Reflective Practices: Writing Exercise

**Materials needed:**
Paper, pencils

**People needed:**
4 or more, preferably 8-10

**Instructions:**
Gather a group of friends, colleagues, or classmates in a comfortable circle. Each person should have a piece of paper and a pen.

Everyone will begin by writing the same sentence at the top of his or her paper. Here are some examples to choose from, but feel free to make up your own:

- *My journey began with a simple phone call.*
- *As he gazed out the window, he saw a figure approaching from down the road.*
- *Last night I dreamt about the sea again.*
- *She could already tell this was going to be a bad day.*

Once everyone has written the sentence down, they pass their paper to the left. Now everyone writes the second sentence of the story before passing to the left again. You may go once or twice around the circle, as time allows. When you are finished, read the stories out loud.

**Reflect:**
Each person will contribute at least one sentence to each story, and yet each story belongs to everyone. Discuss the ways in which ownership over the material affects the way you read it. Are you more comfortable sharing a story that was produced in a collaboration? Did you feel inspired or stifled by the constraints of the exercise?

How did the sentences before you affect what you wrote? Did your voice change and adapt to the story’s needs? Who do these stories belong to?