon. As if to walk past me you'd read on my skin WAS IN BUILDING WAS IN BUILDING WAS IN BUILDING."?
4. What role did Alissa Parker's faith play in her recovery after Sandy Hook?
5. Why does Geneva Cunningham feel it's important to say the shooter's name in her story, "Your Name Doesn't Hurt Me"?
6. Mary Ann Jacob writes, "When the time came to return to school a few weeks later, the staff and the teachers were once again faced with the choice of whether to take care of ourselves or others." Explore the dual roles of teachers and staff members.
7. First Selectwoman Pat Llorda, whose story is located in the archive at www.ifidontthebook.com, tells Mary Ann Jacob, "it's worse than Columbine." What do you suppose she means by that statement?

Writing Prompts for the Sandy Hook Elementary School Chapter

1. In her essay, Abbey Clements states “The presence of guns in schools is antithetical to the basic tenets of school.” Research, summarize, and present both sides of the conversation around arming teachers. Who is against it and why? What is the argument for this measure?
2. Explore the use of physicality in Cindy Clement Carlson’s “Aftermath.” Write about a time when your body has reacted to stress or trauma.
3. What types of advocacy grew out of the Sandy Hook tragedy? Trace the different groups that emerged and discuss their evolution.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, DEKALB, ILLINOIS

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. In “Unidentified,” What does Mary Kay Mace mean by “the double meaning of the word *survivor*”? How does this idea of identity relate to the title of the piece?
2. What does the role of community play in Patrick Korellis’ “Something Has To Change”?
3. Joseph Dubowski writes, “Tragedy and trauma don’t make us who we are; they just reveal the cracks.” Discuss this idea.

Writing Prompts for the Northern Illinois University Chapter

1. Compare and contrast the presentation of grief in Mary Kay Mace and Joseph Dubowski’s stories. How have these two parents moved forward after losing their children? In what ways are their experiences similar? In what ways have they chosen different paths?

VIRGINIA TECH, BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. What might the importance of memory and honoring loved ones in Jennifer Herbstritt “Missouri”?
2. What are some similarities between Margaret Herbstritt’s “Remembering Jeremy” and Mona Samaha’s “A Reema Miracle”?
3. What might Joseph Samaha mean by “I’m alive, but I’m not ok”?
4. Compare Chase Damiano’s journals after the shooting and in 2007 and his most recent one in 2018. How are the journals the same? How are they different?

Writing Prompts for the Virginia Tech Chapter

1. Write about a loved one that you lost. What do you remember most about them? How do you honor them even after death?
2. How might you think journaling plays a part in healing and grief? Are there any benefits to journaling during a recovery process? Consider Chase Damiano’s journals as a reference.
3. Listen to Nikki Giovanni’s “We Are Virginia Tech” poem, which she presented at the Virginia Tech Memorial Convocation on April 17, 2007. How does she use repetition to evoke emotion in her poem? How does the repetition make you, the listener, feel?
4. In Jennifer Herbstritt’s essay “Missouri,” she structures the format of her essay as a letter. How does the structure benefit or enhance her to discussion of grief?
5. What would you consider are the major themes in the Virginia Tech chapter? Pick two themes and support your reasoning using the essays in the chapter.

WEST NICKEL MINES SCHOOL, BART TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. How did the West Nickel Mines shooting contribute to Dr. A. Reema Kar's career in surgery?
2. How did Bruce Becker utilize his art to help the Amish after the shooting?
3. How would you explain Marie Monville's perspective on healing and forgiveness?

Writing Prompts for the West Nickel Mines School Chapter

1. Discuss the theme of healing and forgiveness in the West Nickel Mines chapter. Did it inform your own understanding of healing and forgiveness? Why or why not?
2. Can you discuss a time in your life when art helped you heal? Art could be music, paintings, poetry, etc.

NORTH VALLEY JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER, LOS ANGELES, CA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. In "The Path Not Chosen," how did Josh Stepakoff's experience as a six-year-old gunshot victim shape his career?
2. In her story, Loren Leib discusses her path to advocacy. Discuss what she means when she says, "Doing Nothing Was Not an Option."
3. What challenges do you expect the sibling of a gun violence survivor might face? What does Seth Stepakoff mean when he says, "as the sibling of someone who was shot, you're left with the conundrum of survivorship"?

Writing Prompts for the North Valley Jewish Community Center
Chapter

1. The JCC shooting was considered by law enforcement as a hate crime. Define and examine what that term means. What can Americans do to stem these types of tragedies?
2. How did this shooting, as a hate crime, differ from other shootings in this book, which were not defined as a hate crime?
3. Write about a time where you felt discriminated against or ostracized for your beliefs, your heritage, your age, or your physical appearance. How did you handle this experience? How did you overcome it?

COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL, LITTLETON, COLORADO

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. In what way was Coni Sanders' career path influenced by the death of her father, Dave Sanders?
2. What does Coni Sanders mean when she suggests her father was in the right place at the right time?
3. How did becoming a parent change the way Jami Amo felt about the Columbine shooting?
4. What role did guilt play in Jami Amo's ability to process what had happened in Columbine?
5. Discuss what Heather Martin means when she says, "Like other survivors, I tried to get back to normal as quickly as possible."
6. What role did connecting with other survivors play in Heather Martin's recovery?
7. Discuss what the title of Ted Hochhalter's piece could mean in relation to his story.

8. How does Ted Hochhalter’s inability to get home and the confusion in his travel mimic the Columbine shooting itself?
9. Why do you suppose Paula Reed chose Robert Frost’s *The Path Not Taken* for her message to the Sandy Hook teachers?

Writing Prompts for the Columbine High School Chapter

1. Trace the idea of “home” as described in this chapter. How is the idea or concept of home presented?
2. Define vicarious trauma and discuss the presence of such trauma in these essays in the chapter, especially in Ted Hochhalter’s “Arrivals and Departures.”
3. Interview a family member who was an adult or near adult when Columbine happened. What are their memories and how does their perception of what occurred there compare to the narratives presented in this chapter?
4. Watch “Bowling for Columbine,” written and directed by Michael Moore. What were the cultural implications of Columbine as discussed by Moore, and where do we see them presented in this chapter?
5. The group “The Rebels Project” was begun by two students from Columbine. Research that advocacy group and discuss how it compares with other groups involving gun violence.

THURSTON HIGH SCHOOL, SPRINGFIELD, OREGON

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Discuss how Jennifer Alldredge Ryker’s decision to write her story in present tense affects the tone of the piece.
2. Discuss the significance of Jennifer Alldredge Ryker’s title, “If I Die Before I Wake.”

3. In “Diary of a Witness in Two Parts,” why does Jenny Gregory feel she is not entitled to PTSD?
4. In “A Little More Healed,” Jolene Leu swells with emotion after seeing a banner hanging outside the school that reads THURSTON STRONG. Discuss her reaction.
5. After witnessing the gunman and hearing shots fired, Aubrey Bulkeley writes “I made my way to Spanish class. I was supposed to have a test.” Discuss her decision.

Writing Prompts for the Thurston High School Chapter

1. How is Thurston’s placement in history as pre-Columbine reflected in these stories?
2. Define “survivor’s guilt,” and discuss this concept in relation to this chapter.
3. Write about a friendship you value. When did you meet this friend? How have they supported you in your life? How have shared experiences brought you closer?

HEATH HIGH SCHOOL, WEST PADUCAH, KENTUCKY

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. What does Hollan Holm mean when he says, “What we didn’t know over twenty years ago was that we couldn’t run away from it?” What is the “it” to which he is referring?
2. In Christina Hadley Ellegood’s story, she describes returning to school the day after the shooting. Discuss why the administration may have made that decision.
3. Discuss how Kelly Carneal Firesheets struggled to become more than just “The Girl Whose Brother Shot People.”
4. What does Sarah Holland Stewart mean by “I am done picking sides”?

Writing Prompts for the Heath High School Chapter

1. Explore the role of the NRA according to Hollan Holm. Examine the roots of the organization. How has its purpose and mission changed? How has it not changed?
2. This chapter is not represented in the Washington Post’s extensive database of school shootings. Why is the cultural starting point for school shootings always Columbine?
3. Compare how schools respond, recover, and move forward after a shooting now, as opposed to pre-Columbine. How are those responses different?

BETHEL REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, BETHEL, ALASKA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Why does Fannie Black say, “I never thought Evan Ramsey would shoot me?” What evidence did she have to feel this way?
2. Explore what Fannie Black means when she asks, “If we had the support we needed right away, and if we accepted the limited support offered to us, would we be able to speak now?”

Writing Prompts for the Bethel Regional High School Chapter

1. Research the Bethel Regional Shooting in relation to the shooter and his past. What does his story tell us about the mental health support system? In what ways did they system help him? In what ways did it let him down? Use two outside sources and two scholarly sources.

BARD COLLEGE AT SIMON'S ROCK, GREAT BARRINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. How do Gregory Gibson and his wife Annie react to the news of Galen's death to Gregory Gibson in "Sick of It All"?
2. Who or what is "moxie" in Mark Fredrick's letter to Galen Gibson?
3. What might Jesse Doris mean when he writes in "Concealed Carry" that "trauma molds from a shield into a *personality*"?
4. After reading a section of Anne Thalheimer's autobiographical comic, what does the title of the whole work, *What You Don't Get*, represent to you about love, life, and death?

Writing Prompts for the Bard College at Simon's Rock Chapter

1. If you were to write a letter to a deceased loved one, what might it say? Draft a letter to them where you talk about a memory or what they mean to you. Is there anything you'd like to tell them that you didn't have a chance to when they were alive?
2. Create an autobiographical comic about a traumatic event in your life. Who are the main characters? What is the plot? How will you represent the trauma through illustration?

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, IOWA CITY, IOWA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. What is the cause of Karein Goertz's struggle to complete her dissertation?
2. How would you explain the "debit column" in Sonya Rodolfo-Sioson's narrative?

