IMAGINING THE CURIOUS TIME OF RESEARCHING PEDAGOGY

by

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ABSTRACT

What might becoming a poet have to do with becoming a teacher? What might becoming a teacher have to do with becoming a poet? Is it possible to invite someone to become a teacher or a poet? What might such an invitation look like? What kinds of conditions are involved in “making poetry”? What might these conditions have to do with “making pedagogy”? Further, what might these conditions -- of making poetry or pedagogy -- have to do with “making research”?

Based on a study of a six-week intensive language across the curriculum course involving a group of prospective Secondary School teachers, this dissertation explores the kinds of conditions that might create an interpretive location in which to entertain and address the above kinds of questions -- of the making of poetry and pedagogy and research -- in all their relations. Moving backward and forward -- between the lived particulars of a group of preservice teachers' writing practices in a workshop-styled setting, and the writing practice of a researcher/teacher educator/poet curious about the acts of learning and teaching, writing and researching -- this work attempts to live well with the necessarily tangled relationships among literacy, aesthetic practice, and the ongoing production of subjectivity in teacher education and our educational researchings of teacher education.

The value of writing practice, as this dissertation attempts to enact it, is not only in its offer of further practice -- of writing to learn (about writing and teaching and researching) -- but also in its offer of a location where we might become curious about the performative nature of learning itself. The dissertation seeks to show the ways that my own writing life, shaped as it is by the work of those who have brought hermeneutics, postmodernism, psychoanalytic theory, and the literary imagination to bear on teacher education, is deeply implicated with other writing lives, others who are always and already writing lives. The invitation to imagine the curious time of researching pedagogy, then, is part of an invitation to think differently about preservice teachers thinking differently about their time together in classrooms, engaged in acts of learning and teaching, writing and researching.
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I. Your Careful Listening

i have so much to thank you for,
the sky falling out in colours
just this way.

the blue is in the exchange
knowing I need you
to complete the seeing.

who would I be without you
to read the thin line of clouds
that gather sometimes

on certain afternoons as if
in anticipation
of a prairie sunset. and

who would know god went by
if it weren’t for your careful listening.

and the quiet rain that falls afterward
on small green coastal towns making grey
so worthy of praise?

the page must be turned in faith
with the understanding that words
will grace the other
side.

the wind providing the illusion
of a hawk in flight
means we are being written.

the ferry makes the islands possible and
the ocean is everything

else left over
in the language of our
living.

II. A Series of Acknowledgings

mindful of breath, of thoughts
small in their singing, the light falling
out as citations left

the page winding up empty or crowded
over with weeds that spell beauty
ending by beginning by
ending: thankful

for every thing. for a bowl of yellow flowers. for the freezing music. for wildmind. for writing
down the bones: karen connelly. al purdy. natalie goldberg.

to gaalen erickson. tony clarke. dennis sumara. carl leggo. for their careful listening,
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to the teacher candidates in ened 426: language across the curriculum, section 949
for im-personating themselves, gracious, even in their pseudonyms.

to david jardine. maria klawe. john willinsky. margery fee. ted aoki. allan mackinnon. and
deborah britzman (for the curious time of pedagogy).

for family: jean peter coosje linda tom matthew & courtney. ziggy valda ivar sylvie & brencis.
and in memory: leonard charles rasberry.
for extended family: janet angus bridge and kelsey.

to ubc: the faculty of education. the centre for the study of curriculum and instruction. the
creative writing department. the faculty of graduate studies. the office of graduate programs
and research: for continued administrative support and for the possibility of flight.

for fecundity and fixity and flux and a life that includes writing. a broad stone wall flicking
alive small green flames of lizards. live music. stubborn particulars. neil & bruce. my complete
line of espresso-makers, brass-bellied stovetoppers, which remain unfailing in their impeccable
sense of timing. the marginalia that overwhelms with textual underpinnings. the crazy need to
measure mystery. for certainty questioned.

poetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfictionpoetryfiction

to carl leggo: for the poet's gift of un/naming.

the generous support of a social sciences and humanities research council doctoral fellowship.

for gathered poetry found lying
in the margins, in/visible only to itself.

the metaphysical candle that heats up the winding out,
burning away to beat the night into a band of light.

and always, for fear and for forgetting to
save as ... 

and closer to home: the oldstone schoolhouse, all woodstove and windows. and treasures, too.
paws for reflection: magpie. buzz. toobie. forbes. the reign of cats and dogs.

for hayden: original blessing.

and first and finally: to rena.
to whom i am grateful. always. and ever.
rena bridget upitis: who invents the world each day. for our living together in a place where
words seem to trip over themselves in their effort to tell the whole story.
Imagining the Curious Time of Researching Pedagogy

"Imagine: a trail made of moments rather than minutes, wild bits of time which resist elapsing according to a schedule.

Pauses.

Each one bell-shaped, into which you step as an applicant for the position of tongue.

Or: each pause is designed as the unbuilt dwelling of that moment -- a cabin, a stanza, a gazebo, a frame -- a room which the trail accepts as a fiction or a wish.

This is the point of [Time in Teacher Education], the erotic hinge of translation. When ownership is set aside, appropriation can turn inside out, an opening, a way of going up to something with a gift from home ...

... [textual play] ... along this trail, is a gift to the other from the dwelling you will never build there.

How?

A slight deformation of human categories, an extra metaphorical stretch and silliness of language as it moves toward the other, dreaming its body. There is danger in this gift, because language, in this poetic mode, compromises its nature, dismantles itself ...

[Researchers]/Poets are supremely interested in what language can’t do; in order to gesture outside, they use language in a way that flirts with its destruction ...

---

2 With certain apologies to poet Don McKay, I begin imagining the curious time of researching pedagogy through a poetic absconding of his words. The particular passage of his prose I have poeticized comes from an essay entitled "Binder twine: thoughts on ravens, home and nature poetry," in which he contemplates/questions "poetry and knowing." (In Tim Lilburn's (1995) Poetry and knowing. Kingston, ON: Quarry Press.)
Every statement we make in educational writing must be able to be read as the answer to a question that could have been answered otherwise.

-- David Jardine
PREFACE

The Educational Research Fanzine: "A Record of Obsession"

Never does one open the discussion by coming right to the heart of the matter. For the heart of the matter is always somewhere else than where it is supposed to be.

-- Trinh T. Minh-ha

Throughout the long and sometimes arduous but always privileged period in which this dissertation has taken shape, I have been tempted, again and again, to re-present the piece of work that follows as it has presented itself to me -- in a dis/continuous series -- an oddly portioned and multifarious collection of words that seem to beg for something other than "chapters" as places, placeholders, that might provide them with some kind of home, some kind of form in which to find themselves.

Perhaps I have been reading too much Roland Barthes, whose words, often irreverent in their scholarly musings, offer such pearly wisdoms as: "Thus every writer's motto reads: mad I cannot be, sane I do not deign to be, neurotic I am" (1975, p. 6). Or perhaps some of my not-so-clandestine poetic and fictional explorations, unconventional needles that cannot be separated out from the haystack of my ongoing scholarly harvests, have convinced me, truly, that all of my/our writings are simply side-bars and/or marginalia in a world where writing wishes it were otherwise. Throughout the writing of this dissertation, the night-table has held steady under the press of books: the unbearable lightness of Kundera, the sometimes acerbic Rushdie; the poetry-filled prose of Anne Michaels; the Canadian fiction hall-of-famers: Munro, Ondaatje, Gallant, Shields. Poetry and more poetry: Kate Braid, Joy Kogawa, Seamus Heaney, Bronwen Wallace, Karen Connelly, Bill Bissett, Patrick Lane. Collections of essays by Wendell Berry, Oliver Sacks, Annie Dillard, Linda Hutcheon, Daphne Marlatt, Rafael Campo, Jeanette Winterson. All these, along with tricksters like John Barth rewriting many of my (conventional) notions of writing, or Italo Calvino serving up several opening chapters, promising always a beginning, delivering instead a playful circling; offering mock consolation at every turn: "And

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1 Trinh T. Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other, p. 1.
you realize ... alert reader that you are ... that, to tell the truth, everything was slipping through your fingers" (Calvino, 1981, p. 37).

So why do I bother offering you my nightstand of book titles amid what will surely include an already over-crowded desktop's worth of educational hardcovers and scholarly research journals? I mention these writings and their authors as a kind of acknowledgement. An acknowledgement of the vital role they have played in the writing of this dissertation -- not as pleasant distractions from the "real business" of scholarly inquiry but as inextricable, invaluable pieces of the complex web of curricular relations required to make an endeavour such as this possible.

While I name such works -- of fiction, and poetry, and essays of one form or another -- in order to acknowledge the obvious but often unannounced influences they may have had while I dreamed dissertation, there is more. (Certainly, they have offered everything from comfort to inspiration when I felt that things were truly slipping through my fingers.) These literary works also announce, in what I hope will become evident in the pages that follow, my passion for a life that includes reading. And writing. For a life that includes words and wordmaking. And wonder. And, finally, for a life that seeks to engage with others whose lives also include reading and writing, learning and teaching. Emphatically (and ungrammatically) speaking, I cannot not mention these works, just as I do not wish to make them separate from the curricular artists who have helped shape the pedagogical and aesthetic sensibilities of this life project without end:

_Bitter milk_  _Pedagon_  _Practice Makes Practice_  _Teaching to Transgress_
_Madeleine Grumet_  _David Smith_  _Deborah Britzman_  _bell hooks_
_Private Readings in Public_  _Releasing the Imagination_  _Speaking With a_
_Dennis Sumara_  _Maxine Greene_  _David Jardine_  _Patti_
_Boneless Tongue Getting Smart Teaching Mathematics: Toward A Sound_
_Lather_  _Brent Davis_  _Bill Pinar_  _Adrienne Rich_  _William Gass_
_Alternative Understanding Curriculum ... What is Found There The_
_John Caputo_  _Trinh T. Minh-ha_  _James Hillman_  _Jane Gallop_
_World Within the Word Radical Hermeneutics Woman, Native, Other_
_Héline Cixous_  _Ted Aoki_  _Jacques Daignault_  _Laurel Richardson_

---

2 "A Life That Includes Reading," is the title of the opening chapter of Dennis Sumara's (1996a) Private Readings in Public: Schooling the Literary Imagination. I have borrowed the expression and added a variation by exchanging reading with writing. Chapter Two, "A life That Includes Writing," explores what the interplay of these two words -- reading and writing -- might mean to our lives lived in and out of classrooms.
A partial list to be sure, but certainly enough to evoke poetry. For poetry often is a list, and, in turn, I list these writers and their various writings just as I might attend to a favourite poem, or invent an incantation that helps to ritualize my curricular practice -- a deliberate and ceremonious weaving of particular objects, artifacts and events. All of this and yet there is something else. Something more.

The poet Adrienne Rich says, “You must write, and read, as if your life depended on it. That is not generally taught in school” (1993, p. 32). She continues,

To read as if your life depended on it would mean to let into your reading your beliefs, the swirl of your dreamlife, the physical sensations of your ordinary carnal life; and, simultaneously, to allow what you’re reading to pierce the routines, safe and impermeable, in which ordinary carnal life is tracked, charted, channeled (p. 32).

To write and read as if your life depended on it. It’s certainly difficult to deny the gravity of Rich’s passionate words: This is not generally taught in school. And yet, this dissertation, this particular and purposeful turning of energy and attention toward the shared experience of reading and writing and learning and teaching seeks to imagine education -- in the words of Maxine Greene -- as if it could be otherwise. In her book Releasing the Imagination, Greene states that she wants to “help us think in ways that move beyond schooling to the larger domains of education, where there are and must be all kinds of openings to possibility” (1995, p. 5).

Openings to possibility. This is why I choose to begin this particular body of work with a preface that is in some ways an invocation -- a calling upon -- that seeks openings to possibility, as well as a certain kind of guidance and support from the Muse(s). This is why I begin by placing the work of Maxine Greene and Adrienne Rich alongside Barbara Gowdy and Russell Banks. Teachers, poets, writers: releasing the imagination. Reclaiming the imagination. Inviting us, demanding, even, that we allow what we are reading to, in Rich’s words, pierce the routines of

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3 Repeated instances of previously quoted text are sometimes italicized without page references.
the ordinary. All of these writers, educators, poets: "each ... teaching me to read the other" (Felman, p. 6).

It is not surprising that a life that includes reading and writing (and teaching) would also include a certain amount of obsession: the capacity to be swallowed up, consumed by words, worlds: wor(l)ds. Lost and found. Lost and found. Lost. In turn, the capacity to learn to live well with both the intense light of obsession as well as the long shadow that often accompanies its presence are important parts of the living. James Hillman says that for every bit of light we grasp -- "that bright circle of awareness" -- we also darken the remainder of the room (1979, p. 12). Yet, if we are moved by Rich's words, if we recognize ourselves in her words, knowing the swirl of our dreamlife, we might also find strange comfort in obsession, recognize it as one of the many faces of living a life that includes learning and teaching. Reading. Writing. In this way, obsession becomes an acknowledged element, one of the conditions that make certain kinds of teaching and learning, reading and writing possible.

Informed by the busy stirrings of popular culture, my work is, in many senses, like the production of a fanzine: "a record of obsession." Originating in the cinematic world, fanzines -- put together by obsessive fans, most often as basement operations -- can take the form of photocopied sheets unceremoniously hand-stapled together, or they might be professionally printed on glossy stock. Reflecting the idiosyncratic bent of their founders, these "zines" usually operate as mail order productions dedicated most often to the heady cult(ure) of B-movies. Though I am reticent to carry the B-movie metaphor over to the work to which I have dedicated myself these past days and months and years, I am not at all reluctant to name this particular (curricular) obsession in order to help find a form for my passion, those things for which I care deeply about.

A record of obsession. This is what I find when I look back over my shoulder toward the future. No real beginning, middle. End. Simply a complex gathering of citations, incantations, and ruminations in endless combinations and permutations. Obsession. This is a word I do

not often encounter in the field of education(al research). Most often, obsession is something that might best be sidestepped. For fear. Obsession is desire unhinged, or so we say. Not usually used in curricular terms. Yet, it seems an appropriate word to use in the context of our work as writers and teachers and researchers; it lends itself to our becoming curious.

I choose to make obsession a curricular concern, not so that I might loosen its burden through a kind of therapeutic catharsis, but so that I might more mindfully consider its weight, claim it even as I offer it up for consideration within a broader community of teachers and writers and researchers. In offering up my own particulars, and in turn, some of those whose lives have become connected to mine through our shared experiences -- in this case of writing and reading and considering the practice of teaching -- I hope to render visible, through attention to form, some of the “usually-invisible pedagogical relations that circumscribe our teaching and learning” (Sumara and Davis, 1996, p. 4).

Perhaps my introductory remarks characterizing the dissertation-as-dilemma, as I fumble for form and bring the works of Italo Calvino to bear on those of bell hooks, are merely confessional; the bedside table moved into the study as a rhetorically convenient bit of furniture re-arrangement. Even so, it is a necessary fumbling in my efforts to establish a location from which to begin to dwell on a specific set of curriculum practices. “The ‘private’ reading is illusory,” says Sumara, “both reading and writing are communal acts” (1996a, p. xiii). While my own (private) practice of reading and writing are integral to the work they are not in themselves sufficient nor generous enough as locations for interpretation; they provide a kind of starting place, however, a way of attempting to make visible the oftentimes hidden conditions required to produce something we might agree to call a dissertation -- or a novel or a poem or a fanzine. I feel it is important and worthwhile to make more explicit the living and writing that is often required to work in the world as a teacher and a researcher. Otherwise, the nightstand conveniently disappears as the names fall into neatly pressed rows of citations (or are left out altogether); the marginalia is erased by the wax and polish of re-presentation. The press of the last fresh font is left to create the first impression.
The writing of this dissertation -- this curriculum form -- becomes a co-labouring and like any curriculum form it “emerges from the middle of the mundane and very specific details of daily life” ... the pieces present possibilities, as Sumara and Davis (1996) have described them, “possibilities for educational experiences,” as objects intended to function as generous locations for interpretation (pp. 2-3). And, in what has surely become a kind of hermeneutic mantra for me, it is never just the “things themselves but rather, in the relational space between and among particular objects, artifacts, and events” (Sumara & Davis, 1996, p. 2) that the curricular acts of reading and writing, living and learning take place.

Under the pull of obsession, I can’t seem to stop talking about writing, reading about writing, writing about writing, can’t seem to be able to stop talking about a life -- about lives -- that include the practice of writing. Part of my own experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing -- a practice which also includes writing about other writing lives -- has lead to the strangely troubling, strangely satisfying experience of becoming lost in what I now refer to as “the tangle”: A teacher. Teachers. A writing life. Writing lives. Teaching. Learning. Reading. Writing. Researching. It appears impossible not to become caught up in the tangle when considering the question of what the experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing might be, especially when the question is lived through the shared experience of writing. Within the context of teacher education, obsession’s spell has also led me to consider, through the tangle, how my wonderings/researchings are made different when the writing is “attached” to a living that includes the practice of becoming a teacher.

From the tangle, I can’t seem to stop talking about preservice teachers writing. About preservice teachers writing lives. And, unless I truly have become unhinged, I believe that many of the teachers whose lives I have had the pleasure and privilege of writing with and among were willing participants in a shared obsession: writing. Writing lives. Writing became a real way of imagining a life that included teaching and learning. A way of following words to find out that words lead to other words. A way for teacher candidates 5 to negotiate their identities as teachers. In other words, writing became a way of wording the world. A world of

5 I use “preservice teachers” and “teacher candidates” interchangeably.
labyrinthian possibility as well as un/expected ends.

Yet another tendril of obsession in the tangle of this dissertational experience has involved being caught between living (a) life and writing about it. Fiction writer Kent Nussey describes this phenomenon as "the thing the writer does to herself by withdrawing from the world to write about it." Nussey continues, "the practice of writing, the extended act of creation, might cost the writer the very things she’s trying to capture and illumine in her writing."

I am thus needing, at the outset, to acknowledge this powerful sense of loss that occurs during a project such as this, a loss that, in Nussey’s words, seems to happen “because we have taken our eye off the world to write about it.” I am discovering that the willingness to own and embrace obsession can lead to an interesting place pedagogically. Following Nussey from fiction to educational research, part of our acknowledged roles as teachers and researchers must involve cutting ourselves off from pedagogy in order to write about it. We are not, then, simply writing about pedagogy. We are writing pedagogy. We are not only writing about lives, we are writing lives. Through teachers’ I’s. Through researchers’ I’s. Through readerly eyes. Through writerly eyes. Through poets’ I’s. As if our life depended on it.

Over an extended period of time, my writing life has become filled with snippets of (preservice) teachers’ writing lives: bits of poetry, email correspondence, written feedback from class, more bits of poetry. Not knowing what to do with all the words that began to pile up, I simply gathered them together -- all the loose scraps of paper that seemed to beg for some kind of order -- and stuffed them unceremoniously into a green plastic box with a hinge-lid. I returned to the box on an irregular basis and flipped through the paperworks, shuffled them, looked for clues -- looked for some-thing for which I had no clue I might be looking.

It was at this point, I think, that the fanzine was born. The cut-and-paste-ability of the scores of words was at once my arch-nemesis and great hope. I tried other strategies. I tried, simply,

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6 The passages from Kent Nussey are taken from an address titled “The Book of the Grotesque,” given at the Kingston School of Writing, Kingston, Ontario, July 1993. His two most recents works of short fiction include, *In Christ There is No East or West*, and *The War in Heaven*. 
to be quiet and listen to the writing. I experimented with the art of getting to know art as described by Jeanette Winterson: “Suppose we made a pact with a painting and agreed to sit down and look at it, on our own, with no distractions, for one hour ... what would we find? (1996, p. 8). Like Winterson, I recognized the roughly formed stages of “Increasing discomfort ... increasing distraction ... increasing invention ...increasing irritation” (p. 9).

Winterson’s discovery, her dis-comfort and her love and passion for art -- her dis-comfort in her love with passion and art -- led her to title the series of resulting essays, Art Objects; such a clever and wonderful way of reconfiguring her relations with the things of the world: “Art Objects. The nouns become an active force not a collector’s item. Art Objects” (Winterson, 1996, p. 19). Similar to Winterson’s experience of developing relations with paintings, so it was with my stumblings with teachers’ writing lives -- their writing, poetry or otherwise, seemed to “object” to my attempts to be with it, especially to my attempts to sort it or use it for my own purposes. And just in case it is not clear, this “problem” -- of learning to live well with the difficulty of teachers’ writing lives -- was my problem. The writing was, well -- itself. As Winterson might have said about my time spent with all of these words, my encounters were not the usual “This [writing] has nothing to say to me,” but rather, “I have nothing to say to this [writing]. And I desperately wanted to speak” (p. 4).

My desire ongoing, then, is to continue to find ways to speak and also to be quiet. The dissertation feels to me like a long poem for and about poems. And yet it is not about poems. I continue to look for ways that we might learn to be with our writings and researchings even though both writing and research object. My continuing desire to seek ways (of learning) to be with aspects of reading and writing, and teaching and learning -- of the living that goes on in our lives -- find parallels in the ways I continue to learn to read and write: poetry, fiction, curriculum. I have wondered and wonder still if it is possible to live with our curricular obsessions like poems dwell with them at length, hover around meaning not meaning
to pick them apart but rather to admire their unwillingness to mean one thing, and to imagine (other) possibilities for meaning. Learning always “to become attentive to the unreadable, the inaudible, the invisible” (Felman, 1987, p. 15).

The idea of an educational fanzine does not appear to object to my contradictory whims and wishes -- methodologically, pedagogically or otherwise -- in its textual recordings that want to become dissertation. As a record of obsession, it seems to capture the complexity of the “dilemma-lived-as-dissertation” in a way that conveys the earnest desire on the part of one who so desperately wants to speak, to write, to make some kind of sense of teachers’ writing lives -- of teachers writing lives -- at the same time as it points to the sheer fallibility of such a venture and the consequent need to embrace a kind of living and writing that self-reflexively points out its own foibles as it goes.

Perhaps, if one were daring enough, the fanzine, itself, would be/come the dissertation: a stapled together, show-and-tell kind of textual record of obsession. Or, perhaps if one were even more daring still, the dissertation might be recognized for what it is: a fanzine.
Finding Form

Of course
this is how it must begin:
imagining the world.
Standing on any green hill
at the mercy of all blue rivers,
(re)inventing the colours of sky and three perfect ravens.

Waiting for the moon
to find a form that signals the planet's giving way
to an inevitable shade borne out of light.

As a matter of course,
the palette gives and receives
in combinations until the body is no longer a body.

Whisper the incantation as it was given,
as breath. Walk around
the canvas three times,
counterclockwise, for luck and
momentum:

wind the world up until it spins
on spit and sweat and the bloody pitch of a
fallen pine. Aware of nothing
but the first drop of rain
repeating itself --
three times counterclockwise,

putting the hex on cliché: out of the blue,
words fall on open fields, plant themselves and
wait for the world
to imagine itself out of a seed, or
run its course like an
avalanche down a garden path
ripping up colour as it goes.

gwr 03/95

---

tangled lines and lives

____________________ an opening INTER-LUDE________________
Dear Participant,

Dear Carl,

This letter constitutes Part Two of your written consent to participate in the research project -- So far, I feel like a bull in a china shop -- just waiting to break something. My Language Across the Curriculum: An Investigation of the Writing Practices of Pre-Service Teachers writing background is very limited -- I avoid it whenever possible. I like working with -- outlined below. This study is part of my doctoral research which I am undertaking as a graduate numbers! I may not be bringing the right attitude in with me ... I have never been creative student. Please read the letter carefully before signing and feel free to ask any questions regarding and the ideas and writing of others in the class makes me feel a little awkward as I don't the project and your involvement in it. feel like I can measure up -- but I will try ...

Up to this point in the course, you have agreed to participate in the initial phase of the research ... I even found myself in the mall last week in a bookstore looking for poetry. While

8 I have employed a poetic device -- the double-voice -- in order to (playfully) juxtapose a version of the consent form that research participants signed as part of the Ethical Review process for research at UBC with random feedback from some of the students during the early stages of the course. The comments, taken from "exit slips" written at the end of each class, have been variously scrambled in a purposeful attempt to (con)fuse the lines and lives of the students.
project involving members of ENED 426: Language Across the Curriculum. As discussed earlier, browsing I started looking at journals; I haven’t kept a journal in about 11 years. I’m the second phase of the study will involve a smaller number of students who have agreed to finding a need to express myself ... Well I have to admit that before this course started participate more fully by discussing their experiences with writing and by sharing samples of their I was really dreading this class. I am now looking forward to it. I have never taken a writing. In addition to regular class writing, this smaller group of students will be sharing and course like this before -- one that allows me the freedom to express myself as I am. discussing their writing through a variety of forms to include audio-taped interviews, personal journal I have always enjoyed writing but not for others. I, like many, have learned the game of entries, letters, electronic mail correspondence, as well as creative writing (e.g., poetry). Any time essay writing. I have often taken time on my own to express myself and have then spent outside class will be strictly voluntary and will not exceed three hours per week. thrown away my thoughts. I must admit this class scares me a little.

In agreeing to participate in this project it must be stressed that:
... I’ve been losing sleep, getting tangled in words and writing and thought -- thank you!

1. All data collected will remain confidential through the following procedures:
   ... This class makes me feel slightly inadequate. I look at all of these
   
   i. your name will NOT be used in the study or in any other representation of the study wonderful brave works and I yearn to do something amazing! Anyway,
   
   ii. all taped interviews and discussions will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study other than a feeling of immense talentlessness (isn’t making up
   
   iii. each participant will have the opportunity to review and comment on the transcripts words fun?) I’m really enjoying this class. I can say that I have been

   iv. all data is restricted to the investigator and course instructor inspired to write and think creatively ...

2. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time, without prejudice, even if you sign this
   ... I think I have done more writing in the last three weeks than I did in all of my letter of consent.
   undergraduate degree.

3. At any stage of your involvement you may request clarification on any issue regarding the project It is very painful since I am not used to it ...

4. This study will NOT involve any risk of any kind whatsoever. You will not be rewarded
   The projects [assignments] are very inviting and intriguing, I hope to take advantage
or penalized in any way for your involvement (or lack of) in the study. Similarly, data
to release myself from analytical writing that I have been forced to adhere to for so
collection and analysis will in NO way affect the course grades of participating and non-
long. We'll see what happens and where it takes me ... I have a story inside of me
participating students. All students will receive the same instruction regardless of their
which must be written. I have been aware of it for years. I just never have the time.
involved (or lack of) in the study.
It's been in my head and I need to tell it ...

It is hoped that you will benefit from the type of interaction, reflection, and group and self-study
... I would like to see more of how this is going to help us as teachers! I would love
involved in being part of this research project's writing community. You will be given every possible
to get my students to write in class but don't get a chance in Biology classrooms
opportunity to provide input during the project. In turn, I will provide ongoing feedback to
(I have to try harder!) ...
participants as the study proceeds.

* * *

Further clarification on any issue regarding this project may be obtained from Dr. Carl Leggo, Assis-
... Haven't learned anything but we're being challenged to overlook our apprehensions
tant Professor, Language Education (822 4640, Ponderosa E 215) or from Gary William Rasberry,
and just express the way we feel. I like that. I think our time in this class has
Centre for the Study of Curriculum & Instruction, (739 6813, Ponderosa F 104).
great potential for growth ...

Please indicate your consent to participate in Part Two of the study by completing the form below ...
... Unfortunately, sad as it is, I don't see myself being able to share [my writing]. I do,
and returning it to me. Thank you for your willingness to participate.
however, plan on continuing to write now that I realize I enjoy it ...

I, _____________________________ , have read the above and have had
On my assignment, you gave me 17 out of 20 -- Maybe you don't know how difficult
the opportunity to discuss in full the nature of this project. I understand that my participation in
it is for me to write and share it with someone. It just seems like I don't want to
this project, and the data collected, will be totally divorced from my assessment in ENED 426:
share it if you're going to put a mark on it because it almost reinforces to me that I'm
Language Across the Curriculum. I understand that the entry of a researcher into my classroom not much of a poet, at least not a 20 out of 20 poet. I realize you can’t give everyone a will be done as unobtrusively as possible, with minimum disruption of normal classroom proceedings 20 out of 20, but if you’re giving 20 on the basis of how much heart went into it, I put and in consultation with me.

lots into it -- 21 worth ...

I have had the opportunity to question both Dr. Carl Leggo and Mr. G. W. Rasberry. I give my ... A very purposeful emphasis on process. Where will it go? Perhaps that is the consent to participate in this project. I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this document. question ... I am seeing poetry in everything and I think that I will write a poem ...

Signed ___________________________ Date ___________________________
CHAPTER ONE

Through a Poet's I

This book is about desire and daily life. I began it because I needed a way of thinking about poetry outside of writing poems ... to imagine other ways of navigating into our collective future.

— Adrienne Rich 1

Desire and daily life: it would be difficult to imagine education in the absence of either. The tangle of lines and lives that run through this work would suggest that education is itself an imagining, a way of navigating into our collective future; and further, that poetry has something to do with this imagining, something to say about the ways that desire and daily life come together and apart as we spend our time engaged in acts of learning and teaching -- of living in and outside of classrooms.

At the same time, poetry is itself a word that I am at times uneasy with. Reticent in certain kinds of ways to speak the word, fearing the worst from possible conversational outcomes: on buses, during family gatherings, at seminars and colloquia, in the gym. I am anxious to reimagine the word -- poetry -- particularly as I bring it to bear upon pedagogy. Anxious, meaning a little insecure. Anxious, meaning quite excited. By possibility. I am anxious, then, for the ways that my identity, personally and professionally, is (always being) carved, crafted, and shaped by words. By poetry. Anxious for the ways my identity is always a result of my carving, my crafting, my shaping of words. Of poetry. I could speak in similar ways of my relations with pedagogy. I could place pedagogy in poetry's place and wonder over the similarities, the differences. Wonder over the ways in which my identity is about poetry and not about poetry, about pedagogy and not about pedagogy. Wonder over the ways my identity, like the identities of the teacher candidates I spend time with, engaged in acts of poetry and pedagogy, is shifting. Fleeting. In flux. Always.

1 Rich, What is found there: Notebooks on poetry and politics, p. xiii
In an ironic sense, poetry is a word that has become somewhat worn out. Insisting on carrying everyone else's baggage, poetry sometimes struggles under the weight of its own history. Perhaps pedagogy, as a word, is no different. Not in the ways each of them mean but in the ways that they have both come to mean almost anything and/or everything to everyone. My own belief is that poetry is a way of imagining and reimagining words and worlds. I might say the same of pedagogy. There is a lot more to say about both. Poetry and pedagogy.

I have Adrienne Rich to thank, then, at the outset of this particular imagining for her offerings of a way to begin "thinking about poetry outside of writing poems." As Toronto artist Andy Patton has said about particular writers whose words he cherishes spending time with, Adrienne Rich, for me, is "a voice in which I've been soaking" for a number of years.

Of particular value for me has been the ways in which Rich takes the poem and cracks it open into life, into the living. Takes it well beyond words on the page without ever losing sight of the sources from which the words grow. Her writing -- of poems and of a living that includes the practice of writing poetry and living poetically -- reminds me of a film I once saw in school called the *Powers of Ten.* The memory, like the film, is old and plagued some by white spots and burn marks that scroll by as the spool engages, but I am remembering that the opening images depict two people sitting on a blanket on a lawn. The camera takes us, first, inward and inward and inward, until we are viewing these human beings at a cellular, then molecular, then sub-molecular level. The movement then reverses itself to take us outward, each movement in increments of powers of ten, until we are viewing human life and the earth from outer space, and eventually, outer outer space ...

Finally, we are drawn earthward once again until gravity rests its case and we are bodily present, grounded somehow different. The universe seen through a poet's I ...

---

2 I have since been able to locate the book, *Powers of Ten* written by Philip and Phylis Morrison and the Office of Charles and Ray Eames "based on the brief and beautiful film *Powers of Ten: A Film Dealing with the Relative Size of Things in the Universe and the Effect of Adding Another Zero,* made by the Office of Charles and Ray Eames."
Adrienne Rich says,

For a long time I've been trying to write poems as if, within this social order, it was enough to voice public pain, speak memory, set words in a countering order, call up images that were in danger of being forgotten or unconceived ... But I've also lived with other voices whispering that poetry might be little more than self-indulgence in a society so howling with unmet human needs ... It's been possible to consider poetry as a marginal activity, of passionate concern to its practitioners perhaps, but as specialized, having little to do with common emergency, as fly-fishing (1993, p. 18).

