

BROCADING THE WORLD:

A POETIC INQUIRY

by

Maya Tracy Elizabeth Borhani

B.A., The University of California, Davis, 1982

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Language and Literacy Education)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

August 2013

©Maya Tracy Elizabeth Borhani, 2013

Abstract

An exploration of poetry at play in one woman's life, this poetic inquiry seeks to highlight existing relationships between language, poetry and poiesis, life long learning, and a pedagogy of lived experience. This thesis inquires a/t/tographically into some of the relationships between inner knowing, self-expression, the poetic arts, and the value of their confluence for pedagogical practice. As witnessed through the roles of artist (poet and writer), researcher (academic and community), and teacher (visiting artist in the classroom and community educator), I explore what it means to live and learn *poetically* – as writer, poet, performer, social researcher, and educator. The resulting *métissage* of poems, autobiographical life writing, and analysis documents the pedagogical intermingling of persona and life activities, using poetic inquiry to (re)present the practice and process of learning in and through the arts, art-making, and teaching. This represents a journey through physical places, actual experiences, the author's heart and mind, and pedagogy as “a poetic, emotional, personal, spiritual commitment and experience” (Leggo, 2005, p. 439), exploring the value of these processes to learning, teaching, and living skills. Also investigating poetry as practice, in place, and through multiple sites of learning, observed within an ongoing aesthetic of poetical engagement in the world, this view of poetry in research and praxis emphasizes "curriculum" not as a pre-defined set of steps to a pre-determined outcome, but as exploration emphasizing process rather than end product. This brocade of words further investigates poetry as an essential pedagogical tool, suggesting that through poetry, language, learning, and teaching become journeys of self-exploration and creativity, no longer separating “arts” from “humanities,” nor learning from imagination and self-expression.

Preface

All of the work presented henceforth was initiated and completed within the Department of Language and Literacy, in the Faculty of Education, at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver campus.

A version of the chapter entitled “Riding the Bus, Writing on the Bus: A Self in Transition” is currently in press [Borhani, M. (*in press*). Riding the bus, writing on the bus: A self in transition. *UNESCO observatory multi-disciplinary research in the arts-eJournal*, 2, 3. University of Melbourne.]. I was the sole investigator, responsible for all areas of concept formation, data collection and analysis, as well as manuscript composition.

A version of the poem entitled “Preferring Revolution” is also currently in press [Borhani, M. (*in press*). Preferring revolution. *English practice: The journal of BC teachers of English language arts*. Kelowna, BC: British Columbia Teachers of English Language Arts. Retrieved from <http://www.bctela.ca/about-us>]. I was the sole author of this poem.

Finally, a version of the poem entitled “The Thief” is currently in press as well [Borhani, M. (*in press*). The thief. *Shark reef: A literary magazine*, 22. Retrieve from <http://sharkreef.org/>]. I was the sole author of this poem.

I was the sole investigator and author for all other projects described in the Prologue, Found Poems & Theory, Poems & Field Notes, and the Epilogue. I was responsible for all major areas of concept formation and development, data collection and analysis, as well as all manuscript composition. Carl Leggo was my supervisor on this project, and involved throughout the project in overseeing concept development and content.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------|
| Abstract..... | ii |
| Preface..... | iii |
| Table of Contents..... | v |
| Acknowledgements..... | vi |
| Dedication..... | viii |
| Prologue..... | 1 |
| Riding the Bus, Writing on the Bus: A Self in Transition..... | 19 |
| Found Poems: Theory and Methodology..... | 44 |
| Poems & Field Notes..... | 63 |
| Epilogue..... | 103 |
| References..... | 130 |
| Appendices..... | 142 |
| A. Quotations from the Denise Levertov essay used in the found poem:..... | 143 |
| B. Poetry Writing and Teaching Resources..... | 144 |

Acknowledgements

I offer my great gratitude to the faculty, staff and many fellow students at UBC who have inspired me to inquire deeply and with heartfelt attention into language arts, Indigenous and postcolonial questions, education, and related fields. I owe particular thanks to Dr. Carl Leggo, my supervisor, whose unending avocation as a poet and teacher have been both inspirational and lent valuable mentoring to this graduate student process. For the many conversations (and more to come), and for cogent reminders of faith and flow in the kayak of words on this river of life, thank you.

Special thanks as well to my committee members: To Dr. George Belliveau, gentle leader, who first suggested I consider UBC, and explore a/r/tography; and to the incomparable Dr. Rita Irwin, a truly inspirational scholar, educator, leader, and elegant model of a woman-of-power graciously walking her talk. Thank you both so very much.

To Dr. Annette Henry, for welcoming me so warmly when I first arrived in LLED.

For a timely and much needed GRA appointment in Summer 2012, my deepest thanks to Dr. Stephen Petrina (EDCP). *The music never stopped.*

To colleagues and professors in LLED, EDCP, and CCFI: Thank you for friendship, camaraderie, and (en)spirited conversations. To Raven and Coyote: Thank you for other ways of knowing. To Dr. William Doll, Jr. and Dr. Donna Trueit: Gratitude for excellent advisement, and the inspiration to never forget to play.

To Laurie Reynolds (LLED), Jeannie Young (EDST) & Basia Zurek (EDCP): Your personable, caring attention to every concern has been exemplary, deeply touching, and so greatly appreciated. Thank you for your great kindnesses. Thanks to Chris Fernandez (LLED) for timely assistance with innumerable questions and details!

Especial, heartfelt thanks to my parents, Patricia Anne (Hyde) Borhani and Nemat Ollah Borhani (1926-1996), for giving me life. Mom, thank you for everything. Without your love and support, I could not have done this. Thank you to the rest of my loving family and friends for helping to keep all aspects of my “small boat afloat.”

To the Great Mother & New Father Conference, eCrow, and Crow communities: *Thirteen thank yous, long life, no evil, honey in the heart.* Caw, caw! Thank you to Sioban, Gus, Nils, and Norm, for last minute research assistance.

To Richard Carter and Community Shakespeare Company: *We are such stuff as dreams are made on.* Thank you for the wonder of transformation. In loving memory of Greg Ewert (1949-2012): for ARC, and rarified time together to play, dream, and grow.

To Dr. Parviz Sahabi and Zahviah, Nooshin Dahya, and Golnar Riahi: thank you for the gift of sharing Rumi, and for your openhearted friendships.

To Christi Kramer: thank you for all your generosity, kindness, and poetry.

To Julia Kelliher: thank you for lifelong camaraderie in the dance, and for the keys to a healing language. To Rex Richardson: thank you for teaching me to sweat and sing and pray, for first believing in my humble poems, and for always feeding me with poetry and music. To Dr. Ahmayo Bohm: Thank you for helping me bring my gifts and talents out into the world. I am forever indebted.

Eric, Zhenya & Lyova; Benoit, Ludo, Emma & Lowyn; Gillian, Jeremy, & Jackson: thank you for giving me homes away from home, family, and friendships.

Thank you to the San Juan Ridge, and Lopez and Orcas Islands and their many inhabitants, for apprenticing me to place, and to kinship with all. I bow down in beauty to all my relations.

Dedication

*To my beautiful daughters
Petra Wilhelmina and Elena Rose,
who give meaning
to everything.*

*In loving memory of Geri Ryan Hamrock (1996-2012),
chanteuse of poetry in song and motion.*

*To Robert Bly,
for reunion with the caravan.*

Prologue

“Si cunta e si ricunta...”

It is told and retold...

~ Gioia Timpanelli,
Traditional Sicilian storyteller

1. brocade, *n.* A textile fabric woven with a pattern of raised figures, originally in gold or silver; in later use, any kind of stuff richly wrought or ‘flowered’ with a raised pattern...

...Cloth of Silke, Brocardo, and di(v)ers other sorts of merchandize which come out of Persia.

2. bro'cade, *v.* To work with a raised pattern....

~ Oxford English Dictionary

The true alchemists do not change lead into gold;
they change the world into words.

~ William Gass

I have always marveled at language’s breath, moving in and through us, connecting (and severing) us in ways intentional and otherwise. Words, and writing, have been my constant companions, for as long as I can remember. As a young girl, I safeguarded bold, blue words penned in a white vinyl-covered diary, and wrote terrible, emotionally clichéd poetry throughout high school, getting in touch with all that roils in the teenaged heart. During undergraduate days as an English and Mass Communications major, I studied mostly on my own, informally, blessed by numerous mentors who excelled at their art and guidance. All this, and a life steeped in place in Northern California, and on islands off the coast of Washington state, amidst a community of writers, activists and performers, feeds my interest in language as communication, as art, and as a political act – language as written, embodied, spoken and performed. Living with and by words in the world is what compels my inquiry.

Through poetry and autobiographical life writing, my research explores intersections between poiesis, that is, “creative production, esp. of a work of art; an

instance of this” (OED, 2013, para. 1), life long learning, and a lived pedagogy of the moment (Borhani, 2013). My inquiry lingers in the overlaps between lived experiences, inner knowing, self-expression, the poetic arts, and the value of these confluences for pedagogical practice. Interdisciplinary and experiential explorations of literature, theatre, art, ritual, and mythology, especially as occurring in places and situations outside of traditional classroom settings, loop in and amongst the fabric of my writing. I am intrigued by experiences “in the field” and unexpected learning moments, by our lives everywhere, at once; I want to know what ignites us, and how we learn to notice and ultimately honor that in our fullest expression of ourselves. Through inquiry into my own experiences, as witnessed through the roles of artist (poet and writer), researcher (Master’s scholar), and teacher (visiting artist in schools, and community educator), my research seeks to highlight how to better allow and accommodate for unexpected learning moments as they arise, and for unconventional, “on-the-ground” experiences in our pedagogical practices. That is, how can we – parents, teachers, educators – truly open up and make room for that which is “out of the box,” in the margins, on the borders and in-between? For dislocation, for being at home everywhere? For encounter, transformation, and liminality? For the poetical, and the “4th person singular” (Ferlinghetti, 2001, p. 25)? For embracing all these possibilities as fraught with pedagogical significance?

The journey is long, life is short, the earth we love
The flower unfolds, snow falls, the aching heart
On the shoulders of giants we stand
Reaching out, reaching out...

~ *The Journey* (Richardson, 1991, track 5)

How do we live poetically? Can we embrace each moment, the unknown, change and possibility, as poetical endeavors? Inquiring a/r/tographically into what it means to live and learn *poetically* – as a writer, poet, performer, social researcher, and educator – I present a *métissage* of poems, stories, and analysis documents some of my engagements with poetry and poetic living. Engaging with poetic inquiry to (re)present the practice and process of learning in and through the arts, art-making, and teaching – an exploration of dwelling poetically (Heidegger, 1971) – this work represents a journey through physical places, my own heart and mind, and pedagogy as “a poetic, emotional, personal, spiritual commitment and experience” (Leggo, 2005, p. 439). As such, I hope to underscore the value of these processes to our living, learning, and teaching skills; to offer poetry as a lens on multiple sites of learning; and, at best, to model this process of “living poetically” (Leggo, 2005, p. 441).

A/r/tography is defined as an educational research methodology that unites **A**/rtist, **R**/esearcher and **T**/eacher to create new understandings of the dynamic, holistic interplay between these interconnected identities and their practices (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Sullivan, 2005; Irwin & Springgay, 2008; Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, & Grauer, 2006). A practice rather than methods oriented research approach (Sinner et al., 2006), “the practice of a/r/tography means to inquire in the world through an ongoing process of art making in any artform and writing not separate or illustrative of each other but interconnected and woven through each other to create additional and/or enhanced meanings” (Irwin, 2005, para.1). This may include “a subjective position of intuitiveness and responsiveness” (Sinner et al., 2006, p. 1229), thus invoking an affective exploration of one’s artistic and teaching practices, *in which process is as valuable as product*. This

work occurs at the confluence of one person's experience with another's, where the reflective process (the sharing of that experience) potentially bears import for others, enacting "research that matters" (Chambers, 2004, p. 7) by writing honestly about experiences of being and becoming in the world.

Rita Irwin describes how

Theory as a/r/tography creates an imaginative turn by theorizing or explaining phenomena through aesthetic experiences that integrate knowing, doing, and making: experiences that simultaneously value technique and content through acts of inquiry; experiences that value complexity and difference... (2004a, p. 31)

Thus, "data" is a painting, a musical score, or a poem, where content – and technique – are valued as *mutually inquiring*. Art-making, research, and teaching coincide and conjoin, becoming mutually informative in their meaning-making, and sometimes performative, activities. Irwin (2004b) further explains that "as educators consider metaphoric and metonymic ways of perceiving their lives and their engagement with curriculum *and* pedagogy, they are engaged in the process of unfolding aesthetic in/sights" (p. 46), and opening to possibility in in-between spaces.

Contiguous with one another, bumping into and overlapping one another, we enact the "*lived poiesis* of the 'mandorla'" (Deardorff, 2004, p. 37) through these processes and practices: a third space altogether. This liminal space of the mandorla is where the inquiry of technique and content meet, where discovery and transformation flourish. As Daniel Deardorff (2004) explains, the mandorla is that creative "*coincidentia oppositorum*, the crossroads" (p. 38) where boundaries blur, one becomes

many, and thus investigation, inquiry, is enriched through the perspective of many lenses, many techniques, and many methods explored cross-disciplinarily and inter-personally.

The Mandorla is an ancient symbol of two circles coming together, overlapping one another to form an almond shape in the middle... The space within the overlap is the place in which we are called to "remain", the "liminal space"... This is the place where you arrive after you leave one room and have not yet entered another. In this place, you are living on the threshold and this requires faith. All transformation takes place in liminal space. (Kyrie, 2008)

Deardorff (2004) emphasizes, “What is needed is the generative tension *lived in the mandorla*” (p. 40), and I believe that as a/r/tographers, we understand and live in that fertile tension. As a/r/tographers, we transform vision by performing as artists, teachers and researchers, unfolding and reconstructing aesthetic and cognitive sensibilities and possibilities.

Experimenting with what is becoming, a/r/tographers often lend their “attention to what lies outside the acceptable” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxx) in their investigations and portrayals. Like Sappho, we’re not afraid to prod the beach rubble (Barnstone & McCulloh, 2010). Thus, an a/r/tographical inquiry is “often rendered through the methodological concepts of contiguity, living inquiry, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations and excess” (Sinner et al., 2006, p. 1224), which by their very nature overlap, interpenetrate, insinuate, envelope, reflect, and resonate within and among each other. Through these processes, then, we give form and voice to the (sometimes messy) intersections of artist, teacher, and researcher.

A/r/tography also implies working at the margins, in a littoral wash where identities and forms are free to mingle like tides on a shifting strand (there's that beach rubble again). For many poets, historically, this borderland between avocation and employment, between artistry and scholarship, results in a life of literally dwelling in the margins of society and her material fortunes; for some of us, it's an endless search for that room of our own (Woolf, 1929/1957). Yet with such margin dwelling come strange gifts, as well. Poetry offers transformation, possibilities for being, possibilities for becoming (Leggo, 2004); nomadic processes, full of rhizomatic "lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9) that can lead any and everywhere. By extension, my living inquiry, and thus my research and writing, seeks these fertile breaks or "ruptures" (Van Parys, n.d.), those liminal spaces where ideas spark and epistemological potential bumps up against paradox, and the unknown. Where knowing isn't certain, new ideas emerge. Georgia O'Keefe says, "Whether you succeed or not is irrelevant – there is no such thing. Making your unknown known is the important thing" (n.d.). How can poetry be used to tease apart what we think we know, to let our unknown come forth? What does paradox have to do with it? Just as complexity thinking in education examines *relations among relations* among things, rather than one single thing (W. Doll, lecture notes, March 6, 2013), so does this poetic inquiry range among topics, and relations among relations among topics, addressing personal, professional, educational, and universal concerns.

Ultimately, this work aims to shed greater light on certain interstitial experiences of the artist, and this dance of living poetically and pedagogically in the world, suggesting differently adapted ways to live and learn, to teach and to conduct research. One such way, *métissage*, is

a counternarrative to the grand narratives of our times, a site for writing and surviving in the interval between different cultures and languages, particularly in colonial contexts; a way of merging and blurring genres, texts and identities; an active literary stance, political strategy and pedagogical praxis. (Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, & Leggo, 2009, p. 9)

This description matches well the background, artistic approaches, and pedagogical outlook I bring to this thesis. It is intended to imply a sort of braiding: of stories, perspectives, of methodologies and methods, and perhaps in the end, of results and conclusions (or (in)conclusions); just as we braid a life from many strands, those given, gathered, or inherited, and those made by our own hands, in love with poesis.

The world calls them its singers and poets
and artists and storytellers;
but they are just people
who have never forgotten the way to fairyland.

~ L. M. Montgomery (as cited in Narayan, 2012, p.)

Engaging in poetic inquiry (Prendergast, 2009) becomes “an expression of living aesthetically as a researcher in the field” (Leggo et al., 2011, p. 244), offering poems as notes and testimony to lived experiences. Unlike traditional social science research, well steeped in its Cartesian certainties, poetic inquiry welcomes the *uncertainty* of potentially (*in*)conclusive results, as well as the traceable messiness of a researcher seeking to reveal, not hide, her presence within the research. According to Iranian poet Nilofar Shidmehr,

poetic inquiry focuses on the answerability of an act/experience which scientific inquiry completely dismisses. Poetic inquiry, thus, is a

performative act in which the researcher, recognizing the uniqueness of her being and her participation in the world, actualizes this uniqueness in her inquiry. (2009, p. 102)

With that uniqueness may come confusion, chaos, or, a shining actualization in the world. A/r/tography, and poetic inquiry, are like this. We must aim big, sweep a wide brush, and collect the stardust that falls from that grandiosity. We can't predict what stardust looks like, or how it colors and shines in the brocade of our life's tapestry. Through unabashed homage to the body (my own, the world's), to the spirit, to corporeal and sensual attention in the world, interconnection within nature, prayers to what is holy, and embracement of related perplexities (Elza, 2009), this inquiry aims to embody such an ontology of reckless grandeur, of a poetics in love with the world. These essays and poems seek to explore how we make our place where we find ourselves, amidst glittering scraps of memory, lost words and found topographies. What emerges from that pile of scraps and beauty is our life, and our witnessing of that grand and mysterious experience.

What Can the World Give

What can the world give
 what can I give to the world,
 each day a sun peels back
 orange tinged with violet at
 the ocean's edge, a curl of foam
 all we see on the shore coming in
 but so much more than this teeming
 puddle of cellular conjunction
 salt brine and slippery weeds.
 What can the world give
 what can I give to the world,

a holy exchange of meaning
 our lives, communion, living agape.

Living, and learning “in the moment,” in an ongoing pedagogy of the moment, fuels my work. “Pedagogy of the moment” here is stretched beyond its original definition of “the decisions made by educators, based on their observations made when meeting the child in its different environments” (Aman, 2006, para. 18), to indicate an on-going openness and attentiveness to choices practiced by the individual, based on her observations of *meeting herself* in different (learning and life) environments (Borhani, 2013). This constitutes a form of *educaré*, or a drawing forth of that which lies within (Sathya Sai Baba, n.d.).

Trusting to *educaré*, like brocading one’s life, one pulls out and illuminates gold and silver threads woven in and amongst the warp and weft of daily existence, placing them in relief (sometimes sharp, sometimes muted) against the ongoing fabric of time. Not just a flowery, nor solely Western European notion, the origins of the word “brocade” point to Persia, and roots in fabrics woven with a raised relief against brightly colored backgrounds. Persia is also home to a rich poetic legacy – and my own paternal ancestry – and remains a consistent corporeal and metaphoric thread in the weave of my own brocaded life. This coincidence between the roots of the word, and my own roots, I discovered *after* settling on this title for my research. Such is the way of a/r/tographic inquiries; we are led to what we need to know.