3. What is the meaning of the line in Jane Nicholson’s “Sudden, Violent and Public: Into the Crucible”: “A bullet makes a straight-line trajectory, grief makes a circle”?

Writing Prompts for the University of Iowa Chapter

1. How do the contributors in this chapter write about grief? Compare and/or contrast two essays in the chapter and how they discuss grief.
2. What is meant by *cowboy justice*? Is this a theme or perspective found only in the University of Iowa chapter?

CLEVELAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. How does the structure of Julia Schardt’s “The Red Shoes” impact the topic of her essay?
2. What is the importance of memory in “The Red Shoes”?

Writing Prompts for the Cleveland Elementary School Chapter

1. How do the images in “The Red Shoes” inform Julia Schardt’s topic? Select two images to support your claim(s).
2. Does Julia Schardt’s structure add to or detract from her topic?

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. How do Kent Kirkley’s photographs inform his topic?
2. What is meant by “It is the experience of the survivors that are most instructive” in Monte Akers’ essay?
3. Explain how survivor’s guilt is important to understanding John Fox’s experience.

Writing Prompts for the University of Texas at Austin Chapter

1. Compare and/or contrast how survivors in the University of Texas at Austin chapter refer to survivor's guilt.
2. Do Monte Akers and John Fox agree that the University of Texas at Austin was America's first school shooting? Why or why not?

COORDINATING TRAUMA

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Explain what Hollye Dexter means when she writes "gun violence never takes a day off"?
2. Explain the theme of giving back in Charlene Mokos Hoverter's essay.
3. How do Jennifer Ostrega and Marcel McClinton describe their rise to activism?

Writing Prompts for the Coordinating Trauma Chapter

1. Compare and/or contrast the events that lead up to two survivor coordinators' activism.
2. Is activism important to survivors' healing process? Why or why not?

AFTERWORD

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Discuss how Natalie Barden feels about having grown up with Sandy Hook Promise in her life. What statements or clues does she give us?
2. What does Natalie mean when she writes, "I remember sitting in my basement with my friends weirdly making

bracelets with Daniel’s name on them, as if he was going to wear them someday”?

3. Discuss the role memory plays in Natalie’s story.

WRITING PROMPTS THAT ADDRESS OVERALL THEMES AND TOPICS OF THE BOOK

THE FOLLOWING writing prompts address overall themes or topics in the book rather than specific chapters.

1. After reading first-hand accounts from students and teachers who have lived through a school shooting, what do you think they might recommend for active shooter drills?
2. Interview a parent or grandparent about their school experience. What role did safety play? What dangers or threats did they face? Explore the differences and similarities between your own experience and that of your subject.
3. Research the Dickey Amendment and discuss why gun violence research is restricted.
4. “We’re all survivors. Even those not at the school that day. We all had to find a way to heal.” Do you agree with this statement? Explain.
5. What are two essays in this book that you identify with most? What aspects of the essays (e.g., theme, perspective, structure, visual representation, etc.) resonated with you and why?
6. In your opinion, what is the overall theme of this book? Use examples from the text to support your claims. Be sure to cite!
7. After reading this book, do you feel moved to activism like many of the contributors? Why or why not?

8. Research and define the “No Notoriety” movement. Do you agree or disagree with the effectiveness of this movement?
9. Analyze the role of social media in these tragedies. In what ways has social media broadened our world and helped these survivors? In what ways do you imagine it has hurt? Compare two chapters from this book in your analysis—one from pre and one from post the advent of social media.
10. The cultural reference point for school shootings is often Columbine. Why do you suppose that Columbine stands out as it does despite the fact that there were several shootings in the 4-5 years before?
11. Choose two to three essays from the book that talk about faith. Trace the role of faith through these stories.
12. List some of your favorite artifacts from the digital archive at <https://www.ifidontmakeitthebook.com>. Choose one artifact and write a letter to a future reader or student about why those are your favorite artifacts. Tell them what you learned about the artifacts, including how those artifacts relate to the larger themes book.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS (OR ADDITIONAL TEACHING IDEAS)

1. Write a letter to one of the contributors in the book to follow up on their narrative.
 - a. Students can email letters to: info@ifidontmakeitthebook.com
2. Write a letter to both editors of the book to discuss your thoughts, feelings, perspectives reading the contributors' narratives.
 - a. Students can email letters to: info@ifidontmakeitthebook.com
3. Develop weekly reading groups for students.
 - a. Group students and assign a specific chapter from the book.
 - b. Assign students in the group to address the discussion questions associated with that chapter.
 - c. Assign students in that group a day to present their findings and engage the rest of the class in a group discussion.
 - d. Groups can present/lead discussions on a rotating basis with teacher as the moderator.
4. Have students watch movies about school shootings to reflect on gun violence and make connections to the book.

Some suggested movies might include:

 - a. *Bowling for Columbine*
 - b. *We Need to Talk about Kevin*
 - c. *Amish Grace*
 - d. *The Life Before Her Eyes*
 - e. *Tower*