I, too, hear the "other voices whispering." Some years ago, as this dissertation, this imagining, was just beginning to take shape I was working on a poem. The opening line read, *Eye seem to have a poet's I.* It felt like a wonderful opening. But the pen couldn't seem to move fast enough before the opening closed. The poem remains unfinished, still, not for lack of words or feelings about what it might mean to have a poet's I, but possibly because it was never meant to end. The poem's opening stanzas look something like this:

*Eye seem to have a poet's I,*  
not for any particular rhyme or reason.

Maybe it's just because  
I have always been

will always be  
unfinished.

Uncomfortable in happiness  
incomplete in unhappiness

insecure in outwardness  
confident in introspection ...

The middle stanzas, which I have left out in this particular rendering, stumble self-reflexively in
search of some invisible pattern, scratch at metaphysical quandaries, mix metaphors of mining
and writing with pick axe determination, stretch toward quiddity (a useful words for poets and
pedagogues), and then look for a soft place to land. As the final stanza picks itself up

off the floor, a question surfaces,
dust-covered: What good the poet's I?
at which point, a shaky
scratch-and-claw voice approximating my own
drops deep deeper
into steep-shaft darkness
knowing the poet's I
with less certainty
than eye could ever have
imagined.

This poetic anecdote is a way of saying that I relate to Rich's thoughts on poetry-as-fly-fishing,
just as I relate to her sense of the urgency and importance of poetry -- poetry that exists outside
of writing poems. In fact, one of poetry's many possibilities might even lie in its capacity to
bring fly-fishing and unmet human needs together. Not for the purpose of jest or satire or "Far
Side(d)" humour, but for the ways that language can sometimes make us different for having
tried. For allowing language to pierce the routines. For entertaining the possibility of the Strange
in the Familiar. And for allowing the Familiar to appear Strange. Contradictions.
Poetry and pedagogy.

In addressing the work of the poet, Don McKay makes a distinction between "poetic attention
and romantic inspiration" (1995, p. 24). (I think it's the Romantic inspiration aspect of poetry
that I am quick to deny possession of in pedagogical circles, then give myself away, of course, in
self(conscious)defense.) And while I must acknowledge the romantic pull of the poet's I in my
writing (which includes poetry), I am interested in the ways McKay's description of poetic
attention -- as a "form of knowing" in which language acknowledges itself -- might inform my
writing of research: As artifice, as essential, as inadequate, as impossible, as necessary.

As McKay offers,
Language is experiencing its speechlessness and the consequent need to stretch *itself* to be adequate to this form of knowing ... the persistence of poetic attention during the act of composition is akin to the translator's attention to the original, all the while she performs upon it a delicate and dangerous transformation. Our epistemological dilemma is not resolved ... but ritualized and explored (1995, p. 26).

Poetry outside of writing poems, then, has something to say about lines *and* lives; it has something to say about research. Poetry, like pedagogy and our research of pedagogy, is akin to translation. As Andy Patton (1995) suggests, "it's not poetry [and, I would add, pedagogy] that we study but its translation into other words" (p. 155). This kind of poetic attention to language, as a research sensibility, refuses opposites, resists dichotomies. Research through a poet's I does not necessarily beg for phenomenological brushstrokes that paint portraits of our teaching and learning in true, living colour, but neither does it call for postmodern pastiche, a beautifully meaningless collage of human experience.

Somewhere in-between, the poet Bronwen Wallace, echoed by the hermeneutic research of David Jardine (1992a, 1992b, 1992c, 1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1995a, 1995b), makes an (interpretive) case for "the stubborn argument of the particular" (Wallace, 1987, p. 111). As Jardine notes, "only through a deliberate and disciplined attention to the stubborn particulars is the whole anything more than simply a floating, and, in the end, unsustainable idea" (Jardine, 1995a, p. 272). And, significantly, there is both "multiplicity and particularity [in] the local" (Hutcheon, 1992, p. 13).

In turn, I ask, what is it about the particulars of our learning -- our writing and reading and teaching and living -- that remain so "stubborn" to our writing and reading and teaching and living -- to our researching? How is it that our pedagogical relations with these "stubborn particulars" can bear the tension of both invitation and resistance? And, what kinds of conditions for teachers and learners and/or for writers and researchers might we create in order to savour and celebrate, problematize and trouble over the "stubborn particulars" of writing
and reading? Teaching and learning? Research?

This dissertation attempts to dwell with/in this tension, this language of invitation and resistance. Attempts to create an interpretive location somewhere between poetry and pedagogy. And research. Attempts to live well with/in the tangle. Of writing and teaching and reading and learning and living and researching. Of methodology and epistemology. Attempts to honour the importance of the stubborn particular that comes out of an attending to the lines and the lives, as Bronwen Wallace says, the "right now, in the midst of things, this and this" (p. 111). The dissertation attempts also to imagine research as an imagining that sometimes strays far from the living, cuts itself off from the living in order to write about it. Attempts to live on "the hinge of translation" (McKay, 1995, p. 28). Through a poet’s I. Imagining the curious time of researching pedagogy.

Adrienne Rich says, “When I can pull it together, I work in solitude surrounded by community, solitude in dialogue with community, solitude that alternates with collective work” (1993, p. 53). Not only the poet’s I. But also poets’ I’s. Most times, the dissertation is their I’s through my eyes. Their eyes through my I’s. A danger, of course. A risk. Delicate and dangerous. Like teaching. Like learning. Like writing. Like research. Like life.

In a poignant and self-reflexive turn, feminist educator and filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha states, “I write to show myself showing people who show me my own showing” (1989, p. 22). Her words offer another way to begin to describe the nature of the work of this dissertation which attempts to live well with the relationships among literacy, aesthetic practice, and the ongoing production of subjectivity. Trinh T. Minh-ha’s writings speak particularly well to poststructural understandings of the experience of identity that are carved out of the complexities of language. Writing (and) identity are the infinite play of empty mirrors, writes Minh-ha, an ongoing play that reveals our doubles, our ghosts, our flaws, our imperfections. In this way, my own writing (self) suffers under the spell of such narcissistic tensions, even as it attempts to catch the reflections of other selves writing: “rare are the moments when we accept leaving our mirrors empty” (1989, p. 22).
And, while necessarily caught up in the illusory nature of trying to write the real, I attempt, still, to portray some of the ways in which a life that includes writing -- or, a study of a self, studying education -- is deeply implicated in other lives that include writing, other selves, studying education. Within the limited humility that writing a life -- or lives -- offers, I look to Minh-ha’s offering of a more generous interpretation of writing a life, in which a self-study is not only a self-study,

For writing, like a game that defies its own rules, is an ongoing practice that may be said to be concerned, not with inserting a ‘me’ into language, but with creating an opening where the ‘me’ disappears while ‘I’ endlessly come and go, as the nature of language requires (1989, p. 35).

“What is the experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing?” This question permeates the next chapter, “A Bowl of Yellow Flowers Stains the Canvas” -- so much so that it becomes invisible in its persistence. Chapter Two is, in many ways, a “sampler” in the postmodern sense in which Linda Hutcheon (1992) uses the term to refer to a “kind of formal sampling or self-reflexive, parodic manipulation” (p. 10) of text ... “the ‘sampler’ erodes the tried and true ... distinction between original and copy” (Hutcheon, 1992, p. 9). “A Bowl of Yellow Flowers” is a story within a story within a story; it is a part of the whole. A whole in part. Chapter Two is (in) the dissertation. The dissertation is (in) Chapter Two. It re-presents an attempt at (the) writing out (of) an experience(ing) of a life that includes writing as it writes its way into and out of the necessary tangle of teachers’ lives that also include the practice of writing, and teaching and learning.

Chapter Three, “A Life that includes Writing,” is an attempt to sketch some of the lines and lives by moving in and around the classroom experience of teacher candidates who explored writing pedagogy and teacher education in a writing workshop-styled setting. The workshop offered opportunities for teacher candidates to begin viewing writing practice as a curricular form that enabled possibilities for further writing practice. The chapter attempts to show how, in the context of teacher education, writing practice, that included “wordmaking” and...
"wordplay," become a way of writing practice — in order to discover our selves — to see our selves thinking out loud on paper in a (writing) process and practice that, like the process of learning itself, is interminable. In short, Chapter Three suggests that a life that includes writing must include a lot of writing (practice).

Chapters Four and Five offer a “trip through the tangle” — in theory and practice — on the way to Chapter Six, the concluding chapter. These chapters re-present and enact a sometimes-stumbling-toward-meaning, what Shoshana Felman (1987) has called “the lived experience of a discovery,” as the dissertation dwells in the location of the workshop, a place of writing and teaching,” in which the living and writing, the lines and the lives become blurred. Teacher candidates negotiate the fixity and flux of the liminal space of student-teacher through writing. How might identity be negotiated through writing? Perhaps throughwriting — Throughwriting: on the way through to somewhere else ...

Chapter Four, “Through the Tangle,” lives with and through the question posed by Deborah Britzman and Alice Pitt (1996), “Can a study of the self, studying education create new conditions of learning and the making of pedagogical insight?” This chapter offers a tentative fulcrum, a state of im/balance, a place from which to experience the moment arm of the dissertation move through its own series of shifting identity negotiations — from a self, studying education to a self studying selves studying education. “The tangle,” refracted through hermeneutics, postmodernism, psychoanalytic theory, writing practice and pedagogy, is itself a location in which to situate a particular classroom practice, self-reflexively “learning to look closely into the dense particularities of concrete situations of teaching and learning” (Lather and Ellsworth, 1996, p. 70).

Chapter Five, “Becoming Curious about Teaching and Learning,” is a poetic attempt to imagine time in teacher education, to imagine the time of teacher education as an imagining that is itself tangled. Playing on Deborah Britzman’s (in press), conceptualizations of “the curious time of pedagogy,” this chapter (re)considers the curious time of researching pedagogy. The poet’s I returns to the “Small Imaginings” introduced in Chapter Two for the ways they create a location
of ambivalence that enables me to cast the time of research — the time of learning — backward and forward (Britzman & Pitt, 1996) in order to complicate the practice of writing research and pedagogy.

Chapter Six: Teachers' writing lives ... Teachers writing (their) lives ... Teachers writing lives. This play on words is also the play of pedagogy, "a pedagogy that attempts to make space for students to 'perform differently'" (Orner, 1996, p. 77). This chapter gives shape to a curricular location that offers the possibility of "work-shopping" and "word-shopping," both part of a playful process of ongoing identity negotiation through a writing practice that includes "wordmaking" and "wordplay." Word-shopping and work-shopping: the hyphen introduces a space -- re-members the space -- as a location where teacher candidates can try on both lines and lives in a living that includes the practice of writing, as well as a practice that includes the writing of living. Through writing practice. Through writing practice. And through writing theory. Through writing theory. Writing practice into theory into practice. Teachers writing lives as a never ending process of learning to live "un/grammatically" (Leggo, in press).

***

And what good the poet's I? (Re)Turning (to) the words of Adrienne Rich, this dissertation "is about desire and daily life. "I began it because I needed a way of thinking about poetry outside of writing poems ... to imagine other ways of navigating into our collective future."

Now that I have re-discovered The Powers of Ten, I find myself visiting and revisiting the marvel of words and images, the science and poetry of the Universe contained on those pages, where both inner and outer are space. Out of the boggling array of fact and fancy, several small passages struck me in particular and I recount them here. First, in the book's introductory notes,

The step-by-step examination within these pages is best shared by a traveler who is pleased alike by unexpected familiarity and by exotic novelty ... and then, later on,
These microscopic scenes are so near the edge of ordinary vision that they are recognized even in novelty, hidden surprises within the commonplace ...  

Both the film and the book on which it is based create an awesome and impressive interpretive location from which to address questions that elude even our imagining. On one particular page of *Powers of Ten*, we are offered (an imagining?) of the skin of a human being at $10^{-4}$ meters. The caption below the grainystrange image reads,

> Unexpected detail appears; we can scarcely orient ourselves. Deeper still, we enter an intimate world within, as unfamiliar to us as the distant stars.

The moments and movements of this particular imagining -- of the curious time of researching pedagogy -- now seem suddenly small and insignificant against the weave of the cosmos. Still, it is easy to become lost in a life that includes writing, a life that includes imagining. There have been, and continue to be, many places in this text, in this curious time, where I can scarcely orient myself. My self. My selves. Yet, always, there is

> "Unexpected familiarity ... Hidden surprises within the commonplace."

Finally, then, moving from an imagining of *The Universe* to the tiny arrow that says, *You Are Here,*

> “these pages” -- this imagining

*is best shared by a traveler who is pleased alike by the un familiar.*

Imagining

> the curious time of researching pedagogy through a poet's I ...

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3 There are no page numbers in the text with which to provide a reference.
a very large footnote with an "I" for form

INTER-LUDE
The workings of this text have been influenced in part by a special issue of *Theory into Practice* (Spring 1996) called “Situated Pedagogies: Classroom Practices in Postmodern Times.” Each of the essays, in its own way, attempts to contribute to the ongoing conversation over what it might mean to live and teach within “the postmodern moment ... sense made here is limited, local, provisional, and always critical” (Marshall, cited in Schaafsma, 1996, p. 115). While many of the authors in the collection offer examples of students’ speaking and writing in their expositions, it interests me that Elizabeth Ellsworth, whose work I pay particular attention to, has chosen not to include any “excerpts” from student writing or from any of the possible classroom interactions she explores. Interesting how many of the other authors go to great lengths to carefully cut and paste student comments into their texts, making sure not to take textual liberties under the constant and watchful eye of liberatory pedagogical research and practice. The eye, of course, is their own “I” which must learn to live self-reflexively within the potentially contradictory textual world that threatens to prescribe or reinscribe the very practices that seek to act as helpfully critical or emancipatory in the first place.

I find the absence of student words/works in Ellsworth’s re-presentation of her classroom practice no less “real” for the lives that are apparently “missing.” In fact, I find her account of classroom living to be entirely consistent with her efforts to become more and more “response-able” to the students and the relationships they share together in that commonplace location. This is part of the postmodern moment, their presence is, for me, made more real by their absence. As Ellsworth says, paraphrasing Rooney: there are no “innocent readings of the world” (1996, p. 138). Our readings of the world, or text, or curriculum Ellsworth continues, quoting Rooney, are “neither possible nor impossible, but practical under certain political and theoretical conditions” (Rooney, cited in Ellsworth, p. 138). I read Ellsworth (and Rooney) for the helpful ways in which they make explicit the conditions of production in their curricular work.

I, too, seek ways to make my curricular workings of the text more explicit and choose to represent the living and writing practices of the preservice teachers as a series of constructions, a textual strategy subject to a reading that is co-produced -- performed -- through the conscious and unconscious exclusions and omissions of reader and writer. I seek to create forms for my writing of the preservice teachers’ writings, comments, and questionings that foreground their textual performance as staged excerpts. This is, in part, a postmodern strategy designed to de/construct the textual workings of the dissertation. I offer poetry and anecdotal comments in the form of “interludes” as Mary Aswell Doll has employed them in her book *To The Lighthouse and Back: Writings on Teaching and Living* -- parenthetical placements between the “important moments of a lived life” (1995, p. vii). The interludes also come disguised as footnotes and appendices, as fractured tales and unfinished business; these include some of my poetry, as well as that of preservice teachers and the course instructor. Other textual additions in the body of the dissertation include student comments from email messages and “exit slips.”
CHAPTER TWO

"A Bowl of Yellow Flowers Stains the Canvas" 1

One of the central concerns of hermeneutics, and one of the reasons for a cyclical mode of inquiry, is the question of how one might go about inquiring into a phenomenon in which one is immersed, entangled, and complicit.

-- Brent Davis 2

Something About This Wall: An Opening Prelude

Here is a broad stone wall flicking alive small green flames of lizards. The wall is low: I sit on its back watching the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea ... 3

Already there is something about this wall, something about this orderly collection of stone that demands patience and curiosity. I cannot yet say what this something is, though I am compelled to wait here for some kind of unfolding. Maybe it's only the promise of a story that holds me in place, a deliberate building with words -- word upon word upon word -- that makes the road worth watching; this road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea.

The sea is always itself, restless, forever altering its colours like a sad eye; the road itself never shifts; the squat wall I balance on is like the tough arm of an old fisherman. It keeps children and old women from dancing off the cliffs.

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1 I am grateful to Karen Connelly -- for her words, her poetry, her stories -- for "A Bowl of Yellow Flowers." A version of "A Bowl of Yellow Flowers Stains the Canvas," as it appears in her book, This Brighter Prison, can be found in Appendix A.

2 Davis, Teaching mathematics: Toward a sound alternative, p. 22

3 These opening lines of Connelly's, "A Bowl of Yellow Flowers Stains the Canvas," paint a scene that opens out into a story which haunts the work of this dissertation. Connelly's words are italicized throughout the haunting, while my own remain in plain font (see p. 36 in "Blind Spots and Irrelevant Adumbrations": A Traveller's Guide" for more details).
Blindly With Words: Introductory Notes on Ambiguity, Self-reflexivity and Desire

Painting is trying to paint what you cannot paint and writing is what you cannot know before you have written: it is preknowing and not knowing, blindly with words.

— Hélène Cixous

Blindly with words. This is my hope-full intention, my strategic desire: to move forward with words, one word at a time, surrounded by the words of so many others, others whose words create “a weave of knowing and not-knowing which is what knowing is” (Spivak, in Lather, 1991, p. 49). I feel very much a part of this weave as I begin to gather words: borrowing, sorting, presenting, and re-presenting. As such, I am committed in satisfyingly obsessive ways to inventing and reinventing the answers that question what re-search is and quite willing to embrace the ambiguity and uncertainty involved in such a pursuit “given the postmodern foregrounding of the ways we create our worlds via language” (Lather, 1991, p. 14). If, indeed, we only see the world we make then we must be prepared for our world(s) to be full of problem and possibility, alive with interpretability (Jardine, 1995a).

This commitment to obsession is why I choose to begin this waterfall of words with the kind of existential dilemma that Cixous invites us to consider for our own lives: is it fear or desire (or perhaps fear of desire) that compels us to put one word after another in order to compose our Selves and our living? Blindly with words. Now, one might choose to argue with Cixous over her choice of the word “blindly,” feeling it is perhaps too heavy a word, too over-stated for the task of our work as curricular artists who seek to invent and reinvent ourselves in “the language of the world where we all live and work” (Grumet, 1988, p. xviii). Still, for me and for the spirit of the work I wish to pursue on this particular journey, the imagery of Cixous’s canvas holds an important tension, “an unsettling juxtaposition of opposites” (Moore, in Hillman, 1989) that I believe we must learn to live well with. Preknowing and not knowing.

If not blindly, there is certainly a (hermeneutic) sense in which the painter or poet, the writer or researcher works with/in a series of difficult and dedicated movements, a sometimes-stumbling toward meaning, “endeavouring to render visible that which has become invisible” (Sumara, 4 Cixous, Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing, p. 38)
1996a, p. 120). As Brent Davis (1996) so beautifully offers, “I do not seek a blind pedagogy, nor do I believe that teaching is currently deaf. Rather, the quest is for a middle way” (p. xxiv). In the hermeneutic tradition, it is this middle way I would choose to travel, entertaining both a crazy optimism that anticipates “the suddenly kindled light of the never-before-said” (Kundera, 1986, p. 123) as well as a sober respect for the im/possibility of language that “disrupts, refuses to be contained with boundaries” (hooks, 1994). In the midst of this hour-glassed living, our research slipping through the eye of a storm, we must at times be compelled to walk slowly feel the pull of the earth the beating of our hearts beneath our skin breath short and choppy.

Perhaps we should fall to our hands and knees crawl across sun-streaked pavement kiss the cracks notice the beautiful imperfection of everything.

For so long we have scratched and clawed like ravens, like blind dogs, children waking in sun-darkened caves filled with passageways and possibilities and always dark light at the end of the tunnel.

But now we are lizards, all scales and eyes unblinking, part way up the wall, warmed by the sun.

Aware.
Unmoving.
We speak in tongues
having crossed the desert and become
grains of sand,
there is nothing left
to tell.

Yet, tell we must, and this is how it must begin -- like art, like poetry, like curriculum -- waiting for the world to imagine itself out of a seed, or run its course like an avalanche down a garden path, ripping up colour as it goes. And so the work that follows dreams (of) poetry and pedagogy, curriculum and the “hermeneutic imagination” (Smith, 1991), writing (and) research, teacher education and everydayness.

My initial intent was to research “the writing life” -- to explore writing theory and pedagogy and the living that such practice and theory requires. I am now discovering that my desire is also to write the research(ing) life, where “writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project ... [it] is also a way of ‘knowing’ ... a method of inquiry” (Richardson, 1994, p. 516). Concomitant with this project is the desire to celebrate and interrogate “a language [and a living] that lives beneath our desires for fixity and clarity and centration” (Jardine, 1994a, p. 514).

My reasons for “choosing” difficulty do not spring from some Romantic or altruistic notion that the best research can only come from selfless dedication and sacrifice; they are more the result of discovering and acknowledging “the value in dedicating ourselves to the difficulty of not knowing where our engagement with the text [or canvas] [might] lead” (Sumara, 1996a, p. 147). As Lorri Neilsen suggests, “It is not an easy place to be, but it is alive” (in press). As such, it is an invitation of sorts, to consider both the writing and the living as though they were so many colours in search of a palette. And the dream is the canvas.
And painting is trying to paint
what you cannot
paint.
And, of course,
through it all
there is a broad stone wall
flicking alive small green flames of lizards ...

The Writing(s) on the Wall: A Traveller's (Foot) Note

The pilgrimage is not one of place ... The pilgrimage is one of spirit, and if that spirit allows no rest, no steady rhythm, no resolution of form or content, it is because [the broad stone wall, writing and researching, and a bowl of yellow flowers] live a life of their own and ceaselessly haunt my work.

— Myra Cohn Livingston

No rest, no steady rhythm, no resolution of form: The sea is always itself, restless, forever altering its colours like a sad eye ... Myra Cohn Livingston, who provides the epigram above says that "poets need readers, just as they need the world around them" (1990, p. 20). In the same breath, she refers to Robert Frost who speaks of a "right reader." While I agree wholeheartedly with the idea that poets (and writers of all flights and fancy) need a world and/of readers, with all due respect to Frost, I am not certain there is such a thing as a "right reader"; it seems to fly in the face of Barthes' notion of a writerly text which invites the reader not to be right, but to write the text in a way that may or may not be "right." (Or, as one reader of this text has suggested, "Maybe a 'write reader' would be preferable.")

As readers and writers, then, we are responsible in our own ways for acknowledging what David Jardine refers to as the "helplessness and weakness of the written word [which] is also its strength, for in such weakness, writing retains an irreducible 'porousness' and 'openness'" (1992a, p. xx). This seems another way of saying that as much as we desire to invest our words with certain meaning(s) and, in turn, to give them over to the world in a way that our

5 Myra Cohn Livingston, Climb into the bell tower: Essays on poetry, p. vii.
meaning might be received, we are -- in the end -- not entirely in charge of the proceedings. This is not to say that since we can't be sure what meaning(s) readers will make with our words then we are not responsible for our author-ity; rather, part of our responsibility lies in remaining open to the possibility of multiple meanings and, in turn, being prepared to live well with both the satisfaction as well as the difficulty of potential mis/understandings that may arise in the face of such multiplicity. This "learning to live well" with/in our relations, textual and otherwise, has implications for teaching and learning and for the shared experience of living a life that includes reading and writing. This particular section, then, subtitled "A Traveller's (Foot) Note," represents my initial attempt to navigate and negotiate pathways of meaning with other readers/writers as I/we begin to wonder in a sustained way about the relationships we create and enact when immersing ourselves in (curricular) acts of reading/writing.

This chapter -- "A Bowl of Yellow Flowers Stains the Canvas" -- exists on canvas, though as artifice it is part of "a laying open of possibilities that suspends any final completion" (Greene, 1994, p. 213). As my writings began to grow into something that might be recognized as dissertation, my "painting" was a trying to paint (what I could not paint). I experimented. Created. Invented rituals -- whispered incantations, walked around the canvas three times counterclockwise for luck and momentum (putting the hex on cliché):

> Prussian blue [was] the colour on the tip of the brush. There [was] a stroke to make. [My] hand move[d] forward and then [it] stop[ped]. The instant that connect[ed] wishing and doing, linking movement of a hand from palette to brush to canvas, began to vibrate like a thread under tension. The thread glisten[ed], hummed as it [was] pulled."6

Then -- out of the blue -- words fell on open fields, planted themselves. I became immersed in not-knowing as a way to meaning, quite confident in my uncertainty and quite enthusiastic about inviting others to join me in that cloud of unknowing. Yet, as an aspiring artist, as a reader and writer and researcher, self-reflexivity most often shows myself to me in images of self-effacing clarity: watching myself watch myself -- sometimes splashing the canvas with colours I've never even seen before, dreaming abstract as I paint-by-number. It is not long before

6 Michael Ignatieff, Scar tissue, p. 114
I am splashing my contradictions all about. I tend a careful garden, longing for dark coastal forests where hungry green continues to invent itself: crazily.

With the first writing of this painting, I followed myself wherever I wanted to go. No rest, no steady rhythm, no resolution of form: *The sea is always itself, restless, forever altering its colours like a sad eye.* Then, after the courage that was also an unveiling, I invited others to come with me to the sea. Many felt the waves as I had, others watched from the wall. Others wished the wall was a little higher, a little lower, wanted a different view, thought the ocean could not possibly come in those colours. I wished they could see my ocean, wished they could understand my place on the wall. Wished they could be the right readers. In the end, however, as Michael Ignatieff (1993) notes in his book *Scar Tissue,* “there is almost nothing a person will not do in order to be understood. They will even pull their life apart so that what was not understood can at last be seen, like a wound” (p. 114). I grew uneasy with the first whispers of (possible) mis-understanding and began to backtrack, then unravel my text in order to show it to others more clearly, assure them -- but mostly myself -- that my intentions were epistemologically sound. Look! I pleaded, it's right here between the lines.

Having mostly re-covered from those earlier experiences of dis-comfort, with the best of intentions, I attempt now to find a middle way, not so that I might be a servant to understanding, and not only for the reader but also for myself -- for us -- so that together we might stumble contentedly between our uneasy desire to honour Mystery and our insatiable need to understand. In so doing, I hope to play with/in the im/possible tension required of our living well together -- of our painting and reading and writing. And researching.

In our textual dwelling together, it is often form that provides the underpinnings of our coming together and coming apart. Sometimes this shaping and creating, this unfolding of form is an ecological movement -- a deepening -- *waiting for the moon to find a form that signals the planet's giving way to an inevitable shade born out of light.* In such an unfolding, form is not necessarily ours to manage, but rather something that we are always and already a part of; shaping as we are shaped; it is the momentary loss of breath that comes with the sudden shock of recognition.
at seeing form reveal itself to us as we work/sculpt/write/paint — as we re-search. Sometimes form is a transcendence through the simple movement of breath; it is the semi-colon that says “Wait here for just a moment,” or the hyphen with its invitation into a space/place of ambiguity: as barrier, as breath, as tightrope, as pregnant pause. It could also be the diagonal stroke (/) “that within its slant is already inscribed living tension” (Aoki, 1997). These are the placements of words and symbols that mark our lives and become “announcements in the language that dreams speak.” 

Sometimes form is the geography, geomorphology even, of the text, the sliding of textual plates, the formation of paragraphs and poetry, that allow us to “lay down a path while walking” — allow us to discover the lay of the land. Very often, however, we do not allow for form’s complexity, forget to account for form in our textual living. As Dennis Sumara (1996a) states, “Although modern readers want to be surprised, they want the surprise to be an unexpected event, not an unorthodox structure” (p. 151). As a poet — who is also a teacher — I am most often drawn, in my reading and in my writing, to surprise — to “the mystery which withdraws, which never hands itself over in a form we can trust” (Caputo, 1987, p. 270). Expecting always the unexpected. I relish the prospects of becoming lost in the (textual) world. As a teacher — who is also a poet — I feel it is, at the same time, important to acknowledge and honour the relationality of our textual travels together, feel it is important to establish some kind of “map of pedagogical responsibility” (Sumara, 1996a, p. 141) with those whom I share my writing and reading, teaching and learning so that we might find our way (or get lost) together. It is a map that speaks of a commitment and a certain obligation, a “co-labouring” that says that “somehow the personal and the communal must co-exist” (Sumara, 1996a, p. 143). It is a map that when read, finds me sincere and sensitive: “This is a favourite of mine that I want to share with you ... Please listen attentively! It’s important to me that you read carefully” (Sumara, 1996a, p. 157). In turn I will respect and care for your reading(s) that make my writing(s) possible. It is a map that finds me parodic and playful: “Throw away the map if you like, just take a wander for wonder’s sake.” It is a map that finds me eager and enthusiastic: “Just read me!”

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8 I was introduced to Francisco Varela’s notion of “laying down a path in walking,” by Sumara, *Private readings in public*, 127, 175, and Davis, *Teaching mathematics*, 40, 79, 129.

9 “Wander for wonder,” is the name of a particular writing exercise used during the course (see Chapter Six).
Spots and Irrelevant Adumbrations") are, as promised then, an explanatory offering based on the fan/observer’s historic complaint -- and the vendor’s familiar refrain -- that “you can’t tell the players without a program.” I offer them as a set of postmodern program notes, as a guide for a particular piece of writing that, at times, may take both reader and writer “under” for sustained periods without coming up for breath as it willingly and unwillingly blurs the lines around whose story is being told and who is actually doing the telling. The idea for a “guide” was prompted by some who have read this work and suggested that an introduction or commentary might be useful in helping readers read the piece:

With experimental writing 10 it’s always hard to know if what seems difficult or exceptional is intentional or if it could be usefully revised to help the reader along ... The piece is interesting but makes me feel like I need the author along, sitting on the wall, talking me through this. 11

So, realizing that “having the author along” for the journey is neither feasible nor desirable, and having long given up on the idea of a right reader, I offer instead an age-old curricular nemesis -- the antithesis of art -- a multiple choice in order to assist the traveller as the journey begins ...

a) Read the following section -- “Blind Spots and Irrelevant Adumbrations” -- as one would a set of program notes before proceeding to the main body of the text.

b) By-pass the following section and wade directly into the body of the text -- (Already) (There is) Something About This Wall: An Unfolding -- and become willing participants with/in an “ideology of doubt” (Richardson, 1994, p. 520).

c) Some of the above

d) None of the above

e) Read/Write/Read the text in whatever way you see fit.

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10 Unlike the reviewer of my work who is quoted above, I am somewhat reticent to call my own writing ‘experimental,’ feeling just a bit presumptuous in that (self) labelling; it helps (me), however, to refer to Laurel Richardson’s use of the term experimental representations in Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research, p. 520-521.

11 This comment came from a reviewer who read an earlier version of this paper-come-chapter for Writing on the Edge, a journal based out of the University of California at Davis.
"Blind Spots and Irrelevant Adumbrations": A Traveller's Guide

Here is a broad stone wall flicking alive small green flames of lizards. The wall is low: I sit on its back watching the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea.

These are the words of poet and writer Karen Connelly (1993) as she begins to carve A Bowl of Yellow Flowers Stains the Canvas, a beauty-filled short story. A poem, really. A piece of non?fiction. The sea and the (broad stone) wall that affords its view -- as you will soon see -- become constants as they mark a scene that shifts, sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes dramatically around them. With words, exquisite and polished, we are offered an intimate view, a meditation -- through a(nother) Poet's I -- of an extraordinary series of events.

Watching the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea it is easy to forget everything else and simply surrender to the steady breathing of wave upon wave. This is a perfectly acceptable option, to be pulled by storyline and tide. The Poet's I is playful and inviting: "We are charmed out of the ordinary by the riches of words" (Hillman, 1992, p. 155). But as the story proceeds there is a growing sense of dis-ease amid the charm, an uncertainty as to whose story is being told and by whom -- a result not only of Connelly's intricate literary weavings that begin to grow tendril-like around the unfolding scene, but also due to the addition of my writings/readings which sometimes blend with, other times interrupt the ongoing narrative.