Brocade suggests a pattern, texture, depth, contour, often a story told – and qualities of luminescence, reflection, and beauty. Silk shimmers. There are tears, and stains, in the fabric. Living poetically, practicing the arts of attentive observation and

storytelling, weaving the brocade, involves openness to performativity (the story unfolds), to impromptu moments of theatrics and possibility (in the warp and weft yet unwoven). This is experiencing the world as the breathing, living, dying, transforming, dynamic poem it is. We are all part of that performance. We are all shimmering threads in the weave.

Living poetically, brocading the fabric of our lives, is a bit like “(s)tealing sugar from the castle” (Bly, 2005, p. 97), when a passion becomes a sweetness that sustains: “The only thing I hold in my ant-like head / Is the builder’s plan of the castle of sugar. / Just to steal one grain of sugar is a joy!” (p. 97). Mythologist and educator Joseph Campbell (1988) echoes, “If you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time” (p. 120). That life *within you*. Drawing forth that which lies within. The self-refreshing tapestry of the inner life.

Like this many-colored brocade, poetry weaves pictures and ideas in words. Though often composed in solitude, poetry, paradoxically, draws us into community in its outward expression, listening together, enveloped in feeling. Unfurling its imaginative banner, typical barriers to language learning, creativity, and connection break down. Amidst laughter and experimentation, we learn that word play can be fun (and profound), as we tumble through metaphor, discover rhythm, and sometimes express our deepest feelings. Poetry helps move us beyond practices that box language learning into expected outcomes, as Rumi describes (Barks, 1995):

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing
there is a field. I’ll meet you there. (p. 36)

That field of open invitation comes alive when writing poetry, enabling students and teachers alike to find their own unique relationships to language. Language learning, and

teaching, become journeys of wonder and possibility, no longer separating learning from imagination and creative self-expression. By playing with poetry, we learn to engage a pedagogical tapestry of many colors and designs, an open field where we cultivate, in turn, attunement to inner knowing, artistic practices, and a questioning mind. In our outer fields of learning, where “learners-and-educators” (Shidmehr, 2013, p. 123) – teachers, parents and students – interact as learners, together, in a pedagogy of the moment, what *emerges* is valued *as is*. Carrying no expected outcomes, trusting that what is learned is valuable *because* it arose from our own life experiences, this work could be dubbed the play of the uncanny and unexpected (D. Trueit, personal communication, April 13, 2013).

Playing with poetry helps educators to better understand the importance of inner processes to our teaching skills, and the value of sharing these (and artistic practices) with our students. A transformative experience, poetic inquiry inspires students and teachers alike to embrace their own artistic drives and processes. I have consistently witnessed young people, labeled as problematic or unable to write, find their own voices and positively channel their crises through poetic expression. Some teachers, at first often stunned at the change in their students’ writing, become enthused, and begin to co-create such transformations in their own explorations with poetry. As Carl Leggo (2005) notes, “the heart of pedagogy is revitalized by poetic knowing” (p. 439). That knowing inspires greater creativity, and diverse streams of engagement with any number of disciplines and media. Poetry’s introspective practices are essential skills, and keen sources of inspiration, in naming and navigating the terrain of today’s tumultuous world, while its un-standardized forms can be immensely freeing for those struggling with uniform definitions of aptitude and proficiency. Poetry enlivens language arts classrooms, and can

“foster living creatively in the...larger pedagogic contexts outside classrooms” (Leggo, 2005, p. 442). Language, learning, and teaching become journeys of words, song, theatrics, and self-exploration, no longer separating “arts” from “humanities,” nor learning from imagination and creative self-expression. If, as Hannah Arendt believed, “education’s central task...is to create conditions for understanding and for the possibilities of renewal” (Naqvi & Smits, 2012, p. 2), then poetry surely wends its way through the heart of this endeavor.

After a Neruda Question Poem

What sword grew
 in the heart of eternity?
 Did volcanic rock sprout
 from seeds of the lily-palm?
 Where did the Dodo bird nest
 before Noah sailed by without her?
 Why do leaves love the parachute of descent
 falling through time to the waiting earth?

My research is rooted in "the most archaic values on earth" (Snyder, 1969, viii) – those of the poet. I find understanding where it emerges from the interplay of the fertility of the soil, the magic of animals, the power-vision in solitude, the terrifying initiation and rebirth, the love and ecstasy of the dance, the common work of the tribe. I try to hold both history and the wilderness in mind, that my poems may approach the true measure of things and stand against the unbalance and ignorance of our times. (Snyder, 1965, p. 551)

Like Snyder, this personal ethos permeates my life and work, arising out of an embodied sense of place, or what poet John Haines calls a “place of sense” (Hamill, 1990, p. 69): an

aesthetic and spiritual presence here on earth that is attentive to *where* we dwell, and also to all – animal, plant, elements, star fire – with whom we dwell. There, in place, I become “a kind of cultural historian” of my own life (GMC, 2013, para.7), gathering details of my “herstory” (Morgan, 1970, xxxvi), transforming life’s ups and downs into writing fodder, finding a way in which it all adds up to “good material” (personal communication, Karen Fisher, February 28, 2010).¹

Brian Wattchow (2012, p. 18) believes that “place, movement and language become entangled in each other,” where living, poem making, and explorations of language and culture intertwine. Judy Pinn describes how poetry can offer an “enfolding of self with place, of the outer with the inner” (2003, p. 45-46), where boundaries are porous, and dialectic is a kaleidoscope of currents, places, voices and visions. I believe this enfolding, of the outer with the inner, similarly informs my inquiry, just as for Heidegger, “poetry and dwelling belong together, each calling for the other” (2000, p. 93), melding the worlds of living, writing, and being.

Growing up in a territory that ranged from the San Francisco Bay Area, to the great Sacramento Valley, and northeast into the Sierra Nevada mountain foothills and alpine high country, of northern California, my connection to place was nurtured amidst this ethos of watershed and biosphere, with the languages of First Peoples and their intimate, cultural, ecological knowledge of dwelling on the land, and through mentorship with other poets and writers in remote communities dwelling close to the earth. This lifelong connection to place has since migrated north, to years raising my daughters on

¹ Usually after getting their family (three kids, dog, two adults) into one scrape or another - for example, the time the truck was stuck in 3 feet of mud up to its hubcaps down a dead-end dirt road in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night – Karen’s husband Dave, a cultured Scotsman, would invariably and cheerfully declare, “Well, it’s good material!” (for Karen’s writing endeavors). Now a time-honored truism.

islands in the U.S. San Juan Archipelago, and now in Vancouver, alongside this Salish Sea and these jagged mountains to the north, further, deeper into British Columbia. Reflections on time spent in these locales (and the elusive realm of reminiscence and recall) become integral to this poetic inquiry, informing context as well as flushing out mundane, unexpected and extraordinary details of memory and ancestry, and connecting epistemological and ontological wonderments and concerns.

Whitman talked about the need for time to loaf for poems to come. I think Lew Welch talked about the need for “wild idleness.” So much of it is internal; I guess it wouldn’t be very photogenic...like those Chinese landscape paintings where the human figures are so small...[and] the landscape so large. It’s easy to imagine those figures being the authors of those great poems. (P. Woods, personal communication, November 10, 2012)

Before ever reading Kenneth Rexroth, Gary Snyder, Jack Kerouac, and Lew Welch, among others, I had already discovered (and mastered, to the detriment of regular employ) that urgent need to ramble and do nothing, save for walk and sit and gaze and wonder; to rest and play and dream in those wild places, in service to the mind of poetry.

As a way of writing with and to the mind and body of nature,

Ecopoetics asks in what respects a poem may be a making (Greek *poiesis*) of the dwelling-place – the prefix eco- is derived from Greek *oikos*, ‘the home or place of dwelling’...it could be that *poiesis* in the sense of verse-making is language’s most direct path of return to the *oikos*, the place of dwelling, because metre itself – a quiet but persistent music, a recurring

cycle, a heartbeat – is an answering to nature’s own rhythms, an echoing of the song of the earth itself. (Bate, 2000, pp. 75-76)

Mary Oliver (1992) says,

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
 I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
 into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
 how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
 which is what I have been doing all day.
 Tell me, what else should I have done?

~ Excerpt from **The Summer Day** (p. 94)

These acts of attention bind us to places, and nurture a sense of belonging. We humans share a responsibility in our presence there, in remembering these places, and their stories. In a song entitled “Evermore,” musician Rex Richardson refers to these “times that can end” (1991), highlighting the profound urgency with which we consider

our ethical relations to place, and what happens, whence we might forget....our obligation to take care of our stories and to take care of the land where such stories unravel, as a matter of physical and spiritual survival, as part of the webs of responsibilities that bind all living and nonliving things. (Ng-A-Fook & Rottman, 2012, pp. 8-9)

Our stories unfold within a paradoxical backdrop of nature and empire, and the tension between the two, held in a fragile balance. How to reconcile these fraught and seemingly polar opposites? Environmental educator David Greenwood (2010), like Mary Oliver, points to the simple acts of taking time and paying attention, of “slowing to open to the more-than-human others, to the experience of habitat...to the interactions between land and people...” (p. 13). Working together to create what Pramod Parajuli calls “resiliently

abundant lives” (lecture notes, March 1, 2013) that embrace relationships between each other, nature, paradox, these troubling contradictions, and uncertainty, “How can the spirit be separate from the body/the senses, if it is embodied and known from the heart? All members are present here in that beat and in each breath” (Kramer, 2012, p. 128).

In Chinese, “poetry” comes from the characters for “word” and “temple,” which depicts “a hand shielding a new sprout” (S. Hamill, personal communication, November 23, 2012), creating a temple of and for the word; a word-seedling tenderly en-earthed by the hand, protected by the spirit (temple). I believe poetry lives in us, in the earth, in our bodies, lungs, breath, and skin. Spirit and seedling. Temple and song. “Beyond the unseen is the unimaginable, beyond the unspeakable the ineffable. Or perhaps within” (Cole, 2006, p. 108).

Living Inquiry

Field notes of
self and other

memory and time
language and place

all come together
as one understanding

when I see the illustration on
Gary Snyder’s *Axe Handles*,

Mayumi Oda’s blue green blizzard
“*Treasure Ship, Goddess of Snow*”

Japanese goddess
playing her shakuhachi flute
red cheeked, bare breasted,
cross legged in her restless boat,

single sail at her back
amid snowfall

on choppy water
red head sash flying ~

I am twenty three again
riding restless waves

off California's churning coast
reading Snyder by day

Robert Bly by night,
learning about treasure ships

snow goddesses
poetry, and dreams.

Thirty year later,
what has changed?

Now what was my time spent
is a memory retrieved,

restless boats floating
on rivers of blue desire

amid snowfall
bare breasted

sailing my treasure ship
home, to where

time and memory
language and place

self and other
unite in living,

inquiring from within,
from the outside in

each day an awareness
each inquiry, a living thing.

Riding the Bus, Writing on the Bus:

A Self in Transition

The bus came by and I got on,
That's when it all began... (Garcia, Weir & Kreutzmann, 1968, track 1)

Shortly after arriving in Vancouver, a topsy-turvy landing with an international learning curve, I was finally enjoying my own (new) bed for the first time in over three weeks in a bright, colorful room in Kerrisdale, on the southwest side of the city. Just settled enough to start feeling lonely, a funny thing happened on my way to campus one day. I was riding the bus slouched down in the seat I'd flung myself into, catching my breath after the sprint I'd just made not to miss the lumbering silver coach. Thoughts elsewhere, I absent-mindedly sat up straighter, and could not believe what caught my eyes: There, on the inside wall of the bus where advertisements usually blare, a *poem* had been posted. My joy at seeing a poem (anytime, anywhere – but on a *bus*?) was enough; but when I noticed the poet's name – Daniela Elza – I recognized instantly a new acquaintance met the year before in the company of other local poets. That recognition, that unexpected familiarity, welcomed me into a circle of connection, community and commonality, a stranger in a new place. Arrived here for a new life “chapter” I hadn't as yet even begun to unearth (laying the official mantle of motherhood a little bit to the side, for the first time in over 23 years), Daniela's poem came winging down to reference, root and *locate* me in my new milieu, to uplift and comfort me in a way only poetry can. Although I didn't realize it at first, Daniela's poem, and myriad others on tasteful *Poetry In Transit* placards that I came to look for, expectantly, whenever I entered a city bus in the months that followed (The Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia, 2011), wound their way into my a/r/tographic process and inquiry, becoming a central set of threads weaving in and amongst my explorations and discoveries around the city, in

personal communication, October 31, 2011). Locating myself in place (here, in Vancouver), within a practice of poetic inquiry, and with a fierce commitment to *educaré*, or drawing forth that which lies within (Satya Sai Baba, n.d.), I began. My inquiry coalesced into a more focused concentration on my own writing, fed by deep, thirst-quenching gulps from other poets' works, unexpected explorations of my new city and home, and attention to the process of *becoming*, through writing, surrounded by change: nothing short of a recycling of the self.

A/r/tography can take as many forms, simple or elaborate, as possible definitions, each a weave of uniquely chosen colored strands. Media combine, overlap, tangle; explorations fall apart; new threads arise out of nowhere: the a/r/tographer's job is to seek, to attend, to catch the flying array of change incarnate as it wheels by, expressing through our art, evoking through our instruction, recording through our research. Through my (initially unexpected) reflexive journey on buses around the city, steeped in my mobile-reading of the poems posted there, and in the writing and gathering of my own poetic observations and compulsions, I was "free to tell and retell and not 'get it right,' but rather 'get it' contoured and nuanced" (Gouzouasis & Lee, 2002, p. 126), thereby "negotiating the messiness of field research through living inquiry, and...the messiness of day-to-day practice...engaging in poetry from a perspective of living inquiry" (Leggo et al. 2011, p. 250).

A/r/tography

| | | | |
|------------|--------------|----------|--------|
| partition | proceed | back up | return |
| streetside | Stateside | outside | return |
| crosswalk | intersection | sidewalk | return |

repeat review repetition return
 remember research revisit return

Pen feather story tell

return

return return return

smoky evening fires

by morning, ashes,

charcoal remains

add water

paint the page

reflecting

self

auto bio graphy

in between worlds

metis

in other words,

assemblages self reflexive

wonderment

a perpetual

state of mind

northern place of mind,

place of mine

in artful consort with breath,

frog chorus

coyote women howling

all the way from California

all night cavorting

in forest, on shore, flocks of

starlings flung skyward

untethered flight upending the night,

cast an arc
 perfect swerving
 reckless swoop
 past the silver moon
 licking the horizon
 toward the fine narrow
 line dividing
 tomorrow from today

And so it came to pass that riding the bus became a most meaningful ritual in my day, as I anticipated the twice-daily poems, riding back and forth to campus for class, infusing me with a sense of communion and prayer as I solemnly read the words I found posted there. I was always bereft when, for some unknown reason, the customary poem placed above the front section of seats on the driver's side was absent. The bus became a sort of home-away-from home, a place where the familiarity of poetry, found in a public place (so often devoid of the personal), reminded me of a community stretching backward and forward in time, from which I am never separated – the community of poets and lovers of poetry. Palestinian-American poet Naomi Shihab Nye (2002) describes how after the fall of the twin towers,

I found myself, as millions did, turning to poetry...Why should it be any surprise that people find solace in the most intimate literary genre? Poetry slows us down, cherishes small details...We need poetry for nourishment and for noticing, for the way language and imagery reach comfortably into experience, holding and connecting it. (xvi)

The poems on the bus were a familiar language in an unfamiliar landscape, helping to ground my new life path, my (re)location, in something and someplace ancient, a place I

can always visit, wherever I may be. I came to see the bus rides themselves as moving metaphors, incarnate, for the literal transition I was in: riding on the bus, in transit, myself in transition, transiting, heading somewhere, rolling along through glistening rain-drenched streets, a coach ride through a city of sparkling water and sunlight. My jostling, sometimes careening bus rides caused me to muse more than once, Are we ever NOT in transition, in this journey we call life?

How does it feel
 To be without a home
 Like a complete unknown
 Like a rolling stone? (Dylan ,1965, track 1)

One day I met the celebrated local driver known to many as Tommy Transit. A smiling, welcoming, cheery fellow, he pointed out interesting trivia all along the city artery we traveled, as I began to grow more familiar with the route, the neighborhood, and my own steps in this new life as a graduate student (the very reason for the daily rides!). He gave me his card when I departed the bus that day; this led me to a website containing many treasures, not the least of which was an award-winning film from the Gulf Island Film and Television School located on Gabriola Island, BC. A very moving short film about place, change, and transition (coincidentally?! or not?), *The Journey of the Unicorn* speaks to that which I, too, have come to appreciate in my own journeys on the bus and in life, as I settle into a new routine, (re)situating myself: “All people are on a journey. A journey that can take them wherever they want to go...Every person, every story, is unique....‘Be brave/things change/I’ll love you anyway’” (Wright, Moss & Gerber, 2007). The film’s closing moments remind us that wherever we travel, wherever we disembark, love follows in the wake of change. Liminality hovers like wings on the

heels of what was, as change propels us forward, our feet flying. So, too, was the bus a liminal space: a container for my inner and outer journeys, a (moving, changing) location of practice for my poetic inquiry as both reader and writer (scribbling in my a/r/tographic journal enroute), and a visible symbol of the ritual movement I was navigating inside and out. The bus ride was finite, it had specific pick-up and drop-off points, and it traveled on time; but that predictability and continuity lent necessary contrast to those things liminal about my experiences around town and on the bus, things as yet unformed. In an excerpt from *Incoherent State*, posted on the #16 bus, I found a mirror for this feeling:

If you are horribly alone,
like a heaven-sent ladder
.....
just counting the rungs
could save your sanity. (Israel, 2011, p. 84)

They did save my sanity, those poems like ladder rungs, and that predictable bus that always ran on time. Through directed attention to “the circumstances that produce knowledge and understanding through artistic and educational inquiry laden processes” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, xxiv), my a/r/tographical explorations rooted and spread in internal and external landscapes alike, framed by poetry and movement.

Ideas sprouted and spread, like prolific weeds; not orderly like a seedbed, but wandering, entirely rooted in trust. And so, I was told, “Make a rhizome. But you don’t know what you can make a rhizome with, you don’t know which subterranean stem is going to make a rhizome, or enter a becoming, people your desert. So experiment” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 251). Poetry making is *like this* (Barks & Arberry, 1990, p. 135); a/r/tography is *like this*. Experiment. Making an umbrella of flowering paper and

leaves and spoken word and “lines of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9), living wheels of human ambulation – as I did, in the end, when all these poems were written, the “experiment” almost complete – is *like this*, an experimentation in poetry, performance, visual aesthetics, sense of place, and protest. A surprise. Rumi says,

When Shams comes back from Tabriz
 He'll put just his head around the edge
 Of the door to surprise us
 Like this (Rumi, Barks & Arberry, 1990, p. 135)

When our work surprises us, the changes it takes, the unexpected directions in which it leads us, we're living *like this*.

