



Train Itinerary



Depart at 8:30 from main station.



Connecting Section: "Owl Pellets", text-to-self connections

Features Rebecca, Angela F., Jeanette, Jessica, Lee,
and Angela B.



**Neighborhood Visit: Favorite books and how we describe ourselves
as writers.**



Suburb Highlights: More on favorite books and personal writing.



Lunch: A yummy smorgasbord of assorted feasts



Author visit: Lois Battle, lots of changing tracks: information about her life,
her writing, and advice



Bryant's Gold Mine: Workshop on Conscious Imitation of Author's Craft



Dismissal at 3:30.

A Detailed Transcript (a loose script)

Good morning, my name is Angela Byrd, and I'll be your railway tour guide today. Janie Goodman and Vic Oglan are your conductors, and we'd like to welcome you to the Reading and Writing Railroad Tour, situated in the picturesque town of Storyville. Although considered quaint by some, Storyville is home to evolving readers and writers of all types and ages. Fans of Louis Battle may notice the resemblance between our town's name and one of her novels. The similarities end there, however, in that Storyville, as a town, is more of a state of mind. Here, writers are in a constant state of locomotion, following trains of thought. Lois Battle fans will be pleased, however to know that additional information is included about her in today's tour due to her recent visit.

Lunch is part of this trip. If yesterday's fare is in any way indicative of our selection today, you are in for a real treat.

Please make sure all hands and personal belongings are inside the train car as we officially begin our journey.

As we pass the last part of the station, please direct your attention to the workers at the far end of the rail yard. Several workers—Rebecca, Jeanette, Jessica, Angela F., and Lee—are connecting poetry and prose cars to the "Owl Pellets" engine conducted by Ralph Fletcher. The cars' contents range from emails to personal connection about saying no to friends, dealing with divorce, and handling problems caused by dishonest fence workers. You will notice many text-to-self connections in Storyville.

Our first stop today will be the local neighborhood, which consists of project housing—MWP housing that is. Storyville is proud of its varied style of houses and its ranges of newer and older homes. Establishment dates range from the 1950s to 1980. The houses are all occupied by their original owners and are noted for their strong schema frameworks, well laid reading and writing foundations, as well as their drafty qualities: a welcome sound to writers' ears. The Bryant house on Maxwell Street is noted for its Southern architectural style, while the Haney house on Bible Way is appreciated for its inspiring view. The Brueck home has a unique style and fresh look due to a recent renovation that helped the owner discover her voice. Several houses are under construction, such as the Cohoon estate where much is written and then none. And the Sheila and Rebecca mansions are still evolving, even though they sometimes appear to be scattered and lacking in focus. Finally, Memory Lane is home to Joan, whose upbringing and personal experience make one of the strongest foundations in the neighborhood. Libby, who claims to battle against sentimentality, is often seen redecorating her house in classical and romantic stylings.

As we leave the suburbs and enter the city, please take note of our new Writing Conference Center, where writers can meet together in a less formal writing improvement network and later present at formal conferences to read a broader audience.

Just ahead is Idea Mart, where Helen Schull stocks 16 million ideas daily and one chair that will strap you in and force you to think about them. Just joking!

Two additional sites to note are the Einstein Museum and City Hall. The Einstein Museum currently is featuring a little known book entitled *Dear Professor Einstein*, which showcases books by and about Einstein that extend beyond scientific theory and

into practical writing advice. City Hall is run by our mayor, Dr. Mary Styslinger, who pays bills, etc. to keep our town and project running.

We now enter downtown where information about Lois Battle is tantamount to understanding the landmarks along the way. Please make sure hands and belongings are kept inside the car at this time, as this part of the trip involves many stops and tangential tracks.

First, as we enter this first loop, is the Lois Battle historical house where one can learn about Lois's early childhood in Australia, journey by war transport to California, attend a Catholic school, and eventually move to New York where her career started. But "the past is another country," so we move on.

Switching tracks, the Battle Center for the Performing Arts is dedicated in memory of her first career as an actress, which she eventually left after being scared by the attention she received for a commercial she didn't care about as compared to her small audience for her performance of what she loved.

Behind us is Lois's Public Library is located on the left and is home to numerous copies of Lois's books, which are available for checkout. It is often visited by Ms. Battle, and she often does book signings and book talks there.

Finally, the Battle Writing Mentor Building is a home for writers who are seeking their way. Many inspirational quotes are engraved on the pillars, such as the following: "I must keep going, even if I doubt what I'm doing . . . I never looked back . . . This is the great thing about writing. I'm usually well received by researchers (paraphrased)".

As we leave town and head back towards the station, we find our last landmark: Bryant's gold mine. Here, writers are constantly engaged in unearthing books, such as *Elegy for the Southern Drawl*, *Now That My Father Lies Beside Me*, and *Lummox*. These writings help writers shape and emulate their personal craft. Lee Bryant is foreman and is expert at helping writers emulate and even parody other writers as they craft original writing in settings of gold, platinum, and silver.

We are now approaching the station where we departed and hope you've enjoyed your tour of Storyville. Please come visit us again, for Storyville is a state of mind that all writers may inhabit. We hope you have a good day. Please be careful as you disembark, remembering Battles's words of wisdom, "Don't fall in that trap of trying to be someone else. It'll cut you up and spit you out." May you continue enjoying your involvement and change in the Midlands Writing Project. God speed you on your journey until we meet again.