Following Jacques Daignault, 12 I am "entering the Literary Space ... welcoming words, welcoming characters, welcoming emotions, welcoming the imaginary ... giving up ideas but not completely." In seeking to be part of Connelly's work, I am opening myself to what the literary space might have to say to my researcherly imagination. (As Daignault says, sometimes our research is "too real.") And so together Connelly and I invent/re-invent, present/re-present real, separated only by the thin skin of convention: her breath italicized and then frozen as font, my own breath "un-italicized," as though I assume the reader might believe I have some textual right to a place (t)here between the lines in the first place.

12 The notion of "literary space" re-presented here comes from a talk Jacques Daignault gave at the Faculty of Education, The University of British Columbia, February 27, 1996. I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to talk and listen with Jacques, in classrooms and cafés, over the course of his sabbatical year spent in Vancouver.
And there are the voices of others still, others whose words become part of the weave in ways that belie the apparent seamlessness of the text. In bringing the scholarly world of educational research with me, I am entering and embracing Daignault’s “Intertextual Space ... welcoming influences ... acknowledging and thanking all those I need to thank ... welcoming others” (who are not really Other): Madeleine Grumet, Jeanette Winterson, John Caputo, David Smith, Dennis Sumara, David Jardine, bell hooks, Brent Davis, Deborah Britzman, Hélène Cixous, to name but a few.

I may have, at various points during the process of writing, tried consciously or otherwise, to deny my role in this orchestrated heteroglossia. Karen Connelly has, after all, consented to my request to “use” her poetic text for my academic experimentations.\(^\text{13}\) In turn, I have followed accepted conventions in “using” the texts of others -- academic or otherwise -- careful always to indent here, cite there, leaving a trail of institutionally recognizable crumbs as I go. Still there is a sense in which I have bent and twisted the words of others to suit my own intentions and sensibilities. It is to Bakhtin’s (1981) sense of contestation and seizure and appropriation — in which “many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them” (p. 294) -- that I refer. My willingness to embrace a kind of cacophony of voices and stir them up in order to celebrate the embedded and multiple soundings of many suggests a certain kind of postmodern sensibility that aspires to open up rather than close off possibility. Yet, still in play are my ever-present feelings of dis-ease at playing writer or researcher as “ventriloquist,”\(^\text{14}\) belying the difficulties and problematics of having others speak through/for me.

\(^\text{13}\) In what could only be a literary-fuelled event — ‘non’ and ‘fiction’ twisting and turning with one another in a strong ocean breeze — I wrote Karen to ask permission to use her story. (I had heard that she was not enthusiastic toward the APA-formatted world of the Academy.) Some weeks later, a postcard found its way through my mailslot from a small Greek Island with Karen’s blessing and encouragement for my work. A shaky correspondence with Karen ensued — postcards being the wordcarrier-of-choice as my paper moved through to its eventual conclusion (which was not really a conclusion at all).

\(^\text{14}\) I am indebted to Lorri Neilsen and her work at Mount Saint Vincent University. Several years ago she introduced me to the notion of “researcher-as-ventriloquest” and we continue to discuss its ramifications for our lives as teachers and re-searchers, as poets. Following Neilsen, I believe that this dis-ease is part and parcel of writing and researching; rather than avoiding it, the task is ours, as researchers, to address it continually through self-reflexive positionings that point to ourselves as we point to the world. (Lather’s \textit{Getting Smart} remains an excellent re-source for who seek to live well with this type of dis-ease.)
And though the wall and the constant interplay of I’s may raise difficult questions for many — cause consternation even — many still will choose to follow the “magic thread” it weaves: “It pierces and runs through our hearts” (Connelly, 1995, p. 15). As Richardson (1994) says, experimental writers work within an “ideology of doubt” and raise a number of important questions,

questions of how the author positions the Self as a knower and a teller ... these lead to the intertwined problems of subjectivity/authority/authorship/reflexivity, on the one hand, and representational form, on the other (1994, p. 520).

Working with/in Connelly’s (and others) text(s) allows me to experiment with these different sets of I’s, to employ forms of writing that Richardson (1994) calls “evocative representations”:

Trying out evocative forms, we relate differently to our material; we know it differently. We find ourselves attending to feelings, ambiguities, temporal sequences, blurred experiences ... we struggle to find a textual place for ourselves and our doubts and uncertainties (p. 521).

My own ‘I’ finds its way into Connelly’s text, not with explicitly confounding intentions, but aware nonetheless of the possibility for increased complexity, confusion even. Together, our I’s are not only self-reflexive — playful or parodic in their concern for language and the manipulation of text — they are also privileged eyes from scene to shining scene. From the wall, the poet narrates, feigns omniscience, doles the scene out in bits and pieces of her choosing according to an internal (and often hidden agenda). In turn, I employ many of the same strategies. The wall thus becomes a place from which to not only witness but also to question the unfolding scene, construct it even; it is (t)here I seek to find my own place in the tangle, relishing the view, interrupting the view, playing with the colours the ocean makes possible.

In her most recent work -- One Room in A Castle -- Karen Connelly (1995) begins to ponder, then play, with many of the conventional boundaries we have scratched in the sand to separate/confound non/fiction: “Why create another story when so many are being lived?” she asks, poking (fun) at the storymaking machine which creates its own fascinating criteria for
“what is real/fiction.” This is wonderfully dangerous territory to explore and Connelly is only one of many who choose to work with/on “the rough edges of our crisp categories ... the gaps in our precise definitions (Davis, 1996, p. 14). Wonderfully dangerous because many (readers/writers) want to have their (non)(fiction) and read/write it too. While many wade into the textual fray, willingly suspending all judgement, others do not want their trust betrayed. This hearkens back to my earlier discussion (in “A Traveller’s (Foot) Note”) of form in which so many of our historical reading/writing habits and traditions are born/constructed. While many writers may attempt to use form to organize/construct the relations between and among the text and reader and writer, they may also use form to dis-organize and dis-orient, to deconstruct these relations. Dennis Sumara, however, asks us to consider not only the form, but our naming of that form. He notes, for example, that when we choose to name something as fiction then culturally we know how to engage with it. (Even if/when that engagement sometimes involves the acceptance of not knowing how to engage with a particular text/fiction.) Difficulties arise, however, when some of our con/textual clues are strategically veiled or buried or hidden; therefore, it’s not so much the form but how it’s “announced.” As Sumara (1995) states, this naming-of-things in our literary and curricular lives (and imaginations) needs to be interrogated in an interpretive and hermeneutic sense in order to honour “the complex fabric of intertextual relations” (p. 24). I believe he is saying that not only do we need to address these kinds of curricular issues (and forms) in our lives with the kind of complexity they require/deserve, but that, in addition, we need to go even further by learning to “complexify” (Davis, 1996, p. xvii) the acts of reading/writing/reading in ways that lead us to understand our own lives differently because of the relations we establish with texts. In other words, it is never just the text or the reader or the writer but the relations made possible by their coming together and apart.

This leads me in a somewhat tautological fashion back to my reasons for offering “A Traveller’s Guide” in the first place as this chapter and, in turn, this dissertation continue to unfold. I seek to demonstrate how my notion of complexifying the shared acts of reading and writing move both with and against some of the ways identified by Sumara. I am interested, for example, in

the potentially rich and productive con/fusion that can result from the intentionally ambiguous naming of form(s).

In my own fumblings toward a middle way, for example, I seek a strategy that might allow me to introduce the particular text that follows, in a manner that Sumara has suggested, as “an object that announces the possibility for an interpretive location ... a space opened up by the relations among reader, text, and the contexts of reading” (Sumara, 1995, p. 20). My intentions are (toward) complex(ity), however, in that I wish to culturally announce this text as literary -- as poetry and fiction, but also as pedagogical and scholarly text -- as poetry and non-fiction and educational research. Again, my intentions are not to confuse though they have intentionally confounding elements. In keeping with Daignault’s use of “zones” as ways to move with/in the gaps and spaces of our textual living and dwelling, Linda Hutcheon (1992) suggests that this kind of (confounding) experimentation with text occurs in a place and space she calls “the interzone” ... the space between forms and genres: between poetry and prose ... between critical essay and ironic story ... between biography and fiction ... between performance and writing (p. 13). Perhaps the interzone is, in this way, a part of the in-between, the beginnings of a middle way. A way for educational researchers who are interested in the generative (and generous) potential of ambiguous textual locations in interpretive work.

Hermeneutically conceived, then, my sense of textual, tautological vertigo is always and already an un/familiar feeling with un/familiarity as I choose to spend time in “the interzone” where even the most “careful attending to the details of experience [can lead to] a foolhardiness of saying too early what the world is like” (Smith, 1991, p. 16). “A Bowl of Yellow Flowers Stains the Canvas” is thus a “story” that is telling to my own re-search story. My aim in this particular exploration is not to employ experimental writing because it might make for a better story, but rather because the story I would like to “tell” aspires to a “persistent questioning of our taken-for-granted modes” (Davis, 1996, p. 26) of telling stories. And further, I believe there is curricular value in dwelling with texts that have the potential to resist our namings either by “formal experiment or self-conscious play with language and conventions” (Hutcheon, 1992, p. 14). It is in these kinds of ways that I see the “interzone” as part of the tangle -- as a
curricularly fecund and generous place to spend time as part of a life that includes the practice of reading and writing.

And so, finally, I offer an invitation in/to story; “whether you see it as arch or honest, as irritating or entertaining ... its concern for itself as text, as language is hard to ignore” (Hutcheon, 1992, p. 11). My intention is to tell stories that end in neither comprehended knowledge nor in incapacitating textual undecidability” (Spanos, in Lather, 1991, p. 151). Aspiring to the tradition that Sumara (1996b) has termed “hermeneutic postmodern pedagogical practices ... ones which create curricular forms that serve to rearrange perceptions of the familiar” (p. 45), the hopes I hold for the journey to come are earnest hopes. Returning to Cixous,

The thing that is both known and unknown, the most unknown and the best unknown, this is what we are looking for when we write. We go toward the best known unknown thing, where knowing and not knowing touch, where we hope we will know what is unknown. Where we hope we will not be afraid of understanding the incomprehensible, facing the invisible, hearing the inaudible, thinking the unthinkable, which is of course: thinking. Thinking is trying to think the unthinkable: thinking the thinkable is not worth the effort (1993, p. 38).

My hopes are also playful hopes as exemplified by “fiction” writer Douglas Glover in Likely Stories: A Postmodern Sampler,

Note. Already this is not the story I wanted to tell. That is buried, gone, lost ... I am trying to give you the truth, though I could try harder, and only refrain because I know that that way leads to madness. So I offer an approximation, a shadow play, such as would excite children, full of blind spots and irrelevant adumbrations, too little in parts; elsewhere too much. Alternately I will frustrate you and lead you astray. I can only say that, at the outset, my intention was otherwise; I sought only clarity and simple conclusions. Now I know the worst -- that reasons are out of joint with actions, that my best explanation will be
obscure, subtle and unsatisfying, and the human mind is a tangle of unexplored pathways (Glover, 1992, pp. 112).

This is my hope-full intention, my strategic desire: to move forward with words, one word at a time, full of blind spots and irrelevant adumbrations, so that together we might be/come lost and found, blindly with words ...

This is where you are now. Then you turn your head away and you are somewhere else. The only truth is that there is none: it moves when we blink.

(Already) (There is) Something About This Wall: An Unfolding ...

Truth is made rather than found.
-- Richard Rorty 16

Here is a broad stone wall flicking alive small green flames of lizards. The wall is low: I sit on its back watching the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea.

Already there is something about this wall, something about this orderly collection of stone that demands patience and curiosity. I cannot yet say what this something is, though I am compelled to wait here for some kind of unfolding. Maybe it is only the promise of a story that holds me in place, a deliberate building with words -- word upon word upon word -- that makes the road worth watching; this road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea.

The sea is always itself, restless, forever altering its colours like a sad eye; the road itself never shifts; the squat wall I balance on is like the tough arm of an old fisherman. It keeps children and old women from dancing off the cliffs.

Yes, I am sure now about the wall. The wall is why I have come. I know little else. So I will practice. Practice watching, practice waiting. I will try to pay attention. I will begin to notice everything about the wall. I will begin to believe in the wall. At the same time, I will begin to see that the wall is unbelievable. I will begin to build a wall of my own; I will also begin to tear

16 In Sumara, Private readings in public, p. 119
it down. *The road itself never shifts.* I will begin to see that the wall is a story and that the story is *the tough arm of an old fisherman.* I will begin to see that the wall announces a *location,* one that makes all the colours of the ocean possible. I will begin to see from the wall that the boundaries between sea and sky are illusory. I will begin to see that the wall is a theory, and that theory is a story that *keeps children and old women from dancing off the cliffs.* And in case I get lost, I will think of practice as “a pragmatic entryway into a theoretical (analytical) problematics ... [that] should be approached with caution” (Felman, 1987, p. 5).

I am not certain about old women but I have heard that children make the best theorists, “since they have not yet been educated into accepting our routine social practices as ‘natural,’ and so insist on posing to those practices the most embarrassingly general and fundamental questions, regarding them with a wondering estrangement which we adults have long forgotten” (Eagleton, cited in hooks, 1994, p. 59.) We are, of course, (most) familiar with the singsong-voiced chorus of children trying on the alphabet for size, embracing with a frighten/ed/ing innocence -- the adult symbols of an (other) worldly discourse, symbols that, for now, masquerade as colourful building blocks that can be stacked and put away behind the activity centre in preparation for afternoon rest period. Perhaps we are not as accustomed to listening to voices that begin to resist the chorus, the notes that ring hollow and already begin to form silent songs of protest. As David Levin (cited in Davis, 1996) listens to Gilles Deleuze: “If the protests of children were heard in kindergarten, if their questions were attended to, it would be enough to explode the entire educational system” (p. 275). Maybe they are questions that have to do with walls: What *is* a wall? Why is the wall (here)? What is the wall made of? What’s on the other side of the wall? Can I climb the wall? What does it look like from the top of the wall? The bottom? Does the wall have a name? Can I give the wall a name? Can I see the wall? Touch the wall? Wall? What wall?

I am not surprised that we try to keep children and old women from dancing off cliffs. Perhaps we do so with our own safety in mind. I am also not surprised that -- if we let ourselves -- dancing would be the method-of-choice for such an event, filled as it is with such risk and excitement. Walls beg questions which are not followed easily by answers. How might a life
that includes writing help to rewrite a life that includes learning and teaching? Perhaps children
(and other spirited re-searchers) bring us valuable new ways to look at walls. And so, the
dance.

I am not a child so my questions -- these questions that insist on presenting themselves with
unpredictable regularity -- try to turn the wall into something other than a wall, into something
other. My vision is metaphorical. My imagination leads to a pedagogical place and space far
from *the road itself* where theory and practice make a “paradise of words” possible (Barthes,
1975, p. 8). For it seems to me that

a wall

in theory

is a good place for practice --
a good place for *writing* practice
a good place for *writing* research,
for writing theory into practice into
theory into practice into theory --
for writing, for researching for
being written, for
playing and working with words
even though words can also be
a wall.

And it seems to me that “we must continually claim theory as [a] necessary [form of] practice”
(hooks, 1994, p. 69) as we go about trying to (re)imagine what research is. It is not a matter of
saying that theory is theory, and practice is practice, and metaphor is metaphor. Similarly, we
cannot point to a wall and say that the wall is a wall. Theory is metaphor that comes in all
shapes and sizes. Practice, along with its own perverse set of metaphors, is the result of our
theorizing, our writing and building the world as we imagine it.

The wall and the world are, in this way, interchangeable parts of a sentence: The wall makes
the world possible. Or, perhaps the wall *is* the world, or our way of watching the world,
positioning the world, being positioned by it. We might build our theory based on our practice
of building the wall, just as we might build our practice out of our theory of the wall, often one
stone at a time. Often we have little idea of the kind of task we are taking on, little idea of what we are getting into, yet we do it all the same. Witness John Jerome, author of *Stone Work: Reflections on Serious Play and Other Aspects of Country Life*, who, in an odd way, belongs with the sun-glazed images of an exotic and restless sea as he ponders stone walls in rural New England.

A decade later I was seized again by the idea of similar, almost purposeless, wall-building. It was just about the dumbest piece of work I could conceive, and I took it on grinning, amused at my own perversity, full of fantasies about stone walls leading off in all directions, stringing these hills and fields together, organizing the world (Jerome, 1989, p. 7).

Whether it is the world, a poem, a curriculum, or a canvas, we “envision the hole in the air that the wall makes, then fill it” (Jerome, 1989, p. 7). The wall, then, like a poem or a canvas or curriculum, “is meant to direct attention, to provoke response, to rearrange the familiar so that it is understood differently ... it presents possibilities” (Sumara & Davis, 1996, p. 2). In this way, the wall within this story -- the wall within a wall -- becomes a commonplace location.

Here we are, los domingueros, the Sunday people, drunk to exhaustion with light and the dusty scent of African wind. The bright blue benches behind me are soft with the bodies of old people, tense with the knuckles and knees of young lovers. The old people wait patiently for the farther darkness, the young for the closer one. They sigh anxiously, almost painfully, glancing in happy anguish at each other’s fingers and chins.

This story is not mine. I would like to tell you otherwise. I would like to claim the light and the dusty scent of African wind. I cannot. The words blow in on the trade winds with an invitation to follow. In theory, they could be mine. The text, the story -- *this squat wall I balance on* -- is “the place where the death of language is glimpsed” (Barthes, 1975, p. 6).

It’s so easy to lose our balance drunk to exhaustion with light and language. Author-ity is easily misplaced as we write and as we are written. The wall is a wonderfully dangerous place to be under such circumstances. In lucid moments, we remember that the story is just a story. The
wet blue belly of the sea is artifice that helps us suspend our disbelief. In turn, the wall causes us to question our beliefs, it reminds us that our beliefs are simply another kind of story, another kind of theory, another storied theory, another theoried story.

If you sit on a bench, the wall cuts the landscape in half: you cannot see the road below or the little restaurant on the beach where black guard-dogs sit on the roof, glaring at customers. From a bench, the landscape is picturesque: you receive the sea rising up like a mirror to the sky, slow ships sweeping the harbour like women in evening gowns, the grand old mansions reigning the far cliffs.

If you sit on the wall (but no one else does, for sun, olives, and wind unbalance, and the drop would be lethal), you get a wider angle. The back-arch of the waves stretches toward you, warm as a cat begging hands. There is something about the sea that makes you want to reach out ... Below, the beach is speckled with people, scurrying with energetic crabs and children and dogs. The dogs are bounding through the sand, barking, pleading with stones to come alive and throw themselves into the air. The dogs see, blissfully, with their noses. They are enthusiastic about dead squid. From here, it looks clean, children tumbling playfully, doll-limbed, the people (featureless, really, at this distance) fine and strong, leaving well-formed footprints behind them. But you also recall occasional smudges of tar, the condom-scatter of spent Catholic boys on Saturday mornings, the shredded glitter of dead fish. Still, from the wall, the scene gleams, glassed-over, lovely.

Here, amid metaphors of theory and practice and walls that stretch out before the sea, I believe I am changing my feelings about how it might be to go dancing off cliffs. I am choosing the in-between place — the place between the farther darkness and the closer one. The back-arch of the waves stretches toward you, warm as a cat begging hands ...
Hermeneutics and A Broad Stone Wall: A Generous Location for Interpretation

Who can catch the invisible
sing the unnameable though soul snatched up and spun
through cupola and mosaic, turn wax.

— Méira Cook

In an oft-quoted passage, Madeleine Grumet has said “that to be an artist is to perpetually negotiate the boundary that separates aesthetic from mundane experience” (1988, p. 79). The stone wall that offers us the view of the road and the sea is, in many ways, this boundary made visible. How many of us, for example, notice we are even sitting on the wall until we are invited to experience it as a broad stone wall flicking alive small green flames of lizards? Is it still the same wall? Is the sea that changes colour a result of our observing it and/or making it so? For me, poetry is (like) the wall. From the mundane -- sitting on a broad stone wall -- and very concrete particulars of our lives, emerge the possible forms for our living and writing. The world blooms. For me, poetry is like pedagogy. The boundary is shifting and negotiable, “a place where meaning unfolds. The act of building, then, occurs through a process of dwelling and, at the same time, for the purposes of dwelling” (Sumara, 1996a, p. 160). And, pedagogy is like poetry. Our learning falls out in ways that never fail to surprise. Words are small comforts that anchor us like balloons. We can only marvel at the weightlessness of all that colour. Poetry and pedagogy.

The wall becomes a (curricular) form that “serve[s] to rearrange [our] perceptions of the familiar” (Sumara, 1996b, p. 45), yet it is not so much the wall, or the road, or the beach ... speckled with people, scurrying with energetic crabs and children and dogs. As Sumara and Davis (1996) remind us, it is not in the ‘things themselves’ but, rather, in the relational space between and among particular objects, artifacts, and events” (p. 2). So, the broad stone wall and the text in which it is embedded -- and the “story” it makes possible -- become a “‘commonplace location’ for hermeneutic interpretation” (Sumara, 1996b). That is, all of our writing and living and teaching -- and our researching of all of these -- comes from the middle of a highly complex, highly intertextual web of relations: the tangle. “To engage in hermeneutics -- to interpret -- then, is to tug at the threads of this existential text, realizing that, in tugging, the texture of the

entire fabric is altered" (Davis, 1996, p. 20).

For example, my teaching and learning and writing and research are all part of the wall. My writing life and my interest in the writing lives of a group of preservice teachers is inextricably woven in with the wall and the waves, but it will take time to tell the story. For now, I offer a series of textual interjections I call “Small Imaginings” -- small slices of research wonderings that have been made possible by Karen Connelly’s generous commonplace location. I introduce these imaginings, not simply to add yet another font that might draw attention to itself and add complexity to the form, but because they are always and already part of the complexity of this hermeneutic endeavour. Such a task requires that I work, as Roland Barthes has suggested, like a “Chinese shadow-caster who simultaneously shows his audience both the positioning of his hands and the silhouette of the duck or the wolf or rabbit as they cast upon the wall.”

... Imagine a space. A soon-to-become-place. 19
A location. A (writing-styled) work-shop. Imagine that a group of forty or so teacher candidates, soon-to-be teachers, those-who-would-teach, live in this place. Let’s say they’re prospective Secondary School teachers from across all subject disciplines: Mathematics, History, Technical Studies, Economics. Let’s say they’re wondering WHY in the world they’re in a writing workshop to begin with. Let’s say that, generally speaking, if you interviewed them before the workshop began, most would equate poetry and pedagogy with drinking and driving: a dangerous mix. Imagine, from the wall, choosing this as a place to begin to dwell, a place to begin to re-search ...

“A Bowl of Yellow Flowers Stains the Canvas,” and the world it makes possible, serves to raise questions about how we are made different by our participation in that world, by our reading and writing of the world and of ourselves, and by our being read and written by the wall and the world. The wall is low: I sit on its back watching the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea: “Something has been ‘built’ that has altered the way in which we understand our past, present and projected lived experiences. What words can be summoned to describe these

19 In his book, Private readings in public, Dennis Sumara provides a valuable discussion on what it might mean to move from “a public space to a communal place” in a section entitled “Communal Commitment,” pp. 141-146.
experiences” (Sumara, 1996a, p. 162).

Indeed, what words can be summoned to describe these experiences? What words will do? This is the generative dilemma upon which hermeneutic work -- and I would argue poetry -- spins: how to (sur)render (to) the world in all its (living) colour and everydayness without reducing it to a lifeless portrait that closes down possibility. And: how to live well with “the knowledge that indecision, ambiguity, and tension are inevitable parts of living” (Davis, 1996, p. 171). In most cases, there are few clues as to which strand we might be better served to tug upon and even fewer clues as to what might happen when we begin to tug.

Part of the complexity in addressing and entertaining a question like, what is the experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing, arises when the question becomes a questioning that blurs the edges and categories of the questions themselves. How is each of our (writing) lives made different by participating in Connelly’s text? Connelly writes her story. The teacher candidates write their stories. I write mine. If you sit on a bench, the wall cuts the landscape in half: you cannot see the road below. Many of my questions and concerns about the “text” of the teacher education course -- the writing, the lives, the practice of teaching -- are not unlike my questions and concerns over Connelly’s text. Who is writing/reading/writing who?

And so the wall is a mixed blessing. In its generous provision of an interpretive location it also portends a certain amount of risk, for sun, olives, and wind unbalance, and the drop would be lethal. Still, there is something about the sea that makes you want to reach out. The wall and the sea provide an entry point for the beginnings of a journey -- be it pedagogical or methodological, epistemological or poetical. Blindly with words ...

...Imagine the class -- that began as a mandatory language across the curriculum course -- is now in full gear. It’s mid-June. With four, three-hour sessions per week for six solid weeks, and just two months to go until graduation, you’d think that the bodies -- each now feeling more teacher-than-student -- who share this space would be beginning to wilt. Let’s say that they’ve been invited to work and play with words. To imagine.
Their lives. Differently.Imagine that this invitation to write -- personally, creatively, expressively -- as a community of writers and educators is proving irresistible. Poetry is blooming in the most unexpected places. Let's say that writing is becoming a ritualized practice that is transforming the space of the classroom into a place of communal dwelling. Try to picture a kind of writing and living that would allow these classroom dwellers "to complicate their education and to live creatively within the contradictory world of teacher education?" (Britzman et al., 1995, p. 2). But let's say that you are uncomfortable with the word transformation and you are highly (and not surprisingly) resistant to these local stories of classroom successes that begin to line up like clouds on a predictable prairie afternoon as they build into grand narratives of perfect pedagogy that eventually explode into shower. And then they're gone. But, still, you wonder. About this poetry. This pedagogy. This notion of "living poetically"...

"Could we say that our engagement with a poem collects our personal and cultural experience in such a way that we are able to engage in a deeper interpretation of ourselves and our relation to the world?" (Sumara, 1995, p. 19). From the wall, an offering of words fall out in bits and pieces of poetry -- you receive the sea rising up like a mirror to the sky, slow ships sweeping the harbour like women in evening gowns. The world opens out into all its relations as we begin to develop then share a commitment -- to observing, listening, describing, wondering, interrogating -- our own living, our own wording of our worlds -- pedagogically, poetically.

As a commonplace location, as a curricular form, the reading and/or writing of poetry enables us to begin to theorize about these relations, about our lives lived together, as teachers and learners, painters and writers. The poetic thrust of our work together acts simultaneously to alert us both to the relative inability of words to carry the true fullness of experience as well as to the absolute richness of language and the almost inescapable desire inherent in wordmaking which compels us to try to word our own worlds anyway. Drunk to exhaustion with light and language. It's easy to lose our balance. Everything approaches poetry. Everything approaches
pedagogy. Pedagogy and poetry.

...You continue to observe, participate, marvel at the ways in which a group of prospective teachers embrace language, become lost and found with/in language, revel in wordmaking. The students continue to take considerable risks with their writing and in their living and teaching; they build campfires with words, explode sentences into brilliant flashes of fireworks, dig holes in the backyard and bury the bones of favourite lines for safekeeping. There is much talk of teaching ...

...The course instructor is a poet. He is, at times, a juggler, at times, an accountant, at times, an undertaker. A jester. A griever. A voice. A poem. A listener. Moving with language always, part entertainer, part interrogator, part witness. In myriad playful ways, the students take their lines and lives very seriously. These about-to-be-teachers -- of Physics and Biology, English and Geography -- become poets of a sort, literally, metaphorically. What is happening here? ...

Our writing, even if it is writing we sometimes choose to name as poetry, is not simply about becoming poets. The “voice” that rings in the classroom needs to be not only “artistic and aimed at naming yourself [but also] political and focused on naming the world” (Lensmire, 1994a, p. 10). Returning to Adrienne Rich’s words from Chapter One, I am pointing here toward the experience of coming to live more poetically in the world where words provide “a way of thinking about poetry outside writing poems” -- a way to “imagine other ways of navigating into our collective future” (Rich, 1993, p. xiii).

Living poetically, as I continue to learn to embrace it, is living that is rich with imagination which, according to Gadamer, “naturally has a hermeneutical function and serves the sense for what is questionable” (1976, p. 12). Imagination, then, is not extra-curricular, not some thing we use to achieve poetic ends. As John Dewey so wryly observes, “‘imagination’ shares with ‘beauty’ the doubtful honor of being the chief theme in esthetic writings of enthusiastic ignorance” (1934, p. 267). Instead, Dewey paints imagination as “the large and generous
blending of interests at the point where the mind comes in contact with the world. When old and familiar things are made new in experience, there is imagination” (p. 267).

For me, living poetically means embracing the hermeneutic imagination (Smith, 1991); it is a living that is an inherently creative act which “seeks to illuminate the conditions that make particular interpretations possible and, further, to describe what conditions might alter our interpretations” (Sumara, 1996a, p. 124).

... Let’s say that you’re extremely puzzled about what to do with this set of shared experiences you’ve had with this group of preservice teachers. Let’s say all the answers keep falling out as questions. And the questions keep you off balance. You wonder if they’re legitimate questions to be entertaining amid the scholarly traditions of the academy. Still, you are certain something important has happened here. So important that you’re hesitant to put words to it. Others have. Some of them have made the words sing, even as the words are spelled as questions: How do we paint a “pedagogy of possibility ... [in which] ... hope is constituted in the need to imagine an alternative human world and to imagine it in a way that enables one to act in the present as if this alternative had already begun to emerge” (Simon, 1992, p. 4). And: What kind of pedagogy allows us to proceed with some kind of certainty toward a future of teaching and learning that is “highly specific, contextual, perspectival, constructed, and in a sense, unrepeatable?” (Britzman et al., 1995, p. 5). And: What happens when we treat the liminal space indicated by the hyphen in ‘student-teacher’ as “a haunted and generative space, full of tales told to anyone who will listen?” (Jardine, 1994b, p. 18) ...

...OK, so you try a few of your own: What is a poet? What is poetry? How does the naming of someone -- a poet or a teacher -- shape and influence our relations with the named? How does the naming of an activity change the activity? change us? Other questions follow: What does becoming a poet have to do with becoming a teacher? What does becoming a teacher have to do with becoming a poet?
What are the similarities/differences between a conversation that takes place in a café and a conversation that takes place in a classroom? What are the conditions that poets/writers create/require to "make poetry"? What might these conditions have to do with "making pedagogy"? Can we be "taught" to be/come teachers? Can we be "taught" to be/come poets? What are the conditions that might help create an interpretive location for asking these kinds of questions? ...

Living & Writing & Researching -- The Moments & Movements of Everydayness

At this stage of inquiry, exuberance is more important than uniformity, not to mention easier to achieve. And the conversations among us ... may need to be perhaps a little raucous, and to some degree deliberately inconclusive, speculative, maddening, and pleasurable.

-- Hans Ostrom 20

As teachers, writers, and researchers who work with others in a world of wordmaking -- students and learners all of us -- clearly, the conversations among those who have chosen to live our classroom lives as questioning are anything but agreeable or conclusive. This is the way things should be: The sea is always itself, restless, forever altering its colours like a sad eye. If we believe what we are told, the benches are a bright blue but everything else is manifest through an agreed upon uncertainty. And then there is the wall: obstructing the view, enhancing the view, privileging the view, reconstructing the view, deconstructing the view, making the view im/possible. We live and work and write and research through the tangle.

The wall, borrowing from Wendell Berry's words, can be understood "both as enablement and as constraint" (Berry, 1983, p. 203). The wall is what brings old people and young lovers together with the sand and the sea and the sky; it makes positioning a necessity, causing some to settle in and others to scramble on. The wall is not impenetrable. Worn smooth by wind and made loose by rain and time, the wall is an opening -- a portal of possibility -- an opportunity...

for discourse. As Leonard Cohen suggests, “there is a crack in everything, it’s how the light gets in.” 21

Research may risk becoming another wall, another border that keeps some things in, others out. Breaking walls down, then using the pieces to build new walls. The task of sorting stones and moving them from one pile to another, however, is not the task that hermeneutics would choose to take on:

It would be an exhausting business, almost a parody of human effort: tear down the old wall, haul it to a new site, stack it back up again stone by stone. Stone is another word for total: stone broke, stone cold, stone-deaf. Moving a wall would be stone work -- hyper-work, Ur-work, mindless, brutalizing toil. Who would hire out for a task like that? (Jerome, 1989, p. 6).