This must be poetic inquiry. At first, I didn't think I was writing enough. I didn't think I was writing anything “good.” I didn't know where I was heading. I was worried my poems weren't emerging when beckoned. “Enjoy the writing as full of surprises. Honor the writing as wild, as wide wilderness, as wonderful wildness. In addition to calling out to your poems, let the poems call out to you. *Lean into the process...*” advised poet Carl Leggo (personal communication, October 31, 2011). And like a rhizomatic, niggling sprout of crabgrass, the words of educator Pat O'Riley kept teasing at the edges of my questions, reminding that “(t)rickster discourse creates contradiction between presence, absence, and silence...It is not about prescription, but wonder, chance, and coincidence” (2003, p. 36). In a break with prescription, the words of errant poems tried to jump off the page, like they were listening to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) encouragement to “(a)lways follow the rhizome by rupture; lengthen, prolong, and relay the line of flight; make it vary, until you have produced the most abstract and tortuous of lines of n dimensions and broken directions. Conjugate deterritorialized flows” (p.11). I

had a poetry rebellion on my hands, and I loved it. What would come of such experimentation? How was my poetry capturing the experience of transition, translation, and transformation?

Night Rhythms

Tired at eight, wired by eleven,
 unwind, go to bed,
 wade across a narrow floodplain
 ripped tides and up-tipped
 scallop shells,
 dawn water in muted pink cups,
 venus brine rocking
 back and forth
 on sandy shores of the moon's
 full conundrum of fate.

No two were alike, but poems were beginning to flow: as testimony and witness, as acts of attention, as voice to desire, reverie, and delight; poetry as constant companion and mental health barometer, writing to stay alive. Instead of a nice, neat “answer” or packaged end result (a few poems reflecting my experiences of transition in a clear, linear manner), I had a handful of scruffy looking rough drafts, and a lot more questions than answers. The research question and conceptual parameters had shifted; in addition to writing poems, now a plethora of visual artwork and an ethos of protest were dominating my days with the advent of the worldwide Occupy movement and its local Vancouver scene and encampment.

My old roots in media, broadcasting and stage work were promptly utilized in that new (rhizomatic) community, and I juggled my time spent on site “occupying” at the

Vancouver Art Gallery with my coursework, often reading in UBC's satellite campus next door, or writing (bundled against November's chill) on the steps above the Robson Street skating rink. My bus route had changed, too, as a result of these new activities: now I was riding down Arbutus Street, to Broadway, then Granville, across the bridge, all the way downtown. No more student-packed coaches on the short ride to campus; here rode workers, grandparents, kids in love, lost souls, a variety and flavor missing in the university-bound busses. I was still writing poems (mostly when they spoke to me rather than trying to coax them), continuing to journal, and shooting off some old rolls of black and white 35mm film I'd been carrying around for years.

The photographic eye was a counterpoint to my writing, even though many shots were of more words, the powerful signage that so characterized the Occupy movement. Words staring in grainy black and white relief, shot at deliberately weird angles, or a lone autumn leaf, a crack in the sidewalk, held in a milky still. Reflections of a faceted inquiry into the nature of expression, documented while on the move, marking place and time with language and image. I was in a whirlpool of aural and visual input, sensory overload, and not always sure what I – as researcher – was doing, and what was being “done” to me by the process, the questions, and all the information – poems, photographs, new experiences and new questions – pouring in. (Re)calibrating myself to the (re)verberations, excesses, openings, contiguities and metaphor/metonymy (Irwin & Springgay, 2008) of a/r/tographical practice, I was reminded that:

We each need to learn to be in the flow of the whirlpool. We are not fighting the whirlpool; the whirlpool is holding us. We are in process...Re-search is about searching again, and again.....Research has ear in the middle to remind us about

learning to listen; research is connected to the heart – we always hear with the heart. So, your research is your daily living inquiry, your ways of being in the world, your ways of learning to live with others in words. Your research is searching for holiness and wholeness and holes. (C. Leggo, personal communication, October 31, 2011)

Just as Flow Theory describes an “experience of complete absorption in the present moment” (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, p. 195), this *living* field of inquiry absorbs me, inspiring and inviting attention and regard, regenerating threads of personal, social, and artistic meaning-making back out into the world. Recycling. Flowing.

Beauty

curved lines of shadow
 flickering patterns of light
 collect on the ice rink floor
 like mercury spilled between rigid iron bars,
 breakdancer bending leaping on shiny cement,
 fractured sunlight filtering down
 through a clear geodesic dome onto
 his ballet against a backdrop
 of curved shadows, underwater sunlight,
 limbs intersecting unfettered space
 black lines and wobbly light,
 the unseen dancing out of shadow

Scurrying movements on the street above.
 No one looks down
 to see his spontaneous ballet
 in striated netting of shadow and light,

light as air, fluid Gumby breakdancer
 skating on smooth unfrozen cement
 to the edges of the people's rink
 in the unknown watery world
 of poetry in motion

(In)quiry – to inquire, to query, to query within – like *educaré* – to draw forth – artistic inquiry, living inquiry, poetic inquiry – suggests an ongoing process, a living investigation into things intangible and non-specific. Inquiry leaves room for the imagination. Inquiry is alive, not static or dead, or simply relegated to the past (though at its best, it will thoroughly mine the past). Inquiry is situated firmly in the *here* and *now*. As an artist, researcher, and teacher, inquiry *is* the occupation (both as *vocation*, and *interior/exterior political locale*), and it is everywhere, omnipresent. Learning fields are everywhere and anywhere. Activism can happen anywhere, and everywhere. Art making, learning, and teaching engaged as forms of (re)search are co-creative states of awareness and radical self-empowerment, capable of a humility and grandeur not unlike we're "passing through the iris of the world" (Cockburn, 2011, track 1). I was living a/r/tography.

On many days, while riding the bus, I wondered if other riders noticed the elegant, well-crafted poems posted on its curved silver walls. Few seemed to ever look up, let alone take notice of the versified text, rich metaphors, and poetic narratives. Rarely did anyone echo my own inadvertent and satisfied smile at the well-worded twists and turns; for me, they greeted, and sometimes framed, the rest of my day. The teacher in me wondered about this seeming lack of interest in poetry, or even the self-edification

this innovative program nobly aimed to address. What would it take to enliven a greater interest in poetry in our culture? (Humble suggestions forthcoming, dear reader.)

Though more immersed in pursuing a degree than teaching at this particular time, I nonetheless appreciated *Poetry in Transit* for making the effort to “normalize” poetry amidst our everyday life activities like going to work and riding the bus. I hope this kind of public exposure to poetry will continue to spread its “news that stays news” (Pound, 1934, p. 29), in rhizomatic fashion, through riders and readers like me (and you), winding its life-affirming golden thread (Blake, 1904) that we “don’t ever let go of” (Stafford, 1998, p. 42) in our conversations, our artistic practices, and our classroom explorations.

The Way It Is

There’s a thread you follow. It goes among
 things that change. But it doesn’t change.
 People wonder about what you are pursuing.
 You have to explain about the thread.
 But it is hard for others to see.
 While you hold it you can’t get lost.
 Tragedies happen; people get hurt
 or die; and you suffer and get old.
 Nothing you do can stop time’s unfolding.
 You don’t ever let go of the thread. (Stafford, 1998, p. 42)

But *how* do we learn to see like this? In part, by attending to the unknown. How do we *attend* (come into) the unknown? One writer has suggested, “It is through the intense and scrupulous attention to the known that the unknown begins to become fathomable” (Haas, 2002, para.13). In the practice of poetic inquiry, intersecting lines of flight, in flow, we tease open the known, passing through in-between and interstitial

places on our way to the unknown. Where we end up may not be where we began – as I discovered in my a/r/tographic process, framed initially as an exploration into “a room of one’s own” (Woolf, 1929/1957, p. 1). Although this served as my point of departure (for what led to many Deleuzian lines of flight!), in the end, my inquiry wasn’t about the room at all. The journey took me *outside*, into different modes of transit, and different modes of *being* and *becoming-ness*: I walked, I rode, I sometime drove or was driven; the journey took me outdoors, into nature, public spaces, art as activism, and ritual as activism; and the journey took me *out of the ordinary*, into fluid and liminal places of becoming, *in moment*, a dance in consort with the unknown. A mystery.

Dream

I dream of black cowrie shells
 reach for them
 under curtain of falling water
 tucked behind coral trumpets
 throng of tangled seaweed
 a tawny bed of sand

I see my outstretched fingers
 can’t reach
 shells glistening
 beyond my grasp
 can’t reach
 desire
 black as night

Marble green water
 fingers waving lurid white

over pearly black cowries
 pursed lips tiny teeth
 littering the ocean floor

Citing visionary musician, artist and poet John Cage, Pat O’Riley (2003) notes that “poethics regard knowing as not only about knowing or not knowing, but a *willingness to not know*...thinking as letting go and receiving rather than capturing and assembling/ordering” (p. 38). In a similar vein of praxis, American poet Robert Bly has long insisted on values that do not strive for:

perfection, but a record of imaginative enactment...a reckless grandeur
 over the virtue of meticulousness...not just a poetry of psychic leaping,
 but a poetry of devotion, an ecstatic spirit which disdains the fidgety
 cautions of the intellect. (Hoagland, 2011, p. 46)

This aesthetic is well suited to poetic inquiry. Without mystery, without “spiritual intensity...as an essential poetic value” (Hoagland, 2011, p. 43), without *devotion*, how can we practice trust in the poetic act? Where will the words lead us? Where will those things we pay attention to lead us? Where will the things we ignore lead us? Spiritual intensity as a poetic value means walking “on the road to find out” (Stevens, 1970, track 9). We carve a space for the poetic, a place for the unknown to come in and start another line of flight. Like those mystical poets from the East – Mirabai, Rumi, Hafez, Kabir – we practice tuning:

more sharply to instincts which had been there all along – the liberating force of paradox, and the way in which crisscrossing lines of thought, images, and competing claims can be used poetically to deliberately pull apart the tight certainties of “knowing.” (Hoagland, 2011, pp. 46-47)

Similarly, environmental educator David Greenwood (2010) points out the ways in which poetry functions as a site of resistance to what is traditionally understood as “knowing”:

Like...time I seek out on the land, poetry engenders another cultural way of knowing. It is a dissident minority tradition within my own colonized and colonizing culture. Stopping for poetry is an antidote to the morning news...to the voice of reason that governs research method...Poetry...helps me to recover my wilder self. (p. 13)

Coyote Song

Waking early,
before my soul
out wandering all night
has jumped back into my body,
I think I hear coyote's
lonely distant dawn yearning
howl

then, my eyes focus
see the house right next door,
know I'm in the city now.
There are no coyotes here.
Was that me I heard?
Out wandering some lonely highway
peering sideways at the dawn?

“If life is mythically conceived of as a heroic journey, if the myth includes trials, errors, and failure as part of one's necessary education” (Hoagland, 2011, p. 45), then are not a/r/tographical explorations the field notes from that journey, the lived myth returning

from the sojourn, evidence of a newly “certified” teacher of the self? Sometimes they are literally field notes: poems written outside at the Vancouver Art Gallery, on the bus, at home curled up on the red settee below my window; emails from classmates, my supervisor, old friends; inspiring one-liners on Facebook and snippets of text from the internet. One of these guided an important methodological consideration for this poetic inquiry, arriving at a timely juncture during some of the early “confusion” over what constituted “(re)search.” Thereafter, I kept it front and center on my desk, its message reminding me of a vital and easily overlooked tenet of any journey worth taking: “The purpose of life is not to find yourself. It is to lose yourself” (Brooks, 2011, para. 14). So instead of worrying that I was getting “lost,” I learned to relish it, better understanding that being lost is what makes a *finding* all the more rewarding. These poems and musings are my findings, my way-making; they are my understandings. As Indigenous scholar Priscilla Settee (2011) points out, “Writing, in fact, is vital to cultural and racial survival because it is not just to communicate; writing is for discovering oneself” (p. 438). At the heart of a/r/tographic work, deeper discovery of oneself guides the intersections between art-making, living inquiry, and the practices of *educaré*; the many ways in which the world draws us forth.

Listening to Grieg’s Peer Gynt, Suite 1 (To Robert Bly)

Dear Robert, did you listen
to this soaring primeval music
on silent mornings
when the white mantle
lay deep on the land,
working your translation

of that (foolish) hero's journey
 (unknown) into the self
 and (nimble)
 back again?

When first setting out on this journey into a/r/tographic research, the idea of a finished, final product was somehow so appealing. But along the way, the messiness took over; in translation, the woman and writer in transition did indeed transform, into a (re)searcher and exploratory artist grounded in a new milieu, looking to *find* out. Rather than a neat, packaged envelope of poems, my process was allowing “these dynamic practices and identities to interface and collide with one another so that meanings, understandings, and theories become...multiple, tangled, and complicated” (Springgay, 2008, pp. 158-159). Through the practice of writing, through the practice of “Occupying” politically in that season of global unrest and “occupying” myself, in (that new) place, on the bus, at home, in class, and on walks to and from these locales, I found that “delight in turbulence does not deny the messiness and ironies of real life” (O’Riley, 2003, p. 38), but rather, enfolds them within and amongst other moments of ongoing, inexplicable beauty and unexpected grace. My bus riding, walking, protesting, and writing immersion endeavors underscored that “theory *as* practice becomes an embodied, living space of inquiry” (Springgay, 2008, p. 160), where the line(s) between my lived experiences, art-making, and reflection on it all began to grow very entwined. In-betweens abounded.

An interesting shift in understanding and process emerged from questions I felt percolating, related to performance, “found” art, and the poem on the page. Throughout the (re)search, I kept wishing to move beyond a purely linguistic, flat, one-dimensional way of making poems. The photos I’d taken, though interesting ethnographically, were

not high quality. I'd collected fascinating scraps and picture tidbits, intending to make a collage documenting the (re)search, but somehow, amidst other demands, that didn't happen. An initial mandala of ideas for my research, scribed in a circular formation and colored with wide sweeps of beeswax crayons in spiraling rainbow swathes, which hung above my desk, kept the ideas and concepts flowing; but what was the form I was unconsciously seeking?

What you seek
is seeking you. (Rumi, n.d., para. 1)

I found out what it was (or at least began to piece together the jigsaw-like pieces of my clues) one very blustery day walking home from my neighborhood coffee shop, where I saw protruding upside down from the corner garbage bin a strikingly beautiful umbrella. Momentarily confused – why was this beauty in the trash? – I pulled it out, sure there had been some mistake – and saw the broken spines that had led to its truncated existence as a whirly-gig in the rain. At first, I was still troubled, wishing for some way to repair, reuse, or recycle the beauty; then, my dismay slowly shifted to renewed curiosity and inspiration, as I examined the dusky-blue leaf pattern on the silver-periwinkle fabric, convinced that the umbrella could be made into a piece of “trash fashion,” at the very least – an *haute trash* designer skirt or hat (Haute Trash, 2012). In addition to the lovely fabric, the umbrella had a classy, thick wooden handle and spine – clearly this umbrella had seen some days, and might yet sport some more! Originally, I thought I'd pass it on to designers who relish such projects. But when I took the broken-accessory-about-to-become-art home, then my fun really began!

“We have to understand the artistic process not only as an attempted solution of a paradox, but as the paradox itself. What one knows, one cannot say, and once said it is no more the same” (Hess, 1975, p. 55). Hoping to create a next (even better!) incarnation of this classy umbrella, I glued photos taken at the Vancouver encampment to the leafy blue fabric, along with some fresh red and gold autumn leaves that, amazingly, held up under the delicate pressure applied in the gluing process. I added scraps of poems, tucked between its fabric and spines, or impaled onto ends of the spines, and christened it “the poetry umbrella.” When I twirled the broken device, spines collapsing as I spun, the photos revolved in a peculiar bent and shapely way, like an improvisational dancer, and leaves fluttered in time to the rhythmic breeze of the spin. Natural materials, recycled objects, and narrative documentation combined in a photo-leafed moving montage of a place, events, and words in time.

For a presentation about the inquiry, inspiration blossomed into a performance piece out of the beautifully decorated umbrella parked in my study. When considering the form of the presentation, I knew I didn’t want to stand still, reading my poems at a podium – that felt too static, and inappropriate to all the movement and motion that had characterized this journey thus far. Having recently seen a video of Vancouver artist Rebecca Belmore’s street performance, entitled “Vigil” (2002), I was inspired to unite my research on the streets with a performance that embodied that aspect of the work. What ensued was a poetry reading centered around the umbrella’s movement within an indoor space, inspired by Deleuzian lines of flight suggested by its akimbo spines veering off in all directions, as if they could help my poems rise on the wind, carrying reminders

of the threads of writing, transportation, transformation, protest and community that were woven into the development of the inquiry.

Thus freshly adorned, the umbrella was now destined to become the “roof” of an improvisational “bus” in which I would “ride,” periodically stopping to disembark and present a poem. To transform the broken umbrella spines into my lines of flight veering off from within the imaginary bus, I tied long pieces of (many) colored wool yarn to each one. In the spirit of true improvisational theatre, actors (selected from the assembled audience of fellow-presenters) were asked to fulfill their roles only moments before we “moved.” A handful of yarn strings was held by each of four comrades, who formed a loose rectangular shape around me, standing in their midst, holding the curved wooden handle of the umbrella that united us all (metaphorically, and literally), its colorful strings flowing from our center in unpredictable yet fluid ways. Like balloon strings, but without the buoyancy of an actual balloon to hold the strings aloft, each person’s strings twisted, sagged, and tangled in a particularly satisfying enactment of rhizomatic play! At the front of the rectangular(ish)-shaped space that the lines of flight delineated, a sixth participant – my “driver” – commanded, like a steering wheel, a hand-painted cardboard sign (which we had found in our classroom, painted in another class?) that read, “This Space Is Occupied.” The four comrades were meant to represent the wheels, or four corners, of the bus, and I, the passenger in their midst, with the driver of our “bus” leading the way as we moved around the room. The driver and four “wheels” would halt in unison (their lines tangling more magnificently each time) when an iPhone’s doorbell chime rang for the “stops” on our route. There, I would step out from the intertwined configuration of lines of flight that draped the imaginary walls of this improvised transport, and toss-

spread-rain a shower of colorful autumn leaves from a shopping bag at my side, suggesting movement between indoors and outdoors, on the bus and off, cityscape and nature, as well as blurring those distinctions, since this mimicking of outdoor activities was being performed indoors on a gray November afternoon in liminal space and time. I read one poem at each stop, then stepped back into the “bus” as we kept rolling throughout the room, “all around the town” (Wickstrom, 1998, p. 4). With the amorphous swish of movement as we swerved and shuffled around the long and narrow, low-ceilinged room, the flurry of leaves tossed and blown about the space, the ethereal tone of the bus-chime, and the reverent delivery of my words, our improvisation captured the in-betweens, excesses, metonymy and liminality of a/r/tography as live performance.

Our audience seemed intrigued by the mode of presentation, at times even entranced, and perhaps therefore more receptive to the poems, curious about their delivery, the context, and what it might say about the words themselves as part of a moving, vibrating, intertwining whole. Not everyone “got it” that we represented a bus, yet they were swept away in an imaginary world, experiencing the poetry of movement, the words recited, the impressionistic tangle of colored yarn and moving bodies and flying leaves, sensing wind. A/r/tographer Alex de Cosson describes that just “as nature claims for itself the twines of its existence, so an (inter)relational walking/writing temporal space of being-becoming is in continual flux within each of us as we come to terms with our teaching and learning practices” (2009, para. 17). So, too, did my role as artist, researcher, and teacher – how I communicated meaning from my poetry – gained new depth and scope that day, as I strode more solidly from poet into performer, incorporating visual art, sound, dance, and theatre into my expressive work. And perhaps

for having ritualized their initial foray out into the world, the poems did come alive off the page, their voices the echoes of a budding a/r/tographer, finding hers.