Although the hermeneutic journey I am choosing to take strives toward a thought-fullness, there is always the risk of demystifying, of poking holes, of squeezing the life out of those things I most care about. There is also the fear that I may not go into the places that most require my interrogation, attention or care. The task is “both attractive and pleasantly terrifying” (Ostrom, 1994, p. xx). And so it is that I proceed with a poet’s ‘I’ -- knowing that “the vibrancy and life of language is found in its living interdependencies, not in its lifeless fragments” (Jardine, 1994a, p. 513). And so it is that I proceed with a re-searcher’s eye with an aim, not to clarify or de-mystify, but to offer myself to the wall, to open myself up to the researching/writing/researching life, to engage in the “privileged act of naming” (hooks, 1994, p. 62) -- not for the purpose of setting up more walls, more restrictive boundaries -- but for the purpose of honouring the paradox and difficulty that such a writing/researching/living requires. Through a poet’s eye. Through a researcher’s I ...

...You think you are beginning to get your bearings. The classroom, this writing workshop has re-verb-erated itself, become a kind of work-shopping, a kind of wordshopping, prospective teachers trying on both lines and lives, writing themselves in and out of context. Poetry and pedagogy are beginning to approach one another ...

From the wall, we seek a “shift from the expected to the unexpected ... the difference between learning about an experience or culture or event and learning from one's own reading [writing] of an experience or culture or event” (Britzman & Pitt, 1996, p. 119). We are beginning to think about “how to stage a pedagogy that is exploratory rather than content driven” (Britzman & Pitt, 1996, p. 122).

But the view includes the road, which I watch in amazement. The thud bangs in my bones as I realize what I've seen. A child and a car have collided with the grace of birds; it was choreographed, her skipping down off the path and the black swoop of metal speeding around, catching her at the waist. Her scream is mistaken for a seagull's. There are thirty people behind me, oblivious as I watch a shadow dyeing the road (it does not even appear red -- simply dark, like dirt spilling from a bowl of yellow flowers, her head).

There are shouts below, the single wail of a woman, but still no one around me hears this, no one leans over to look. I wonder if I am imagining all of it. I blink away sunlight and the cracked body remains down there, utterly still. The people around me (half-hearing the female cry) think only that the beat of the waves has changed.

As we dwell upon the wall, ponder our places as re-searchers, collisions are taking place all around us. To think that any one of these collisions might have the horrific impact that leaves dark shadows on a road is to make light of a child’s life lost. Still, the immediacy of the impact, and the terrible intimacy of the scene the wall makes available brings the writing and the researching, the writing and the living into sharp relief. Do the words, like dirt spilling from a bowl of yellow flowers, make death a possibility? Does writing/research enable us to express our shock or construct it? And, what kind of living makes writing (and researching) about dying possible? Sometimes, it's easier to wonder if we are imagining it all.

Although our pedagogy is not usually life and death, still there is the shadow. There is “something irremediably risk-laden, perplexing, and disorderly” (Jardine & Field, 1992, p. 304)
about any attempt to pull writing off the page "and out of the individual intellect into our sense-making, body-resonant selves" (Neilsen, in press). The decision to embrace a pedagogy/research that goes beyond seeking technical solutions to technical problems -- and which instead tends toward an opening up of the lives that we are busy living -- brings risk and opportunity. As Sumara notes, 

The agreement to allow disclosure and locations for interpretation during ritualistic events means that participants must understand that, at times, they will need to witness the unexpected, the unfamiliar, the tragic, the uncomfortable, that someone might announce (Sumara, 1996a, p. 144).

...You begin to wonder about Michael, a History major in the class. Michael: a bit older than many of his peers, dominant and over-bearing in group work, his words and his poetry full of thinly disguised sexist remarks; the same Michael whose group wanted nothing better than to see him walk one thin line of his own prose, farther and farther, and farther still, until the words grew smaller and smaller and eventually could not support the weight of one so opinionated, leaving Michael to fall into a pit strung with his own barbed lines ...

... And then there's Kendra, an English major: "OK. I'm just going to get this off my chest before I go insane. On my assignment, you gave me 17/20 ... I was hurt because even though my poetry may be only worth "17," maybe you don't know how difficult it is for me to write and share it with someone. It just seems like I don't want to share it with you if you're going to put a mark on it, because it almost reinforces to me that I'm not much of a poet -- at least not a 20/20 poet" ...

... Do the quotes convince you? That Kendra lives and breathes (and cries) and, in fact, wonders whether she ever wants to write another word again. Ever. Do the quotes convince me? That I have done little more than write and rewrite Kendra and her 17/20 poetry -- scribing her and then re-in-scribing her for the purposes of my own academic prose ...

There is the skipping down the path and the black swoop of metal. The writing and the living
collide. *I watch in amazement.* We don’t often allow ourselves to hear the collision of the writing and the living. *There are shouts below.* There is the *half-hearing,* but few are those fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to feel the thud bang in their bones as they “point the way with a pedagogical epistemology to which [they’re] committed” (Ostrom, 1994, p. xi). *If you sit on a bench, the wall cuts the landscape in half: you cannot see the road below.* And what about the classroom – that real and imagined space arch-welded into almost every individual psyche as a universal – four walls that enable and constrain possibility. We listen hard, try to pay attention to the moments that unfold, try to capture the words that connect the lines and lives. But somehow the writing seems to resist our writing (about it). The moment(s) slip(s) away. Our lives are full of shadow and light and richness, yet our pens often dry up under curricular or methodological (or other forms of author-itarian) scrutiny. “[W]riting is always over there in the novels on the shelves or discussed on class blackboards and we are over here in our seats (Goldberg, 1990, p. xv). *The wall cuts the landscape in half: you cannot see the road below …*

*The old people are gazing at the cliffs, ignoring the white threads of cataracts, seeing perfectly the greenness of other lives, other decades, thinking of the ancient lime trees towering beyond them -- they were smaller once. I hear serious talk about green beans and rose gardens, the cost of carrots. The laughter of sparrows rings from the trees as always, and the young men and women listen to it, imagining their hearts are birds. A girl with hair the colour of clean straw is staring at her watch, desperate for time to slide open. Her hand flutters at the boy’s silk-brown arm and I can see what her fingers are thinking: There has never been flesh this warm. Their hair is tangled and heavy with dropping light. The sun rolls down the hill like bleeding fruit.*

Despite the dark stain that gathers below, pedagogy demands that we keep the conversation alive, stay with the living. “It is the rupture — the break — that provides the interruption in our usual patterns of living, forcing us to learn and perceive differently” (Sumara, 1996a, p. 156). “We are the bellringers. It is we who must climb into the bell tower” (Livingston, 1990, p. 216).
Blindly With Words: Closing Notes on Ambiguity, Self-reflexivity and Desire

A tune beyond us, yet ourselves ...
-- Wallace Stevens 22

And on the road below (all I do is swivel three vertebrae in my neck) the scene changes, a world bursts, the magic shadow spreads like a dark angel stretching its wings under people's feet. The bowl of yellow flowers is rust-red brown.

While above, in the little town, old women gossip, girls touch lipstick lightly to their mouths, men grunt at the government, and I sit on the wall, watching all of it, looking back and forth like someone at a stunning tennis match, trembling (remembering all the world itself, the wars in the back pages of atlases, whole countries spreading with shadow).

From the wall, I resonate with the words of writer John Jerome who laments, "words, I am beginning to think, are the specific barrier against seeing things clearly ... and, at the same time, the only specific tool I have for penetrating the barrier. Perhaps this is the writer's curse" (1989, p. 191). Perhaps this is also the researcher's curse. We notice the light, the detail. We are moved, entertained, shocked, perplexed, and compelled to wrestle with those things we see and hear, touch and taste. We are choosing the in-between place. Blindly with words. The wall disappears, though we lean on it heavily.

... Al Purdy, a crusty old Canadian poet, tells you in his self-effacing way that the poet is usually the "designated oddball" to his or her neighbours. David Smith (1991) reminds you of Wilhelm Dilthey's remark that, "feeling strange or alien is the first prerequisite to a life of interpretation" (p. ii). You can't help making the connection between the poet and the researcher; you certainly seem to meet the criteria for both. The poet certainly lives a life of interpretation and the researcher often takes on the character of strangeness, oftentimes acting as the designated oddball. But then you begin to think that maybe there's a certain call, not to be different but to see different; it's the willingness

22 In Myra Cohn Livingston, *Climb into the bell tower: Essays on poetry*, p. 13.
to acknowledge the reciprocal relationship of ordinary and strange in living out the everydayness of our lives that makes us poets and re-searchers …

...Your questions are still questions: What are the conditions that poets/writers create/require to "make poetry"? What might these conditions have to do with "making pedagogy"? Can we be "taught" to be/come teachers? Can we be "taught" to be/come poets? What words might the poet and researcher have to offer one another? Can our treatment of these questions bear the possibility of remaining questions?

This is an interesting place to be: "catching life at its game of taking flight" (Caputo, 1987, p. 1). The moment of inquiry mirrors the writing life itself; we dwell in those places where we are at a loss for meaning, those places where meaning breaks down. The tangle offers an ambivalent location for writing and researching; it is a place and space in/from which to learn to live well, a place in/from which to deal with the "loss of meaning by confronting the meaning of the loss … remaining open to the mystery and venturing into the flux" (Caputo, 1987, p. 271). And on the road below … the scene changes …

This is where you are now. Then you turn your head away and you are somewhere else. The only truth is that there is none: it moves when we blink. The trick of seeing is not seeing everything. If you see everything and feel all you see, you unravel the wrinkles of your brain like a ball of kite string. You drift off and disappear. It is easier to be blind if the choice is between blindness and madness. Learn to see with one eye or both eyes half-closed. I look at the lovers, the lavender-haired old ladies. I look with great concern at my bony feet. Absurd tears there, gems of wet salt sliding toward my toes.

This is where you are now. Then you turn your head away and you are somewhere else. I am left pondering the in-between -- the place between the farther darkness and the closer one. I am thinking about these bodies, these human beings who have often-times stumbled, other times straddled the awkward (liminal) space between student and teacher. I am thinking about old women and children, and wondering what it might be like to go dancing off cliffs.

Because, below, a child drains. The moment was a pebble-brained shark, and her life a bloody tear in
time's soft belly. Now an ambulance clangs everyone awake, the people, even the lovers, crowd to see the crowd below, to glimpse the broken doll, the shadow. A shattered body collapses in my eyes, but I look beyond it. I examine the elegant web of veins on the backs of my hands. (You must look beyond.) I see the Bay of Biscay. I slide off the wall and walk towards a new place. The blood on the road will be gone at dawn and perhaps I'll forget I've written this.

... All that's left of the workshop and the teachers who lived there are echoes. Still, there is much listening to be done. The (classroom) scene has (un)folded. The teachers -- they are teachers now -- have come and gone. Their words and images still remain, however, hovering; their "meanings" refuse to crystalize into discrete moments that can be harvested, "nor [can] their ambiguity be squeezed away" (Davis, 1996, p. 220) ...

The wall is low: I sit on its back, watching the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea. This is what (the writing/research) life is like. When you started out, there was only the ocean. And, after all this time, there is only the ocean. But now you have everyone's attention: an ambulance clangs everyone awake, the people, even the lovers crowd to see the crowd below. You have written them on to bright blue benches and beaches. Into classrooms. On to walls. And here is a broad stone wall ... the road itself never shifts. And after all that has happened you realize that "you do not know the road; you have committed your life to a way, for words [like dirt spilling from a bowl of yellow flowers] remind us of the past, demand the present; knowing, too, that a certain awesome futurity ... is the inescapable condition of word-giving -- as it is, in fact, of all speech -- for we speak into no future that we know" (Berry, 1983, pp. 200-201).

Already there is something about this wall; something about this orderly collection of stone that demands patience and curiosity. You cannot yet say what this something is, though you are compelled to wait here, by the wet blue belly of the sea, for some kind of unfolding.

Here are the pastel hues (skylight, sea, warm green eyes, pearled skin). And here are the dark oils. And here is your life. This is the only canvas they'll sell you. Do not just paint what there is. (You'll be
dust before you’ve done that work.) Paint what you want to see.

It’s just like John Jerome describes it, “envision the hole in the air that the wall makes, then fill it.” The writing, like our living, like our research of the living and the writing is the in-between, “a manifestation, I think, of the staring process, of all that time spent memorizing holes -- trying to make vague shapes fit together in the mind” (Jerome, 1989, p. 56).

... Imagine a space. A soon-to-become-place. A location. Imagine that a group of forty or so teacher candidates, soon-to-be teachers, those-who-would-teach, live in this place. Imagine, from the wall, choosing this as a place to begin to dwell, a place to begin to re-search ...

Yes, you are sure now about the wall.
The wall is why you have come.
You know little
else.
I’ve been having some interference between “nupop” and my screen-saver which resulted in my screwing up the message I just typed you. I presume that there is no-one left on the system anymore...

I meant to write a poem to send for the final class get-together but the teaching has been keeping me very busy. It felt strange to leave Vancouver and UBC so quickly to take this job. A teaching job!

Gary — I’ve been meaning to ask you about your research for a while now. I presume it is focussed on some of the workings of our workshop experience and concepts that Carl talked about during the course. I am quite interested to hear where you are at in your work as I’ve been trying to bring some of the course ideas through in my teaching.

The idea of positive support is particularly important with the adults I am teaching as they have all failed at the high school level so I need to do things differently. I can’t press ahead in my lessons if someone is having difficulty because to leave them behind is to write them off once again. I have designed a term project worth 10% of the course that is creative-based and completely open-ended and invitational for my math classes and have also been using a math journal.

Students’ are finding this quite different than what they are used to and I hope it is working. The ENED 426 course outline contains a number of good references that I never had a chance to read and am trying to order them so I have some more ideas on how to use writing in the class.

I want to hear more about your research...

Geoff 23

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23 Preservice teachers are referred to by pseudonyms throughout the dissertation.
CHAPTER THREE

A Life that Includes Writing

To write as if your life depended on it: to write across the chalkboard, putting up there in public words you have dredged, sieved up from dreams, from behind screen memories, out of silence -- words you have dreaded and needed in order to know you exist.

-- Adrienne Rich 1

In addition to being one of the most wonderfully long sentences I have ever encountered, the following passage is a manifesto-of-sorts for a life that includes the practice of writing, one that sets the stage for a group of preservice teachers writing across the curriculum.

I court conversation and perhaps consternation in my commitment to shake up and explode notions about writing, in my claim that writing cannot be conceptualized, schematized, and classified anymore than beachstones can be categorized and labelled, in my contention that idiosyncrasy and unpredictability and meaning-making characterize the writing experience, in my conviction that writing teachers must not reduce writing to lists of concepts and skills that can be taught to all students in ways that can be evaluated for purposes of report cards and promotion, in my devotion to interrogation and self-conscious rhetorical posturing and playful earnestness and contravening conventions, in my resolve to understand writing as the manipulation of language (material signifiers) in order to produce effects (emotional and ideational) in readers, my dedication to constructing a picture of reality that incorporates insights into chaos, the abyss, the flux, in my experience of writing as magnificently magical mystery, in my determination that circuitous, laboured writing full of obscurity and obfuscation (writing that twists, serpentine-like across the page and down the page, coiling back on itself, springing in a sudden frenzy of attack or slithering with calculated slowness) can manifest an energetic

1 Rich, What is found there: Notebooks on poetry and politics, p. 33.
power by providing a site where the reader can dwell and play and dance in the production of multiple and complex meanings, in my perception that writing is not a steady, step-by-step progression through identifiable stages like moving a ship through the St. Lawrence Seaway, in my experience of the often uncontrollable aliveness of language, especially the relentless compulsion to write, listen to writing, to respond to writing with more writing, in my conception of writing as chaotic and risky and emotionally and physically demanding, of writing as exploration and struggling with words and discovery and growth (Leggo, 1992, p. 4).

The passage is written by the course instructor for ENED 426: Language Across the Curriculum, Section 949. The instructor is a poet, a writer, a teacher of writing. A teacher educator. His words, as this chapter begins, offer a textual location from which to consider writing pedagogy through a poet's I. And as I continue to read and re-read his words, taken from an essay titled "A Poet's Pensees: Writing and Schooling," I find myself replacing the word "writing" with the word "teaching" in order to observe how new possibilities are announced, how other relations become possible by the interchange of these two words:

I court conversation and perhaps consternation in my commitment to shake up and explode notions about teaching, in my claim that teaching cannot be conceptualized, schematized, and classified anymore than beachstones can be categorized and labelled, in my contention that idiosyncrasy and unpredictability and meaning-making characterize the teaching experience ...

I am discovering, in the midst of these relations, how writing pedagogy can become writing pedagogy. Through a teacher educator's I ...

The writing and teaching continued to weave and interweave long after the "426 experience" was over, with Leggo's words of teaching and writing reverberating still. Geoff's "final" message to our 'on-line'd' group of teacher candidates from the course -- the last e-mail -- is an important reminder for me that not only did the course actually take place, but that there were
also possibilities for lives that included writing once the course was over. I say “final” message because Geoff and I, in fact, continued to correspond during the year that followed the course, even though all that remained of our communal on-line group were the abandoned usernames of our colleagues, emptied shells, that sat hollow on the server. Geoff got a teaching job at a college in Prince Rupert, British Columbia and continued to seek ways to bring language into his Math courses. Sometime after that (final) message in which he spoke in hopeful terms about his teaching, Geoff wrote, “Well, I’m wondering about my experiment with ‘the creative project’ assignment ... I got the first one handed in to me yesterday and I was quite disappointed. The student chose a minimal effort project just to get it out of the way. I hope this is not a sign of things to come.” Our conversation had both of us re-membering Leggo’s words ...

... writing/teaching/writing cannot be conceptualized, schematized, and classified anymore than beachstones can be ...

Yes, idiosyncrasy and unpredictability and meaning-making certainly characterize the experience of writing and teaching. As Geoff’s teaching life continued to unfold, so did his own writing. He continued to write a series of childhood poems, a project he had started in the course, in addition to writing poetry with his own students. A success story? Maybe. Geoff’s words have partly captured, partly created a life that is more real for the poems he left behind. Lost lines from his playful poem “Random Thoughts” now echo whimsically of my researchings,

“... random thoughts fill my head
up down in and out like
swallows picking up insects above a pond
If you miss one on that dive, the thought is lost
and another fat one jumps out and says ‘Eat Me’:
Write it down quick ...”

The rest of the teacher candidates, all teachers at this point, are no doubt writing their lives
somewhere, too, but they seem as real to me now as the characters in Karen Connelly's "story." This is where you are now. Then you turn your head away and you are somewhere else. A bowl of yellow flowers stains the canvas. A group of teachers dissolve in solution with the world. The shadow-caster's workings are ever-present.

I continue to discover the importance, if not the necessity, of inquiring into the experience of a life that includes writing as though through a hologram. Seeking a language that might behave holo/grammatically -- allowing me to invent words as needed and to observe lived experience alternately as the light and image gather to re-present new images that alter ever so slightly in the movement between writing and reading, teaching and learning ... researching. Casting the time of research -- the time of learning -- backward and forward (Britzman & Pitt, 1996) in order to necessarily complicate the practice of a life that includes the practice of writing.

Writing research. Writing research. Writing pedagogy. Writing pedagogy ...

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"A life that includes reading": This is the title of the opening chapter of Dennis Sumara's book Private Readings in Public, from which this chapter is named: "A life that includes writing." Reading-to-writing ... writing-to-reading. What might the interchange of these two words mean to our lives lived in and out of classrooms? 2 The hyphenated space that connects the experience of reading and writing is both a generous and a generative space.

As Sumara points out, we cannot begin to understand the act of reading without inquiring into the relations that are made possible by our experience of reading and how this experience might "contribute to the ongoing project of understanding oneself and one's relations to others within the complex set of relations called the school curriculum" (1996a, p. 1). And so it is with writing, which is of course one of the elements inextricably bound with reading in our curricular travels through school and, most important, through a life that includes learning (schooling and

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2 Chapter Four presents an interpretive reading of the experience of writing through a reading of Elizabeth Ellsworth's (1996) development of a "different kind of reading ... a reading toward awareness" (pp. 138-139). I propose, in turn, a different kind of writing ... a writing toward awareness through my own "discovery," through the work of Ellsworth and others, that writing is a form of reading ourselves -- just as reading is a form of writing ourselves.
learning not always being born of the same breath, though Sumara helps us to imagine otherwise).

*Private Readings in Public* (Sumara, 1996a) is itself a hermeneutic rendering of what it might mean to bring our attention to those things for which we care deeply. Mary Aswell Doll (1995), another hermeneutic educator, researcher, and scholar, who also lives well with/in the literary imagination and breathes passion into her pedagogy, says that when we bring our (hermeneutic) attention to the work of teaching and learning, “Something Happens” ... (p. 42).

Attention. A tension. A tending. These homonyms with their differing meanings residing within the same sound attract me, interest me about the teaching encounter. One gives attention to what one is interested in. There arises a tension between one and the material. The tension, once felt, turns into a tending of the material, much as one tends to the needs of one’s garden or one’s child. (Doll, 1995, p. 128).

Sumara’s work is full of attention -- a tension -- a tending of the curricular relations that become manifest in one’s attendings to the word. Throughout the many days and hours I spent with *Private Readings* -- often in the beautiful spaces of Vancouver’s new Public library -- there were numerous times when I became quite absorbed by the fine details of Sumara’s attention, became caught up in the (at)tension of his work. I experienced my self be/com/ing obsessed with/in Sumara’s obsession. Obsession, in this way, seems an irreducible aspect of hermeneutic inquiry as I have come to experience it in my own work as well as the work of so many others; at times it seems incapable of being brought into another condition or form. (As the pre-face noted with/out irony, obsession is always and already part of the body of this work.)

The experience of reading and writing brim with the possibility of/for obsession. My experience of living with a group of preservice teachers writing lives became in many ways a shared obsession -- as we became caught up in wordmaking -- together and alone. As Sumara, following Mary Catherine Bateson, notes, “deep learning often means becoming obsessed with a topic of inquiry. We [Sumara and Davis] have often wondered why these obsessive rituals are
not permitted in school” (Sumara, 1996a, p. 237). (At the same time, Sumara does note that any obsessions school life might entertain curricularly are usually tied up with “the real” -- repetitive events that “suffocate the fantastical, the imaginative, the erotic, the not-present” (p. 234).)

Obsession with “the real” and “the not-real” formed the backdrop for a group of preservice teachers who lived a relatively brief period of their lives together within the “fixity and flux”3 of an extremely complex array of social, cultural and political forces at a particular place and time. Not unlike the experience of living in a very large city, these teachers-to-be lived out their days in ways that often left them feeling overcrowded and alone. In this case the group of preservice teachers, who lived in a particular section of a large multi-sectioned course within a large teacher education program within a large university (within a very large city), seemed well-schooled in obsession -- at least with the hard-wired ways of schools, which often have little to do with teaching and learning.

Many, if not most, were often caught up in “the game of teacher education,” caught up with “the real” as Sumara would have it. It can be very easy to lose sight of learning and teaching under these kinds of conditions, conditions in which obsession with “the real” becomes the “object” (within the larger game) of learning to teach. Learning becomes a learning to navigate the maze of logistics required to “survive” through the busyness -- the business -- of teacher education. Is it too simple, too trite, too cynical, to picture their living -- our living -- in such programs as a game in which the object becomes puzzling a series of colourful plastic preschool objects, ranging in size from big-to-small, one inside the other until only the large red container remains? There is an expression, the source of which I have forgotten, that says, “In life, we become what we pay attention to.” So what do we choose to pay attention to?

Our course operated within a six-week intensive Spring session that saw preservice teachers

3 I have borrowed the expression “fixity and flux,” from Jeanette Winterson, who says that “the emotional and psychic resonance of a particular people at a particular time is not a series of snapshots that can be stuck together to make a montage, it is a living, breathing, winding movement that flows out of the past and into the future while making its unique present. This fixity and flux is never clear until we are beyond it, into a further fixity and flux” (Winterson, 1996, p. 40). I have held these words close over the time of the writing of this dissertation. Polishing them and listening to them as poetry, as research, as part of a life that includes the practice of both.
attending at least two, and sometimes three courses per day, each class running for up to three hours. Sadly, this description will turn few heads. Worse, many will ask, “Well, what point are you trying to make?” My point, one that I will try not belabour, is that obsession can easily become equated with busyness -- hyperactivity -- which can easily lead to exhaustion and the inability to pay attention, to attend to those things that require our attention in other kinds of ways -- ways that don’t necessarily involve the busyness of teacher education. Obsession, then, can easily become equated with the real. What becomes the real and what becomes the not-real?

Here, I do not wish to create an unhelpful dichotomy between the infamous and pejoratively labelled “busywork” of teacher education (and schools in general) and a more meditative and mindful work that might attend to the busy work of teaching and learning (though it certainly is tempting). Instead, I am more interested in asking questions about the ways that teaching and learning are about, and not about, obsession. In the midst of our busy lives, what does it mean to pay attention -- to bring our attention -- to our obsessions? What are the kinds of conditions that make obsession possible, impossible, bearable, unbearable?

I continue to be interested in the ways that a particular six-week lived experience in a writing workshop-styled language across the curriculum course (which was, by the way, not completely free of busywork) offered opportunities to entertain certain kinds of obsession through writing and rewriting the real and not-real, the present and not-present. I am interested in the ways that writing provides opportunities -- creates conditions -- that allow us to bring our attention to lived experience and, in turn, change -- express and/or construct -- our experience(s). I am interested in the ways that writing provides opportunities -- creates conditions -- to think about practice. Writing practice. What kinds of conditions are needed to create certain kinds of writing practice? And, what conditions are, in turn, created by our writing practice? What happens to these questions when we ask them to bear the additional weight of the practice of teaching?
Writing Pedagogy/Writing Pedagogy: Re-Considering the Writing Workshop

A class is a course embodied; it has a certain temporal, locational, dynamic, and personalized makeup. It has a specificity that cannot be duplicated no matter how many times the course is offered or taken, no matter how its story is told; it is a course caught in the act.

-- David Crane

Before discussing some of the writing and teaching and learning that took place within the workshop walls, it is first necessary to discuss some of the ways I have come to frame the ENED 426 class experience itself as a "writing workshop." In the following section, I articulate the ways that my framing works both with and against some of the historical curricular conceptualizations of the writing workshop and the kind of writing pedagogy that has paralleled/supported/created the workshop's development. This discussion, then, is a reconsidering of the writing workshop, where a reconsidering is also a re-framing, a re-conceptualizing, a re-visioning, a re-staging, a re-interpreting -- a re-imagining.

The workshop, as a location -- as a real and imagined space -- provides the potential for form and offers pragmatic possibilities for talking about some of the conditions of learning and teaching -- to write, as well as to teach. In this way, the framing of the ENED 426 classroom as a workshop provides a location where preservice teachers could experiment with both lines and lives in order, to not only explore writing pedagogy across subject disciplines but also, to "raise thorny questions about the inherited discourses of student teaching and to theorize the contradictory realities that beckon and disturb those who live in this field" (Britzman, 1991, p. 2). The workshop, then, was not only about writing practice and writing pedagogy, but also about writing practice, writing pedagogy. Writing lives, teaching lives.

So the workshop became helpful as a location where learning to write, and "learning to teach, like teaching itself, is a time when desires are rehearsed, refashioned, and refused" (Britzman, 1991, p. 2)

4 Crane, In J. Gallop (Ed.), Pedagogy: The question of impersonation, p. xiii.

5 This chapter and, indeed, the dissertation, both work to articulate "the shift" not only from a "preoccupation" with learning to write to an "investment" in writing to learn, but further, following Britzman and Pitt (1996), a shift to becoming curious about (the conditions of) learning itself.
The invitation for preservice teachers to write in certain kinds of ways -- personally, creatively and critically -- was, by association, also an invitation to live and work and teach in these kinds of ways. My intent has, in many ways, been to study a classroom "that offered opportunities for prospective teachers to transform their prior experiences of teaching, writing, and children as they began to assume the role of teacher" (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990, p. 277).

For almost three decades now, teachers and researchers -- too numerous to begin to list here -- including Donald Graves (1983), Donald Murray (1985, 1990), and Lucy Calkins (1991) have focused on the writing workshop as an alternative to traditional writing instruction, as a learning environment that fosters "teaching and learning writing in ways that transformed typical classroom social relations and work" (Lensmire, 1994b, p. 372). The results, well documented in other places, continue to play a significant part in the "historical and current drama of the struggle to redefine literacy in schools" (Apple, cited in Willinsky, 1990, p. xiii). The writing workshop, along with a number of other reading and writing pedagogies including Whole Language, Language for Learning and Writing Across the Curriculum, Reader-Response Theory and Writing Process Movement, falls under what John Willinsky (1990) has termed "The New Literacy."

The New Literacy consists of those strategies in the teaching of reading and writing which attempt to shift the control of literacy from the teacher to the student; literacy is promoted in such programs as a social process with language that can from the very beginning extend the students' range of meaning and connection (Willinsky, 1990, p. 8).

Since its inception, advocates of the writing workshop/writing process movement have emphasized "a commitment to taking students' experiences and meanings seriously ... [an attempt to] humanize writing pedagogy through the acceptance and encouragement of student
[voice] in the classroom” (Lensmire, 1995, p. 4). As the workshop continues to find its way into teaching and learning, so it continues to be a source for both advocacy as well as critique. Timothy Lensmire (1994a, 1994b, 1995), in particular, offers an insightful reconceptualization of the writing workshop. He calls for a “revised, alternative conception of student voice -- one that affirms both workshop and critical pedagogy commitments to student expression and participation, but also helps us see student voice as in-process and embedded, for better and worse, within the immediate social context of the classroom” (Lensmire, 1995). He writes, “for workshop advocates, the sounding of the voices of heteroglossia in the classroom is already a better world. Maybe so. For advocates of critical pedagogy, this heteroglossia may, unfortunately, sound too much like the already existing world, and be in need of criticism and revision” (1995).

This discussion, then, serves a responsibility in honouring the many significant practical and theoretical concerns made possible by “The New Literacy” -- connections to be acknowledged, forged and fleshed out. Specifically, Willinsky’s (1990) work “challenges advocates of New Literacy programs to explore new measures, to prove itself in difficult settings” (p. xviii). And so, before focusing in to, in part, take up this challenge (with the ENED 426 classroom as setting), I will first provide the larger historical sense in which challenge, as a way of demonstrating how the work of literacy -- of language and learning in schools -- is always a re-working, so that my contributions are in no way a “New and Improved”. Literacy but, rather, are offered in a spirit that contributes to a continued sense of re-newal. A re-considering. A re-imagining.

It is my intention in this section of the dissertation to establish a series of interconnected movements between the Language Across the Curriculum and Writing Across the Curriculum programs (LAC and WAC) with/in and against a more “traditional-styled” writing pedagogy (as documented within The New Literacy), and between one particular section (Leggo’s ENED 426 class) with/in and against both a large (and, in my view, rather unwieldy) multi-sectioned Language Across the Curriculum course offered within the Secondary Teacher Education program at U.B.C.. The discussion also moves with/in and against the larger LAC/WAC movement itself.
First, the LAC/WAC movements were originally established in ways that paralleled the writing workshop/writing process movement (thus, Willinsky's helpful, and hopeful coining of The New Literacy as a useful umbrella term); such programs were intended to introduce "a radical program of studies along two dimensions, the one unsettling the school and the other disturbing the acquired habits of the student. This [was] to be a literacy which play[ed] against institutional authority and a literacy which work[ed] within the student" (Willinsky, 1990, p. 22).

Reviewing the literature and perhaps more important, visiting the classroom, it becomes apparent that, in many ways, the results of the shift in literacy practices, particularly in the last decade, have begun to make a difference to the practice of writing and to the writing of practice. Those, like Lensmire, who have helped to carve out the many forms and faces of The New Literacy have seen the teaching of writing and composition move from its conceptualization as "essentially a neurotic activity," to a process central to self-discovery, understanding, creativity, and connection (Emig, cited in Maimon, 1994, p. 14). We have made "remarkable progress," suggests Maimon (1994) in a playful but telling comment on the gains made by The New Literacy: "We no longer tell students that only some are visited by the Muse. We now teach them what to do while waiting for the Muse -- and in case she never shows up at all" (p. 18).

Current LAC/WAC and associated programs, while necessarily cautious in their claims, are optimistic about writing practice and pedagogy in schools. Students in classrooms are no longer empty vessels waiting to be filled up; "mistakes" are no longer considered "linguistic sins" (Maimon, 1994, p. 16) but, rather, important steps toward a more generous living and working with words. Still, in what is perhaps not so unexpected an irony, the LAC/WAC movement, in my view, has itself become somewhat calcified through a gradual reification of the many characteristics and attributes associated with language-centred pedagogy. I would argue, along with Lorri Neilsen (in press), that despite the significant gains that have been made, much of our teaching and research continues to be guided by "impossible metaphors [which] perpetuate
The myth that literacy is something we think about and do, rather than something we live” (Neilsen, in press).

The kinds of wordmaking that took place in a particular lived experience of ENED 426 created certain conditions for enabling a writing practice that invited teacher candidates to become curious about their own writing (and teaching) practice. In this way, as this chapter will illustrate, the workshop represents a kind of “metaphor of the possible” which “invites students and teachers into, rather than alienates them from themselves, their communities, and a sense of all that’s possible” (Neilsen, in press). All of this is to say that the workshop -- one section of a large course -- offered a way to begin to interrupt this calcification of language and literacy by offering a pedagogy that explicitly questioned and critiqued the movement of which it was a part -- in the immediate sense of the multi-sectioned course in which it was housed, as well as in the larger sense of the language and writing across the curriculum movement (from which the over-arching ENED 426 course took its philosophical and pedagogical bearings).

In beginning to make this claim, however, it is important to acknowledge that WAC/LAC programs have now been in existence for almost thirty years, which allows me the privilege of being able to re-play history, to feel the weight of its existence, to take advantage of the benefit of time played out in patterns, and even to be so optimistic as to talk about what might be im/possible. In “Writing Across The Curriculum: History and Future,” an essay in a recent collection of essays linked by their common concern for WAC programs (primarily in North American colleges and universities), Elaine Maimon states,

The third decade of Writing Across the Curriculum is prompting many of us working in the field to ask the traditional question: *Quo vadis?* 

*Whither goest thou? Where have we been and where are we going?* 

(Maimon, 1994, p. 12).

Within this historical movement -- in search of patterns -- I wish to show how, in the case of the
In the introductory section of the course textbook — "required" reading by all students in the multi-sectioned course, Crowhurst (1994) states that "[a]s teachers, we need to be aware of language and how it works because language is the currency of the classroom ... this book is about language, about learning, and about the interrelationships between the two" (p. 2). This conceptualization of language by Crowhurst (1994) as "playing a central role in thinking, knowing and learning" (p. 10) mirrors the LAC/WAC movement and served as a "unifying philosophy," for the workings of both the textbook and, in turn, the large number of students enrolled in the multi-sectioned course. Designed specifically as a textbook for course use, Crowhurst's book is predictably and, perhaps, necessarily broad in its presentation of language.
and learning across the curriculum. Sampling the table of contents, the first section, entitled "Language," contains the following chapters:

Language: Its Structure and Use
Language Acquisition, Language in the Classroom
The Language of Specific Disciplines

The second section, entitled "Strategies for Learning Through Language," contained the following chapters:

Reading in the Content Areas: Theoretical Issues
Strategies for Teaching Reading in Content Areas
Writing Processes: Theory and Pedagogy
Writing to Learn
Teaching Students From Other Cultures and Language Groups
Assessment and Evaluation

The text was presented as a kind of practical handbook for teachers, a utilitarian guide for those who have been prompted by the teacher education curriculum to look across the curriculum as a way of beginning to develop a theoretical/practical base from which to address issues of language use in schools and classrooms. In my view, the text, while useful for addressing the above kinds of concerns, does not provide any kind of assistance in placing the LAC movement into any kind of social or historical context. Instead, the text offers a rather prescriptive and apolitical view of language and learning and carries with it a certain obsequious "remedial connotation" (Lundy, 1994, p. 71). One might argue that preservice teachers are already burdened with a plethora of difficult issues and simply need to be given a broad overview of language and learning, along with some "things that work" in the classroom. After observing the responses to the text (many teacher candidates found it to be "neat and tidy," flat and one-dimensional, in a world they knew to be full of bumps and curves and most-times-messy); it became apparent that the language of the textbook was not a living language; it was a language that was not curious about language.

So, the course textbook and its conceptualization of language across the curriculum, while providing a common source from which to draw on, also left room for a good deal of interpretation on the part of both students and instructors in the implementing of the course.
As a poet, and teacher of writing -- as one who lives with a deep and abiding commitment to language as a means for writing and being written by the world -- the course instructor chose to emphasize a writing workshop-styled course, in my view, in order to entertain the bumps rather than smooth them out, and, in order to problematize and give shape to the discourse in which teachers find themselves being continuously shaped.

In “Transforming future teachers' ideas about writing instruction,” Florio-Ruane and Lensmire state, “It is our responsibility and challenge to initiate prospective teachers ... into the problems and possibilities of teaching the writing process inventively and meaningfully” (1990, p. 277). So it was in ENED 426, though I place quotation marks around “initiate” in the above quote to draw attention to it and to suggest that, in the case of this particular course, “invite” might be a more suitable term. To “initiate” suggests an admittance to a membership or organization, which of course the teacher education program does at many levels. And while “invite” may simply carry the same connotation in a slightly different guise, I would like to suggest that the invitation to experiment with language, to play with words -- to become curious about writing -- was a significant element that provided the course with its particular flavour and sensibility. The quality of invitation made this particular section unique among other sections in the course. In the context of a dissertation that deals with writing pedagogy, I suggest that this particular lived experience of ENED 426 created a certain kind of location that offered both the warmth of invitation as well as a call to be critical; an invitation that both welcomed and disrupted writing and writing pedagogy.

Throughout the course, preservice teachers wrote painful “literacy narratives” that spoke of a seemingly endless series of damaging experiences in schools. Through poetry and prose, talk and text, many spoke of the experience of being “wounded writers,” growing up with writing in schools (Leggo and Rasberry, 1995). As a result, teacher candidates often came to the writing situation with a good deal of insecurity and trepidation over their ability to work (and play) with words as they attempted to express and articulate themselves -- their thoughts, feelings, and ideas; much of their insecurity, along with a related difficulty with various aspects of the writing process, seemed to stem from previous writing experiences in schools in which they were
somehow "damaged" as prospective writers. As a result, subsequent attempts at writing pedagogy, it seemed to me -- and the irony is not lost here -- had to focus more on unlearning than on learning. Desire was an element that seemed conspicuously absent in many of the sessions in which preservice teachers reflected on their own experiences of learning to write in school. These literacy narratives seemed to portray a world of schooled people outside their bodies, outside themselves, unable to connect their ways of knowing to their horizon, their life to their words (Neilsen, in press).

Again and again, the personal spilled out as political with voice becoming a contested term which, at the best of times, found a shaky fulcrum that offered a shifting balance between writing (and "voice") as both expression and construction -- of self, of selves. In helpful terms, Lensmire speaks of "two related senses of voice: one artistic and aimed at naming yourself; the other political and focused on naming the world" (1994a, p. 10). This reconceptualization of voice supports The New Literacy claim of being a "political as well as a pedagogical act" (Apple, cited in Willinsky, 1990, pp. x-xi) and parallels Britzman's (1991) conceptualizations of the teaching relation as "dialogic," one that emphasizes "the ways teachers construct themselves as they are being constructed by others" (p. 2).

Writing Practice/Writing Practice: "A Writing Toward Awareness"6

The study of teachers' lives, whether described from narrative, postmodern, or critical perspectives, is beginning to inform our understanding about actual people doing messy work in classrooms.

-- Lorri Neilsen 7

The workshop itself did not necessarily change the conditions of the teacher education program but, rather, made good use of some of the inherent conditions already existing within the program itself as a starting place for writing practice. "Wildmind" writing, for example, an

6 This expression, taken from Elizabeth Ellsworth (1996), places "writing" in the place of "reading" (pp. 138-143).

7 Neilsen, in press.
expressive, process-oriented style of "freewriting" that will be discussed at length in this chapter, became a particularly productive and interesting way to tap into the generalized hyperactivity of the teacher education program itself. (When not exhausted, the preservice teachers were often "wired" with and from the kind of living that accompanied their time in the program. One more coffee, a chocolate bar, lots of shallow breathing, a string of endless assignments due. Always needing to be pumped up for the next "event.") By using as its starting point this place of busyness, along with the acknowledgement of what Natalie Goldberg calls "monkey mind," wildmind writing became an apt choice as a workshop strategy for teacher candidates. Monkey mind is the busy mind, that voice that won't quit: the one that reminds us of ALL those ways in which we are inferior, interrupts us with minutiae, and generally maintains a flybuzz monologue that ranges from the inane to the insane. On any given day, many of us never got past monkey mind, never got past this kind of hyperwriting which allowed us, simply, to put pen on paper and bring our attention to the resulting words that spilled out in lines, straight and crooked. Sometimes the writing brought us closer to our selves as teachers -- to our teaching selves, other times it led us further afield -- helped us forget our selves as teachers. And both were perfectly acceptable results. There was no-thing to necessarily "get past," only the satisfaction of being present in our own writing (process). How exhilarating this proved for so many of us.

Critical questions about writing process, posed by the teacher candidates early in the workshop experience, and then later on by teacher educators and researchers reflecting on the experience of process writing, often arose out of a generalized concern for "where this kind of freestyled writing might be headed." Writers, whether they were interested in directing their writing toward a poem, a short fictional piece, a history essay, or a comprehensive exam question, wanted to know how and when wildmind writing would get them to where they wanted to go. Wildmind writing, however, is a technique only -- a starting place for writing and composition that requires both patience and practice, as well as a certain amount of trust and faith. (See working with wildmind interlude for a further discussion.) While writing process, as mentioned, was only one aspect of language across the curriculum, it is significant but not

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8 Chapter Six contains a more in-depth exploration of the notion of identity negotiation as both a forgetting and a re-membering.
surprising to note, that it permeated everything we did together in the course. Writing theory and pedagogy -- drew by far the most intense response from teacher candidates. Writing, and the teaching of writing, seemed to represent, for many, a highly charged, highly ambivalent issue; it was loved and feared in seemingly random and unpredictable ways.

In an essay titled “Composition and Composure,” Cynthia Chambers, a writer and teacher educator at the University of Lethbridge, states, “There is a seven-character expression in Zen which reads, ‘The instant you speak about a thing, you miss the mark.’ Just as talking about Zen makes enlightenment more elusive, writing about writing dims the possibility of its true nature being revealed.”⁹ I find strange comfort in being able to commiserate with Chambers, and her acknowledgement of the difficulties of writing about writing, in this case within the context of teacher education. Of course it is of little surprise that Chambers, despite the initial apprehension caused by her stumbling-upon-Zen, goes on to provide a piece of writing that offers excellent insight into the troubling aspects of the experience of writing about a life -- a living -- that includes the practice of writing and teaching. It is also of little surprise, at least to my reading of her work, that “obsession” finds its way into her text that is also her living. As she says,

> I myself write a great deal, although I am quite ambivalent about the practice ... words exist and they cannot be avoided any more than eating or sleeping ... I find this ambivalence about writing both as a practice and as a topic for writing erupting in my own words both spoken and written. But, I am resigned to the fact that words are all we have and in the end, they can be filled with beauty and power. This is what I teach, or at least hope to (in press).

As it turns out, obsession seems to share itself generously among teaching, reading, writing and learning. I can only make note of the irony of composing a sentence -- or a life -- that brings obsession and Zen to bear upon one another. Some, like Chamber’s colleague David Smith at the University of Lethbridge, have written in ways that approach “Zen and the Art of Teacher

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Education,” while others, like Natalie Goldberg and Annie Dillard, have hovered around “Zen and the Art of Writing.” (I know now that my own writing about writing, if anything, will more likely always aspire to contradiction: “Zen and the Art of Obsession.”) And so I continue to feel both blessed and obsessed as I attempt to write about writing, learn about learning, obsess about obsession. I have long since discovered that once you begin asking questions of obsession you are, in many senses, already too late ...

Where to begin. With writing, I suppose. I am writing about a group of people who spent a great deal of time writing: this needs to be stated explicitly, no matter how obvious it may seem. This is in contrast to the amount of time we often spend writing (or in many cases, not writing) in our classrooms. Whether it is grade school or grad school, time spent writing does not generally correspond well to how much we know about the inextricable and invaluable role writing plays in our learning and in our living. And, further, the amount of time we do spend writing is often directed toward specific (task-oriented) curricular ends. Writing is, for many, a means to an end, a necessary but often painful experience. I am able to book-end this paragraph, then, by saying that I am writing about a group of people who spent a great deal of time writing. Often with a new found desire for writing. And while the writing may not have been less painful, it was done in a spirit of curiosity in which the process itself was interrogated as well as celebrated.

The preservice teachers who gathered together in this particular classroom as the course began were not necessarily “writers.” There were some who seemed to enjoy writing, while some were reticent, even fearful about writing. Others seemed entirely ambivalent about writing. The preservice teachers’ feelings about writing and their corresponding writing practices could not be neatly charted according to their subject disciplines — neither before nor after the six-week experience. (And who would want to?) Stereotypes could not contain the many possibilities that characterized some of their writing predispositions and experiences: some English teachers felt terribly insecure and uncomfortable with writing (as did some Geography and Math

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10 It is at this point that, as a teacher and researcher, I feel compelled to provide a block quote in which I insert excerpts from any number of possible student reflections-on-writing to confirm my “writing-is-painful” statement. In fact, I will resist this research “strategy” in favour of a more writerly text that invites readers to write their own classroom scenarios into the imagined space.
teachers). Some Biology teachers — along with some English, Geography and Math teachers — embraced writing practice and became wildly enthusiastic in their wordmaking. In the end the preservice teachers, who went their separate ways once the course finished, were (still) not necessarily writers. Instead, our time spent together, if anything, enabled us to explore and interrogate -- to rewrite -- what it might mean to be a "writer" as well as a teacher.

My own intense love for writing, as an Honours B.Sc. undergraduate and an elementary and junior high school Phys-Ed and Science teacher, made me a perfectly biased candidate for both suspicion and suspension of writing stereotypes. Deeply immersed in and committed to writing, I wrestled continually with my own framing of the research experience, alternately embracing and resisting a Model (of writing) Pedagogy in which each and every teacher candidate might (free)write themselves into self-scripted sunsets where writing and teaching were bathed only in the most Romantic of hues. But, having acknowledged this bias, I can still say that a tremendous amount of writing (and teaching) occurred, much of it fuelled by a communally kindled desire and filled with an undeniable sense of purpose and excitement.

Throughout the workshop, we lived with words, and in words, in part through a poet who lived through words, in words. A teacher who shared his words. Listened to the words of others. He read aloud. We read aloud. With desire. Often. In a sense, we also “wrote aloud,” where writing became a thinking out loud on paper. We began to experience the many ways in which we are our words. The many ways in which we are not our words.

As I have tried to articulate elsewhere, with the help of Sumara and others, the practice of writing in the most literal sense creates a text -- a location or place for us to bring our attention, curricular and otherwise. Some have said that writing is thinking on paper, or thinking-made-visible. In this way, writing enables us to work with and interpret texts that are “us and not-

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11 My sense is that Language Across the Curriculum courses offered, as they are, within the context of a teacher education program tend to "gather" around the "commonplace" of language in teaching. Preservice teachers tended to become caught up in developing not only a "way of being" with language in their own classrooms, in their own subject disciplines, but also a language of experience for teaching itself, where language and teaching are inextricable. To live in language is to live in teaching. The term, "language across the curriculum," can give a false sense of language as some "thing," which can somehow be housed in different compartments across the curriculum. The curriculum is, rather, housed in language. I have come to think in terms of language in and around the curriculum, language as curriculum, curriculum as language where we are always and already in language.
us" — "linguistic placeholders," as Sumara (1995) has described them: "Learning about things that we identify as 'not-us' means learning about ourselves. Learning about ourselves means learning about not-us" (Sumara, 1995, p. 22). Acts of writing as we embraced them in the workshop, whether they were directed toward writing an essay or a poem, or were more spontaneous freewritings, were undertaken in a self-reflexive spirit of both interrogation and celebration. These acts enabled us to engage in both personal and collective interpretations of our textual dwelling together. Paradoxically, we often chose to embrace our acts of writing in order to let them go, becoming self-conscious about our words in a spirit of self-forgetfulness.

It seemed, then, that the best way to begin to explore the kinds of conditions that made certain kinds of writing practice possible was "simply" to begin writing. In order to explore the kinds of conditions that made certain kinds of textual dwelling together possible, we needed text. To simply begin writing, however, proved to be somewhat of a stumble-point. The group of us who came to class every day, deeply immersed in a textual kind of living, surrounded by words always, found ourselves sometimes stumbling over our own words. Many of us were caught up in early anticipation with the possibilities of being in a course with an invitation to live in writerly ways. Excited. Nervous. Tentative. But for many of us, when it came time to move pen against paper, the blank page -- at least at first sight -- seemed to be at once cavernous and restricting. This was, however, the hopeful tension that characterized much of our writing process, trying to imagine words where there were none before ...

Within this tension -- within the tangled location of the workshop -- teacher candidates began to view writing practice as a curricular form that enabled possibilities for further writing practice. In particular, wildmind writing was developed as a writing practice that included "wordmaking" and "wordplay," as a way of writing toward writing practice. A practice that enabled us, in part, to discover our selves, to see our selves thinking out loud on paper through words -- even though words sometimes resisted our writing. The blank page: Trying to imagine words where there were none before. The crowded page: Trying to imagine words where there were none before. The blank page: Trying to imagine words where there were none before. The crowded page: Trying to imagine words where there were none before.

12 There are a number of excellent sources in which to find Dennis Sumara's interpretive workings of the complex curricular acts of reading and writing (see References). For a detailed description of reading as a "focal practice," as well as "commonplace locations" in curriculum, see Sumara, D. (1995). "Response to Reading as a Focal Practice," English Quarterly, 28 (1), 18-26.
seems to be no room for more. Words.

"Wildmind" as Writing Practice for Preservice Teachers 13

We are not the poem.

-- Natalie Goldberg 14

As Bonnie Friedman, author of Writing Past Dark states, "We are afraid of writing, even those of us who love it" (1993, p. 15). Afraid. Of writing. Even those of us who love it. So where does that leave those of us who live in a place of fear and anxiety to begin with? In my experience, as a writer and teacher of writing, the single most difficult aspect of the writing process is putting words on to the page. 15 I most often begin with this acknowledgement -- of the inherent difficulty and vulnerability of exposing our thinking on paper. As a result, I often begin writing workshops with the following words from Natalie Goldberg pouring bravely from the overhead projector onto the screen and into the classroom that awaits our wordmaking:

Life is not orderly. No matter how we try to make life so, right in the middle of it we die, lose a leg, fall in love, drop a jar of applesauce. In summer, we work hard to make a tidy garden, bordered by pansies with rows or clumps of columbine, petunias, bleeding hearts. Then we find ourselves longing for the forest, where everything has the appearance of disorder; yet, we feel peaceful there ... What writing practice, like Zen practice, does is bring you back to the natural state of mind, the wilderness of your mind where there are no refined rows of gladiolas. The mind is raw, full of energy, alive and hungry. It does not think in the way we were brought up to think -- well-mannered, congenial (1990, p. xiii).

13 The writing of the dissertation has cried out often for the possibilities that hypertext might offer: "click here" to explore a particular poem or have a certain theory fleshed out in greater detail thus providing ways for the reader to move more fluidly throughout the body of the text and in turn, create their own pathways of meaning. All this to say I have chosen to include a further detailing of Goldberg's wildmind writing in the Inter-ludes that follow this chapter. I wish I could say, "Click here to go there."

14 Goldberg, Writing down the bones, p. 32.

15 The "voice" in this particular section reflects the ways in which I also acted as an instructor during various parts of the course. As the details of the writing indicate, I offered a series of writing workshops that made use of Goldberg's wildmind writing theory and practice.
There “it” is again: Zen practice. And while I have held this quotation from Goldberg close to the heart of my writing and my teaching for a long while now, I still cannot claim to really know what it means. I love the sounds of the words, for the ways in which I think they might mean and for those ways in which I will never know what they mean. My life — my writing and my teaching -- has been, and continues to be, made different by writing practice. Natalie Goldberg has offered me, and those I write with, beautiful words to write by, words that inspire more words, more practice. Goldberg’s offerings of writing practice have created the possibility for us to gather around words, to celebrate and interrogate our words and our ways with words -- for the ways they are like our experiences and for the ways they can never be like our experiences. Writing practice has helped me -- and many who have joined me in the shared experience of writing together -- to taste the fullness of words and know, too, the emptiness that words can sometimes bring. Isn’t this like the experience of teaching? Fullness and emptiness. Yes. I think so.

Funny. When I first began offering writing workshops I didn’t think too much about Goldberg’s words on Zen and writing practice. They became a kind of pedagogical talisman that streamed into the classroom on a beam of suspended light. I could point to them. Read them out loud. People would nod. Or smile. Or look away. Wildmind words seemed to be like a manufacturer’s guarantee: I could stand behind them. Despite their insistence on demystifying certain aspects of writing process -- a process that has traditionally been written for us -- Goldberg’s words were still an authority I could defer to (in case they didn’t work). And now, as I press for greater understanding, demand further articulation of writing process and pedagogy for myself, Goldberg’s words are still just “words.” I was then, as I am now, mostly interested in writing. Interested in creating conditions that enabled groups of people to write together. Within the constraints of the classroom. Forty minute periods. Countless distractions. A certain demand to produce visible “results.” These constraints are, of course, not surprising. I do not necessarily want to wish them away; they are inherent conditions of the place and space we have agreed to negotiate as curricular. This is one of the reasons I have gravitated more and more toward writing process using methods like wildmind writing.
exercises. They prove effective under certain kinds of conditions. They also create certain conditions which prove effective within certain kinds of constraints at the same time as they push out against other constraints. They point to the ways that we write as we are written. Not curricular victims but not necessarily in charge of the complex layerings of our curricular living. So I use wildmind writing exercises. I frame them within a workshop-styled pedagogy which sets writing into a certain context that must itself live within a greater curricular context. Writing. Within constraints. With possibility.

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"Life is not orderly. No matter how we try to make life so" (p. xiii) ... While I continue to find many of Goldberg's words truthful I can still only point to them. I still know little about Zen practice. I am interested, fascinated even, by what I read about the practice of Zen but it is not my experience. Similarly, I don't know if I have ever met the "wilderness ... the natural state of [my] mind" (p. xiii) -- or anyone else's for that matter. I don't think I would want to necessarily. What does continue to interest me though is the following description that Natalie Goldberg provides about writing and, in particular, about writing practice and pedagogy.

We can take a class from a writer but it is not enough. In class, we don't see how a writer organizes her day or dreams up writing ideas. We sit in class and learn what narrative is but we can't figure out how to do it. A does not lead to B. We can't make that kamikaze leap. So writing is always over there in the novels and we are over here in our seats. I know many people who are aching to be writers and have no idea how to begin. There is a great gap like an open wound (Goldberg, 1990, xv).

As I continue to think about the practice of writing, I become more and more interested in the practice of teaching. More and more interested in taking the word "writer" in Goldberg's poignant passage above and making it interchangeable with the word "teacher." It is this "close
connection between writing and teaching” (Sumara, 1996a, p. xiv) — and practice -- that fascinates me. For the way I sometimes cannot separate them out: “We can take a class from a teacher but it is not enough” … For the ways I don’t want to separate them: “We can sit in a class and learn what teaching is but we can’t figure out how to do it … there is a great gap” … I now seem to have stumbled on the subtitle of this particular piece of writing: “Wildmind as Writing Practice for Preservice Teachers.” Stumbled on to a subtitle reconfigured: “Wildmind as Teaching Practice for Preservice Writers.” I will continue to talk about writing but I will be prepared to blink hard when I reread my sentences wondering if I am reading teaching-into-writing. Reading writing-into teaching. Certainly the wall is low. I sit on its back watching the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea. The writing workshop is, indeed a generous location in which to take up questions. Of writing. Of learning. Of teaching. Of practice and theory. Knowing also that “A does not lead to B. We can’t make that kamikaze leap” …

I am more comfortable now saying that the pedagogical practices of an instructor and a particular group of preservice teachers have created conditions that foster wordmaking — a personal, creative, expressive act that en-courages people to put words together, one-after-the-other in order 17 to begin to “word their worlds” (Leggo, 1996, p. 233). As a pedagogical practice, wordmaking does not necessarily mean creating new words, though this is a possibility; it suggests, rather, the putting together of ordinary words in ways that often achieve extraordinary results. Sentences that surprise. Sentences that sometimes mean and sometimes don’t mean. Sentences that unsettle. Sentences that offer places to experiment with lines and lives as we play and write and work at (the) practice and theory in/of teacher education. I will attempt to follow these lines and lives to a place of theorymaking in Chapter Four in order to find out more about what it might mean to sometimes know (and yet not know what we know) and then, follow them further, to Chapter Six to further explore teachers writing lives.

“Following the line.” Sumara (1996a), taking up Grumet’s line, says that “following the line means taking up a life that includes reading” (p. 9). Taking up Sumara’s line, for me, means taking up a life that includes writing. Grumet and Sumara, as I interpret their work, are talking

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17 In fact, a central feature of wordmaking is that words that come one-after-the-other are not necessarily in order; this writing practice is described in detail in other parts of the dissertation.
about how the world and the word bump into each other. Often and always. I believe they are both saying, in similar and different ways, that this experience, this bumping up against the word and the world can be both exhilarating and frightening, as well as potentially disturbing. All in one breath. The breath that follows the line: meaning the world with words. I would like to suggest that following the line speaks well to the workshop experience. To the experience of teachers writing to learn. Writing to learn to teach. Further I would like to bring awareness to how fine the line is. Between teaching and learning. Between reading and writing. How the line disappears. And reappears. I would like to show how the experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing and teaching is an experience of following a line that does and does not exist. The line is real and not real. We read and write the line. We are read and written by the line.

... Old thread, old line  
of ink twisting out into the clearness  
we call space  
where are you leading me this time? 18

It fascinates and disturbs me that the preservice teachers I spend time writing and learning with are “being asked” -- are choosing and not choosing -- to follow the line while they are simultaneously asking others to follow the line. The line(s) lead(s) into and out of the classroom. Or, into one classroom and into yet another. The classroom is an interpretive location. Yes. And it is “lived as anxiety” -- as Britzman et al. (1995) suggest, “many experience the role of student teacher as an oxymoron: part student, part teacher, the student teacher is engaged in educating others while being educated ... the individual as both in need and in possession of knowledge” (p. 9). The lines are tangled. And the lives. Lines and lives. Teaching and learning. And writing. Practice ...

18 Atwood, Morning in the Burned House, p. 72
Hi Everybody,
I can't help but be analytical about the way in which Carl's class works. It's my brain. For me, one of the largest factors can be summarized in a word: responsibility. In the university setting, Carl gives us the responsibility for our own learning by TRUSTING us to do the work when he sends us off to write each morning. He trusts we will do the work and learn from it. The trusting atmosphere plays a large part in the workings of the class, but often I am scared to give that much responsibility to a class of 32 rowdy grade 8's. Perhaps I am not trusting enough or else perhaps there is a middle ground in that I can give some responsibility to students (as much as they can handle) without ending up with students walking all over their responsibilities. Just a thought.

Tim

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hi gang --

Yeah. Trust. Responsibility. I would add courage to the list. I think Carl is really trying to live these things out in his teaching. (I thought he was quite funny and eloquent today in his "confessional" about marking and grading.)

We need to be courageous in our teaching,

gary
Following the line back to Sumara and Grumet’s reading of it, I wish to reiterate, then, how the notion of “wording the world,” as play-fully as I continue to interpret its meaning in the workshop context, is also filled with uncertainty. Risk. As Sumara, citing Grumet suggests, “the reader,” and I would add, tangling their lines -- the writer, the learner, and the teacher -- “must relinquish the world in order to have the world ... [must] follow the line across the page without knowing where it leads” (Grumet, cited in Sumara, 1996a, p. 9).

Following the line: wildmind writing, as writing practice, enables a kind of “visibility factor” to our writing; being able to “see” writing happen -- is quite remarkable. One of the most impressive and helpful aspects of freewriting using playful techniques is how quickly a group of people are able to generate words, together and alone. Text(s) can be generated almost instantly. (I often use a writing exercise I have come to call “Insta-Poetry” which never fails to surprise with its results: short, pithy clusters of words that offer nuggets of crazywisdom.) The writing process-made-visible can provide glimpses into some of the ways we tend to approach learning, and in the case of preservice teachers, approach teaching, and ultimately, a life that includes the practice of both. As individuals writing within a collective we are again and again asked/invited/compelled to bear witness to our Selves -- to our private inner worlds made public, if only to our Selves -- sometimes for just the tiniest of moments. A window opens. A window closes. This is an intimate practice but it doesn’t necessarily have to always be this way; it is (“only”) writing practice. Wildmind writing, as an example of a kind of writing practice, opens certain possibilities for certain kinds of experiences but never is the goal to model a pedagogy that demands that the windows be opened or closed in a certain way. Neither is the intent to privilege certain views over others. Neither is it stressed that the window remain open, or closed for that matter. This particular writing practice, as a technique which may, at times, potentially transcend technique, is, in the end, a premise only. Try this. Give yourself to the writing. See if it works. Write fully for five minutes using this approach. See what happens. Follow the line. It’s only a window. It’s only a line. It’s only five minutes. It may open a window to a life lived: the view provided might be personal, intimate, private. We

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19 Someone calls out a “topic” and a number of lines to be written on that topic. e.g., Epistemology (2): A big word for/knowing grown up(s). Or, Baseball (5): Hotdogs/soaring through the sky on opening/day like freshly hit/homers/(hold the mustard).
might, in this way choose to see it as the window on the world -- on our world. We might also choose to see it as a window on a (possible) world -- to a life invented/created; the view provided might be playful, public.

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Through a poet's I. I have tried to indicate in a number of different ways, how this particular experience of a group of teacher candidates writing across the curriculum, immersed in various acts of teaching and learning and writing, came to be framed as a writing workshop. What I am discovering are the ways that it became a writing workshop because that is what we paid (most) attention to: writing, workshopping. I have shown the ways the workshop became a location, a place of possibility, made possible by the relations between and among all those who lived the experience.

I have, of course, offered some of the ways that my own multiple roles of researcher, teacher, learner, writer, along with those of the course instructor, also a researcher, teacher, learner, writer helped to shape the experience. Passionate about writing, in love with writing, we both helped write the course into an experience that included the practice of writing. And living. And learning. And teaching. The group of teacher candidates were pulled by this passion, pulled by this open invitation to consider the profound nature of wordmaking, of writing practice, of writing practice. While the students were written, in part, by us, we were in turn, written by the students, by their passion for learning, for writing. All the while, the workshop, as a location, became something that was us, and not-us, of us, and not of us. So, while we wrote the workshop, we were, in turn written by it, through the relations made possible between and among the two of us and the teacher candidates (whose multiple roles also included those of researcher, teacher, learner, writer), our writings themselves, and, of course, the physical location itself that offered the cold comfort of desks and chairs (which we most often abandoned).

In short, we became writers
and learners and teachers writing our selves as we were written. Together, we re-imagined the place of learning and teaching and writing as a writing workshop a place for writing for teaching, for practicing teaching and writing. A place for learning to write a life that included the practice of writing a life. In short,

We became what we paid attention to ...
working with wildmind 1
I am particularly interested in the possibilities that Natalie Goldberg’s work holds for teachers and writers and researchers involved in the everydayness of classroom life. *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within* (1986) and *Wild Mind: Living the Writer’s Life* (1990) serve up pop culture and writing pedagogy alongside a steaming espresso and a side order of biscotti in ways that has the classroom feeling very much like a café. This classroom-café dichotomy can, of course, be problematic -- the café may not be everyone’s pedagogical cup of tea and debate over whether “Aged Sumatra” or “Arabian Mocha Java” promotes a higher degree of creativity may be considered not only politically incorrect but also atheoretical by many.