For the Missing Women

*“Because the night belongs to lovers,
because the night belongs to love....”*

- Patti Smith & Bruce Springsteen

the night is my lover
when I walk past
darkened buildings
shiny streets
last gold leaf hanging
from a blackened branch
fluttering alone,
echoed in an oily mirror
– shadow reflected
in an elliptical puddle –
at the empty bus stop

the night is my lover
grand solitude in darkness
salty air dotted stars
 alone
under cover
 fully exposed
impenetrable
 fully enclosed
companioned by loose, curling thoughts

the mysterious wind that carries them away

Transition, translation, transformation. Maybe transition never ends. To keep translating ourselves bears witness to change, and honors who we become.

Transformation, I think, is a daily thing, absorbed in the process of writing ourselves into being. Poems, and poetic inquiry, reflect the wonder of this process, also reminding us of ecstasy and devotion, of slowing down on the journey. Strange synchronicities guide us; impossibilities dissolve; poems blossom like night flowers lighting the way through darkened streets and times. “John Keats is right. This is a vale of soulmaking....so full of unanswerable questions, the real ones, *Who am I?* being foremost” (Barks, 2007, p. 59-60).

Who am I? Who is that transformation translating the transition? *Becoming*. Ever-changing. Like a falling leaf, a wind blowing in from the sea, an old idea – or fabric – recycled. Poet and scholar Carl Leggo honors and celebrates these ways in which “(a)r/tography invites you to linger with the living. A/r/tography honors process, and the complex intersection of diverse identities, and the generative questions that call out in the midst of each moment’s oscillation...We write in the spaces that are available” (personal communication, October 31, 2011). We linger in the liminal. We dance the littoral. Together, transforming. We are all on the bus.

There was Cowboy Neal

At the wheel

Of a bus to never-ever land

(Garcia, Weir, & Kreutzman, 1968, track 1)

Found Poems:
Theory and Methodology²

“...theory could even be poetry...”

~ *Jean Baudrillard*

² These found poems are composed of words extracted from source articles and a personal communication, arranged poetically by myself. For sources of the quotes found in Levertov’s essay, see Appendix B.

Some Notes on Organic Form

(A found poem, after an essay of the same name by Denise Levertov, 1965)

there is a form
in all things
(and in our experience)

the poet can
discover and reveal

inscape ~ intrinsic form
the pattern of essential characteristics
in single objects
and objects in a state of relation
to each other

instress ~ experiencing
of the perception of inscape

the *apperception* of inscape
(extend reference to sensory phenomena
to include
intellectual & emotional experience)

the inscape of an experience
sequence or constellation
of experiences

organic poetry is a method of apperception
of recognizing
what we perceive

intuition of order
a form beyond forms

Such a poetry is exploratory

felt by the poet intensely
is brought to speech
the condition of being a poet
a constellation of experiences
demands wakes this demand,
the poem.

beginning fulfillment of this demand
 contemplate
 meditate
the heat of feeling
warms the intellect

Contemplate
 from “templum, temple, a place, a space for observation, marked out
 by an augur”
 not simply to regard
 but to do these things
 in the presence of a god

Meditate
 “to keep the mind in a state of contemplation”
 its synonym
 to muse
 from a word meaning
 “to stand with mouth open”
 think *inspiration* ~
 To breathe in.

the poet stands
 open-mouthed
 in the temple of life

contemplating experience

moment of vision
 crystallization

Faithful attention to the experience
 from the first moment of crystallization
let in to the possibility of the poem
 letting the experience lead
 through the world of the poem

elements of the poet’s being
 in communion with each other
 heightened
 ear and eye
 intellect and passion
 intuitive interaction
 between all the elements involved

Content/form

state of dynamic interaction
 only discoverable in the work
 not before

rhyme chime echo reiteration
 knit the elements of an experience
 density of texture
 returning circling perception
 transmuted into language,
 apperceived

if this return occurs more than once
 a refrain
 not decided but
 directly because of demands of content

repetition variation
 corresponding images
 a kind of non-aural rhyme

out of fidelity to instress
 a design that is the form of the poem
 rhythmic relationships
 of syllables
 within the line
 and line to line

“form follows function”
 “the reality of the building
 lies in the space within it,
 to be lived in”

“ask the fact for the form”

in organic poetry
 metric movement the measure
 is the movement of perception
extended onomatopoeia
 imitate the feeling of an experience,
 emotional tone, texture
 varying speed and gait

the peculiar rhythms of the parts
 are modified, if necessary
 to discover the rhythm of the whole

like painting from nature,
 the character of the whole
 arise out of the parts
 yet when closely juxtaposed
 in the actual painting,
 you may have to lighten or darken
 sharpen or cloud
 to produce
 air, light, dust
 shadow, and distance

In organic poetry,
 the form sense
 ever present
along with
 fidelity to revelations of meditation

a sort of Stanislavsky of the imagination:
 putting a chair two feet downstage
 thickening a knot of bystanders upstage left
 raise his voice
 that actress
 enter more slowly
*(all in the interest
 of a total form
 she intuits)*

the form sense is a sort of
 helicopter scout
 flying over the field of the poem
 taking aerial photos reporting

form sense
 the sense the poet's ear has

of some rhythmic norm
 peculiar
 to a particular poem
 from which lines depart
 and to which they return

the horizon note
 beat or pulse underlying the whole

“the health of the eye demands a horizon”

poetry of linguistic impulse
 absorption in language itself
 world of multiple meaning revealed in
 sound, word, syntax

as much a constellation of perceptions
 as the instress of non-verbal
 sensuous and psychic
 events

Form is never more than a *revelation* of content.

no loading of the rifts with ore
 because there are to be no rifts

alongside this truth another truth

there must be a place in the poem for rifts too
 (never to be stuffed with imported ore)

great gaps
 between perception and perception
 must be leapt across

magic
 when we come to those rifts
 make those
 leaps

religious devotion to the truth
 to the splendor of the authentic
 brings us to undreamed abysses

we find ourselves sailing slowly over them

landing on the other side –

that's ecstasy.

The Poetic Thing (On Poetry and Deconstruction)

(A found poem, after an essay of the same name, by J.W.P. Phillips, 2011)

“A text is not a text unless it hides from the first glance, from the first
comer, the law of its composition and the rules of its game.”
- Jacque Derrida, *La Dissemination* (1972)

poetry does not come
except by way of announcement
of its disappearance
the poetic
the name and the thing

in ‘*Che cos’è la poesia*’ Derrida
situates the poetic between visual arts and music
by way of the kind of aesthetic classification
traced from Kant through Hegel,
poetry characterized
in terms of its
powers of condensation
the dense compressions of dream substitutions
poetic rendering the idea itself
secretly accessible
through memory learned by heart

deconstruction
writing lets itself be affected
by the signature of that
to which the writing is given
(the other)
the structure of the signature of the other
(the poetic)

the answer to the question
What is poetry?
to what the question refers
(poetry itself)
both subject and object

Poetry must (be the) answer (to) the question
what is poetry?

even though it remains inapparent,
 since disappearing is its law
 (to the extent that anything ever appears,
 disappearing is its law)

Derrida writes,

*You are asked to know
 how to renounce knowledge.*
 You need to know how to write
 without knowing

the poet serves as a kind of 'radio'
 able to collect transmission from the 'invisible world.'

'I am a dictation,
 pronounces poetry,
 learn me by heart,
 copy me down, guard and keep me,
 look out for me,
 look at me,
 dictated dictation [dictée],
 right before your eyes:
 soundtrack, *wake*, trail of light,
 photograph of the feast in mourning.'

deconstruction and poetry:
 the common ground might be teaching.
 Poetry as a kind of teacher:
 in Hegel's classic formula,
 'poetry has always been and is still
 the most universal and widespread teacher
 of the human race'

Derrida's no less classical axiom
 'the poetic:
 that which you desire to learn
 by heart;
imparare a memoria.'

slight incline between poetry,
 as the teacher,
 and the poetic,
 as that which you desire to learn
 from poetry
 suggests without revealing

an interval
 where much may happen
 in the course of teaching

paradox of philosophy in deconstruction
 our inability to know exactly what it is
 that survives
 (remains, endures)

poetry (or the poetic)
 a complex set of transitions and distinctions.
 distinct from prose,
 more primitive, more fundamental,

predates prose

(‘a knowing that does not yet separate the universal
 from its living existence in the individual’).

Poetry is the original form of human expression.

Poetry is prose bewitched
 says Mina Loy,

‘a music made of visual thoughts,
 the sound of an idea’

the language of poetry
 figures the universal of philosophy
 in secret
 through the mediation
 of the language of things

‘The aim of poetry
 is imagery and speech
 not the thing talked about
 or existence in practice’

Derrida/Francis Ponge
 the law of the thing:
 ‘dictated as if in the first person
 by the thing
 with an intractable rigour,
 as an implacable command.’

(*garde et regard*)
 the being lost of what must be lost

‘poetry, the art of speech,
the totality which unites in itself
the two extremes,
visual arts and music’

Derrida’s allusive repetition
captures in its image a wake,
a *sillage*, as in light trails
in night photographs:
time passing
captured as a trail of light

what one sees
must be kept and reserved for the gaze
in terms of its loss

(*garde et regard*)
constant attention paid
to the structure and law of the loss
of lost things

what makes it possible:
the hallucinogenic qualities
of these fragments of word
(the shriveling and shredding,
the snipping of the tips)
which so much *produce* in its absence
a memory that is absent

the mislaid key
can only be given
in the form of a mislaid key:
the key is its loss.

Theory and Play of the Duende

(A found poem, after an essay of the same name by Federico Garcia Lorca, 1933,
translated by A.S. Kline, 2007)

Longing for air and sunlight, I was so bored
I used to feel as though I was covered in fine ash

‘You have a voice, you understand style,
but you’ll never ever succeed
because you have no *duende*.’

‘All that has dark sounds has *duende*.’

Those dark sounds are the mystery,
the roots that cling to the mire that we all know,
that we all ignore,
but from which comes the very substance of art.

Goethe, in speaking of Paganini
hit on a definition of the *duende*:
‘A mysterious force that everyone feels
and no philosopher has explained.’

the *duende* is a force
not a labour,
a struggle
not a thought.

‘The *duende* is not in the throat:
the *duende* surges up, inside, from the soles of the feet’
truly alive:

meaning, it’s in the veins:
the most ancient culture of immediate creation

the spirit of the earth

The *duende* I mean, secret and shuddering,
is descended from that blithe daemon,
all marble and salt,
of Socrates,
whom it scratched at indignantly on the day
when he drank the hemlock,
and that other melancholy demon of Descartes,

diminutive as a green almond, that, tired of lines and circles,
fled along the canals to listen to the singing of drunken sailors.

Every step that he climbs in the tower of his perfection
is at the expense of the struggle that he undergoes
with his *duende*,

not with an angel, nor with his Muse.
This is a precise and fundamental distinction at the root of their work.

The angel guides and grants, like St. Raphael:
defends and spares, like St. Michael:
proclaims and forewarns, like St. Gabriel:
dazzles, but flies over a man's head

The Muse dictates, and occasionally prompts.
She can do relatively little
since she's distant and so tired
(I've seen her twice)
that you'd think her heart half marble.

The Muse stirs the intellect,
bringing a landscape of columns and an illusory taste of laurel,
and intellect is often poetry's enemy,
since it limits too much,
since it lifts the poet into the bondage of aristocratic fineness,
where he forgets that he might be eaten,

suddenly, by ants

things against which the Muses
who inhabit monocles,
or the roses of lukewarm lacquer in a tiny salon,
have no power.

Angel and Muse come from outside us:
the angel brings light,
the Muse form
Golden bread or fold of tunic,
it is her norm that the poet receives in his laurel grove.

While the *duende* has to be roused
from the furthest habitations of the blood.

forget our fear of the scent of violets
that eighteenth century poetry breathes out,

and of the great telescope
 in whose lenses the Muse,
 made ill by limitation, sleeps.

The true struggle is with the *duende*.

The roads where one searches for God are known.
 Seeking the *duende*,
 there is neither map nor discipline.

We only know it burns the blood
 like powdered glass,
 that it exhausts, rejects
 all the sweet geometry we understand,

that it shatters styles

tear down the scaffolding of the song,
 but allow through a furious, burning *duende*,
 friend to those winds heavy with sand

She had to rob herself of skill and safety:
 that is to say,
 banish her Muse, and be helpless,
 so her *duende* might come,
 and deign to struggle with her at close quarters
 worthy of her pain and her sincerity

The arrival of the *duende*
 presupposes a radical change
 to all the old kinds of form

‘Allah! Allah!’

‘Olé!’

‘Viva Dios!’

deep, human, tender cries
 of communication with God through the five senses,
 thanks to the *duende*
 that shakes the voice and body
 a real, poetic escape from this world

Naturally
 when this escape is perfected,
 everyone feels the effect:

but in that crowd of Muses and angels with lovely forms and smiles,
who could earn the prize

but her moribund *duende*,
sweeping the earth with its wings made of rusty knives.

Spain, country of ancient music and dance,
where the *duende* squeezes out those lemons of dawn,
a country of death, a country open to death.

In every other country
death is an ending. It appears
and they close the curtains.

In Spain they open them.

When the Muse sees death appear she closes the door,
or builds a plinth, or displays an urn and writes an epitaph

with her waxen hand,
but afterwards she returns to tending her laurel
in a silence that shivers between two breezes.

When the angel sees death appear he flies in slow circles,
and with tears of ice and narcissi weaves the elegy
we see trembling in the hands of Keats

The *duende* won't appear if he can't see the possibility of death,
if he doesn't know he can haunt death's house,
if he's not certain to shake those branches we all carry,
that do not bring, can never bring, consolation.

With idea, sound, gesture, the *duende* delights
in struggling freely with the creator
on the edge of the pit.
Angel and Muse flee, with violin and compasses,
and the *duende* wounds

and in trying to heal that wound that never heals,
lies the strangeness, the inventiveness of a (wo)man's work.

The magic power of a poem consists in it always being filled with *duende*,

baptising all who gaze at it with dark water,

since with *duende* it is easier to love, to understand,
and be certain of being loved, and understood

We have said that the *duende* loves the edge,
the wound,
draws close to places where forms fuse
in a yearning beyond visible expression.

The *duende* works on the dancer's body
like wind on sand.

The *duende* never repeats itself,
any more than the waves of the sea do
in a storm.

In the work with the cape, while the bull is still free of wounds,
and at the moment of the kill,
the aid of the *duende* is required to drive home
the nail of artistic truth.

Dark sounds, behind which in tender intimacy
exist volcanoes, ants, zephyrs, and the vast night
pressing its waist against the Milky Way.

The *duende*....Where is the *duende*?

Through the empty archway a wind of the spirit enters,
blowing insistently over the heads of the dead,
in search of new landscapes
and unknown accents

Found Advice

(A found poem, after correspondence with a friend)

Yeah, well,
ask a tame person
what you ought to do
and they'll tell you
tame is good.

Ask a wild person,
you'll get a different answer.

Guess you have to decide what you're most afraid of.
And then do that, if you want to be a poet.
If you want to be an academic,
do the opposite, what's safe.
Unless teaching is your art, which it might be,
and then you'd be in the right place.

Refuge is where art dies.
Poets need sharp teeth.
Keep your momentum.
The opposite of refuge is exposure, exploration,
expression. Hopefully not also expiration,
but if you're not flirting with that,
you won't have much of interest to say.
Do you want to arrange flowers, or bloom?

In My Arrogant Opinion.

Sorry,
I just have to do this to myself
every morning.
Because I am unaffiliated.

So if you don't want to sound like me....

River Journal

(Ecopoetic Practice: Writing the Wounded Land)

(A found poem after an essay of the same name, by Brian Wattchow, 2012)

not just a record
 (observations, experiences)
 but a meaning making exercise

paddling by day
 contemplation meditation
 at night

metaphorical journey
 how no place is untouched,
 every day
 encounters with the whole ecosystem
 forest river animals people

where place means
 environments implicated and enfolded
 by each other
 (and their creatures)

where metaphor immerses us
 in relations among things
 devotion to sensuous
 particulars

culture and nature wrestle with each other
 and emerge changed

(though we perceive ourselves separate)

we begin the process of reattachment
 by apprenticing self to a place

listen deeply to a landscape
 balance of natural and cultural forces
 dynamism of a place
 how it changes through time
 how we are changed as a result

river floodplain families communities

ecologies that sustain them all

place, movement, language
become *entangled*
in each other

Ecopoetics: a poem making (Greek *poiesis*)
the dwelling-place—
the prefix eco derived from Greek oikos,
“the home or place of dwelling”
poiesis in the sense of verse-making
is language’s most direct path of return
to *oikos*, the place of dwelling,
metre itself a quiet but persistent music,
a recurring cycle,
a heartbeat
an answering to nature’s own rhythms,
an echoing of the song
of the earth itself. (Bate, 2000)

Poetry awakens
“the momentary wonder of *unconcealment*”

as for Heidegger,
poetry can quite literally save the earth

Poetically Man Dwells:
“poetry and dwelling belong together,
each calling for the other”

poetry offers
an enfolding of self with place,
of the outer with the inner

and a way of pursuing knowing
most often suppressed
and relegated
to the margins

tied to the immediate and the immanent
to the processes of ‘being there’
and sensual saturation

poetic writing
as a form of research activity

relies on a paradox, say Van Manen,
 “distances us from lived experiences
 but by doing so
 allows us to discover
 the existential structures of experience”

ecopoetics is, quite naturally, an extension of *cultural poiesis*,

immersion
 and self-conscious saturation
 potential to access and represent
 aspects of human experience
 otherwise impossible to realize
 in the research process.

There is a pace and rhythm to poetic writing that mimics the natural rhythms and cycles
 that we may have lost sight of
 in the headstrong rush of culture.

sitting at my desk
 several hundred kilometres from the river
 distance does not lessen the pull the river has on me.

The initial inspiration for a poem is often hard to trace

begins with a kind of “emotional picture”
 at the edge of rational thought.

we realize our indebtedness to the more-than-human world

Poems & Field Notes

I no longer try to describe where I've been. It is not possible to capture in a few sentences the essence of a journey, a pilgrimage that is of the mind and heart as well as of the body. I am learning that a pilgrimage is a private thing, not easily shared. There are places we go where the people we love cannot follow.

~ Gelareh Asayesh, *Saffron Sky: A Life Between Iran and America*

We knew that gypsies were properly another race. They inhabited the land of eros....You encountered them in broad daylight, going about their usual business, yet there was always a feeling that they were coming towards you out of storytime...there was an extra-ness in the air, as if a gate had been left open in the usual life, as if something may get in or out.

~ Seamus Heaney, *District and Circle: Poems*

Memory

Memory is a fictitious device.
As soon as we head back
on that long voyage forward
connecting two ends of the same strand
we lose our way,
invent or embellish details
meant to save the sinking story,
this leaky boat we bail furiously
to keep from going under,
some part of ourselves
stuffed in the hull,
hoping for release.
But "*it's already too late,*"
and we're sunk before
the voyage begins
lost, adrift, at sea.
Memory is no help at all.
Make it up
and you just might
swim to shore.

Ink Blots

Ink blots on my fingertips, from changing the printer cartridge, but it looks like I've been slaving over the ink well all night. Writing of writer-ly things, dreaming poetic things, like night fish wandering through deep blue subterranean caverns, or edges of sky parting for a sliver of lightning to sneak through, stenciling blackness with its immanent flash. The inkblots fade slowly, leaving clean thumbs for another day's imprints, etchings, impressions, blots, marked evidence of my presence here on earth.

Song of Place

In search of place: where we write, where we land, where we are home. I seek out the lonely, less habited places, to sit alone with my journal and a certain amount of disengagement from the rational. Sinking into the sensuous, this dry, matted grass, nearby downy thistles, this patch of sunlight, and the further, distant – almost missing – sound of traffic: tires on asphalt, sirens, voices from a faraway sidewalk. Instead, a whistling towhee holds my attention as it relaxes, perceptibly, in the grander quiet that reigns here on the hillside behind the museum, overlooking all of English Bay. Faint conversations of the groundskeepers pruning along the fence line above the steep embankment float my way. Tenor hum of bees, foraging the last of summer's vetch blossoms, underscores the deep bass chugging of a tanker's slow ascent up the bay in the waters far below. A steady soprano *peep-peep-peep*; bullfrog joins in, early for his evening serenade, but signal to me that the afternoon wanes. At the choppy sound of a helicopter overhead, he stops. The grounds crew drives out the service road. Gazing a long time at the heavy sky lowering over the bay, blue mountains rolling northward into infinity, bullfrog begins his song again. I rise to go.

Blossoms

To paint the divide between dark and light, the blacks and whites with all their possibilities for shade and shadow, tone and texture, thick and thin inky lines, erotic curved snaking through blackened horizon, unveiling the naked sky of night, spiral throats of the flowering earth brimming with stars in the lush shower of complex creation, aquamarine, a black violet bloom.

The curved opalescent whorl inside moon snail, capricious curl of petunia's will-not-be-deterred upward blooming growth. Breathing color from the backs of the eyes, cobalt, indigo, rose as red to pink as – (did Georgia ever paint a rose?) – the way the white impatiens blurs against the dawning light of day until the blossoms' whiter white distinguishes their shape, against the paler, creamy expanse of widening sky.

Crescent moon hanging
in a violet sky

white sickle
in the dark hollow
of her throat

Venus appears
just before light of day

Mt. Baker
etched against a growing horizon

The mountain lies down.

“Its Feet Are the Ears”

Writing, a way between the worlds and beyond, to what’s really going on. Robert Bringhurst calls the hands “uprooted feet.” We feel and shape our way through life, everything we touch or craft a part of our sensory hand “walk.” Like making our way through visual landscapes, seeing (that is, touching) things with our “hands of the head” (our eyes). Or listening with the toes of our head’s hearing feet, walking through aural landscapes, dancing what we (h)ear.

The feet are the link
between earth and the body. Begin there.
The lungs are the link between body and air.
The hands, these uprooted feet, are the means
of our shaping and grasping. Clasp them.
The eyes are the hands of the head;
its feet are the ears.

~ “Sengzhaò,” from *Pieces of Map, Pieces of Music*

(Bringhurst, 1986, p. 21)

Sam Hamill speaks of the ears and eyes as one sense organ, of no duality between vision and the other senses. Like listening to the piano player’s fingers caressing, boldly dancing across the black and white keys, the tempestuously thick resonant jam unfolding between rhythm, bass, lead guitar, drummer and pianist, unfolding, infolding, a Deleuzian rhizome of aural space, a musical symphony in its live manifestation of cosmic stories embodied through our listening, our sensuous responses. The space within the music pulses with “...intimate communication and spiritual transformation” (Lesh, 2005, p. 269), a communal heartbeat, like that found in poems. Present to receive when the gift arrives.

Writing

Sitting at my desk writing
inviting something to come
a word a world an idea
some flip of the switch
an urn of possibility turned upside down
on the table of my mind
(what *does* a writing desk have
in common with a raven?)
bits and pieces of feathers and dust
float to the ground
textured wind
fractal complexity of beatific rain
the simple shower of things
dressed as words
falling around my eyes ears tongue
heat and taste
sound and vision
shadow and light

Speaking in Tongues

I don't know the language of my ancestors, a fleur-de-lis of grief for that loss of ancestry, the poetic tongue that Farsi is, and for my own avocation in this lifetime toward writing and the poetical. I can't help but wonder how life would have been had I learned Farsi when I was young, and grown up reading, hearing, and speaking its musical tones and mélange of emphatic murmurs. A Persian friend, a mother like myself, recently assured me that had it been a woman, not my father, who had emigrated from Iran, I most surely would have learned my mother tongue, my ancestral *langue*. What is lost, what is left behind, and what is found, years later, buried where no one who came from that place thought to look?

Mountains etch a razor sharp edge of sky; no haze, no blur to the clarity of cliff, sky, and sea. This, too, is a language, buried in the land, in our genes. Cellular geography. Breath, solar flares, ashes from a sacred fire. Living language. I've heard it said poets are the cartographers of the mythic realm. Do we map emotional springs, memory, gesture, and silence? Imprint of what we knew, but were never told? The way in, and back out again. In reverse. An ache. Tangled perspectives; an open passage through exiled heights.

Daughters (*For Petra & Elena*)

Their twin pools of brown eyes pinned resolutely
 on the future journey back centuries
 to streets of Shiraz, Isfahan, Tehran
 where great, great grandmothers gazed from wide
 dark pools like theirs, like my father's, like mine.

Dream of Mashad

I trace my ancestry back
to the people of *Mashad*,
who walked in from the desert
with carpet laden camels, *kashk*,
Eshrat's granddaughter in *Amrika*.
I carry your memory inside me.
Sunlight, pomegranates, apricots, figs.
Saffron. Roses. Fragrant inheritance
of a past your son tried to forget
I was born to remember,
Grandmother, *Maamaan-bozorg*,
Nemat's youngest daughter you never knew
looking through eyes like yours,
 lines of your face
perfectly mirrored
 in mine,
I remember the places he left behind,
blooming orchards, mountains, Caspian Sea,
your smile, the old ways, how things used to be.

Language Is a Pink Martini

I cannot extricate myself from language, language from place, or place from memory dragged backward behind me like a slow slack tide through everything I've ever known, on my way far out to sea. Writing about language embodies so much more than words, or spoken-written thought: return to the language of the senses, pre-verbal articulation: pure experience. Heidegger once described poetry as living phenomenology before phenomenology was "invented." The sensuous language of the body. Sunlight. This cream-colored rose cluster, blush of red at each petal's pale tip, tiny brown rosehips at the center of each, silky petals falling; this too is a language. The language of rose, shedding.

What does the heart say? Is transience a language? Migratory patterns, are they languages? I don't mean birds, necessarily; I mean, me. My migrations. The poet memorizes experience, image, gesture and word, added to the language of sleep and dreams. Where do we travel in dreams, that convoluted map of memory gambled away in trickster's hand, gone by morning, the taste of it awakening us all day long? What about the language of things? Where they come from, and where they go.

Like the gold-wrapped box I saw outside The Penthouse Nightclub on Seymour Street, midday, on a sunny Saturday afternoon in October, such a vivid contrast to the dingy niche of front doors draped in shadow in a dark corner sleeping off the day. I saw it as I hurried past on my errand to the stationary store, half a block away, and then slowly turned back around to stare at it, suddenly uncertain of what I was seeing, so incongruous was it to the usually crisp city streets, snappy shoppers, and the sleepy patina of a blackened theatre front by day.

The box was sitting like it was left for a Goodwill pick-up, jauntily perched atop two stuffed black garbage bags, red-tie handles knotted and leaning akimbo against one another. Tucked into the wall of the sleeping theatre, not curbside where trash would

normally reside, the whole be-bowed gold presentation contrasted too sharply with the dark gray sidewalk and gritty, windswept street. Was I the only one who had noticed?

I wondered, then, if it was a bomb; I yearned to know its origin, its destination, its contents; what language it spoke. Marie France says language is, can be, a bomb. Can we hear language ticking, when it goes off, or does it explode silently, as quickly as it mysteriously arrived, in gold as well as brown-paper wrapped packages? Is it spelled into our palms, a series of finger shapes to denote letters, words, and meaning? Is language a part of the self, subsequent or antecedent to it?

Master Dogen says, “We study the self to lose the self. Only when you forget yourself can you become one with all things.” When I returned from my errand, the box, and the bags, were gone. That doorway, now empty, acted like it had never known any different. I looked up, and saw the floating pink martini painted on the side of the building, promising nightly pleasure, and thought of the mysterious box floating off into the city, bright, shiny and gift-wrapped, to who knows where. A part of me floated off after it, spirit-body tethered to earth and language, ever in search of it, one with all things.

Language Is a Gypsy

Moon down over Yew and Vine,
streetlights a mock mirror
for that pale orb half obscured
by wane and early dark of winter.
Language, more than words,
more than speech and action
drips down around us
like moonlight, stalactite,
saltwater brine,
breath.

We are what we know.
A raised eyebrow,
shiny gaze whispered
in tangled green undergrowth,
cuff to the head
or palms cupped
round a diamond flame,
 lightstruck
offering *Haq*
 or spirit,
a breath,
 now wind

Crowsong

Crow party overhead, in whispering maple leaves

their raucous cawing breaks the day like bread
scattered bites for hungry mouths to feed upon

crowsong

boisterous clacking

clicking marbles in your beak

softly swallowed

wooden beads

rolling in your throat

whoosh of wings scraping fir boughs

a wind between the trees

flood of grey sky

alight,

now stealing away

Are We Not Thus All Crows?

(After **A Considerable Speck** by Robert Frost)

Quoth Henry CrowBard
 #OccupyWildernessSinger
 on Frost's speculative poem about
 the mind of ink

following a drop of ink
 on the page
 onyx cabochon
 willing, we
 pick it up in shiny black beaks
 pose, like Raven, who got away,
 our black marble sun held aloft

till it spills back down on a solid page
 liquid messenger scrawled by talon,
 guided by mind met by mind of its own
 in the (willful) black drop of ink

on the page,
 the writer kindly
 stands out of the way
 ink forming words flowing
 into script, into lines
 into more lines, wound
 into knowing

an unobtrusive vine
 that climbs into your soul

these words a flowering,
small shiny leaves
twining between almond white toes
up twirling limbs
tangled
round twin trunks,
down your rippling spine

till you are caught,
a wingéd leafy creature
no longer mere medium
jet black, fluid
let loose on the page, empty
like a gold warmed sky

your spilt message
as grateful as downpour,
black river filled with stars
raining onto parched earth
painting
how it will be
onyx cabochon
depicting dark hills, white dunes
across a sky of empty horizons

“...and recognize / Mind when I meet with it in any guise” ~ Robert Frost

Renga Chain

Red leaves flutter past
pale light of a fading sun,
gold orb spilling honey.

Crimson fire, bare branches,
autumn sunlight falling to the ground.

Shadows light as leaves.
In the clouds, ice crystals form.
Seagulls call to an empty sky.

Voices come to us on the wind; listen.
Even the smallest among us sings.

Mind leans against roots.
Old stone wall, soul breathes sunlight.
Leaves drift through still air.

Nothing in this world outlives the sun and moon.
Celebrate your losses, and sing praises, morning, noon, and night.

This Poetic Inquiry (In a Nutshell)

(A found poem, from titles off the spines of books stacked on my desk)

Changing your story
 a book of ours
 poetry at stake
 becoming animal
 the coral sea
 the practice of the wild
 Indigenous storywork
 a poet's work
 pieces of map, pieces of music
 reclaiming Indigneous voice and vision
 caring
 poetry as method
 Babel
 dancing at the devil's party
 Wittgenstein elegies
 early work
 Rimbaud complete
 the Cubist poets in Paris
 moon and the virgin
 thinking about enacting curriculum in "frames of war"
 the tree of meaning
 everywhere being is dancing

Eros and the Philosophers

How can I study philosophy
in springtime, when Eros' sap
flows molten inside me
golden honey, slowing my mind
green fire, burning from within

I am caught in my own trap
the wildness inside my veins
draws me out, ceaselessly
flames of love breathed into life
flowering, fearlessly ablaze

The True Friend *(for Ostaad)*

This morning I planted primroses
in the garden beyond my door,
one step away, outside the house,
a small teeming world, afire,
new green clambering
tight red buds unfolding
a handful of miracles
leading the way.

Like this day, Mevlana's teachings,
the garden where we grow together
thirsty for water and sunlight,
thriving on the touch of a true Friend.

Pear Flesh

everything is waiting for you
the elder poet said
and I followed
wandering dirt roads
wide desert plains
pebbled for centuries with lust
and desire, not the same thing,
nothing
but lost on those back roads
settled with a patina of yearning,
sepia tint, burning sheen

my skin,
that pale thin covering threaded across
pear flesh, dripping invisible fruitiness, sticky
messiness of juice and pulp
pear flesh, the sweet tasting yielding
melt in your mouth incandescent butter
of soft flesh, fruit
of your desire, bursting pear
flesh, pulp and skin, gritty and sweet
in the belly of union
body of all this thirst
the holy third
flesh, core, and yearning.

The Thief

When I stepped out
into the purpled night air
even the rain smelled like you,

harvest of flowers, citrus,
sadness spiced with hard-earned salt.
A prayer of dusky cinnamon.

How is it
you carry
the gardens of Lebanon

in your tousled, refugee
hair? The scent of you
under an unfaithful moon

disarms me,
the rain washed world
a blanket of storied scent

blown roses, dripping cedar boughs,
bite of lemons
and you

moving through the marketplace
half a world away
across town

without me.

Wreck Beach

mist clings to a low bank of trees

West facing on this slack curved cove

a ferry chortles past to the Sunshine Coast

gulls shriek and fade in the morning air

September, almost equinox, a rippled wake

rushes up to meet damp sand

in the shade of tall cedars, alders leaning

from the steep embankment overhead

smoke from a wood fire bites the salt air

its musky cloud promising eggs, bacon

the bay fills with pleasure boats, a sailboat's

single mast bobbing in a blue robin's-egg sea

For Robert, On the Occasion of his 85th Birthday

Last night I dreamed a tangle of lines
 raven stole back to the sky.
 Blackest bird, decided by design,
 thinks everything belongs to him:
 bundle of words, shiny gems,
 winter's blue lace agate eye.
 By dawn, nothing was left except
 paper dissolving in rain.
 But the dream arose,
 spectacular, improbable,
 like you,
 a dream of fierce love
 all that sings on a turning earth,
 winter's concert of snow and fragrant
 viburnum in the darkest month
 a panoply of vigor and vim
 tangled terrain for a gentle white bear
 ambling through slumbering mindscapes.
 Third daughters lost in these modern forests
 and in need of a ride keep an eye out for you.

Dream of kingfishers

December birds, like you,
 diving in wind-tossed cerulean seas
 rakish crests blown skyward,
 like yours,
 wild sails for halcyone days we spend with you
 adrift in our small boats rocking
 on waves of desire, grief and awe.

Lingering with you, chatter departs.

The weight of ecstasy dwells in between.

Tide's tempestuous sway

mystery of moonrise,

lost pearl swimming in a jet-black sea.

Luminous signs all around,

like your hands dancing in the radiant air

to the sitar's sinuous notes,

a private symphony only your ten fingers know,

conducting the score for the secret Friend

hidden in the folds between every note.

Ghazal

When morning fog kisses night's fading shadow
from the toothed leaves of the holly tree, then we will know
how long the cure takes, and where lies the remedy.

In forests of fascination where we lose our way,
burdened by excess and the dark weight of gold,
days of endless night do not bring the remedy.

The orange tabby curls in a perfect circle,
her thick fur a blazing mantle, like soft fire
I can caress in my search for the remedy.

Rumi traveled a long way in search of his Shams.
Lorca was shot for dissent against the State.
So it's no wonder remedy lives on the run.

When Rumi got to Tabriz, he saw countless birds
fly out of Shams' mouth and into Lorca's cantos,
centuries before the remedy reached these shores.

Here in the morning light, writing poems to old Friends,
the Guest holds a polished mirror up to my face, says
See? Here is remedy, looking back at the cure.

In the Company of Musicians *(For Kathy Ann)*

I wish I was, I dreamed I was,
I would rather be
playing, writing, music
finger like rivers flowing
over the blacks and whites,
plucking, strumming taut corded strings
horse hair and steel issue reverberating twang
harmonics hum in notes wound in the air
whistling whittling a poem of sound.
Whereas words, words are so clumsy,
they bruise and bite when
I don't mean them to,
curse and fall hopeless at my feet
when I most need them to stand up
and speak for themselves.

Hardly an enemy,
living in my mouth, tools of my tongue
breath of mantra, whisperer of all
to freely exalt in praise, humble words
make my resonance your chord,
these words my strings my
black and white keys,
my hammers and softly padded stops,
my musical compositions
my uncommon melody
my improv
my song.

Death at the Encampment *(For Ashley Gough, 1988-2011)*

Death at the encampment.
Living and dying in a public place
living and dying
in a tent in the rain
as D.O.A. took the stage.

Her heart stopped.
What makes a 23-year-old's heart stop?

She came to Occupy
because she felt safe
to set up camp and spend the night
maybe to party
maybe to protest
maybe to play
to live the dream
like the rest of us there
free to give and receive
all we need

She went to sleep and never woke up
sailing on sister morphine's seductive
dreamless sea of sleep
Dead on arrival, her exodus
right as D.O.A. took the stage
smack took her center stage
dancing with veils of life
just out of reach
that last rush

one last sleep.
 Her death haunts us (is important)
 like unfinished dreams
 like chasing fireflies
 on an already fleeting summer night
 like empty parents' arms
 that nothing will fill

Death at the encampment
 a community grieves
 while the pundits post their twitter feeds
 that feed no one
 except rumor
 who's been camped out here the longest
 the one the city councilwoman
 best beware, not the dirty hippies on parade.

The pundits still boast and swill.
 We bank and curve like swallows
 against a grievous sky
 domes carried aloft in the march
 moving camp
 now we soar and free-fall
 joyous in the convocation we are
 Deleuzian line of flight migrating
 toward the sign of life,
 fleeing injustices everywhere
 by running toward them, naming them
 call and response,
 only to turn up underground
 in your back yard

on your front lawn
in your courthouse
in your head
in your teapot
in your bed
in your wildest dreams

with our tents
our people's library
food not bombs
looking to write what is unwritten
looking to rise like lions from our slumber
to shake off our chains,
to build the commons again.
Her name will not be forgotten.
Ashley's life led her here
this movement mobilizing millions
what we are standing for,
why we are here,
why we Occupy.
For Ashley,
looking for a place to sleep
looking for a hot meal
a free concert
maybe for some free smack
tainted smack circulating the community
some ponder it was planted there
not by the addicts, but by political foes
let her blood stain their hands.
For Ashley,
for residents of the DTES,

for the alter-abled,
for people sleeping on the street
for the hungry
for children who never see their parents smile
for the jobless
for all the casualties
of capitalism
the real “collateral damage” whose faces
we never see on the evening news
who are countless, uncounted, but not
nameless

For Ashley
for the hungry
for the children
for addicts who want to get clean
for addicts who still want a fix
who need community
anyhow.
For all of us
around the globe
who need some kind of fix
all we need is love
“love is for everybody,”
in our hearts
she will never die.

For Ashley we Occupy.

Preferring Revolution

(for Edward Snowden)

I can't watch the news
listen to the radio

read so many online updates,
without losing myself in the morass:

it's just more genocide
and politician's lies about

what I never agreed could be done
in my name.

Now it's election time,
and they want to persuade me

the outright lies of one are worse
than the secrets the other never tells.

My friend who writes novels tells me,
Never watch *Democracy Now*.

It's too depressing and you'll never
write a thing. How can our small words

begin to approach
the weight of that boulder?

I know she's right, my pen dries up

while my mind, my heart
try to make sense
of what's incomprehensible.

I want to chop wood again,
carry water, be grateful

for what I don't know.
I want to drink wine

my friend Zhenya pressed
by hand, ask her how it was

in Russia, when the people had
no voice, no bread, no hope

but stuck together,
knowing revolution would come.