I must admit that my own willingness to express my feelings and opinions on Goldberg’s work vary greatly depending on the particular context and audience in which I find myself. My Goldbergian proclamations range from evangelical accolades from the comfort of the classroom to sheepish, guarded optimism in scholarly circles. I am aware and often (overly?) sensitive to those in the academic community who would dismiss Natalie Goldberg’s approach to the practice and pedagogy of writing as irreverent and unscholarly. Nonetheless, I have decided, finally that the café and the classroom might mutually inform one another in some interesting ways and so I press on here, as an advocate of Goldberg’s philosophy of writing practice, and invite others to suspend various states of disbelief -- if only temporarily -- encouraged, in turn, by others like Hans Ostrom and Wendy Bishop (1994) who co-edit an important collection titled *Colours of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy*.

Ostrom, a novelist, poet and professor of English at the University of Puget Sound supports me in my claim that thinking about writing pedagogy as being more café-like than classroom-driven is not, in fact, “a retreat from theory” but, rather, offers a way of connecting theory and pedagogy which “in itself suggests that students are worth the trouble -- that to a certain extent, theorizing pedagogy honours the students and our profession” (Ostrom, 1994, p. xxi).

This group that seeks to bring writing practice and theory to bear upon one another includes academics and scholars, innovative practitioners, “whose innovations emerge from the laboratory of their own experience” (Sarbo & Moxley, 1994, p. 142), poets and novelists,
homespun literary hounds, and self-appointed writing experts and enthusiasts who operate writing groups based out of their own living rooms and kitchens.

This interlude, then, represents the beginnings only of an ongoing effort to investigate and interrogate the boundaries and inter-textual spaces that have begun to give this pedagogical niche shape -- a shape that finds classroom pedagogy more and more influenced by popular culture as both continue to embrace the writing life. As Donald Murray (1990) has suggested, "we need all forms of research and the testimony of those who produce the texts we read and respect" (p. xiv), whether the symposia take place in conference rooms or in kitchens. We can now read writers writing about other writers, about themselves, and about their craft. Annie Dillard’s (1982) Living by Fiction, and (1989) The Writing Life, Donald Murray’s (1990) Shoptalk: Learning to Write with Writers, and Bonnie Friedman’s (1993) Writing Past Dark all move between star-gazing pop culture to in-depth explorations of the writerly life and "how writing happens."

Theory and research into writing pedagogy has also burgeoned as writing has been given a life that lives and breathes beyond the classroom walls. In addition to "response theory," conferencing and workshopping (Murray, 1985), "writing with power," freewriting, power of voice and "audience as focusing force" (Elbow, 1981), epistemic writing and "plural I’s" (Coles, 1978), emerging writers are also being invited in greater numbers to bring their "wildminds" (Goldberg, 1990) to class.

Goldberg’s “rules for writing” -- made to be broken -- include: "keep your hand moving, lose control, be specific, don’t think, don’t worry about punctuation, spelling or grammar, and, you are free to write the worst junk in [North] America" (1990, pp. 2-4). Writers are encouraged to apply these rules in timed-writing exercises. When used on a regular basis as writing practice, these writing sessions help provide ways to move beyond "monkey mind" -- the tireless (and ruthless) editor who tends to rule most of our writing -- toward a deeper, more generous and creative level of writing that has the ability to surprise the writer with unexpected insights and splashes of poetry in prose, whether one is working on a dissertation or composing a life.
At one level Goldberg creates an idealized, romantic version of living and teaching and talking about writing. (Is there anything more to it than finding a café of one's own, the perfect cappuccino and a PowerBook with a reliable battery pack?) At another level, I would suggest that Goldberg needs to be taken seriously by academics and do-it-yourselfers alike; her approach to living and writing offers much to all those who write, from the emerging neophyte to the seasoned veteran. In fact, many of these kinds of distinctions and polarizations that exist between beginner and expert are collapsed through Goldberg's "wildmind" practice and philosophy. There is the pen and the paper and the Selves that we bring to our writing, time and time again. Both the tenured and the tenuous must put pen to paper, fingers to keyboard, and place one word after the other in straight and crooked lines. We all connect the dots with words, waiting with apprehension and excitement, nervousness and composure to see what will come out the other side: our stories, our essays, our grant applications, our letters of resignation -- of indignation and reservation, our poems, our earnest autobiographies, our lavish fictions, our diary entries, our dissertations, our lavish autobiographies, our earnest fiction, our research reports, and our love letters to the world. In all of these forms and more, we bring some part of our hearts and minds to the business/pleasure of writing.

Wildmind writing, if we embrace it as Goldberg suggests we embrace it, becomes a belief, a way of being, a pledge, a craft, a commitment, a caring. Or, we can view wildmind writing simply as a premise: try this, give yourself to the words, see if it works. Then: try it again, give yourself to the words, see if it works. Wildmind demands that we let go of ourselves to find ourselves. Turn the spell check off, forget the word count, don't worry about what comes next. Goldberg reminds us again and again to let go of our "monkey minds":

*I should be doing my income taxes. This sentence sucks. My committee will think this is absolute trash. I think this absolute trash. There must be a better way of describing the sounds of the forest. I always screw up under pressure. This thing is due tomorrow. I'll never be a writer. I'll never get my degree. I wonder what the score in the ball game is? I don't want to be here. I could be board-sailing right now. I wish I could learn to spell apparent. Am I having fun yet?*

Goldberg encourages us to work with our wildminds -- the "wilderness of our mind[s] where there are no refined rows of gladiolas" (1990. p. xiii). You simply start with a blank page and
begin to write:

Right now I'm staring hard at this TV blue screen, an academic artist whose coffee-stained words and cappuccino dreams of market stalls and strings of flowers take me in and out of my word-processed world while I attempt to meet this deadline and stay within a specified wordcount. Slumbering on a bed of semi-colons now, rearranging rows of letters, I count the commas until I drop off or come to the end of a page.

With Wildmind, there is no one way to write a proposal, no perfect place for a semi-colon, no correct way to write a conclusion, no right way to write. Wildmind is rooted in practice. Wildmind is practice. Practice makes for more practice. Wildmind is unpractice. Wildmind is like walking, one foot in front of other. We can always throw our writing away later, or perhaps chip and chop, shape and sculpt our blocks of words into different forms. We don’t have to go into thesis-mode when the going gets tough. Our writing is there to surprise us, to catch us off guard when we’re not looking. Our writing is there to teach us. The lessons are built-in. Wildmind is “writing down the bones” (Goldberg, 1986, p. 4).

Of course, those who write and teach and research know all of this, right? There is nothing new here. Wildmind makes common sense. So, tell us something we don’t know. Sorry. That’s all there is. Keep your pen moving. Write. Then write some more. Follow your hunches. Write. Then write some more. Learn to write with passion. Learn (to ignore) the rules as you see fit. Does the writing have to be personal? Yes and no. We are not our words. We don’t write to freeze our lives in an easy to view snapshot: just another “Kodak moment.” We write to compose our lives, to make up li(n)es and li(v)es. We are not our latest poem or academic paper. We are not hard-wired to our hard drives. We can always unplug.

I watch class after class trip and stumble on to their own wildminds: tentatively, reluctantly, anxiously, excitingly. My goal is not to create a café/classroom dichotomy, nor is it to fashion an either/or-styled pedagogical discourse in which one is either using wildmind or pulling teeth. There are myriad stories to be (de)constructed about both café and classroom as places where our dreams for teaching and learning are both informed and contested. In the same way that
cafed images of the writerly life slide easily into stereotype and become problematic, for example, so too, the classroom writing life. In a certain light, everyone might be considered "A Writer." Such well-intentioned pedagogy is simply not sustainable. There must be something more at work.

At the same time, writing pedagogy has come to a place where we now recognize and accept the notion that writing, like life (or life, like writing) is messy, unpredictable stuff. To live and write in the world is to live and write with "all the contradiction, paradox and living difficulty that such a world requires and invites" (Jardine, 1994a, p. 513).
working with wildmind too
Timed Writing #147a: 20

Whenever I think of lime green, a dump truck rolls up and pours red bricks on the hot blue asphalt now one thing for certain is that the land the sea and the sky are just about glad to be issuing parking tickets to any and all soldiers because a war of words is better than no war at all and the trouble with grey is that mauve was invented and the light bulb’s discovery pales in comparison falling into shadowless night after night green stars fly softly as if space were a garage door and never have I felt so awkward and ashamed at the sight of so much garbage drifting like swans toward the sea the surf belching burgers and every crazy employee you’ve ever had decided to show up in last night’s dream and the sands move inching toward blue dawn stars attempt to reinvent themselves Beethoven removing his socks...

Poem #1:

Stars
attempt to reinvent themselves
flying softly as if space were certain
into the shadowless night
so many grey soldiers, drifting like swans
toward the sea

Poem #2:

One thing for certain:
the sea
the sky
a war
the stars
space
the night
I felt so crazy.

Poem #3:

A war of words is better
than no war at all
the land, the sea, the sky issued
parking tickets
while a dump truck pours red bricks on the hot blue asphalt
garbage drifting
like swans toward the sea
the surf belching burgers
every crazy employee in your dream
stars attempt to reinvent themselves

A war of words is better than no words at all.

20 We used timed writing exercises (see description of Goldberg’s “rules for writing” in Working with Wildmind 1) as a regular part of each class and would then proceed to play with the words generated, sometimes working in small groups to chip and chop, shape and sculpt blocks of words into forms we chose to call poetry. The freewrites in this interlude are my own. (Teacher candidates, for the most part, freewrote in their journals and notebooks which I did not collect as part of my gathering of data.) The poems presented here were written by teacher candidates who took the words I generated during the freewrite and shaped them into forms that pleased them.
Free-write #147b:

Lime green reminds me of blue shadows that creep across brown rivers sliding sliding sliding toward red oceans hoping beyond hope they might fill up with enough of life's liquid ok enough emotional stuff baggage blah blah woof woof sometimes you feel like a nut sometimes you feel three parts whole two parts underwater again a constant theme -- a liquid metaphor that keeps my writing afloat when words run dry dryer than any desert you could have crawled across during any lifetime solo as the time beyond birth beyond what the sand might offer faster still worlds bloom like desert flowers in a nighttime sky -- a sea of golden brown as seen from a lime green balloon a window on some kind of world some kind of wonderful trip into another lifetime and time again you can only nail the words lightly upon the wall hoping another might pass by and wander what the letters mean what symbols have fallen across the horizon of horizons bluer than blue should ever be green yet what colour is enough to stop us all from ever naming the patterns that form behind our eyes, falling and falling as though this is all just a rehearsal and soon someone who knows the truth will raise their hand as if by some great and hidden cue.

Poem #1:

What symbols have fallen
across the horizon of horizons
bluer than blue
shall ever be
green
yet what colour
is enough to stop us
falling and falling
as though this is all
just a rehearsal
hoping beyond hope
they might fill up
with enough of life.

You can only nail the words lightly upon the wall.

Poem #2: Symbols fallen

You can only nail the words lightly upon the wall
Symbols fallen across the horizon
naming the patterns that form behind our eyes

When words run dry
dryer than any desert
words bloom like desert flowers
solo as the time beyond birth

And soon someone who knows the truth
will rise as if by some great and hidden cue.
Freewrite #147c:

If gold were an ocean I'd name gold blue and ask for a recount or trade every one of my hockey cards in for a bigger bathtub or maybe wash less often or count the times like tiny beads of sweat that I have wished for the ocean to be my lover oh well every good boy deserves flavour and salt water cappuccinos are a dime a dozen just think of all the world's tides just think of the way the lake fell away and no longer exists outside this building that no longer exists outside just think about the time your cat flew across the kitchen in some bird-like dream -- a kitty mantra -- a feline in canary's clothing yellow or coal mine or death deaf as a fish is some other like some government sometimes poetry can kiss your cheek and all you feel is that the air has moved and changed everything and nothing else matters and what if it did and the more you eat the more you forget that poetry is breath is the substance that makes you hungry and fills you full of summer evening and violin concertos happening in your underwear ...

Poem #1: If Gold

If gold were the ocean 
I'd name gold blue 
And think of all the world’s tides 

That poetry is breath 
In some bird-like dream 
Of summer evening 
Wished for the ocean 
To be my lover.

Poem #2: Sometimes Poetry

Sometimes poetry 
Can kiss your cheek 
And all that you feel 
Has moved and changed 
And nothing else exists 

Less often I have wished for 
The air and everything 
As breath 
Your cheek 
And nothing else 
That poetry is 
Just think less 
Often 

Summer evenings and violin concertos 
And nothing else 
Can kiss your cheek 
Just think ...
CHAPTER FOUR

Through The Tangle

Can a study of the self studying education create new conditions of learning and the making of pedagogical insight?

-- Deborah Britzman and Alice Pitt 1

The question posed by Deborah Britzman and Alice Pitt (1996) in the epigram above startles me. Into awareness. A new(er) awareness of what it is I am doing, learning, writing, practicing, researching, in and through this dissertation: Can a study of the self studying education create new conditions of learning and the making of insight? The question shows myself to me in a way that enables me to participate in “the making of (an) insight”: “Ah, I didn’t know (I knew) this before.” Until now. Didn’t know (this is) what I was doing: attempting to enact a study of the self, studying education. Imagining the curious time of researching. Pedagogy.

As Elizabeth Ellsworth states in her self-reflexive wonderings about her own practice, of teaching and learning, of writing and reading -- of researching, “without consciously intending it or grasping it, I somehow ‘knew’ ...(1996, p. 142). From the beginnings of the writing of this dissertation, which has no real beginning, I knew I was writing about the tangle. I knew that my experience of writing -- about the experience of writing and researching lived experience -- would be necessarily tangled since I also knew that the experience of writing and researching are themselves tangled, knew that lived experience is itself tangled. The writing of the dissertation, then, has been an interesting trip through the tangle. An interesting trip. Through the tangle. Because it seems impossible. Not to trip. Through this tangle:

What is the experience of a self studying a self studying selves studying (them)selves studying education?

While I somehow knew the tangle, knew about the tangle, knew I wanted to “study” the (lived experience) of the tangle, I did not know what would be involved in learning to experience the

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tangle. I did not know how involving it would be learning to write the experience of the tangle, learning to experience the writing of the tangle, learning to experience the tangling of the writing. While I knew all of these things about the tangle, I did not know the tangle.

This chapter, then, represents an attempt to theorize the tangle through the tangled practice of theory, just as it is an attempt to practice the tangle through the tangled theory of practice. Theorypracticetheory. Practicetheorypractice. The tangle: yroechtectcarpyroeht ...

It is the experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing that has brought me to the tangle, helped to create a location through which to (continue to) write the tangle, as well as be written by it. So it is the practice of writing that I will continue to practice, continue to theorize. This chapter, as well as the final chapter, are both attempts to theorize writing practice -- a practice that includes both wordmaking and wordplay. In so doing, both chapters (Four and Six) are also attempts to practice theory, attempts to practice theorizing by practicing writing practice.

It's easy to see, then, why this trip is through the tangle. Easy to see why it's difficult to move through the tangle without tripping, since theorizing writing practice can only be accomplished through writing practice, which, itself, becomes a way of writing practice, which, itself, is a way of writing theory. So (writing) theory and (writing) practice are en-tangled and can only be practiced and theorized through the tangle. The theorypracticetheory that I am enacting through writing theory and writing practice is made possible through wordplay which helps to create a (shifting) location through which we can continue to write theory and write practice. This chapter seeks to play with words as a way of theorizing and practicing the tangle through the tangle of wordplay, in an attempt to enact wordplay and wordmaking as a writing practice which is, itself, generative, pedagogical, curricular, relational, hermeneutic, psychoanalytic, interpretive, fecund, fictional, and poetic.

Through the tangle of practice, here is an attempt at (a) theory: writing practice, that includes wordplay and wordmaking, enables teacher candidates to begin to experience their own writing
as a form of reading -- a form of reading themselves. Further, writing practice creates conditions of learning to “read writing” as (a) practice which, in turn, enables teacher candidates to read themselves more generously (because it’s “only” practice). In addition, it enables teacher candidates to read the writing of others -- their own students, for example -- as practice which, in turn, offers a way of reading themselves as others, as well as reading others as themselves. Writing practice, then, which includes wordmaking and wordplay, enables teacher candidates to create their own particular forms of writing practice, of writing practice, which is itself a theory, a way of writing theory -- a way of theorymaking.

So, although wordplay never appears to take itself seriously, it can, in fact, play a serious role in the work of writing practice and theory. And while wordplay tends to give itself a bad name and can end up becoming a caricature of itself, it can also help make pedagogy more than (just) a play on words; that is, it can create conditions that help make pedagogy. Or, in more scholarly terms, using Britzman and Pitt’s formulation, writing practice can help create new conditions of learning and the making of pedagogical insight. Similarly, writing practice that includes wordplay can also create conditions that help make poetry more than (just) a play with words; that is, it can create conditions that help make poetry. Writing practice, then, can help create new conditions of learning and the making of pedagogical insight, which in turn helps make practice; this “making of practice” might then be called a kind of poetics of practice.

Wordplay makes up words. Wordplay makes up its own rules. Wordplay can be a clever performance -- a play that draws attention to itself. Wordplay can be (an) exclusive (performance): “Watch this. See if you can get it, see if you can get what I mean.” Wordplay can, in this way, close down meaning. But wordplay can also be performative -- a generous performance that invites others in by opening up meaning(s). Wordplay can make meaning in/visible. More visible. Less visible. Wordplay can make multiple meaning(s) (im)possible.

Wordplay is tangled. Wordplay can further tangle, just as it can be an offer to untangle. Meaning. A trip through the tangle. A trip. Through. The tangle. The construction of a
sentence, the placement of words, of signs and signifiers -- the wording -- can intentionally trip. The reader. In wordplay, the words play differently on the page. The words play. Differently. On the page. In ways that make different meanings available to the reader/writer/reader. So, while wordplay is, itself, a form of tripping or stumbling, it is a tripping or stumbling-toward-meaning, differently. A trip or a stumble is thus an opportunity. An invitation. To learning. To read our own writing, as-if for the first time. As if we were learning. For the first time. Differently. Wordplay is an opportunity, then, to reconfigure reading and writing. (And also learning and teaching.) To see how our lines and our lives are tangled, separated by a fine line only. A fine line between reading and writing. Ourselves. Learning and teaching. Our selves. In practice and in theory. The more we play with words, the more we bring the awareness of wordplay forward into our practice. The more conscious we become of the play of words, the more time we spend “playing” (where playing is a paying attention to) with words -- the more we bring the practice of wordplay forward into our awareness. The familiar becomes strange becomes familiar.

Despite the ways that wordplay might create possibilities for new conditions of learning and the making of pedagogical insight, I continue to worry about wordplay. Worry that some might grow weary of wordplay before all possible meanings have been played out. I wonder whether it is possible to invite others to become serious about wordplay. To re-cognize the pedagogical possibilities in the work of wordplay. Re-cognize the tangle through wordplay. Recognize the tangle in wordplay. To recognize that wordplay is a significant part of the experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing. Knowing that wordplay is tangled. That wordplay is itself tangled. Knowing also that the tangle involves wordplay. “Somehow knowing” ... the tangle is the play of words ... the tangle is itself wordplay ... the tangle is itself ...

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To return to the writing. Of the dissertation. To return to (the theory and practice of) writing the tangle ... I have attempted with varying degrees of success to learn to live well with the tangle, knowing -- at least at an intellectual level -- that as a time of working with/in and through the tangle, the dissertation cannot extricate itself to gaze upon the objects of its inquiry (Davis, 1996). (Nor can I.) I have “known” that the tangle would be like this without knowing
what the tangle would be, or how I would be made different by it. In a hermeneutic sense, I am always already re-cognizing the tangle, knowing I am inextricably part of its relations. The tangled relations. They/we are familiar. As David Jardine (1995b) notes,

- this commonplace, lived familiarity is a fascinating phenomenon because it suggests that, prior to any deliberate and methodological “educational inquiry,” we find ourselves somehow already in relation ... already sharing in a complex, ambiguous, often unvoiced understanding of the constitution of the community of teaching (p. 105).

So while I have always been familiar at some level with the tangle, and while my intention has always been to enact a kind of research that might honour the tangle, I am still and always un/familiar with the tangle -- with what might happen next. My attempts to live well with the tangle in a methodological sense do not translate well to a “method.” Following Jardine (1995b) further into the tangle,

- Interpretation seeks out its affinity to its “topic.” One does not have “interpretation” in hand as a method and then go out looking for a topic ... Rather, something becomes a topic only when its interpretive potency strikes us (p. 110).

In some senses, I thought I had found the tangle and wanted to “use it” as a way to interpret “the lived features of the community of teaching and the wonders and difficulties of student-teaching they bespeak” (Jardine, 1995b, p. 105). Now, I am struck by the tangle, recognizing that it has found me. Startled by how un/familiar it has become/is becoming. Hermeneutics is itself tangled. The tangle is itself hermeneutic ...

I remain, meantime, particularly (self) conscious of being lost in the tangle, unable to write my way through the tangle, unable to sort or explain it -- for myself or others in a satisfactory way. To reiterate, re-cognizing the tangle at an intellectual level has not helped me to know the tangle. Thus, my reading of my own experience of writing the dissertation feels, at times, unsatisfactory in the sense that I feel a certain pedagogical responsibility for understanding and for explicating
my understandings -- for wanting to untangle the tangle.

Before going further, it is important to note, however, that the "making of insight," I am self-reflexively attempting to articulate here, at least as Britzman and Pitt, through Anna Freud refer to it, is not simply a matter of reflection. As Britzman and Pitt (1996) note,

At first glance, this investigation [of the nature of learning and teaching] may seem reminiscent of reflective practice. But the nature and subject of the reflection -- in terms of the time it spans and the preoccupations encouraged -- is something other than a linear recall of a specific interaction or lesson ... something different than the impulse to correct what is taken as a problem (p. 117).

That is, the tangle does not present a problem to practice, only an opportunity to problematize practice, to become implicated in the problematics of learning to practice (to write or teach, or to teach writing, and, even to write teaching). Shoshana Felman (1987) describes it further,

This new mode of investigation and learning has ... a very different temporality from the conventional linear -- cumulative and progressive -- temporality of learning, as it has traditionally been conceived by pedagogical theory and practice. Proceeding not through linear progression but through breakthroughs, leaps, discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action, the [psycho]analytic learning process puts in question the traditional pedagogical belief in intellectual perfectibility, the progressivist view of learning as a simple one-way road from ignorance to knowledge (p. 76).

Breakthroughs. Leaps. Discontinuities. Regressions. Deferred action. Through some or all of these, the making of insight becomes more than simply gaining (a)(new) understanding(s) of what the dissertation (and, in turn, the tangle) is about; it is, rather, an understanding of a different order, an insight that implicates me in my own learning. The making of insight concerns the nature of how I am made different by my engagement with the dissertation itself. By how I am. Made. Different. As Felman (1987) suggests,
... the significance of the discovery appears only in retrospect, because insight is never purely cognitive; it is to some extent always performative (incorporated in an act, a doing) and to that extent precisely it is not transparent to itself. Insight is partially unconscious, partially partaking of a practice. And since there can never be a simultaneous, full coincidence between practice and awareness, what one understands in doing and through doing appears in retrospect ... (p. 15).

This "new" insight, then, in which I am "suddenly" aware of the tangle in all its relations in (a) distinctly different way(s), feels like a discovery, a sudden glimpse into knowing. The glimpse, however, is itself a tangling as it shows me writing the tangle. Performing the tangle, where insight and understanding "are always performative -- always a strategy for constructing knowledge" (Ellsworth, 1996, p. 139). Writing the tangle as I am written by it, where writing -- and learning and researching -- are (always) a sometimes-stumbling route to/ward the making of insight. I am always having to make insight in/through practice -- the practice of writing, or researching, or teaching -- always having to perform it even though I am not always aware, not always knowing, where the performance is leading or even what it is I am performing. I must (always) discover (the making of) insight in order to bring my (new/er) awareness forward into practice, as well as bring my (re)new(ed) practice forward into awareness, because, to repeat Felman's words, "what one understands in doing and through doing appears in retrospect" (p. 15). The resulting performance is itself (a) tangle(d). The tangle is itself performative ...

Interesting, how I seem to have un/consciously positioned myself in a place -- a location -- which is a tangle. Or, to go a step further, I have not only discovered myself in a position of tangle, I have also discovered that I have enacted, have been enacting -- will always be enacting the tangle as a location from which to consider the conditions for a life that includes the practice of writing, of teaching, of theorizing writing and teaching -- of researching the theory and practice of writing (and) pedagogy. Practicing and theorizing -- writing -- pedagogy. Writing pedagogy.
Q: Can the tangle be conceptualized?
A: The tangle is itself conceptual, it both invites and resists conceptualization. In this way the tangle is an invitation to resistance, an invitation that resists, a resistance that is inviting ...

Turning The Tangle into a Curiosity -- Turning Curiosity into a Tangle

The curious time of pedagogy is the time of knowing too much and learning too little, of being too early and too late.

-- Deborah Britzman

Can a study of the self studying education create new conditions for learning and the making of pedagogical insight? Without knowing, without being aware of my knowing, this question has been moving through these words, through this work, moving it forwards. And backwards. Visibly and invisibly. As Britzman and Pitt (1996) describe it, “casting learning backward and forward and providing more space for [me] to consider [my own] conflicts in learning” (p. 123). In this way, the writing of the dissertation continues to teach me what the dissertation is about: a study of the self studying education. Creating new conditions of learning that enable me to continue to bring my awareness forward into practice as well as to bring my practice forward into awareness. The dissertation is always already a “writing toward awareness.”

I write/use the dissertation(-as-tangle metaphor) not simply to point out how the experience of writing -- in this case a dissertation of a life that includes the writing of lives -- is tangled, though this has certainly been true of my experience. The tangle, of writing and teaching and learning, is, of course, marked by uncertainty and pratfalls, full of twists and turns. I also want more than to show how the dissertation re-presents a time of learning/living -- for myself and for those whose lives are re-presented here -- that is full of ambivalence and charged with

2 Britzman, Lost subjects, contested objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning (in press).

3 I borrow Ellsworth’s notion of “reading toward awareness” from “Situated Response-ability to Student Papers,” which I refer to often in this chapter.

4 In an earlier draft of the dissertation, written some months ago, this sentence was written: “I make use of the dissertation-as-tangle metaphor” ... I have now changed it, significantly, to “I write the dissertation(-as-tangle metaphor),” because of the discovery through the making of insight, that the tangle is no longer a metaphor, at least one that is mine to “make use of”. The bracketing, more than wordplay, signifies the ways that “writing the dissertation” is (also) writing the tangle which also means being written by the tangle, being written by the dissertation.
resistance; tangled. Following Britzman (in press), I strive to show how such anxiety and ambivalence and resistance — with/in/through the tangle -- become pedagogical -- in Britzman's terms, how "resistance to learning must be made into a curiosity to learn from resistance ... ambivalence ... must be tolerated." 5 Thus, "[w]hat becomes pedagogical is the possibility of learners implicating themselves in their learning" (Britzman & Pitt, 1996, p. 117).

The curious time of pedagogy, then, finds me implicated, deeply, in a learning that is mine and not mine. I am implicated in the sense in which the word means to fold or twist together. Intertwine. Tangle. Consider the practice of writing. A dissertation. A Self. A dissertation of a Self writing. A self writing a dissertation of other selves. Writing. The curious time of pedagogy is a time of considering what the implications might be of not knowing what you know. Or, not knowing that you know. This is the disturbing nature of knowing itself. This startle -- this involuntary start -- the sudden recognition of not knowing sets knowing in motion, causes a ripple. The involuntary aspect of being startled suggests that there are things going on that are somehow independent of our will, unintentional. Unconscious. There is knowing beyond our awareness. Knowing beyond our knowing. Knowing that doesn't know itself. Knowing that doesn't know it knows itself.

In the context of teacher education, the notion that knowing is in some way "beyond us," out of our control can be the source of further disturbance to our understanding (which, in this case, appears to be a misunderstanding) of how we teach. How we learn to teach. How we learn. It suggests, contrary to many of our pedagogical assumptions, that learning to teach has more to do with learning to learn. Teaching and learning are in this way, profoundly connected. (As well as profoundly tangled.) Bringing this insight forward into awareness: teaching is a form of learning. This insight begs the question of how we might then bring this awareness forward into practice. Following the work of educators like Felman (1987), Britzman (1991; in press), Britzman and Pitt (1996), Ellsworth (1996), and Pitt (1996) who bring psychoanalytic insight to bear on pedagogy, we might be best served by attending to the disturbing conditions that our learning makes available to us, pay attention to the ways in which we are disturbed by our own

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5 All of the Britzman (in press) citations are taken from a talk given at UBC on July 16, 1996 by Deborah Britzman entitled, "That Lonely Discovery: Anne Frank, Anna Freud and the Question of Pedagogy," which has become a chapter in the forthcoming Lost Subjects, contested objects.
Britzman (in press) makes an important case for educators to begin acknowledging learning as a psychic event "charged with resistance to knowledge." This resistance, however, as Britzman notes, is a "precondition for learning from knowledge and the grounds of knowledge itself." This, of course, is yet another sense in which pedagogy -- and its relations -- are tangled. The work of Felman, Britzman and others does not suggest that we begin to understand pedagogy as a dynamic that is tangled. Rather, it suggests acknowledging that pedagogy is itself tangled. Further, the tangle is itself pedagogic; that is, it becomes pedagogic as we "make pedagogy" through the tangle by beginning to acknowledge what Britzman terms the deep attachment to and implication in knowledge. (Jardine, in a hermeneutic rendering, might suggest that learning trails dark and chaotic attachments, entrails that require our attendings.)

This psychoanalytic insight points to the ways that learning is itself tangled. Like hermeneutic interpretation, psychoanalytic practice and theory point to the rich and troubling ambiguity, as well as the dynamic complexity of pedagogy. This "learning of a different order" suggests that the making of insight comes from a provocation. There is something "at stake" in this kind of learning as it disturbs us, disturbs our (psychological) self -- our psyche -- and, in turn, our understanding is irrevocably changed. As Felman (1987) states, there is little room for "ready-made interpretations, for knowledge given in advance" (p. 81); rather it is part of a "dramatic pedagogical performance" (p. 73) that is enacted as we spend time with each other in classrooms.

In their provocative essay, "Pedagogy and Transference: Casting the Past of learning into the Presence of Teaching," which I have been drawing upon as a resource, Deborah Britzman and Alice Pitt state,

In thinking about our work with beginning teachers, we have become curious about the shift from a preoccupation with teaching other people to teach to a consideration

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6 The phrase "making pedagogy" seems a rather crude construction but I am somehow compelled to use it as a way of implicating myself in my own messy learning of the tangle, my own messy tangle of learning. I use it, loosely, as the equivalent of the making of pedagogical insight that continues to echo through this chapter by way of the opening epigram by Britzman and Pitt (1996).
of the conditions for one’s own learning (1996, p. 117, emphasis mine).

In the process of becoming willingly tangled with/in this “shift” -- for the ways I might be made different by attending to some of the “internal conflicts” that structure some of my own patterns of learning, I have, at times, questioned, resisted, the strong pull of self-reflexivity required to make sense of this “difficult knowledge” (Britzman, in press). Perhaps, it has been the “fear” of being swallowed by self-reflexivity and thus losing sight of the “other” selves -- the teacher candidates – whose writing lives I am living in relation with/to. (And, perhaps it is also for fear of re-cognizing myself.) Britzman and Pitt (1996), themselves, ask,

What does it mean to bring this [psychoanalytic] demand to pedagogy? We accept this question knowing the vulnerabilities it poses for those learning to teach and for those already teaching. From the vantage of newcomers, such an odd demand seems to be asking student teachers to forget about their students and to reduce all engagements to the psychological self (p. 118).