Why I Keep a Square of Flowered Paper On My Desk

Origami

working with the hands
 folding origami
 keeping hands busy
 fingers folding, folding
 folding prayers in each new crease
 each new crane

remembering folds and patterns
 more important than ever
 since Greg's diagnosis with glioblastoma
 keeping fingers nimble and precise
 folding, folding
 new creases, new prayers, new wings

folding cranes for healing
 folding cranes for grace
 folding cranes for the tumor
 hated honored guest
 living inside
 our friend's brain

folding cranes for intention
 folding purpose and prayer
 into a thousands cranes
 flying
 free

Leaf Collage

Wet compost of leaf collage
piles of serrated edges sluiced
with smooth, a mosaic
of citrine, crimson, carmine, red
gold bodies entangled,
wrought into another form.
Sidewalk beauty others pass by,
unnoticing,
the bright moment before compost
living kaleidoscope of place and time
form and color, tannin and rain
matted together in decomposition,
waiting to be found.

Knowledge

what is knowledge
everything under the sun
forgetting everything
that crawls in the night

knowing
all that is unseen
all we overlook

everything under the moon
remembering everything
that the daytime forgot

Found Poem

the divide between dark and light, the blacks and whites with all their possibilities
slaving over the ink well all night, writing of writerly things, scholarly things

shade and shadow, tone and texture, thin and thick inky lines, erotic curved lines
dreaming poetic things, like night fish wandering through deep blue subterranean

making their way to the horizon, unveiling the naked sky of night, spiral throats of
caverns, or the whole sky opening up for a sliver of lightning to sneak through

the flower earth echoing stars in the lush light of their faces, purple, dazzlingly
unspoken, hushed, hidden from view until the child reaches up and sees her

plain and simple, complex as creation, aquamarine and saffron, a black violet bloom
in search of place: where we write, where we land, where we ground; where we are

the curved opalescent whorls inside moon snail, capricious curl of petunia's will-
home. I seek out the lonely, less habited places, where I like to sit alone, with my

not-to-be-deterred upward blooming growth. Breathing color from the backs of the
journal, and a certain amount of disengagement with the rational: that sinking into

eyes, cobalt, ochre, rose as rose as red to pink in every hue ~ yoni rose, blush rose,
the sensuous, this matted dry grass and nearby prickly thistles, this patch of

sunrise rose, red rose ~ (did Georgia ever paint a rose?) ~ the way the white
sunlight, and the further distant ~ almost missing ~ sound of traffic: tires on

impatiens blurs against the dawning light of day until the blossom's whiter white
asphalt, sirens, the voices of people passing by on the sidewalk. Instead a whistling

distinguish their shape against the paler expanse of widening sky.

Bird holds my attention as it relaxes, perceptibly, in the grander quiet that reigns

*(From an accidental print overlay of two field notes: it printed as couplets, as shown; one
line from each original piece against a line of the other, combined into something
entirely different and new.)*

When You Don't Know How to Say

sleis!ksnlgk'a'hdlk
 why don't you use one filter
 retroactively
 learn the language of lemurs or lemmings
 right before they leap
 Ernesto, Espen, Alfredo
 ringleaders
 learning WordPress
 circling the lions
 it's like selling you something
 a little like blackmail
 polite blackmail
 make a statement with a question at the end
 the notion of ground zero for language
 like, you get meaning
 through semantics
 deviations from ground zero
 evolution
 derivations
 all in a day's work
 how the mother speaks
 how a child learns
 language is much more than analytical
 corpus, Gaia, Eros, *corazón*
 the structure of noun, verb, and
 where in the visual
 is that division
 between theme and the new,
 spark, imagination, *poiesis*?

The Gypsy Emigrates

We've all heard how language
slipped into the suitcase,
sailed across an ocean
and popped up in Minnesota,
disguised as snow.
Language, that vagabond,
gypsy and errant thief
escaped between prison bars,
like wind stealing through an iron grate
disappeared over mountains passes
dragging a misty, faded moon behind,
showed up on the baby's tongue
in Palestine, crying through the night,
babbling words from the old country
Ishtar, Salome, Jezebel, Eve,
lamenting love to a traveling moon
remembering, naming, coloring things
with an old song in the new land.

Speaking of Place

(For Greg Ewert, 1949-2012)

Paying attention.
 Being-in-the-world.
 Sea-drenched fields
 sweet salty grassy smell
 winding through open car windows,
 tangy and sweet
 honey and hay
 sunlight and grass
 colder nights
 making everything sweeter
 salt breeze, sweet plums, dark plum colored nights
 deep black star blinking nights
 before equinox
 tides in balance, before swinging out again
 to whatever isn't here now,
 balanced in coming and going
 with the tide,
 with birth and death
 with the sun and the moon
 living and dying.

What Eleusinian mysteries we unfurl
 words like puzzles in children's rhyme
 like bentwood boxes in the rain
 the old shed roof
 the whiteness of dawn
 before the sun burns its hole in the sky

to climb through.
 The living survive the dead
 and go on living.
 Why then
 is it so hard?

Coming home again
 they say you can't
 go home again
 but here I am
 returning
 returning
 lapping the shore
 to honor the dead

the dead pass beyond
 the rites for those of us
 left behind
 autumn afterglow lingers on distant headlands
 etched emerald cliffs
 fjords as blue as a dream

The water at twilight, this bewitching
 Salish Sea,
 an undulating mirror of moonlight
 lapping, lapping between shores.
 Unbearable beauty rippling all around
 swallows you,
 lapping, lapping between shores.

Epilogue

Iddi arristaru filici e contenti

Eccà simmu nuatri senza nenti

They remained happy and content

And here we are without a cent

~ Gioia Timpanelli,

Traditional Sicilian Storyteller

As a poet, I am not trying to memorize what I see. What I want is to revel in what I am seeing, to see with the whole body, so that my body is rendered alive, is written in the poems. (Leggo, 2006, p. 151)

In the North plaza of the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG), a noticeable *lack* of visuals is missing from a space formerly replete with symbols, stimuli, flurries of activity, and visible cultural creations of one sort or another, from huge pots of food to declarative banners, free-form dancers, and group painting sessions. During the space and time in which OccupyVancouver congregated there, the plaza overflowed with people, colorful, multivalent, vibratory. Now, bare grounds, an empty space “filled with ghosts” (J. Ursino, personal communication, May 15, 2012) stares back. Yet sense memory permeates the entire space, repopulating one’s sight. Pulling back our sense veils, looking beneath, between, layers of what is “visible”— a plaza “cleaned” of rabble, a former “city,” now deserted, a blue and green mosaic tiled fountain, gargoyles gazing from above – to what is unseen to the naked eye; what the place holds, in its memory.

Does the ghost of Ricky LaVallie (1960-2012) – survivor of residential school, abuse, and family genocide – come back here, where he felt loved and accepted? What of young Ashley Gough (1988-2011), her life sacrificed to “the needle and the damage done” (Young, 1972)? Does she come here to roost on the stone lions and watch the “jubilee” unfold? (Hunter & Garcia, 1972, track 3)

M.C. Richards speaks of “a felt sense, a presence” (class notes, June 11, 2012), palpable after Occupy’s physical body dispersed, leaving these ghosts in its place. What else percolates, still living, once the throngs depart? Jill Bennett (2005) notes that sense memory is about tapping a certain kind of process: a process

experienced not as a remembering of the past but as a continuous negotiation of a present with indeterminable links to the past. The poetics of sense memory involve not so much *speaking of* but *speaking out of* a particular memory or experience – in other words, speaking from the body *sustaining sensation*. (p. 38)

This is the body – in one’s person, and the world’s collective body – that speaks in and through poetic inquiry: a body sustained in sense memory, (re)created in processes of inquiry, and their resultant writings and performances.

Donna Haraway (2002) asks, “What other sensory powers do we wish to cultivate besides vision?” (p. 289) For poets, these are multitudinous, even extrasensory, incorporating elemental and “more-than-human” (Abram, 1997, p. 8) ways of knowing. Bennett (2005) wonders, “how is ‘seeing feeling’ achieved, and how does this process yield information to the body?” (p. 41). If “embodiment is significant prosthesis” (Haraway, 2002, p. 682), how do we feel and see things not present in physical form – the *un-seen*, the not-embodied – dwelling in a place? As with a/r/tography, we trust our instincts, that despite (or because of) nebulous distinctions and perceived borders, new forms of meaning-making may occur, in translation and transformation, not unlike the mystical third body (Bly, 1973) hovering between lovers in embrace.

“A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9). The infrastructure of Occupy’s encampment was “shattered,” yet its pieces sprung up again in unexpected places and times – including my own pieces, in embodied

rhizomatic hauntings, and un-embodied memory hauntings. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) muse, “How could movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another?” (p. 10). A nomadic tide, unseen but swelling, finding new connections and sending out new tendrils and green shoots. As a result of both the physicality of OccupyVancouver, and later, its ineffable, non-physically located essence, so too did my a/r/tographic process in this inquiry release, find, and wind around new tentacles of growth and exploration. Poetry is good at making that nomadic jump, off the track of the territorialized flow, into the unknown. We follow, trusting.

The life of the nomad is the intermezzo, yet intermezzo is integral....

Becoming nomad is giving up a place that is safe, that is home, redefining what home is (not)...this means giving up the safety of universals and standards, the taken-for-granted of hegemonic...discourses. (O’Riley, 2002, p. 29)

Nomadism interrogates what, and how, we see. In tangled threads of connection, spun outward, spiraling between people known and unknown to one another, wherever we are now we carry the essence, the ether, of encounters that occurred, before, in time and space. *Can we see it, or apprehend it?* In the physical space, the now empty plaza of the VAG, we see a “scar of a multilayered past, of which the fragmented state of the entire piece of tapestry is the overwhelming metaphor” (Bal, 2003, pp. 15-16). Thus fragmented, we are scattered to the four winds and the four directions: “Wildflower seed on the sand and stone / may the four winds

blow you safely home ” (Hunter & Garcia, 1975, track 3).

Metaphor. Metonymy. Contiguity. Excess. Everywhere. Traces of a community, threads, woven into my inquiry (search), my (re)search, my writing. Resonances. Mieke Bal (2003) speaks of “meaning’s fugitivity and resilience” (p. 15), suggesting fluidity, flexibility, strength, and transformation. Perhaps Bal refers to meaning’s fugitivity both as necessity, a survival strategy in lean or censored times, *and* as preferred presentation (again, a survival strategy), like the mad farmer in Wendell Berry’s *Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front* (1997), who recommends

As soon as the generals and the politicians
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn’t go. Be like the fox
who makes more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection. (p. 97)

Resurrection is key, and available to us, as Berry points out, as something to practice. We may not be able to predict or control the outer motions of our lives within a greater cosmos, but we do have choice as to what we do with experiences – the sugar that we steal from that castle of our divine intent – that life gives us. As with the practice of a/r/tography, we never really know where the next footstep or path that opens up will lead, whether a thread will break, or the pattern reveal something hidden. In a world beset with threats to our very existence, it would be easy to lose our way. Meaning on the run. Like this a/r/tographer, after the

encampment was dispersed, when a part of me – and thus the place, and placement, of my research – also dispersed, becoming nomad, again.

Meaning surfaces in my writing, as a polished field note, a new poem, an abstract for a teacher-training workshop. I keep writing. In these increasingly stilted and jaded neo-liberal corporate-state-run times, it's more important than ever that artists, poets, activists and a/r/tographers be that voice that does not forget the threads of connection between us, visible and invisible, vaporous and tenuous, strong as steel, that unite us. Especially urgent is the need to remember these connections as *antidote* to what Judith Butler (2009) points out in

(t)he operation of the frame, where state power exercises its forcible dramaturgy....(and) there is an active...set of contents and perspectives that are never shown, that it becomes impermissible to show. These constitute the non-thematized background of what is represented and are thus one of its absent organizing features. (p. 73)

It is our job, as poets, artists, writers, to bring to view and shine a loving light on those absent features of our landscapes and lives, and those absented members thereof. As Irit Rogoff (2002) suggests, this is to

repopulate space with all the obstacles and...unknown images, which the illusion of transparency evacuated from it...the unrecognized obstacles which never allow us to actually 'see' what is out there beyond what we expect to find. (p.32)

Through our writing, through the embodiment of the sensuous and acute powers of observation in our artistic, research, and teaching practices, through noticing and noting,

we give voice and necessary presence to those images and ideas least likely to receive mainstream attention. We learn to see what is beyond what we thought we'd find, and to share that with the world.

ATTENTION

As a way to avoid
or climb out of
despair.

A form of praise.

Attention awakens us

here,

now.

Four tall cedars stand
in a narrow side-lot
near 40th and Vine,
sentinels of a lost forest
next to the busy thoroughfare
cars, buses, Starbucks,
people scurrying all day long,
heads bowed, fingers flying,
bubbles snapped tightly shut
never once looking up
to see majestic cedars
waving in the tawny October air.
Their presence, breathing, next to
cold concrete and steel
calls my attention.
I look up, see four trunks, swaying.
Watched over by dancing cedars.

A black fan swishes by,
 hollow teeth clicking
 clacking an unsteady beat
 crow, hidden high in green boughs.
 Crow, me, sun, cedars,
 singing, dancing, swaying,
 we are dancing and singing,
 swaying in this Longhouse
 as open as the sky.

The energy of the space pulls you before you arrive – seeing, feeling, hearing, sensing; tasting memories in the moist air. A ghostly haunting I was hearing in my head was actually a softly strummed guitar, tweaked through a portable amplifier under the sheltering fir tree, somewhat protecting its clustered inhabitants from the late afternoon’s damp drizzle. I almost skirted past, feeling withdrawn; then remembered it was the plaza, its ghosts, and their descendants that I had come to see. I ducked in under an overhanging branch just to listen to the music-making, clearly the stranger leaning in on a group of familiar friends; but almost immediately, a wizened member of the band offered me his seat on a low branch, while a brassy-sounding young woman offered to sing me a song, “For free.” In her best, gravelly voice (that opened up into a 3-octave range), Stacey (not her real name) – former junkie who’d relapsed, and was now 8 months clean again (and not a day over 20, by my guess) – laid it on me, landing right in the heart of a plea I was sure I’d uttered myself, on another day:

But maybe it'll all be all right, Ma
 Maybe it'll all be okay
 Well, if the people are buying tears

I'll be rich some day, Ma

Look what they've done to my song (Melanie, 1970, track 5)

Looking in her eyes, and she in mine, she grinning and singing to me, my own grew teary at the intimacy of our hearts holding space between brand-new-met gazes in the moist air, a bond built in moments that will, just as quickly, become another ghost. But the bond doesn't disappear. The meeting happened. That moment was. Amidst personal and collective ghosts whom I visit in the ethers of my mind, savoring their presence-ness, in this educative space-time-continuum, seeing others and ourselves as connected in these nebulous and other more solidified ways, under tree branches dripping with clear, invisible rain, the gift of a moment in song, a shared economy that is neither purchase nor barter, was exchanged. *How do we measure a gift?* She reminded me of Ashley Gough – the young woman who overdosed on heroin during the Occupy encampment on these same plaza grounds – who I'd never met, but in whom I felt their shared history; Stacey being the one who got away – alive. Psycho-kinesthetically, osmosis-like in the air, underneath a protective fir tree, we stood rocking back and forth, bodies absorbing and imbibing moments of presence.

Already mystically inclined, admittedly, after this meeting I became further convinced that physical places and spaces carry and hold all the living energy, and memory thereof, that ever happens within them, in the same way our bodies hold onto sense memory, both peaceful and traumatic. Understanding the sensate patterns carried in a space, however, are particularly mysterious.

Fluid and dynamic, amorphous and unstable, the ambience of a space is a kind of energy not easily delimited or grasped by language. It is not a thing, but an experience. Viscerally affective, it is the way in which a

variety of material and immaterial conditions come together to produce a poetics of space” (Schedel & Uroskie, 2011, p. 141).

This is how my poetic inquiry also came to pass: existing, arising from, informed by spaces in which I lingered. Writing in those places, speaking “out of” my experiences there, I feel part of an eternal flux of forms and individuals, becoming and dissolving back into a creative cauldron of forces and intensities. Things, and people, come and go. We might see them in the mist. Miracles, synchronicities, serendipitous events, and chance meetings occur. Questions are answered. Cauldron-like, we come and go and disappear again, chickpeas rising to the surface in a bubbling pot (Rumi & Nicholson, 1990), before being pushed under again to cook to a ripe, delicious wisdom.

On the Summer Solstice, I went downtown to meet a friend. Waiting in Victory Square, between Pender and Hastings, on this longest evening of summer, a young man approached and asked if I was a “big” supporter of the arts. Liking the optimism of his question, I looked up, smiling, and said, “Yes!” He showed me a painting he had for sale, babbling about a spaceship flying over Russia. Slowly, the memory crept in, how only days before I’d been wishing I knew how to reach the poetic kid who’d rapped at Occupy last fall, about the gargoyles overlooking the plaza, and their connection to city politics and longtime corruption. The song was brilliant. I was sure I’d never see him again. I blurted out my wonderment...”Are you...?” Trevor, laughing, reminded me of his name, and swore he’d just been thinking of me as well, two days prior – exactly when I’d been wondering about him. Did we “see” each other somehow, somewhere in the ethers between what is perceived and what is only felt, intuited, sensed? Did we “hear” each other? I’d never been to that particular park before, and this seemed like the most random

of coincidences. Yet, if thought – and vision, and listening – are “not so much a matter of perceptual proficiency, but more fundamentally a matter of orientation and attunement” (Schedel & Uroskie, 2011, p. 140), then perhaps we were never lost to each other at all. Living ghosts of a former home we’d shared in time and space, we (re)congregate new (de)territorialized flows. We hear one another call.

Umbrella Poems

gone out in the world
 whirlygig riding on the wind
 poems in the cold
 in the dawn
 on the lawn
 down the drain
 poems on the loose
 poems run free
 poems in the world
 poems in mail slots
 poems in bushes
 poems on bus benches
 poems on the bus
 poems unglued from the whirlygig spines
 rode out on a breeze
 of music and sign
 color and script
 poems on the loose
 poems in the world
 poems under an umbrella
 gone riding in the rain
 looking for you

This then is my brocade, my poetic inquiry – a weft of gold and silver threads woven among a warp of plain and coarser ones – my lived pedagogy of the moment. Undoubtedly, there are loose threads; or sometimes, a whole picture might come into view, illumined by that raised weave, a contrast of textures, light, and detailed pattern: a tapestry, an ongoing (unfinished) picture of my life. Yet, a/r/tographically speaking, as a community of artists, teachers, and researchers, we tend a larger tapestry together, as it emerges, unravels, and is rewoven, collectively, over time. So as we

weave in and through one another – an interweaving and intraweaving of concepts, activities, and feelings – we are creating fabrics of similarity and difference....Where... a third space offers a point of convergence...where differences and similarities are woven together. (Irwin 2004a, pp. 28-29)

Our collective tapestries reveal their own brocaded hills and open glades. Like in the heart of the mandorla, that almond-shaped third space, that liminal space where difference and commonality meet, we learn from each other's tapestries and life stories, thereby creating diverse fabrics of new and recycled meaning.

Teaching happens best in that liminal, third space, and poetry, by its very nature, also lands us right in the middle of such uncharted terrain, somewhere between raw emotion and pre-determined thought. Intertwining disciplines, methods, and many performative genre, poetry and poetic inquiry not only engage “learners-and-educators” (Shidmehr, 2013, p. 123) with literary arts and practices, but these practices also cultivate emotional literacy (Steiner, 1997) through the self-reflective nature of the writing process, in general, and the permissive range of styles, responses, tones, voices, and formats that poetry can take, in particular. By encouraging poetry's integration as an

ongoing (rather than occasional) and *imaginative* (rather than formulaic, fill-in-the-blank) practice within traditional K-12 classrooms, as well as within academic, community and informal or home-based educational settings, this work seeks to cultivate greater understanding of “the affective ‘we’” (Shidmehr, 2013, p. 123) that shimmers between us all, in every contact we have with the world around us, and which we can perceive so much more clearly with the help of poetry as both guide and tool.

Is all pedagogy poetical? I believe that by ignoring this possibility, we participate in one of the most egregious flaws of our current educational system, and the majority of its practices. I can think of nothing more poetical than an elegant math equation, or a game of cooperative double-dutch jump rope chanted to the rhythm of a rhyme our grandmother’s sang. Likewise, the found poem discovered on a golf coach’s list of technical terms helped his students to remember their meanings and applications, while a history teacher shared a poem to introduce a traumatic event succinctly and with verve. Writing poetry is about embracing all of our experiences, and living to tell the tale. I have yet to read a good poem that didn’t have pedagogical significance for the some aspect of this journey we call life. Embracing poetry as a pedagogical tool of empathic connection, we teach feeling-tone consciousness, emotional literacy, and connection as necessary life skills. Sometimes we are the learner, receiving, as in my encounter with Stacey at the VAG, where attention to this lived pedagogy of the moment allowed me to meet someone with whom I was otherwise unlikely to ever cross paths, and to hear her song, for a brief moment. We come together, learning what we have, or can make, in common.

Encountering poems on city buses, stopping to write a poem, sitting with my friend’s child on their couch and helping her compose a nonsense poem for a school

assignment: these are all pedagogical encounters, embraced in the moment, at play in the flow of life. Sometimes, invested in or locked into routines and schedules within schools and institutions, we can forget to just go outside and play. Poetry, including the gift of music and song, reminds us of this, and can be powerfully useful for “brocading the barriers” between students, or learning encounters, in all settings. By using instructive poems *selected from current writers who will have relevance for today’s youth* (in addition to classics), learners find their own ways to connect with the writing; usually, given the emotional content of poetry, it goes right to the heart of a language children already (still) speak. Even most “grown ups” are hard put to describe that “feeling” they get from a beloved poem.

Yet, when it comes time to “teach” poetry, many educators forget luminescence and reflection, and fall into the trap of trying to teach structural elements alone, often without loving the poems they are teaching, thus evaporating all the magic, rhythm, and passion out of the instruction. Structural elements are meaningless (and it is not poetry) without heart. Most of the time, such instruction doesn’t really work (except by rote). Another generation of kids grows up disliking poetry. This is not the way to teach poetry.

“I realized that fear of poetry was as prevalent at the university level as it was in my grade 8 classes” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 119). So we need to re-educate teachers (and academics) *how* to “teach” and enjoy poetry, beginning with the advice to find poems *they themselves like and relate to* for using with their students. A good poem can teach a history lesson, offer practical advice, or impart a lesson on racism, on child abuse, on love. Two of my students’ favorite poems, hands down, offer such powerful instruction. The first, “Minor Miracle” by Marilyn Nelson (1997, para. 1) details an

incident of racial tension in the American Midwest that is, thankfully, resolved – but we don't know this till the *very last line* of the poem. Tension is high, and partly due to Nelson's raw language, students feel themselves in the midst of controversy that they know all about, first hand, but which is mostly not talked about openly. Through reading and listening to the poem together, we get the chance to release pent-up emotions and tension, and to imagine better outcomes involving connection instead of conflict.

“Tapping into the affective and the sensory, as well as the cognitive, provides another way of enriching learning experiences for students in our classrooms” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 117).

The other poem describes emotions displayed by a middle-aged train engineer after he runs over a stuffed “child” that the narrator and her brother have left on the tracks (Hales, 2003, para. 4). I don't read the poem with children the age of the poem's protagonists, around eight to ten; it would feel too harsh, with its delicate comprehension of the repercussions of an “innocent” childhood prank. But with middle-school students, age twelve to fourteen, freshly “outgrown” such “childish” ways, the poem's message about the often mixed results of wielding “Power” (the poem's title) is not lost on these wise young people. While they are still young enough to remember being that child, they also recognize in the grieved engineer's emotions something they are only just beginning to learn about: unnamable fear, deep loss, helplessness. Many teachers would be inclined to “dumb down” this message, and not trust their students with such a ponderous poem. But that's a mistake. Students are capable of understanding a range of emotional nuances, as are captured in good poems; we must give them the opportunity to experience these reflective and expressive powers of art. This “POET-tential” lives in children *and* adults,

drawn out when we trust we can handle sharing mature, emotionally laden, complex poems describing real life dilemmas, loss, and pain. As well as joy. Hearing of situations – worded magically, poetically, intensely – where others, like themselves, have struggled, students unearth the courage to find these qualities, and where they live, in themselves.

As a visiting artist in public and private schools in the U.S., poetry is my ambassador. The poem is a living, breathing affective offering, connecting readers and listeners with themselves and the world. We experience the poem, and our responsiveness to it and each other – a shared space of vibrant affectivity. Community forms. Irish poet Brendan Kennelly speaks of poetry as a “bridge between separated souls... Though it is born out of one person’s solitude... [poetry] has the ability to reach out and touch... the solitude, even the loneliness, of others” (as cited in *The Writer’s Almanac*, April 17, 2013, para. 5). Like when Gary Snyder describes “How Poetry Comes to Me”:

.....blundering over the
 Boulders at night,....
 Frightened outside the
 Range of my campfire
 I go to meet it at the
 Edge of the light (1993, p. 557)

We recognize, together, that we are all frightened. We take openings where they show up. Unexpected directions unfold. We don’t know what will happen. Yet we know poetry stirs responsiveness in us toward the other, our selves, and the language we speak. Karen Martin describes inter-related facets of a holistic approach to early childhood education that involves home, family, and community contexts inclusive of Western and Aboriginal cultural factors (Martin, 2013); similarly, with poetry we explore these “multiple contexts... past, present and... future... relational, cultural, political, and spatial” (Martin,

2013, para. 3) that our writing and our lives are rooted in. On this medicine wheel of experience and memory, emotion, and interrelatedness, writing poetry is not a pre-defined set of steps to pre-determined outcomes, but an exploration emphasizing process and interconnectedness. That we write many poems over the course of our weeks together becomes secondary to our cauldron of Becoming, where exchange and responsiveness are our currency. We are learning together, in this classroom community, and on the earth.

Performance and grades
do not always measure
smarts and ability.

How do we help teachers become more comfortable with, and less afraid of, poetry? One method is through the use of poetry Teacher Training workshops (Skagit River Poetry Festival, 2013), where a visiting poet strives to demystify poetry for classroom teachers, before coming in to their classrooms. This 2 to 3 hour session (even better suited as an all day retreat) offers the time and, more importantly, the container in which misconceptions, fears, wonderments, hesitations, and many good “teachable” poems can be shared. Age-appropriate writing prompts, and a discussion of instruction techniques (based on elements of craft, as well matters of tone and emotion) help teachers begin to leave the world of the literacy “lesson” (device, structure), and enter the realm of the heart, and this pedagogical moment. There is no goal. We seek only to foster empathy, though we may gain some literacy skills along the way, in the midst of reading, reciting, and actually *writing poems* – which is the most important step, though too often left out of the study of poetry, especially in the older grades; or, if included (especially in the younger grades), it is in that formulaic “fill-in-the-blank” style described previously.

Choosing poems of pertinence for today's youth – for example, from the extensive selection at the Poetry Out Loud website (Poetry Out Loud, 2012) – students discover poetry's mystery, magic, and truth-telling possibilities for themselves, through the transformative power of a few condensed words. The poems we select to share with our students are pedagogical tools. Engaging students in that choice, by offering as wide a variety of poetic works as we can, we expand the possibility of what they may choose to investigate, encouraging a generative process in them.

One particularly poignant story from a high-school teacher in Tacoma, Washington, who used Poetry Out Loud with her students involves an angry young man who would never participate in her attempts to engage him. In one telling moment, as she leaned closer across a desk to try and get his attention, he suddenly sprang up out of his prone position where his head, stuffed inside the protective covering of a hoodie pulled down over his face, had been cradled in his arms, and screamed at her to “Back off!” She certainly did. But one night, when he was perusing Poetry Out Loud's website (and who knows what drew him in to do so, for he had not seemed interested or inclined to cooperate with the assignment of finding a poem to memorize), he stumbled upon Dudley Randall's poem “The Ballad of Birmingham” (1968). This young African-American man, already involved in gang activity and struggling to stay afloat in the culture of public school, surprised his teacher and classmates (who knew him as that surly kid under the hood), and perhaps even himself, by taking an interest in the poem's historical account of the Birmingham bombing, told from the perspective of a mother finding only one of her child's shoes in the rubble after that fateful attack. This young man later told his teacher that he'd never really been taught anything that had to do with his people, his family, or

the realities of his life. In talking with his mother, after first reading the poem, he learned that they had had family in Birmingham at the time of the blast. Studying the poem opened up a family dialogue that had previously been nonexistent, with powerful repercussions for this young man, who went on to memorize and recite the poem with impassioned tonal and emotional strength. Needless to say, this young man's life was changed by his encounter with poetry as storytelling, as historical narrative, and as commentary on the challenges of our times as well as eternal themes of grief and loss.

One of the primary strengths of programs like Poetry Out Loud is their focus on the oral recitation of poems. A central (and oft-overlooked) element of poetry is its innate oral quality, and the importance of recognizing and working with these spoken and sound qualities when writing and reading poetry. We recite poems not to learn them, by rote, but for engagement with the sounds, rhythm, cadence, and the music of internal and external rhymes. Robert Bly, and others who study and translate poems in languages other than English, emphasize the importance of speaking a poem aloud, and hearing its inherent musicality. A return to understanding the roots of poetry as a spoken/sung/performed form of prayer, as sacred chant, is needed. Tracing the bridge between harmonics, linguistics, mathematics (syllable and stress counts), mythology, history, and philosophy, one begins to see not only the architecture of vowel-consonant (and thus, word) construction, but also the mystical construction of a spiritual universe underpinning the individual sounds and words we use. In tune with the magic of writing, we seek to harness the mystical, as found in the ordinary, in the sounds we pen to page.

Another important juncture for educators to embrace, which augments the importance of these aural/oral qualities inherent in poetry, is the link between poetry and

the dramatic arts. Staging full-length Shakespeare productions with K-12 students, I have been consistently amazed at their ability to memorize (fairly effortlessly, in most cases!) the Bard's rhymed couplets and full-length monologues. But in truth, it makes sense. To hear aloud the poetical rhythm, melody, assonance, repetition, and rhyme in these expertly composed lines, the ear is employed in the service of the mind and the tongue, and memorization aided by this conjunction of all three. Memorization, as a classroom technique, is mostly a lost art. Perhaps over-utilized in past generations, it is in turn under-availed in our own (along with cursive handwriting instruction, sadly).

Incorporating the theatrical into poetry lessons reveals not only these rhythmic and musical elements, but also (re)introduces students to the sheer enjoyment of make-believe and imaginative play, as noted by Lynn Fels and George Belliveau (2008):

(s)tudents became less self-conscious, and they allowed themselves to “let go” and to interpret the poem through physical and vocal explorations.

Through choral readings and dramatic activities, they uncovered numerous possible meanings and they played with literary devices without really being conscious of doing so....[D]rama activities, when done effectively, enable students to feel that they are capable of understanding and engaging with poetry. (pp. 108-109)

No longer perceived as something foreign, or devoid of meaning in their contemporary lives, students embrace poetry's meaning-making potential, and often find in it an unexpected ally. Furthermore, by not restricting poetry to the page or a bookshelf, its origins around a campfire, that original oral tradition and ancient form of evening entertainment, rich in cadence, adventure, and emotive and descriptive language, comes

alive anew. As Fels and Belliveau (2008) explain, these oral and performative aspects of working with poetry “capture the nuances and language play within the text. Poetry awakens many of the senses, so...we need to find ways to activate a variety of our students’ senses while studying the form” (p. 117). By engaging multiple art media and forms in the service of poetry, such as drawing, choral work, movement, and music (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 119), students discover a more sensory relationship to the works read, and thus are better able to “create meaning individually and collaboratively, and...discover how the poem relates to their experience” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 119).

Some teachers and poets have theorized that we should revamp the classic poetry canon used in schools, to reflect instead a curriculum based in local and regional authors (J. Lighty, personal communication, April 20, 2013), thus bringing relationships of place, the land, and our meaning-making there even more closely into alignment. Signs of winter in Nova Scotia are vastly different from those in Vancouver, just as animal and plant life vary greatly from region to region. How do we teach students about these bioregional subtleties, and our responsibilities therein? This is part of what Cynthia Chambers (2003) speaks of in her idea of poeticizing the world and its ordinary particulars. We are reminded “language’s primary gift is not to *re*-present the world around us, but to call ourselves into the vital *presence* of that world—and into deep and attentive presence with one another” (Abram, 2010, p. 11). In that presence, we come to know what poet Muriel Rukeyser meant when she said, “The universe is made up of stories, not atoms” (as cited in Malkin, 2011, p. 6).

With our stories in hand, we

position ourselves as feminist intellectuals, armed with maps of our own making, following paths that are evident, often to our eyes alone, but ones that we can narrate, account for, and exchange. (Braidotti, 1994, p. 165)

Like this inquiry, which has evolved as a braided, brocaded map of sensing, listening, looking, touching, and sniffing in the world around me, and inside my own heart and head. “An aesthetic of unfolding in/sights is an important concept for educators interested in attending to the qualities of experience...[A]esthesia unfolds in/sights by choosing attunement, engagement and/or embodiment” (Irwin 2004b, p. 44). Embodied in place, in the world, our inquiries metamorphose into a lived praxis of investigation, art, and stories, as we attend to our experiences with care in this unfolding of in/sights. After all, stories (like poems) are also research; research with soul (Brown, 2010).

“The communicative goal of an autoethnographic author is to perform as a creative, evocative, and engaging storyteller” (Lane & Reese, 2012, p. 2). Accordingly, I offer all of myself to this journey, and find a way for my wounded writer – for we are all “hideously flawed, sweetly so” (K. Allen, personal communication, May 31, 2013) – to draw relational connections in my writing that can help un-do structural and systemic hegemonies of social, economic, and environmental injustice. How, as an artist and educator, can I address these hegemonies, and help affect awareness and change?

One way is that I never forget my way to fairyland. Firmly attendant to the power of myth and the wonder of imagination, like Baudrillard I understand that poems, fables, stories, parables, and fiction are as “real” as anything else in this world. They permitted him to grant to events both a poetic

singularity and an analysis which was at home in radical uncertainty.

(Coulter, 2008, p. 145)

In light of such constant uncertainty, I practice being present and aware. To what is. Rendering this beautiful and blessed life as lived, inserting myself into the experience, extending the invitation to “look with me...we *are* the inquiry...as well as the answer” (K. Meyer, lecture notes, November 5, 2012). For that is how my lived experience of this inquiry has unfolded, a study of the self immersed in place and time, with and amongst others, swimming in language. Being there. It’s not just in fairyland, but also in Lorca’s land of *duende* that answers come to us. Poetry requires a committed attention to that “rag and bone shop of the heart” (Yeats, 1939, para. 5), the dark and dusty, but deeply rewarding places where we fear or hesitate to look. That attention, and its innate responsiveness, is the art of living inquiry.

As William Blake might say, No mistake that Art only exists in Practice.

Indeed, he writes: ‘Practise [sic] is Art. If you leave off, you are lost.’...The Imagination, which for Blake is practically interchangeable with God, is not some ‘inner resource,’ some ‘mental quality’ which may be turned to ‘problem solving’ or ‘profit.’ It is the energy of life itself and what forms eternity. Practice. Practice. Practice. Buddha Blake. (J. Watt, personal communication, May 20, 2013)

This sounds like Eros again, crying the energy of life, and of creativity itself.

Without Eros, we cannot live poetically. Without Eros to reveal expanded possibilities for poetry’s diverse applicability in teaching and research, and to gather these possibilities into a permeable container from which many disciplines and traditions may drink, poetry

is at risk of remaining in its oft-maligned position within North American letters (and our educational system), ill-conceived as a dead art written by dead white guys perpetuating their own ethnocentric views. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Through living poetically, a pedagogical act both in stance and in the works created from that stance, I seek to remember, and teach, that

perhaps most importantly, the educator, as aesthete, would recognize the power he or she has to perceive the world for the beauty within the particular, at a moment's notice, regardless of significance as considered by a world inhabited by those caught in anesthesia. (Irwin, 2004b, p. 46)

A fierce commitment to such pedagogy of the moment, believing in the beauty hidden there as well as the necessity of arresting anesthesia, has guided these stories and experiences as they have informed, unfolded, and infolded understandings of place and presence into the brocade of my life. I don't think I can ever stop trusting in each moment as it unfolds (though sometimes, it is hard). In my studies, in classrooms, on the trail, and in cross-border incarnations of a woman yet in transition, I become a cartographer of each moment: writing as mapping my way. I discover, indeed, that "part of the a/r/tographic adventure is learning to make art while also learning to articulate our processes and struggles. A/r/tography is not unlike living and breathing" (C. Leggo, personal communication, November 18, 2012). As we live, breathe, learn, articulate, write and grow, we realize that we are doing nothing short of recreating the world.

**We Are Not Separate,
So How Can There Be An Other?**

Writing as process
 writing as journey in/to the self
 writing to come out of the self
 writing to discover the self
 writing to become one's self
 writing to uncover what's hidden
 writing to find what's lost
 writing to find the way in
 writing to find what I'm feeling
 or what I think
 writing as my only song
 writing as talking to myself
 writing as me talking to you
 writing as unknown, unfolding

writing as mapping
 writing as wayfinding
 Gretel in the middle
 of dense woods, lost
 and finding her way out
 to the forest's edge
 the clearing,
 Hansel dropping crumbs
 clues eaten, gone, lost, but
 stones sparked with moonlight
 like words on the page
 lighting, leading the way

writing my way into life
writing out of the dark
writing into all things,
We are not separate,
so how can there be an other?

I Live As a Poem

I live as a poem

my lines skip

here and there

at times, steady,

at others

loose and flowing

trembling

and uncertain

not solid

flowing

configured

shaped by the river's banks

contained

now loose

on the page

again

rambling running

everywhere at once

over

flowing

References

- Abram, D. (1997). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York: Vintage.
- Åman, K. (2006). *The pedagogy of the moment: Professional groups in conversational talk about competence in special education within child and youth habilitation*. (Doctoral dissertation abstract, Stockholm: Pedagogiska institutionen). Retrieved from <http://su.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:199410>
- Asayesh, G. (1999). *Saffron sky: A life between Iran and America*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Baba, S.S. (n.d.). *Educaré-Route to global peace and happiness*. Retrieved from <http://www.sathyasaiehv.org.uk/educare.htm#top>
- Bal, M. (2003). Visual essentialism and the object of visual culture. *Journal of Visual Culture*, 2(1), 5-30.
- Barnstone, W. & McCulloh, W.E. (2010). *Ancient greek lyrics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Barks, C. (2007). *Scrapwood man: poetry and prose*. Athens, GA: Maypop Books.
- Barks, C. & Arberry, A. J. (1990). *Like this: Rumi; versions by Coleman Barks*. Athens, GA: Maypop Books.
- Bate, J. (2000). *The song of the earth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bennett, J. (2005). Insides, outsides: Trauma, affect, and art. In *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Life*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Beare, D. (2009) A/r/tography, secondary theatre teaching, and the theatre of possibilities project. *Youth theatre journal*, 23(2), 162-175.