Learning and teaching, self and other, seem to be caught up in the tangle. Through the tangle, they become visible, then invisible, then visible. As learning and teaching approach one another, as each becomes less distinct, the tangle opens out into all its (tangled) relations. Britzman (in press) describes the complexity of the pedagogical dynamic in this way: “learning, it turns out, is crafted from a curious set of relations -- the self’s relation to its own otherness and the self’s relation to the other’s otherness.” When we come together to learn, in this case within the context of teacher education, we become part of a complex dynamic in which knowledge, or knowing is not a “substance” that can be transmitted or gathered in our efforts to mean, but rather a “structural dynamic” that we enter in to. Psychoanalytic insight (like hermeneutics) thus lends itself to the tangle -- of learning and teaching -- as a way of learning to live well with the difficulty of the tangle, even as it reveals the tangled nature of learning and teaching. 

_Psychoanalysis is itself tangled._ The tangle is itself psycho/analytic.

Judith Robertson (1997) offers helpful insight into the tangled movement of self and other, of
inner and outer, in her work with teacher candidates. She helps me to construct a frame for the complex process of identity negotiation that takes place through the tangle. Like Britzman and Pitt, Robertson’s work involves the study of “the unconscious and its conflicts in educators, and … the role of language in mediating between conscious and subconscious realities” (Robertson, 1997, p. 29). She describes the “unconscious … as a set of dynamics that structure the psyche and social lives of all human beings in unexpectedly significant ways” … and, significantly, … “how the inner lives and learning of beginning teachers relate -- at least through language use -- to the external worlds of teaching” (Robertson, 1997, p. 29).

This connection of “inner” and “outer,”-- of psyche and social -- is a significant connection for me in and through the tangle of identity negotiation, for the ways it implicates the tangle as a location for “the psychic work of making identity” (Pitt, 1996, p. 38). The tangle, then, becomes a place of crisis for the negotiation of identity. A place of negotiation for the crisis of identity. The tangle, borrowing the words of Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1996), offers “a location for self-interpretation” (p. 77). Following Sumara and Luce-Kapler’s (1996) work on “negotiating identities while learning to teach,”

- a sense of self-identity does not really have a fixed location inside the body of the individual but, rather, is ambiguously located amid the human subject’s perceived and interpreted relations in the world … a sense of self or communal identity is not stable, continuous or fixed. Identity cannot be contained within immutable categories (p. 69).

So recognizing and acknowledging the study of the self studying education is, in fact, creating new conditions of learning that allow for the making of pedagogical insight … through the tangle … a self studying selves studying selves studying education. It would be unimaginable to consider questions of teacher candidates’ negotiations of identity without re-considering my own. Identity negotiation is itself tangled. The tangle is itself an identity negotiation … I can’t see from only one location. I am multiply located. I am located in the tangle which is neither here nor there. Not this nor that.
Through the tangle I re-cognize that identity is always and already tangled, and that the time of learning, "the time of pedagogy" is, as Britzman and Pitt have said, a "casting the time of learning backward and forward" (1996, p. 122). The curious time of pedagogy is a con-fuse-ing (of) time. In a tangled way, the self and other become necessarily con/fused. The tangle enables us to remain curious about this shift in the focus of teacher education, from the central question of "How do we teach (other) people to teach?" to "How do people learn?" (Britzman et al., 1995, p. 2). Enables us to remain curious about the ways that learning and teaching, self and other, are always con/fusing.

The ENED 426 experience became curious about this shift: from a "preoccupation" to a "consideration." [As a "side-bar"-- a preoccupation makes for an interesting pedagogical play on words when those words are the talk of teacher education: a pre-occupation. Something we do before occupying the place of the teacher. We worry about taking on the occupation of teaching. How we might keep ourselves and our students occupied. We want to learn about teaching. We want to know how to teach. Although there is always much talk of learning in teacher education, we tend to focus on teaching in ways that, in an ironic sense, often leaves our own learning (as teachers) unexplored. We want to know enough about teaching in order to feel secure enough to teach. We want to know everything first, learn it, so that we can be in charge of learning. We tend to concentrate on how we can help our students learn in ways that ensures that we won't be put in the awkward or vulnerable place of "learner" ourselves. We thus avoid implicating ourselves. Our own learning goes uninterrogated, undisturbed.]

As Britzman et al. claim in their "Report of the Academic Framework Committee,"7 teacher education programs organized around the question of teaching people to teach shut out "consideration of more complex conversations about what conflictive forms of knowledge, identity, community, language and its practices might mean in education" (p. 2). Questions of teaching people to teach do not acknowledge the tangle. As I understand it, then, leaving (the word) "teaching" out of conversations that attempt to address some of our most fundamental concerns as educators, works, paradoxically, to open up "unprecedented teaching possibilities,

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7 A document put forward by the Academic Framework Committee at York University (Britzman et al, 1995).
renewing both the questions and the practice of education" (Felman, 1987, p. 70).

Britzman’s (1991) earlier work in *Practice Makes Practice* provides a particularly insightful account of the contradictory realities “that beckon and disturb” those learning to teach (p. 2). In examining the ways teachers come to construct teaching identities, she illustrates “how systemic constraints become lived as individual dilemmas” (p. 3). In constructing “the student teacher as the site of conflict,” Britzman foregrounds the messy problematics of learning to teach -- what Jo Anne Pagano (1990) has referred to as “the conundrum of identification” in teacher education -- where “taking up an identity means suppressing aspects of the self” (Britzman, 1991, p. 4). Of course, postmodern notions of identity do much to confound, conflate, celebrate and de/construct our understandings of self. So we might interpret Britzman’s statement about “suppressing aspects of the self” as a suppression of certain selves in favour of other selves in the complex process of identity formation involved in becoming a teacher. Whether one sees this kind of postmodern self-reflexivity as “arch or honest, as irritating or entertaining” (Hutcheon, 1992, p. 11) this kind of discourse -- this language of practice and theory in teacher education with its concern for itself as text, as language is hard to ignore in our curricular considerations of identity. As Paula Salvio (1996) notes, “the delineation of a self too often demands the exclusion or expulsion of other possible selves” (p. 3).

As I continue to bring psychoanalytic insight to bear upon my own project of learning to become curious about lives that include the practice of writing, the attempt to conceptualize the tangle is, as Britzman (in press) states, “the work of teacher education -- our work in teacher education; it is the conceptual work we are ethically obligated to do, not on the students but on ourselves.” She continues, “the students will learn with or without us. We can create good conditions for learning but what that learning is about is the students’ own.” My choosing to frame the task of pedagogy and of the dissertation through the tangle is an attempt to show how writing practice that involves wordmaking, poetrymaking and theorymaking might “create new conditions for learning and to observe the learning provoked as an effect of these conditions” (Britzman & Pitt, 1996, p. 120). Writing practice will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Six.
Situated Pedagogy: Classroom Practices in Postmodern Times

... to teach in such a moment when familiar categories break down in the face of the complexities of lived lives ...

—Patti Lather and Elizabeth Ellsworth 8

Can a study of the self studying education create new conditions of learning and the making of pedagogical insight? This question, which continues to haunt this chapter, is itself situated, in part, in the midst of the pedagogical practice of two particular educators (Britzman & Pitt) who attempt to use psychoanalytic theory and practice to inform educational practice and theory. Further, their practice, articulated in an essay which I have returned to often, comes from the middle of a series of essays (mentioned at the outset in "a very large footnote with an "I" for form") in a special issue of Theory into Practice (TIP) which I now believe is an issue dedicated to the tangle; an issue positioned with/in the tangle. Patti Lather and Elizabeth Ellsworth, the issue's editors, suggest that each of the articles are connected through a conviction that the resources for finding our way in the postmodern moment lie in learning to look closely into the dense particularities of concrete situations of teaching and learning rather than more generalized calls for one sort of classroom practice or another (1996, p. 70).

Ellsworth and Lather continue,

While there is much debate as to what the postmodern is, it signals both the proliferation of ... differences and the sense that we live between the no longer and the not yet, a time when formerly comfortable holds on making sense of the world no longer suffice (p. 70).

In a thoroughly "postmodern moment," David Schaasfma (1996) talks about the postmodern moment by citing Brenda Marshall (who "originally" coined the phrase "the postmodern moment,") who says that postmodernism "is about the threads that we trace but never to conclusion" (1992, p. 2). Schaasfma, also a contributor to the special Theory into Practice issue, then continues,

8 "This issue: Situated pedagogies -- classroom practices in postmodern times," Theory into practice, p. 70.
I might argue that many if not all moments in my classroom are essentially postmodern in this respect: Examined closely, they are all excessive of the possibility of single explanations. They have -- if they become the object of critical exploration and continued performance ... the potential to lead to an endless exploration of possibilities, instead of the dull and dangerous moment of final conclusions (p. 115).

The postmodern (moment), as I continue to understand and enact it, is lived through the tangle. And in the tangle. The postmodern moment is itself tangled. The tangle is itself postmodern. Consider this meaningful tangle of words that come from a number of educators -- in this case from the TIP special issue (1996) -- who attempt to work in and through the postmodern moment, where sense is made without certainty (of knowing):

I have tried to push at the borders of socially sanctioned pedagogical strategies through the blending of theory, spectatorship, performance and memory work. I have seriously rethought the pedagogical forms I utilize and have attempted to teach in ways that simultaneously construct and deconstruct knowledge claims -- in my ever-changing positions as teacher, adviser, spectator, occasional co-producer, and audience member ... My hope is that the stories I tell will provide readers with opportunities to recognize some of the insights, silences, ambiguities, and masks in their own teaching stories as they become aware of the insights, silences, masks, and ambiguities that inhabit mine ... There are places for ambiguity, paradox, debate, serious doubts, laughter, and irony in stories that other genres and forms do not generally permit ... With this collection, then, we do not set out to prescribe actual situated pedagogies that we expect educators to replicate in their own practice. Rather, we want to offer educators contextualized analyses of actual classroom dilemmas and demonstrate the strategic understandings that situated analysis makes possible ... (Orner, 1996, pp. 72-73 ... Berlak, 1996, p. 93 ... Schaafsma, 1996, p. 112 ... Lather & Ellsworth, 1996, p. 71).
Consider, also, the tangled nature of the work re-presented in this special issue, the ways that
the lines and lives of the educators and researchers tangle
in/to endless citations in various
combinations and permutations that
crisscross and crosshatch and colabour and
cross-pollinate into

tHe TaNgLeD cItAtIoNs oF tHe OrY iNiTO pRaCtIcE:
Patti Lather Getting Smart
Brenda Marshall Teaching
the Postmodern Adrienne Ri
chi What is Found There
Shoshana Felman What Do
esa Woman Want? Jacques La
can and the Adventure of Insi
ght Elizabeth Ellsworth"
Why Doesn't this feel Emp
owering?"

Reading many of the essays in the special (Spring 1996) issue of TIP has helped me to discover
a way of positioning my own work within a framework offered by the title of the Theory into
Practice issue: "Situated Pedagogies: Classroom Practices in Postmodern Times." My choice to
re-present the tangled manner in which each of these essays come together and apart in a form
that plays with words, begins to enact the ways I am approaching the tangle, choosing to be
with the tangle. It is not a better way, but one way of attempting to live in the tangle, write the
tangle. To be written by the tangle. A tangled theory of practice, a tangled practice of theory.
The forms that seem to best suit the tangle are ones that (enable me) to perform the tangle:
Wordplay that begins to play at poetry. The tangle is not pre-formed, it must be per-formed...

By way of dissertational process -- of the particulars of my writing and researching -- much of
the historic wrestling I have done with, and in, the tangle has been a moving toward and a
moving away from some kind of analysis of an "actual classroom dilemma" for fear of mis­
representing the tangle (of the classroom). For fear of not being able to say what happened, as
well as for fear of saying what happened. For fear of not saying enough. Or saying too much.
Much of my own inner conflict — my dilemma of how to approach a particular classroom practice — has im/balanced on the attraction/resistance of somehow creating a model of that practice — a model practice. I dwelled, often, in a place of angst, worrying in/over the hyphenated spaces of my multiple roles as researcher and teacher and writer and student. Researcher-teacher-writer-student. This conflated identity, which has been writing me as I have been writing it, has often left me feeling ill-suited and ambivalent toward the task of somehow offering an interpretation of a particular pedagogical experience — of somehow re-presenting pedagogy in the form of research: bringing my attention inward to a study of a six-week pedagogical experience and, then, outward to “translating,” or “transforming,” or turning this attention toward some form of representation left me wanting for ways to enact/perform, in Felman’s terms, “the lived experience of a discovery” (1987, p. 4). It seems I wanted to enact a research — to perform something I had yet to discover. My “dilemma” as a researcher, then, was much like the dilemma I often experience in writing; this is the experience in which I need to write to convey my thoughts/ideas/feelings/understandings, yet I cannot know what they are until I have written them. So it was with my research which could only be discovered through my researching, which, as I will argue in Chapter Five, is “simply” another form of writing.

In the absence of this particular (making of) pedagogical insight, which I am only discovering now — in and through these latter stages of my writing and researching — I experienced the presence of what I might call a more stereotypical research dilemma, namely, how to “do research” on a lived experience that was made up of a complex set of visible elements, while somehow knowing that the invisible elements were what mattered most? What to do with all this data? Why all this data? What mattered? What would be worthy of doing? How to justify my research choices and my reasons for researching a particular experience to the scholarly community? To myself? To the teacher candidates?

Throughout the time leading up to, including, and then following the six-week pedagogical experience of the ENED 426 course, I continued, consciously and unconsciously, to resist one particular “method” of research, which was to hold the experience up as a “model pedagogy.” (That is, I somehow knew that something of pedagogical value had occurred. The teacher
candidates (and I) loved the course and seemed to learn and grow as learners and writers and teachers in important and powerful ways. What was happening here? Others should know about this. How can I tell them about it?) Following this line of reasoning, my research would have endeavoured to re-present whatever model I discovered/developed. Trouble is, this process seemed to itself require a "model research." A model that would somehow anticipate and address any and all methodological concerns/dilemmas so that the research itself would not interfere with the pedagogy modelled; a model that, once finished, would have no leftover pieces remaining. As Jardine has stated, in hermeneutic interpretive terms, the model would long "for the last word ... [where] nothing more will need to be said" (1992c, p. 118). Or, as Felman (1987) articulates through a psychoanalytic lens, a model, would lead to "the exhaustion -- through methodological investigation -- of all there is to know" (p. 77).

As Britzman and Pitt (1996) note, "models in education" suggest there are "discrete models 'out there' that one merely picks up then applies" (p. 119). Noting our historic and inbred tendencies in teacher education programs to offer such models, they suggest -- with wonderful irony and serious intent -- that we might be better served by teacher education courses (and by our research of those courses) that explore and interrogate "strange" models in education -- "models" that "instead provide contexts of learning where one might become interested in the problematics of learning" (p. 119).

Model pedagogy and research, then, were obviously not the way to go. It seemed that no amount of reflection would provide the necessary opening to "the invisibles." Yet I had difficulty envisioning the alternatives. I created a binary for myself by holding up "a model" as one possibility versus a, a what? (I couldn't say what might exist in its stead.) A critique? An undoing? An unbiased reporting? I had not yet identified the tangle, but I already knew that I was "in it" and framing it would be inadvisable, if not impossible given the knowledge of which I had such a limited working awareness.

The articulation of the researching of situated pedagogical practices by Ellsworth and Lather, as

9 In his most recent book The Soul's Code, James Hillman (1996) asks, "What is the relationship between what we see and what we don't? ... What means are there for transporting the unseen into the seen? Or the seen into the unseen?" (pp. 94-95).
well as by the other authors contributing to *TIP*, offered ways to begin to live and write and research (from within) the tangle. They helped me to address my question of how to “do research” when everything is always and already tangled; it was, as Patti Lather offers in *Getting Smart*, the beginnings of a way to research and “write postmodern … to simultaneously use and call into question a discourse, to both challenge and inscribe dominant meaning systems in ways that construct our own categories and frameworks as contingent, positioned, partial” (1990, p. 1).

To simultaneously use and call into question ... to both challenge and inscribe. Lather’s words offered ways to begin to read my own experience -- of researching the experience of “others” -- as a writing toward awareness; Lather’s words were a window. Of confirmation. Of the need to dwell with the ENED 426 experience in particular ways. In particular. Situated. In what Ellsworth and Lather -- echoing Bronwen Wallace’s notion of the stubborn particulars -- call the materials present in the unique particulars of the moment.


To me ... theory emerges from the concrete, from my efforts to makes sense of everyday life experiences, from my efforts to intervene critically in my life and the lives of others. -- bell hooks

The tangle is both generous and generative. It offers new possibilities for students and teachers -- learners and learners -- to be together in classrooms creating conditions that enable curricular acts of reading and writing to flourish. Ellsworth talks about “a shift from producing a reading to becoming curious about *how* we read ...” (p. 141). And I, of course, am interested in making this same shift from *producing a writing* to becoming curious about *how* we *write*... Writing is performative. Like reading, “It makes something happen” (Ellsworth, p. 141).

Within the context of teacher education, the value of (researching) writing practice, as I have attempted to enact it in this chapter, is not only in its offer of further practice -- of writing to learn (about writing and about teaching) -- but also in its offer of a location where the tangle

10 hooks, *Teaching to transgress*, p. 70.
itself might be workshopped. Performed. That is, the focus — in writing and in teaching — is not necessarily on “finding” learning or understanding but on the process of entertaining the particulars that make the place between knowing and not-knowing so pedagogically rich. I believe the ENED 426 classroom offered such a location, where writing practice created new conditions of learning and the making of pedagogical insight — a place between practice and awareness in which to enact/perform knowing and not knowing. Knowing and not knowing enacted. Through writing. Following Ellsworth’s insights into reading practice, writing practice offered a way of placing the responsibility for writing, and for writings made, with the writers and the uses they intend to make of the knowledge and sense they construct” (p. 140). Some of these particulars will be taken up in Chapter Six.

Again, looking to the work of the educators who have sought to both endorse and problematize classroom practice through situated pedagogies (Schaafsma, 1996), writing “process” takes on newer and potentially deeper meaning and implication as a process that is also part of “the continuing struggle to become aware” (Felman, in Ellsworth, 1996, p. 143). The workshop, as I continue to reconceptualize it in the context of teacher education, offers opportunities to employ writing practice that brings poetry and pedagogy together in productive juxtaposition for the ways they might “mutually inform — and displace — each other” (Felman, 1987, p. 49). Poetry and pedagogy. Here, I do not refer necessarily to the poetry of pedagogy, nor to the pedagogy of poetry but, rather, how each might teach us to read the other and ourselves. In so doing, the work of poetry and pedagogy, and in turn, the work of teacher education “is not necessarily to recognize a known, to find an answer, but also, and perhaps more challengingly, to locate an unknown, to find a question” (Felman, 1987, p. 49). Knowing and not knowing. Poetry and pedagogy, together and alone, offer the possibility of enabling us to “take in and absorb more than [we] know” (Felman, p. 5). As an embodied footnote, it is again important to announce my “discovery,” along with teacher candidates, of some of the ways that wordplay can become poetry within the generous location of the workshop. In our ongoing curricular interpretations, wordplay is becoming (of) poetry. Wordplay is also becoming (of) pedagogy.

The tangle as I continue to conceptualize it, offers opportunities for those in teacher education
to recast their work together as human beings engaged in acts of reading and writing through the possibilities -- individually and in community -- of “a lived experience of discovery” (Felman, 1987, p. 4). The workshop-styled classroom foregrounds this shift in responsibility for the ways in which we might conceptualize reading and writing as curious acts that are “not intended to be used, not ‘understood’ -- grasped fully, generically, or directly, once and for all” (Ellsworth, 1996, p. 141). Writing practice, then, offers opportunities to continually write practice. Said another way, writing practice enables us to continue to practice writing as a way of creating further possibilities for practice so that practice never stops writing us and we never stop writing practice.

My own writing practice, which includes the writing of this dissertation, continues to enable me to engage in my own “struggle to become aware,” to write toward a greater awareness of the shared experience of six weeks lived together in a course that included the practice of writing. As Ellsworth has said, “this pedagogical practice is still new and unfamiliar to me. The meanings of it as a pedagogical practice are not transparent … [then, she quotes Felman, as I too have quoted Felman], there is never a full coincidence between practice and awareness” (1996, p. 143).

Throughout the ENED 426 experience, the emphasis was not necessarily on teacher candidates becoming poets or even better writers but, rather, it was on a practice that enabled them to begin to know themselves through wordmaking and wordplay (which we sometimes chose to call poetry). The practice of writing was a way to explore and address some of our anxieties, conflicts, and desires -- of learning to write and learning to teach, and most important, of learning to learn. ENED 426 was, in these kinds of ways, not a “rush to application,”11 not a practice of learning language across the curriculum (as I believe some of the other sections of the course may have been, despite being well-intentioned in their pedagogies). The rush to write (language) across the curriculum would only have masked anxieties of how much we wanted to be/come teachers who knew how to write across the curriculum. In Britzman’s (in press) terms, this would have only involved a learning about language across the curriculum. Writing practice

11 Britzman et. al (1995) talk about the “rush to apply” as a disturbing “syndrome” within Faculties of Education in which “experience is reduced to a technical problem of classroom application” (p. 4).
enabled us to become more aware — more curious — about this rush to application and how it affected our writing practice and, in turn, how writing practice influenced the rush to application.

Writing practice -- through the tangle -- whether it is a dissertation or a life -- is the practice of creating conditions that enable one to continue to practice *writing* practice, to continue theorizing the practice of writing -- a dissertation or a life. Writing -- to learn -- becomes a life practice.

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Q: What is the experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing?
A: It is an experience of en-tangle-ment.  

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12 It is the experience of finding out what the tangle-meant. Of attempting to find out what living in the tangle-meant, only to find that the tangle never meant one thing, never meant to tangle but always means to tangle. The tangle is not a means to an end but rather a means to a tangle. A tangle means …
taking attendance:
an absence of comment
The following preservice teacher comments are (re)present(ed) by their absence. I make a deliberate choice to include this "blank" space not so much as a clever-minded postmodern performance -- a waste of paper even -- but, rather, as a way of offering up my ambivalent and often empty feelings of dissatisfaction at how little I really heard in the classroom; it is also a plain-faced lament for how horribly distorted the amplification of such a tiny signal can potentially become.

For me, the following dedicated space re-presents another attempt at a respectful listening -- a moment of textual silence to once again imagine the tangle of lives -- this time without words...
taking attendance:
all present
Miscellaneous Preservice Teacher Comments
(Re-presented by their Presence)

Comments from “exit slips” of Teacher Candidates:

... I feel guilty about my reluctance to work with my group; my involuntary reaction to withdraw and to not participate. What if my own students feel this way? How do we, as teachers, choose groups? What about my own beliefs in acceptance, kindness, and understanding? The week has been interesting, disquieting, inspirational, and thought-provoking. For my money, what more could I ask for? We've dealt with issues that will affect my teaching career ...

... I am amazed at how I view things from a teacher's perspective. I am always using what I learn to try and apply it to teaching. This class provides me with a lot of tools ...

... I felt some dis-ease this morning when faced with writing the theme of “love” into a memo ... I laughed with many of the others in class but afterward I realized what I was laughing at ... It wasn't so funny anymore ...

... This stuff is totally awesome and more than a little overwhelming -- kind of like having a spare brain ...

... Convention: What new ways can we create to tell stories? Can we reject the market-oriented-popular-culture way? Do not those who call out need agreement of values? What happens to conflicting conventions?

... Eventually, all conventions are modified on a permanent basis as society requires ...

... Wild mind died when the monkeys started chattering. The mind was quicker than the hand ...

... As a suggestion -- could you give us the order in which we should really read the chapters in the book?
E-mail excerpts:

Date: Thu, 23 May 1996 20:53:51 -0700 (PDT)
To: rasberry@unixg.ubc.ca
Subject: poets?

Do we become poets, having never been poets, or do we rediscover a former self, ability, or openness that had been lost?

Date: Thu, 23 May 1996 20:53:51 -0700 (PDT)
To: rasberry@unixg.ubc.ca
Subject: magic formula

What makes a class work? Though there is no magic formula, I think part of the reason that this class works is student ownership, teacher respect and being “allowed” to express your ... “self”. It is a mutual trust and sharing. How we create that is to be both a guide and open to the desires of our class. To create a classroom is also to create a state of mind. We as teachers are “learning junkies”, we should share that addiction versus forcing a specific agenda. It takes time with kids though. The transformation that has occurred in our class would take more time with kids. Remember it is “US” and “THEM”, maybe that is the formula, changing that perspective into “WE”. Noble thoughts, eh! I am going to miss this class, simply for what it has sparked and what it generates. Where others have grumbled, we have laughed. How to replicate ... share the laughter ... share the “WE” ...

Date: Thu, 23 May 1996 20:53:51 -0700 (PDT)
To: rasberry@unixg.ubc.ca
Subject: risk

426 was about several things ... poetry, writing a journal, etc., are things taught in English courses but one of the differences was that Carl lives the life of a poet so all that stuff we did was very personal and real ... So being invited to be a poet is partly showing what that world is about through someone who lives it, experiencing some level of creativity that isn’t the norm, taking the risk as Carl invited us to do with regard to marks, the recognition from others on our endeavours. I guess what this invitation has to do with becoming a teaching is being open-minded, taking risks, putting your own mark on the job, and in turn giving the same thing back to your students whatever the subject, in my case inviting the students to find the joy and power in mastering math by doing some of the same things. I’ve seen some take that invitation and many that haven’t. All you can do is put your heart into it and hope for the best. Unfortunately, I don’t think I succeeded in doing that for Mary (the singer), so I hope to grow and get better at teaching ... This poetry is burning a hole in my binder ...
CHAPTER FIVE

The Curious Time of Researching Pedagogy

There is neither day nor night, but rather a continual dawning.
— James Hillman ¹

A continual dawning; this seems a rather apt way to begin to characterize, as well as complicate, teaching and learning and our talk of teaching and learning. If pedagogy were a painting, such a canvas would — "in the moment of passing ... likely have more power to stop us than we would have power to walk on" (Winterson, 1996, p. 3). The allure of such light seems full of promise -- enough to keep the palate fat-with-colour in anticipation of seeing the never-before-seen. As Madeleine Grumet -- truly a curricular artist -- has said about the fine line that separates/connects the beautiful mundane work of teaching, "All that we need to decide, each day, when we are ready and the light is right, is where and when to draw the line" (1988, p. 94). And yet this same sense of limitless expectancy in teacher education -- this open-eyed waiting -- burns the eyes, dis-orients, unsettles. Neither day nor night. Charged with ambivalence, a continual dawning hardly seems sustainable. Where (and when) would we draw the line? A continual dawning, then, offers to shed a different sort of light on the researching of teaching and learning that is at once anxiety-provoking and hope-full.

We seem to know a lot more about (researching) the light of day in teacher education. Daylight. Day-planners that log our time together in schools. Day in, day out. The classroom is a canvas that stretches its invitation and with the best of intentions we imagine it waits for our brushstroke and our eye for colour. And this is not necessarily unhappy news. The time of teacher education -- when does it end? -- is a time when we are dizzy with light. Pouring in through south-facing windows of the classroom, unyielding with its overhead fluorescent eye, emanating from opened books and manicured lesson plans, glaring from overhead projectors that illuminate our pedagogy with unblinking eyes. These are the familiar scenes of teaching and learning that, blinded by all this light, we imagine to be enacting for the first time; or if not the

¹ James Hillman, Puer Papers, p. 12
first time, then, the time when we will finally get it right. Again, this is for the most part good news. We live in teacher education with desire, wanting to get it right. Hopeful of our days together and, with the best of intentions, we situate our living in classrooms as a difficult yet worthwhile kind of living. Bringing our learning to light. Bringing light to our learning.

Nightfall marks a more uncertain time for teaching and learning. Recognizable, like stars floating liquid on a dark surface: the classroom turned upside down. Extracurricular at best, avoidable if possible. The place of homework. Answers to assignments appear back at school the next day, like magic, unquestionable. Difficult to ask questions about this time of learning. The shadows are less invitational.

Then there is the in-between time. Neither day nor night ...

My point in drawing attention to the horizon is not to suggest that we recast teacher education as a time of continual dawning, rather, it is to point to how our sense of time — in teacher education and in our educational researchings of teacher education — acts as a profound measure of everyday moments and movements, and how this sense of time consciously and unconsciously affects our enactments of teaching and learning. And researching. A continual dawning offers a curious invitation ...

Understood one way, a continual dawning speaks of a beginning or an opening that appears to grow light without end. This particular aspect of the light metaphor, for me, speaks to the kind of “crazy optimism” with which we most often approach our research of the work of “learning to teach,” which, like much of the discourse of teacher education itself, is conducted as though all still seems possible. A central assumption that underlies this kind of discourse is that “there is a way to teach how to teach” (Britzman et al., 1995, p. 2) and, by extension, a way to research this time of teaching, this “teaching how to teach.”

A continual dawning, as a strangely ambivalent metaphor for the time of researching pedagogy, also holds other possibilities for insights into our learning (to teach), as well as our researching
of our learning (to teach). Becoming curious about researching pedagogy suggests we seek ways to talk with/in and about this “half-light of ambivalence” (Hillman, 1989, p. 30), seek other ways to recast the time of research in teacher education. James Hillman argues that psychology, and I would venture to add teacher education, “usually gives to ambivalence a major pejorative judgment” (1979, p. 14). The practice of teacher education, and our methodological attendings to this practice seem to leave little (sanctioned) room for uncertainty despite the acknowledged difficulty, both of learning to teach and, of learning to research our teaching. Hillman suggests, however, that ambivalence, rather than being overcome, might “be developed within its own principle. It is a way in itself” (1979, p. 36). Hillman continues, “to cure away ambivalence removes the eye with which we can perceive ... the paradoxes of knowing and not-knowing” (1979, p. 36). For Hillman, “living in ambivalence is living where yea and nay, light and darkness, right action and wrong are held closely together and are difficult to distinguish” (1979, p. 14).

Influenced by the work of Hillman (1979, 1989), Jardine’s (1994b) interpretive effort at “re-mythologizing pedagogy,” points to the ways that our work in teacher education might benefit from a more generous -- even courageous -- treatment of the ambiguity and difficulty and uncertainty of the work of learning (to teach). Through the tangle. Jardine suggests that much of our pedagogical and methodological attention in teacher education tend to focus on “interventions aimed at facilitating and easing the transition” (Jardine, 1994b, p. 17) from “student” to “teacher.”

If you sit on the wall (but no one else does, for sun, olives, and wind unbalance, and the drop would be lethal), you get a wider angle ...

The invitation to re-consider and reconfigure ambiguity in (the research of) teacher education, following Jardine, requires that we question the idea that “every difficulty confronted is somehow avoidable” if we could only “orchestrate it well enough” (Jardine, 1994b). If only we could orchestrate it well enough ... our research ... of our teaching ... and learning. If teaching and learning is, as Britzman et al. suggest, “highly specific, contextual, perspectival,
constructed, and in a sense, unrepeatable” (1995, p. 5), then how do we research “it”? How do we talk about teaching and learning in our roles as researchers whose very act(ion)s, in a contradictory sense, threaten to foreclose on an ongoing conversation by our insistence on speaking? How do we research the classroom when it is always itself, restless, forever altering its colour like a sad eye?

Researching teacher education ... the curious time of (researching) pedagogy ...

As Jardine notes, our research of the time of teacher education must begin to make this difficult liminal experience readable and understandable and decipherable as something more than an array of problems to be fixed ... there are deep and irremediable difficulties inherent in the liminal space traversed by student-teachers that cannot and should not be fixed (1994b, p. 17).

The work of Felman (1987), Britzman and Pitt (1996), and Britzman (in press) would further suggest that the “problems” encountered in the liminal space are, in fact, what we need to become most curious about in our research. Interesting to note, too, how, as researchers, we are always, as Michelle Fine states, “implicated at the hyphen” (1994, p. 70). She is referring, of course, to the other hyphen — the “Self-Other hyphen” (1994, p. 70), a tangled space in which we often write about others, forgetting to implicate our selves (as others) in the tangle. Perhaps, a reading of the work of Fine, alongside that of Britzman and Jardine, is a tangled reminder that there are also deep and irremediable difficulties inherent in the liminal space traversed by Self-Other that cannot and should not be fixed. As Fine offers,

Our work will never
'arrive' but must
always struggle 'between' ... (1994, p. 75).