- Belmore, R. (2002). *Vigil* (video file). 2002 Talking Stick Festival, Full Circle First Nations performance, *Vancouver, BC*. Retrieved from <http://www.rebeccabelmore.com/video/Vigil.html>
- Berry, W. (1999). Manifesto: The mad farmer liberation front. In *The selected poems of Wendell Berry*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint.
- Blake, W., Maclagan, E.R.D., & Russell, A.G.B. (1904). *The prophetic books of William Blake: Jerusalem*. London: A.H. Bullen.
- Bly, R. (2005). Stealing sugar from the castle. In *My sentence was a thousand years of joy: Poems*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Bly, R. (2002). It's already too late. In *The night Abraham called to the stars: Poems*. New York: HarperPerennial.
- Bly, R. (1985). The third body. In *Loving a woman in two worlds*. New York: Dial Press.
- Borhani, M.T. (*in press*). Preferring revolution. *English practice: The journal of BC teachers of English language arts*. Kelowna, BC: British Columbia Teachers of English Language Arts. Retrieved from <http://www.bctela.ca/about-us>
- Borhani, M.T. (*in press*). Riding the bus, writing on the bus: A self in transition. *UNESCO observatory multi-disciplinary research in the arts-eJournal*, 2, (3). University of Melbourne.
- Borhani, M.T. (*in press*). The thief. *Shark reef: A literary magazine*. Retrieved from <http://sharkreef.org>
- Braidotti, R. (1994). *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bringhurst, R. (1986). *Pieces of map, pieces of music*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

- Brocade. (2013). In *Oxford English online dictionary*. Retrieved from
<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/>
- Brooks, D. (2011, May 30). Opinion: it's not about you. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/31/opinion/31brooks.html?_r=1
- Brown, B. (2010). *The power of vulnerability*. TED Conferences, LLC. Retrieved from:
http://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability.html
- Butler, J. (2009). Torture and the ethics of photography: Thinking with Sontag. *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* New York: Verso.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. New York: Verso.
- Campbell, J. (1988). In B. S. Flowers (Ed.), *Joseph Campbell and the power of myth with Bill Moyers*. New York: Doubleday.
- Chambers, C. (2004). Research that matters. *Journal of the Canadian association for curriculum studies*, 2(1), 1-19.
- Chambers, C. (2003). "As Canadian as possible under the circumstances": A view of contemporary curriculum discourses in Canada. In William Pinar (Ed.), *International handbook of curriculum research* (pp. 221-252). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Cockburn, B. (2011). The iris of the world. *Small source of comfort* (CD). Toronto: Golden Mountain Music Corporation.
- Cole, D.R. (2008). Deleuze and the narrative forms of educational otherness. In I. Semetsky (Ed.), *Nomadic education: variations on a theme by Deleuze and Guattari* (pp. 17-34). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

- Cole, P. (2006). *Coyote and Raven go canoeing: Coming home to the village*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Coulter, G. (2008). Baudrillard and Holderlin and the poetic resolution of the world. *Nebula*, 5(4), 145-164. Retrieved from <http://www.nobleworld.biz/images/Coulter.pdf>
- Deardorff, D. (2004). *The other within: The genius of deformity in myth, culture, and psyche*. Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press.
- de Cosson, A., Grauer, K., Irwin, R.L., & Kind, S. (2005). An artist-in-residence or a/r/tography in praxis. *Educational insights*, 9(2). Retrieved from <http://www.ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v09n02/exhibits/artography.html>
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Retrieved from <http://projectlamar.com/media/A-Thousand-Plateaus.pdf>
- Dylan, R. (1965). Like a Rolling Stone. *Highway 61 revisited* (LP). New York: Columbia Records.
- Elza, D. (2009). Interpreting the winds. In J. Rosenblatt, D. Canty, & S. Preraputtinwong (Eds.), *4 poets: Daniela Elza, Peter Morin, Al Rempel, Onjana Yawnghwe : Poetry, drafts, translations, interviews, poetics*, (pp. 9-11). Salt Spring Island, B.C: Mother Tongue Publishing.
- Fels, L. & Belliveau, G. (2008). Performing poetry: Multimedia expressions. In *Exploring curriculum: Performative inquiry, role drama, and learning*. Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.
- Ferlinghetti, L. (2001). To the oracle at Delphi. *The Nation*, 273(10), 25.
- Frost, R. (1993). A considerable speck. In *Six American poets: An anthology*. New York:

Vintage.

- Garcia, J., Weir, R., & Kreutzmann, W. (1968). That's it for the other one. *Anthem of the sun* (LP). Los Angeles: Warner Brothers Records.
- Gass, W. (2010). *A temple of texts*. New York: Random House Digital.
- Greenwood, D.A. (2010). Nature, empire, and paradox in environmental education. *Canadian Journal of environmental education*, 15, 9-24.
- Gouzouasis, P. & Lee, K.V. (2002). Do you hear what I hear? Musicians composing the truth. *Teacher education quarterly*, 29(4), 125-141.
- Haas, B. (2002). George Oppen: new collected poems. *Flashpoint*, no. 5. Retrieved from <http://www.flashpointmag.com/oppenrev.htm>
- Hales, Corrine. (2003). Power. In S. Kowitt (Ed.), *In the palm of your hand: The poet's portable workshop*. Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House Publishers.
- Hamill, S. (1990). *A poet's work: The other side of poetry*. Seattle, WA: Broken Moon Press.
- Haraway, D. (2002). The persistence of vision. In N. Mirzoeff (Ed.), *The visual culture reader* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 677-684). New York: Routledge.
- Hasebe-Ludt, E., Chambers, C., & Leggo, C.D. (2009). *Life writing and literary métissage as an ethos for our times*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Haute Trash. (2012). *Haute trash*. Retrieved from <http://www.hautetrash.org>
- Heaney, S. (2006). *District and circle: Poems*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Heidegger, M. (1971). *Poetry, language, thought*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Heidegger, M. (2000). Poetically man dwells. In L. Coupe (Ed.), *The green studies reader: From Romanticism to ecocriticism* (pp. 88-95). London: Routledge.
- Hess, H. (Ed.). (1975). *How pictures mean*. New York: Pantheon Books.

- Hoagland, T. (2011). The village troublemaker: Robert Bly and American poetry. *The American Poetry Review*, 40(5), 43-48.
- Hunter, R. & Garcia, J. (1972). Sugaree. *Garcia* (LP). Los Angeles: Warner Brothers.
- Hunter, R. & Garcia, J. (1975) Franklin's tower. *Blues for Allah* (LP). San Rafael, CA: Grateful Dead Records.
- Irwin, R. L., & Springgay, S. (2008). A/r/tography as practice-based research. In S. Springgay, R. L. Irwin, C. Leggo, & P. Gouzouasis (Eds.), *Being with a/r/tography* (pp. xix-xxxiii). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Irwin, R. (2005). *A/r/tography*. Retrieved from <http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/Artography/>
- Irwin, R. (2004a). A/r/tography: A metonymic metissage. In A. De Cosson & R. L. Irwin (Eds.), *A/r/tography: Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry* (pp. 27-34). Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.
- Irwin, R.L. (2004b). Unfolding aesthetic in/sights between curriculum and pedagogy. *Journal of curriculum and pedagogy*, 1(2), 43-48. doi.org/10.1080/15505170.2004.10411497
- Israel, I. (2011). Incoherent state. In *Beckett soundings*. Vancouver, BC: Ronsdale Press.
Retrieved from <http://books.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/2011PiTBusCards.pdf>
- Kramer, C. (2012). Tutelaries of a place we came into. In C.M. Chambers, E. Hsebe-Ludt, C. Leggo, & A. Sinner (Eds.), *A heart of wisdom: Life writing as empathetic inquiry* (pp. 127-134). New York: Peter Lang.
- Lane, S.D. and Reese, V.O. (2012). "Ah-hah!" moments: Personal notes on culture, identity, and pedagogy from a feminist and a womanist. *Journal of women's intercultural leadership*, 41(2), 1-16. Retrieved from <https://jwil.saintmarys.edu/files/jwil/Ah%20ha%20Moments.pdf>

- Lesh, P. (2005). *Searching for the sound: My life with the Grateful Dead*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Leggo, C., Sinner, A.E., Irwin, R.L., Pantaleo, K., Gouzouasis, P., & Grauer, K. (2011). Linger in liminal spaces: a/r/tography as living inquiry in a language arts class. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 24(2), 239-256.
- Leggo, C. (2008, June). *Living poetically: A teacher's credo*. Paper presented at Canadian Society for the Study of Education 36th Annual Conference, Living Pedagogy: Six Noteworthy Educators Reflect on Their Pedagogical Practices, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Retrieved from <http://ocs.sfu.ca/fedcan/index.php/csse/csse2008/paper/view/353/228>
- Leggo, C. (2006). Attending to winter: A poetics of research. In Ashton, E. & Denton, D. (Eds.), *Spirituality, ethnography, and teaching: Stories from within* (pp. 140-155). New York: Peter Lang.
- Leggo, C. (2005). The heart of pedagogy: On poetic knowing and living. *Teachers and teaching: Theory and practice*, 11 (5), 439-455.
- Leggo, C. (2004). The curriculum of joy: Six poetic ruminations. *Journal of the Canadian association for curriculum studies*, 2 (2), 27-42.
- Levertov, D. (1965). *Some notes on organic form*. Retrieved from <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/essays>
- Lorca, F. G. (1933). *Theory and play of the duende*. Trans. A.S. Kline (2007). Retrieved from <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Spanish/LorcaDuende.htm>
- Malkin, J. (2011). Your own damn life: Michael Meade on the story we're born with. *The sun*, (431), 4-12.

- Mandorla. (2008). In *Kyrie*. Retrieved from: <http://www.kyrie.com/symbols/mandorla.htm>
- Martin, K. (2013, May). *Aboriginal children and families*. Plenary paper presented at The Intersection of Language, Learning and Culture in Early Childhood: Home, School and Community Contexts, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Abstract retrieved from <http://lled.educ.ubc.ca/the-intersection-of-language-learning-and-culture-in-early-childhood-home-school-and-community-contexts-workshop-plenary-sessions/>
- Melanie. (1970). What have they done to my song. *Candles in the rain* (LP). New York: Buddha Records.
- Minnick, N. (2013). Poetry within the pale. Rev. of *Good poems: American places* by Garrison Keillor. *Notre Dame review*, 35, pp. 260-264. Retrieved from <http://ndreview.nd.edu/archived-issues/ndr-35/>
- Morgan, R. (1970). *Sisterhood is powerful: An anthology of writings from the women's liberation movement*. New York: Random House.
- Moyne, J., & Barks, C. (1999). *Open secret: Versions of Rumi*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- Nakamura, J. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2009). Flow theory and research. In C. Snyder & S. Lopez (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 195-206). Retrieved from <http://book.google.ca/books>
- Naqvi, R. & Smits, H. (2012). Introduction: The world on the verge of a “nervous breakdown.” In R. Naqvi & H. Smits (Eds.) *Thinking about and Enacting Curriculum in “Frames of War”* (pp. 1-7). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Narayan, K. (2012). *Alive in the writing: Crafting ethnography in the company of Chekhov*. University of Chicago Press.

- Nelson, M. (1997). Minor miracle. In *The Fields of Praise*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. Retrieved from: <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15663>
- Ng-A-Fook, N. & Rottman, J. (2012). Introduction: An uncommon countenance. In N. Ng-A-Fook J. Rottmann (Eds.), *Reconsidering Canadian curriculum studies: Provoking historical, present, and future perspectives*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nye, N.S. (2002). *19 varieties of gazelle: poems of the Middle East*. New York: Greenwillow Books.
- Occupy Vancouver. (2011). #OccupyVancouver. Retrieved from <http://occupyvancouvervoice.com>
- O’Keeffe, G. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/302-whether-you-succeed-or-not-is-irrelevant-there-is-no>
- Oliver, M. (1992). The summer day. In *New and Selected Poems, Vol. I*. Boston: Beacon.
- O’Riley, Pat. (2003). *Technology, culture, and socioeconomics: A rhizoanalysis of educational discourses*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Pinn, J. (2003). Restor(y)ing a sense of place, self and community. In J. Cameron (Ed.), *Changing places: Re-imagining Australia* (pp. 38-47). Double Bay, New South Wales: Longueville Books.
- Phillips, J. W. P. (2011). The poetic thing (on poetry and deconstruction). *The Oxford literary review*, 33(2), 231-243. doi: 10.3366/olr.2011.0019
- Poetry Out Loud. (2012). *Poetry out loud: National recitation contest*. Retrieved from <http://www.poetryoutloud.org>
- Poiesis. (2013). In *Oxford English online dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/>

- Pound, E. (1934/1960). *ABC of reading*. New York: New Directions. Retrieved from http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Ezra_Pound
- Prendergast, M. (2009). Poetic Inquiry is...29 Ways of Looking at Poetry as Qualitative Research *Educational Insights*, 13(3). Retrieved from <http://www.ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v13n03/intro/prendergast.html>
- Randall, D. (1968). Ballad of Birmingham. In *Cities burning*. Detroit: Broadside Press.
- Richardson, R. (1991). The journey. *Between handshakes* (CD). Forks of Salmon, CA: Self-Published.
- Rogoff, I. (2002). Studying visual culture. In N. Mirzoeff (Ed.), *The visual culture reader* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 24-36). New York: Routledge.
- Rumi, M. J. (1995). *The essential Rumi* (C. Barks, with R. Nicholson, J. Arberry, & J. Moyne, trans.). HarperSanFrancisco.
- Rumi, M. J., Barks, C., and Arberry, A. J. (1990). *Like this* trans. (C. Barks, Trans.). Athens, GA: Maypop Books.
- Rumi (n.d.) Good reads. Retrieved from <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/83089-what-you-seek-is-seeking-you>
- Schedel, M. & Uroskie, A.V. (2011). Introduction: Sonic arts and audio cultures: writing about audiovisual culture. *Journal of visual culture*, 10(2), 137-144.
- Settee, P. (2011). Indigenous knowledge: multiple approaches. In G.J.S. Dei (Ed.), *Indigenous philosophies and critical education* (pp. 434-450). New York: Peter Lang.
- Shidmehr, N. (2013). *Lyric play and affective pedagogy* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

- Shidmehr, N. (2009). Poetic inquiry as minor research. In M. Prendergast, C.D. Leggo & P. Sameshima (Eds.), *Poetic inquiry: vibrant voices in the social sciences* (pp. 101-110). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Sinner, A., Leggo, C., Irwin, R. L., Gouzouasis, P., & Grauer, K. (2006). Arts-based educational research dissertations: Reviewing the practices of new scholars. *Canadian journal of education*, 29(4), 1223-1270. Retrieved from <http://www.csse.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE29-4/CJE-4-Sinneretal.pdf>
- Skagit River Poetry Festival. (2013). *Poets in schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.skagitriverpoetry.org/>
- Snyder, G. (1993). How poetry comes to me. In *No nature: New and selected poems*. New York: Pantheon.
- Snyder, G. (1965). Essay. In P. Leary & R. Kelly (Eds.), *A Controversy of Poets: An Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Springgay, S. (2008). An ethics of embodiment. In S. Springgay, R. L. Irwin, C. Leggo, & P. Gouzouasis (Eds.), *Being with a/r/tography* (pp. 153-165). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Springsteen, B. & Smith, P. (1978). Because the night. Released on *Easter* (LP) by the Patti Smith Group. New York: Record Plant Studios.
- Stafford, W. (1998). The way it is. In *The way it is: new & selected poems*. St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press.
- Stevens, C. (1970). On the road to find out. *Tea for the tillerman* (LP). Santa Monica, CA: A&M Records.
- Sullivan, G. (2005). *Art practice as research: Inquiry in the visual arts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- The Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia. (2010). *Poetry in transit*. Retrieved from <http://books.bc.ca/poetry-in-transit/>
- The Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia (2011). *Poetry in transit*. Retrieved from <http://books.bc.ca/poetry-in-transit/>
- The Great Mother and New Father Conference. (2013). *The woman with the gold between her teeth: The four tasks of desire*. Retrieved from <https://greatmotherconference.org/about/>
- The Writer's Almanac. (2013). It's the birthday of Irish poet Brendan Kennelly. On *The writer's almanac with Garrison Keillor*. American Public Media. Retrieved from <http://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/index.php?date=2013/04/17>
- Timpanelli, G. (2008). *What makes a child lucky: A novel*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Van Parys, M. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.michellevanparys.com>
- Wattchow, B. (2012). Ecopoetic practice: Writing the wounded land. *Cultural studies ↔ critical methodologies*, 12(1), 15–21. doi: 10.1177/1532708611430482
- Wickstrom, S. (1998). *The wheels on the bus: Raffi songs to read*. New York: The Crown Publishing Group.
- Wright, M., Moss, A., & Gerber, L. (2007). *The journey of the unicorn* [video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.tommytransit.com/Media.html>
- Woolf, V. (1957). *A room of one's own*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Yeats, W.B. (1939). *The circus animals' desertion*. Retrieved from <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-circus-animals-desertion/>
- Young, N. (1972). The needle and the damage done. *Harvest* (LP). Los Angeles: Reprise.

Appendices

A. Quotations from the Denise Levertov essay used in the found poem:

Inscape/Instress

– Gerald Manley Hopkins

The health of the eye demands a horizon.

Ask the fact for the form.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Form follows function.

– Louis Sullivan

The reality of the building lies in the space within it, to be lived in.

– Frank Lloyd Wright

B. Poetry Writing and Teaching Resources

ON THE WEB:

Poetry 180 - Library of Congress
<http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/p180-list.html>

Poetry Out Loud
<http://www.poetryoutloud.org/>

Skagit River Poetry Festival (Poets in the Schools Curriculum)
<http://www.skagitriverpoetry.org/poetry-project/curriculum/>

Pongo Teen Writing
<http://www.pongoteenwriting.org/>

BOOKS about teaching & writing poetry:

- In the Palm of Your Hand: A Poet's Portable Workshop.* Steve Kowitz
- Poemcrazy: Freeing Your Life with Words.* Susan G. Woolridge
- The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry.* Kim Addonizio
- The Practice of Poetry: Writing Exercises from Poets who Teach.* Robin Behn
- A Poetry Handbook.* Mary Oliver
- The Poetry Home Repair Manual: Practical Advice for Beginning Poets.* Ted Kooser
- Wishes, Lies and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry.* Kenneth Koch
- Rose, Where Did You Get That Red?: Teaching Great Poetry to Children.* Kenneth Koch
- Getting the Knack: Twenty Poetry Exercises.* Stephen Dunning and William Stafford

Hip Hop, Poetry and the Classics.

Alan Lawrence Sitomer and Michael Cirelli

Good poetry compilations to work with in the classroom:

Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry. Billy Collins (Ed.)

180 More: Extraordinary Poems for Everyday. Billy Collins (Ed.)

News of the Universe: Poems of Two-Fold Consciousness. Robert Bly (Ed.)

This Same Sky: A Collection of Poems from around the World N. Shihab Nye (Ed.)

Rock Paper Scissors: Youth Poetry Anthology on Saving the Environment
James Dewar (Ed.)

Learn Then Burn: A Modern Poetry Anthology for the Classroom
Tim Stafford & Derrick Brown

The Book of Questions Pablo Neruda