If you sit on a bench, the wall cuts the landscape in half ... My continued interest in the metaphor of a continual dawning, then, is for the ways it tangles metaphor, mixes metaphor. Melds. Di-
orients. Perhaps, a continual dawning might help us create new conditions of learning (to research) that would enable us to see ourselves differently through this half-light and, in turn, to discover the ways that we ourselves are made different through the “light” of our research. A consideration of a time of continual dawning, then, is not only “about” becoming curious about the kinds of conditions that might enable us to conceptualize and enact the complexities of teaching and learning -- events that we strive to somehow make visible -- but also for how we might paint pictures of that pedagogy in an act of seeing -- in a language -- that itself allows and accounts for the repetition of unrepeatable acts. Perhaps, a time of continual dawning is itself curious -- curiously tangled -- in ways that remind us to question our seeing, a questioning that makes further (kinds of) (questions of our) “seeing” (im)possible.

To cure away ambivalence removes the eye with which we can perceive ... the paradoxes of knowing and not-knowing ...

The curricular claim for ambiguity as an important interpretive consideration are, therefore, at once pedagogical as well as methodological. There is something about the sea that makes you want to reach out ...

My continued interest, in this chapter, is to point to how, in the work of teacher education, our sense of time itself seems to call for “a new theory of time” (Lightman, 1993). Following Deborah Britzman (in press), I am interested in the act of becoming curious of time -- of turning time into a curiosity.

“The curious time.
Of [researching] pedagogy.”

For me, becoming curious about the curious time of researching pedagogy means imagining both in im/possible kinds of ways, keeping Milan Kundera’s double-edged declarative in mind,

Imagine a castle so big that it can’t all be seen at once. Imagine a quartet that
goes on for nine hours. There are anthropological limits — the limits of memory, for instance — that ought not to be exceeded (Kundera, 1986, p. 71).

Kundera, if we read him alongside Hélène Cixous, invites us to *try to paint what we cannot paint ... to write what we cannot write before we have written*, to imagine becoming curious about the possibility of imagining the impossible. There are limits, of course, but writing is what you cannot know before you have written ... and ... imagining is what you cannot know before you have imagined it ... and ... researching is what you cannot know until you have researched it -- until you have imagined writing it. This is not to suggest that research is an imagining necessarily but, rather, that research is itself imaginative. That is, research is not an act of imagining but is itself an imaginative act. Reading Shoshana Felman alongside Cixous and Kundera, we might say that “the lesson to be learned about [researching] pedagogy from [imagination] is less that of ‘the application of [imagination] to pedagogy’ than that of the implication of [imagination] in pedagogy and of pedagogy in imagination” (Felman, 1987, p. 75). Kundera’s invitation to imagine “a castle so big that it can’t all be seen at once,” is a curious invitation into interpretation, one that is inherently creative and one that is, in turn, hermeneutic, literary, pedagogic, and psychoanalytic, since all of these -- through the tangle -- are concerned “not just with what [imagination] says about teachers but with [imagination] itself as teacher” (Felman, 1987, p. 75).

In this way, Kundera’s essays on the rich dilemmas of working with/in words in *The Art of the Novel*, might also be read as *The Art of Research*. (Significant, too, that Kundera calls this particular set of essays “a practitioner’s confession.”) Through the tangle, then, a reading of Kundera’s reading of the novel can also open out into possibilities for a generous reading of research,

I’ve heard the history of [research] compared to a seam of coal long since exhausted. But isn’t it more like a cemetery of missed opportunities, of unheard appeals? There are four appeals to which I am especially responsive ... The appeal of play ... The appeal of dream ... The appeal of thought ... [and] The appeal of time ... (Kundera, 1986, pp.15-16).
Bringing imagination itself to bear upon our acts of research, and becoming curious about our research as itself an imaginative act is a reminder that our acts of research are themselves acts of reading and writing. Research is performed through acts of reading and writing that become invisible through the tangle. Of course we must read and write to “produce” research but this is a reading and writing “of a different order,” a reading and a writing in which we, ourselves, must become implicated.

In my case, the experience of researching an experience of the practice of writing became most instructive when the research began to break down in a way that offered insight into a reading of my own experience of researching. A reading in which the question, “What is the experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing,” could be read differently each time, through the tangle, as if for the first time. An ongoing reading in which my awareness of my practice of researching as a tangled form of reading and writing -- of wordplay -- became increasingly available to me, so that researching the tangle was a reading and writing the tangle. Researching writing. Writing research.

Becoming implicated in my own learning, in my own research of learning and teaching as acts of learning to read and write my own research differently has not only involved learning about the tangle, but learning from my experience in the tangle. Giving myself to the tangle -- of learning to learnwriteteach ... of learning to learnwriteresearch ... of researching to learnreadwriteresearch: tangled. Everything becoming seriously tangled, yet still recognizable in playful ways. Like Calvin, of Calvin and Hobbes fame, who, in one particular cartooned rendering, finds himself deep in the tangle. In the opening frame, Calvin’s world, in particular his bedroom, splinters into unrecognizable fragments as he begins to experience a radical and uncomfortable transformation which prompts an-always classic Calvin monologue,

Calvin: Oh No! Everything has suddenly turned neo-cubist! [tangled!] It all started when Calvin engaged his Dad in a minor debate! Soon Calvin could see both sides of the issue! Then poor Calvin began to see both sides of everything! The traditional single viewpoint has been abandoned! Perspective has been fractured! The multiple views provide
too much information! It's impossible to move! Calvin quickly tries to eliminate all but one perspective ... It works! The world falls into a recognizable order! [At which point Calvin returns to the living room and the scene of the argument with his father only to say] You're still wrong, Dad ... 2

Unlike Calvin, my writing and researching -- this particular sketch of a particular sketch -- do not resolve quite as easily. And while becoming paralyzed by the tangle might become problematic, there is much to learn from living/writing/researching in the tangle, perhaps best represented by the hyphenated space of dis-comfort. Somewhere in between comfortable and uncomfortable. Somewhere in between reading and writing and researching. Somewhere in-between.

The cartooned rendering of Calvin’s dilemma is, in its own strange way, helpful for learning to become curious about this in-between time, about the curious time of researching pedagogy, of the curious sense of time travel required to live and write and research, in-between. For Calvin, time travel is frame-to-frame. The cartoon strip can offer a writerly text that invites us to write (our own sense of) time into our reading. The cartoon invites us to imagine time as otherwise. Kundera might call this “the appeal of time” in his reading of the experience of writing a novel. The tangle, in turn, works to show how the experience of reading a novel is also a form of writing and researching our experience of reading -- a novel or research -- and how our choosing to write time as an experience of reading or, to read time as an experience of writing are influenced and made different by our naming of text as a novel, or as research.

Kundera says, “the period of terminal paradoxes incites the novelist to broaden the time issue beyond the ... problem of personal memory to the enigma of collective time” (1986, p. 16). He then offers ways for the writer and reader to begin to bend time, to make time malleable, to make time into a curiosity. He offers ways to make time. For the researcher to work in similar ways could mean creating new conditions of research that would enable both researcher and reader to be disturbed by time. To imagine time. To make time, differently. Through the tangle. Inciting the researcher to broaden the time issue beyond the problem of personal memory to the enigma of collective time means asking time to tangle. It means making certain demands on

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2 This sketch taken from Bill Watterson’s (1988) Scientific progress goes "boink," p. 120.
time, as well as certain demands on the ways we read and write and research time.

This might mean framing time in curious ways that don’t necessarily move us (or it) from frame-to-frame. It might mean writing research through a lens that, like the *Powers of Ten* film, move us in ways beyond our imagining. If we were to move outward far enough to see our research framed from outer space, would it still be tangled? Or, in more conventional framings that still become somehow invisible as we read and write and research the tangle, how do we move — without becoming tangled — beyond our own personal memory of a classroom scene, to the time of teacher education in the waning years of the 20th century.

We might also read/write the textual representations of the media into the tangle. (Which is always and already part of the tangle even though we might not make it visible in our research.) A reading of *The Globe and Mail*, for example, situates the classroom, moving with and against this growing tangle of pedagogical relations. This reconstructed memory of Jennifer Lewington, for example, an education reporter with *The Globe* whose words are written on a particular day for a particular deadline …

> In this latest curriculum reform effort, one of several by a succession of ministers over the past five years, Mr. Snobelen said he is making a pledge to parents that ‘we will provide our students with a solid school program that gives the knowledge and skills to compete and succeed in Ontario and around the globe.’

3

This particular tangle becomes situated in a nest of particulars: in Ontario and around the globe. Knowledge and skills to compete. A classroom of teacher candidates in Vancouver, British Columbia. See how the classroom is the same everywhere? Different, too. See how tangled it gets? The tangled relations. But that’s what happens when you follow Kundera’s line in a way that Natalie Goldberg might have strung it. Like this line for example:

> You have to let writing eat your life

and follow it
where it
takes you.
You fit into
it; it doesn’t
fit neatly into
your life ...
(Goldberg,
1990, p. 156)

This is where you are now. Then you turn your head away and you are somewhere else. The only truth
is that there is none: Of course I have already written Karen Connelly so (in)visibly in the text,
written Connelly so tightly into the script that she simply became italicized with no other
mention of a source or a citation. Just: watch in amazement. The thud of your bones. Realize what
you’ve seen. Colliding. With the grace of birds. Then looking back toward History, to John Dewey
or Hannah Arendt: “Art as the Life of the Mind.” To Virginia Woolf or Lewis Caroll: “A Room
With A View Through the Looking Glass.” Or stretching forward to Graeme Gibson or
Donna Haraway: “A Cyborg’s Virtual Manifesto.”

The time of research is a time for becoming curious about time. A time for becoming implicated
in the ways we have learned to tell time -- as though it were seamless. A time for becoming
implicated in the ways we have learned to “write research” that is seemingly seamless; for
creating texts which appear to “tell time” as it “really” is, as it “really” was. Creating a
researcherly text, implicates us in the seams; it demands a reading/writing that acknowledges
the gaps and fissures where time bends and folds. A researcherly text is curious about itself, as
language, which is inextricably tied up with time. In our curricular travels, language becomes a
way of marking time, of testing time, of wondering and worrying over time. Mindful always of
the ambivalent sense of language itself: of possibility and constraint. As the poet Anne
Michaels offers,

Language is artificial of course, relying on juxtaposition to represent the world,
just as the artist draws the imaginary line around the apple to create the illusion of its shape, to give the illusion of its depth (Michaels, 1995, p. 180).

My continued interest in researching teachers writing lives is very much tied to time travel and how we choose to navigate the course of time -- in teacher education time and in the greater collective sense of time -- our lifetime(s) lived as teachers and learners. In particular, I am interested in the conditions that might enable us to spend time together imaginatively in ways that both honour as well as disrupt time and our research of time spent in classrooms. Becoming self-conscious always of the illusions we create to give our (research of) pedagogy shape, depth, texture. Text-ure.

In our teaching, and in our research of teaching, wordmaking offers such possibilities. Words can act as timekeepers. Words can tell time. With words we can imagine time, even play with time, as Kundera does so beautifully in his writing. Is there a place in the research of teacher education for wordmaking? For wordplay? A place to fictionalize time? Poeticize time? Dream time? As I continue to remain curious about the curious time of pedagogy, I feel these kinds of questions are, in fact, worthy of our time in teacher education. When I have tried to write time into being, tried to imagine the time of pedagogy -- of teacher candidates in writing workshops, the results have often taken me in directions I might never have imagined. Through the tangle, wordplay becomes (a form of) research. Research becomes (a form of) wordplay. Research is itself wordplay. Tangled. Imagine: a castle so big that it can't all be seen at once ... Imagine: teacher education. Imagine: research.

Alan Lightman (1993) ponders and plays with words, and with time in his novel Einstein's Dreams. He tangles time, sometimes hopefully, other times hopelessly. His novel's "plot-line" is sometimes unrecognizable, at least in the ways we have come to recognize plot. Lines tangle round the plot, through the plot. Re-plotting time. Re-visiting time. Reinventing plot. Reimagining time. Tangling lines and lives. Like Karen Connelly's "Bowl of Yellow Flowers." Like wildmind writing. Like the "small imaginings" (in Chapter Two). Like research.
In these ways, Lightman’s writings make for interesting curricular imaginings — of time, of research, of lines and lives. His textual wordplay offers a location for becoming curious about researching pedagogy.

In this world, there are two times. There is mechanical time and there is body time. The first is as rigid and metallic as a massive pendulum or iron that swings back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. The second squirms and wriggles like a bluefish in a bay. The first is unyielding, predetermined. The second makes up its mind as it goes along (p. 23).

And while it would be unfair and stereotypical to think of curricular time, and much of our research of the curious time of pedagogy as mechanical time, school time, it takes little imagination to put ourselves in that place. Back and forth. Back and forth. The curious time of researching pedagogy, as I am beginning to imagine it, however, squirms and wriggles ... makes up its mind as it goes along.

Continual dawning. Iron pendulum. Bluefish. A bowl of yellow flowers. All hold possibility for imagining the curious time of pedagogy. Of significance to this particular imagining are the ways that time bends and folds in upon itself, collides and clashes in ways that speak to the difficulty of learning (to tell time). In this case, time colours my attempt to hold time long enough to dwell with a particular set of lived experiences and, in turn, to provide some kind of picture of that seeing. Lost with/in time, I am often left, simply, imagining -- “caressing each moment as an emerald on temporary consignment” (Lightman, 1993, p.9).

Linear time asked that I proceed outwards from the “Small Imaginings” that appeared in Chapter Two, add flesh to the characters and dimensionality to their living in a narrative we might come to recognize in some way, possibly even as our own. Though I employed certain textual strategies that invited (a) certain kind(s) of reading(s), there was still a sense in which day had to follow night -- the imaginings had to be made (more) real. Even if, as Linda Hutcheon has offered, we are invited to read the text as a “likely story” where language and convention and meaning become slippery surfaces, it seems there must still be enough textual...
placeholders to attend to the characters that move between the classroom and the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea. It seems we learn to trust our sense of balance only as we are un/comfortable with our own footing.

With the curious time of research making up its mind as it went along, I chose to entertain the possibility of a dissertational location that might create new conditions for (learning to) research. Without knowing what I was doing (because there is never a full coincidence between practice and awareness), I attempted to enact a research with/of writing practice, using wordplay as a way of becoming curious, not only about the research of writing, but also the experience of writing research. Writing research. Wordplay seemed to offer a way to begin to address and entertain the tangle. Chapter Two -- “A Bowl of Yellow Flowers,” became the dissertation. The dissertation became a bowl of yellow flowers. Was this merely a short form? Of fiction? Of research? Was I simply imagining this being research? Imagining this as a form of research. Was I simply imagining research? Fictional research? Researcherly fiction?

For me, the time of research became a time of tangle. A tangling. I continued to be both blessed and cursed by the “symptoms” of the lived experience of a discovery as Felman talked about it: Breakthroughs. Leaps. Discontinuities. Regressions. Deferred actions. Like a blue fish in a bay, time squirmed and wriggled. The following passage, taken from a previous draft of the dissertation captures some of the ways that the tangle became pedagogical...

Neither day nor night. This is the point where I am beginning to question, among many things, my footing. I wonder, “Do the Small Imaginings grow larger or smaller, more or less real, as I continue to move forward and backward through my (re)searchings?” Certainly, my expectations were that the imaginings would grow -- and they have -- but I now seem unprepared for the possibility that growth would take them in a direction that might disrupt my “findings.” That is, my ability, or perhaps more accurately, my desire to stretch these imaginings on to a template (of time) -- a timeplate? -- that might be more recognizable/acceptable, more real, within the scholarly discourse of which I seek to be a part now seems lacking. I seem to know less and less about what “actually” took place during my lived experience in the shared space of a particular classroom -- now long gone -- at a time when I (am) expect(ed) to know more and more. And, strange -- or maybe not -- I desire less and less to say what happened and want, simply, to imagine what I would like to (have seen)/see happen. Daignault’s earlier comments continue to circulate and inform my writing and thinking: sometimes our research is “too real.” What theory of time might honour this kind of (re)search?
Perhaps this is all an elaborate way of saying that “this is as good as it gets.” The small imaginings are just what they are. Small. Imaginings. And given the choice, I would prefer to create a curricular form that might allow me/us to remain in a place where these imaginings, these images, are left to linger as sub/textual fragments that haunt and inform the dissertation without (certain kinds of) explanation. Or, perhaps -- and I am hopeful here -- this is the beginnings of (imagining) a “new” theory of time for educational research, one that -- like teaching and learning -- needs to account for the sense of terminal vertigo one tends to experience in attempting to live well with the tangle over extended periods of time. A time that repeats itself, a time that moves backwards and forwards, a time that is directionless, a time that does not recognize itself...

“Imagine a world
in which there is no time. Only
images ... footprints
in the snow on a winter island ...
dust on the window sill ... the eye
of a needle ... a child on a bicycle ... smiling
the smile of a lifetime ... a worn book lying
on a table beside a dim lamp”

Four chapters, seven interludes, and one preface later, I remain curious about the curious time of researching pedagogy. Lightman’s imaginings -- “a world in which there is no time ... only images” -- continue to hold up a fascinating, if slightly distorted, mirror whose reflections offer other interesting interpretive possibilities for imagining the curious time of researching pedagogy. While Lightman’s text identified itself as fiction, my reading of it with and against other kinds of research (erly fiction), as well as other kinds of fiction(al research) create the possibility of a more ambivalent reading of both fiction and research where identity is itself fictional. It seems I am (still) learning to read/write/read research differently.

The negotiation of identity continued to tangle in and across an already tangled liminal space in which the acts of learning and teaching, researching and writing began to bleed into one another, leaving a water-coloured world that offered itself to interpretation in a Rorschach-styled reading.

Mary Aswell Doll (1995, pp. 130-132) asks, “How might we read [such a] world? Read our selves?” She responds to her own query by suggesting that we might learn to read “with an eye

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4 I have taken the liberty of “poeticizing” these images from Lightman’s (1993, pp. 75-79) prose, rearranging them into different lines and shapes on the page.
far behind the 'I' ... we must revalue objects; we must become less literal; we must devalue clock
time"...

cLocK tImE: a WaY oF uN/kNoWiNg

Can you imagine
"no time" in schools? No time
pieces to measure a day's worth:
how many minutes left in Language
Arts how long 'til lunch ... Imagine
instead a blank space on the wall -- a perfectly empty
circle that does not return our watch-full stares
refuses to confirm our constant glancings wall-ward.
No glass face to mirror our selves in time
show us our selves being
on time in time late ...

... Do you remember the classroom?
How time used to freeze
just before the minute-hand convinced
the hour-hand it was time
to move: Every hour on the hour. And every eye
turned too. The clock's face ...
Entire school districts lost in that tiny window
of time tripping over itself in tune to the buzzing
sound the clock made straining under
so much pressure to tell time
and then the release
to know ourselves timeless again
time forgotten ... Can you re-member
The moment? when
the cardboard clock with the move-able hands stopped
playing games and simply created its own
shiny curriculum out of the reach
of hands that wished otherwise? And who would dare build
a house-of-cards, chair-on-desk-ladder up to time
to turn the tiny cog on Mr. Henderson’s clock and trick time into thinking
that History (Period 7) was over? (With thirty minutes to spare.)
Trying to trick the teacher into thinking
time was up ... How many years

later? Back in school to become
a teacher. Who would have thought
you’d find yourself trying to trick time again
the curious time of pedagogy, no time pieces to measure
how time is going ... the Shiny Curriculum.
Who would dare build a blank space
the tiny cog tripping perfectly
a glass face straining.
No time in schools. And every eye turned
too.

Can you imagine teachers (s)training
under the pressure to tell time? You need
some way to talk about their telling
of time. So you move
the hands yourself, build
a cardboard clock to freeze the perfect
ladder up to the curious space.
Watch-full. Waiting. No simple measure
to read time's worth. Every Our on the
hour.

I offer “Clock Time” as a whimsical poem, curricular or otherwise, for the ways that words
sometimes fall out as play in the midst of “serious” work, and for how words sometimes point
to possibilities beyond the literal if we allow them to. Wordplay: this is part of the invitation
to think differently about preservice teachers thinking differently about their time together in
classrooms. Thinking differently about time. Writing. Imagining. Can the study of the self
studying education create new conditions of researching and the making of pedagogical insight? As
poet Anne Michaels suggests, “time enters language in many ways” (1995, p. 179). I believe
that wordplay “knows” differently; in turn, it invites us to interpret our Selves and our relations
differently. Our knowing and our meaning making -- made possible through our relationships
with and through words -- are influenced by our work and play with text. The “simple” act of
moving words around the page alters the ways we (get to) know text, the ways we get to know
knowing. Turning our own learning into a curiosity. Turning our researching of our learning.
Into a curiosity.

Can prose become poetry
simply
by bending
or straightening
lines so that the words fly
down from their delicate perches
and fall into new configurations?

Can the different ways
we line our world
also give shape to the ways we live
our lives?
Can wordplay enable us to become curious about the bending
and straightening of both lines and lives,
so that thinking about our work with beginning teachers is a becoming curious
about the shift from a preoccupation with researching the learning of others
to a consideration of the conditions for one's own learning to research
(the learning of others)
(researching) ... 

The closest I have come to imagining these kinds of conditions, ones that might best support
and sustain -- and suspend -- the curious time of researching pedagogy occur in my encounters
with researcherly texts that offer opportunities to
"write and research differently ... 
about the life of our children, our schools, the life
of mathematics or the intricate
meaty heart of science, or the curves
and contours of reading and writing [which] require
dwelling in language that can itself hold life
in its sway, beyond the clear and simple
and harsh namings requisite of [so much of our] research" 5

Loosening the hold of literalism that underwrites much of educational discourse, "we find
ourselves in a different space, where the unfamiliar beckons because it resists labels ... It is
wondrous to be among unfamiliarity" (Doll, 1995, p. 129). At the risk of losing track of
curricular time, I would like to conjecture that becoming curious about the time of our work in
and out of classrooms -- (the) time(s) that "contain little moments, very little moments, which
allow us to turn our attention" (Doll, 1995, p. 143) -- might help us to begin to imagine writing
research differently. Unearthing some of the ways we dwell with words -- the attention turned
toward cadence and breath, connection and disconnection, obsession, text/uality, method and

5 Taken from David Jardine in a Prospectus entitled, Curriculum and the poetics of educational research (Rasberry & Jardine).
unmethod, space and location, construction and expression, deconstruction, non/sense, play and work, literary infusions, form and mystery, imagination, commitment, dis/belief, knowing and not knowing -- point toward a poetics of educational research and a way to begin to dwell with pedagogy ... that is, a way of playing with meaning(s), with words that enable us to make research ...

... It’s about how we interact with texts like poems that show us ourselves in important ways and complicate our learning. It’s not learning about poetry as research or research as poetry, but learning from our experience of writing poetry as research and research as poetry, as we choose to play with the naming of them. It’s the possibility that our learning to read certain kinds of writing as research, certain kinds of research as writing that offer insight into the making of insight which is itself a condition for discovering our selves as researchers researching our selves through others, as others as other ...

At the heart of this “new” theory of time in teacher education “lies the seemingly paradoxical assumption that learning how one learns from the lives, histories, cultures, and dilemmas of others involves a close study of one’s own conditions of learning” (Britzman & Pitt, 1996, p. 119).

... “All that we need to decide, each day, when the light is right, is where and when
to draw the line" ... Returning to Grumet’s words, I am suggesting that thinking
about poetry and research -- poetry as research and
research as poetry and how both as wordplay -- offer ways to pay attention,
ways to attend to the work and (word)play of teaching and learning
under the uncertain and often unsteady light
that attention draws into form(s) that (in turn) draw
our attention. It provides us with ways to draw
the line, knowing and not knowing
that the light may never be
“right.”

***

Here we are, los domingueros, the Sunday people, drunk to exhaustion with light and the dusty scent
of African wind. The bright blue benches behind me are soft with the bodies of old people, tense with
the knuckles and knees of young lovers. The old people wait patiently for the farther darkness, the
young for the closer one.

A time of continual dawning blurs the boundaries between question and answer, between
teaching and learning, between one story and another, between self and other. The light goes on
and on with little opportunity to stop time or ask for directions.

From here, it looks clean, children tumbling playfully, doll-limbed, the people (featureless, really, at
this distance) fine and strong, leaving well-formed footprints behind them.

This is the way we have often come to recognize our selves in our research, our small imaginings:
from here it looks clean ... In my case, the light of my imaginings, along with the images that Karen
Connelly has painted from atop the broad stone wall -- like poetry -- continue to
create/capture just enough light for an interpretive location that enables me/us to appreciate
their complexity, question their existence, and puzzle over the relations that st(r)ain the canvas.
But the light also creates its own conditions, sets other interpretive movements into play. Neither day nor night. As the storyline would have us believe, the characters leave well-formed footprints behind them. Yet just as I observe Connelly observing her characters from the wall -- *The old people are gazing at the cliffs, ignoring the white threads of cataracts, seeing perfectly the greenness of other lives, other decades, thinking of the ancient lime trees towering beyond them ...* I observe myself observing the realness of her fiction. And the fiction of her realness. What do these observations announce? Her writerly text invites my reading it, writing it in ways that move with and against the seeing. I am satisfied to let Connelly tell me what the old people are seeing just as I sometimes resist her omniscient “I.” She can’t know what they’re seeing. In turn, my “researcherly” text provides an invitation to interpretation-made-more-visible, as well as more question-able; it offers ways to become curious about time, both in learning to teach and in learning to talk/write about time from the middle of the tangle; it is an invitation to consider how we are made different through the relations that researchly texts make available. Researchly texts offer ways to address these kinds of questions by inviting us to become curious about our own learning, our own writing, our own researching. Researchly texts create new conditions of learning that enable the making of insight, the ability to discover what it is we are learning, writing, researching, through a reading of our own experience of researching.

I am only now discovering, through the tangle, why “A Bowl of Yellow Flowers” has been so important without necessarily knowing why: Connelly’s story as writerly text is a piece of fictional research, while mine is a piece of researcherly fiction. The tangle is fiction/al. (The) fiction is tangled ...

*The wall is low: I sit on its back, watching the way the morning light washes the letters off the board: Invisible pedagogy ... The BEd. students from the tech studies program slump in the last row of the classroom hoping that language cannot traverse the great curricular distance from front to back. Physics students perform routine calculations that might provide at least temporary immunity to poetry. History majors count on their subject discipline to repeat itself. English teachers-to-be gloat or glow in their seats. The instructor shouts language across the curriculum ... A girl with hair the colour of clean straw is staring at her watch, desperate for time to slide open ... I wonder if I am imagining it*
all ...

I can’t know what they are seeing,
through the tangle the fonts melt
and mingle.

*Italics* can no longer be counted
on. Here is a broad stone wall.

Yes, it’s just as Winterson describes:
in the moment of passing,
the canvas has more power to stop me than I have power
to walk on.
waiting for our names to be called
My first memory of "creative" writing was Grade Nine. I attended a boarding school which was run in the old English tradition. I remember that every Tuesday we were told to write a 200 word essay on a common subject. A week later, we read the textbook in class while we waited for our names to be called. We then walked up to the teacher's desk and gave him our work. We stood by his desk as he read the essay ...

1.
Fresh out of school, Indian and Native Affairs employed me to visit native Indian Bands across the province. I was to instruct them: How to maintain their sewers and water systems.

Rather arrogant engineers had told me stories of being chased off the land by gun-toting natives. They were glad to no longer work with any lazy Indians.

For a year I travelled between reserves -- some in the city, others isolated by uneasy hours in float planes.

They would test you, I found out.
My car was in the Chief's spot (the gravel lot was enormous) or I was too young -- there must be some mistake. All with faces like stone. But with poorly disguise humour in their eyes.

The Chief would eventually greet me at the Band office. "Let's go for a drive." No explanation. "Engineer, huh? You married? Why are you doing this?"

Slow down

I met kind grandmothers who served up fresh prawns while the men searched for someone lost as sea. Pipelayers who laughed like kids at my fear of slugs. Chiefs who shared salmon sandwiches and pointed to where someone's son had jumped off the water tower.

Half Pace. No bonuses here.
The project manager would come by and demand "What the hell's been going on here?"
I too wanted to chase him away.

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6 This is an excerpt of one preservice teacher's "literacy narrative" written in class, along with a trio of poems -- "first evers" -- written some weeks later. I have taken the liberty of italicizing the literacy narrative excerpts and juxtaposing them with the poetry.
Sometimes our writing was met with approval and our teacher read out some paragraphs to the class. Some work was also substandard and was read out to the class as well. My work was read aloud often as I was still learning to master the English language. Knowing that there was a good chance for public embarrassment, my friends and I wrote safely -- simple sentences with verbs and punctuation we knew how to handle ...

2.
I held an engineering job once, for three years. A productive company

We had no lunchroom, no couch or soft seats to gather at.
We would roll up our blueprints and eat our sandwiches
At the drafting tables.
There was no lunch hour -- people ate at different times and took as long
As they thought necessary, or appropriate.
Conversation between the desks would shift between work and golf.

Around my first Christmas there, memos were sent out;
We could request any capital expenditures from the company.
The couch which I asked for never materialized, of course. Others
Had requested new drafting pens and tape measures.
I felt like an idiot. Besides, there was no room for a sitting area.

I began to drive to Burnaby Lake and eat lunch in the bird sanctuary.
A draftsman asked me with a wink where I was off to every day.
I shouldn’t have said that I was having lunch with the ducks.

What a rich symbol a couch would have provided us!
You deserve a rest.
Get comfortable and talk about your family or your weekend.
Sure, we can fit three on here!
As it was, we often ate our lunches in silence, separated
By drafting tables and walls of design manuals.

We could have crossed the floor, of course, and joined
Someone at their desk, or sat on the grass outside.
But for the same reason that I felt like a fool for having eaten
with the ducks, we never did.
Although our year in Grade Nine English killed
our creativity and courage to explore
the possibilities of language, we did become precise and grammatically sound
writers ...

3.
I walked to school in the wintertime.
Dawn would be hours away.
I would imagine that I was the only one awake,
As I crunched my way through the snow.
You could let your eyelashes meet and the street lights
Would disappear into pinpricks surrounded by dim halos.
I would see how long I could stay in this fantastical landscape
Until a snowbank would nudge me along the path again.

On cold mornings, your breath would be left behind in a trail of puffs.
The snow could shatter like breaking glass.
Chunks of it would be booted along for a while.

Those days there were two types of darkness.
There was the kind that filled the basement hallway
As you fumbled frantically for the light switch at the far end.
It would let you sleep only when the door was cracked
And a pen knife was unfolded in the dresser.

But there was also the peaceful emptiness
That was company in the mornings.
No shapeless evildoers sizing you up from behind.
Just a delightful silence. A vast black slate waiting
For a child’s imagination; fields of snow crystals
Brought to life by a porchlight,
Huge white mushrooms instead of mailboxes.
A gentle and dreamlike introduction to the day.
trust me I'm (almost) a doctor:
poetry and pedagogy and teachers writing lives

INTER-LUDE
I. “Listening into a Cadence”

The Canadian poet Dennis Lee offers these powerful words that speak of/to the fragile
conditions that connect the writer and the writing, the poet and the poem, the re-searcher and
the search:

Most of my life as a writer is spent listening into a
cadence which is a kind of taut cascade, a luminous
tumble. If I withdraw from immediate contact with
things around me I can sense it churning, flickering,
dancing, locating things in more shapely relation to
one another without robbing them of themselves ...

From the middle, end, beginning of my re-search -- from somewhere between the known and the
not known -- comes a poem: “Trust Me I’m (Almost) a Doctor -- Poetry and Pedagogy and
Teachers Writing Lives.” The lines of this particular poem grew out of my earliest experiences
as a doctoral student working with a group of preservice teachers “work-shopping” across the
curriculum. (This involvement would mark the beginnings of my fascination with the ways that
a classroom full of preservice teachers embraced writing practice on the way to teaching.) I
have been living (with) this poem for quite some time now -- workshopping it endlessly in the
hopes of finding “dazzlement,” Kundera’s wonderful word for “the truth to be discovered”
(1986, p. 117). (A poet who serves any other kind of truth, according to Kundera, is a “false
poet.”) Kundera’s emphasis on the “to-be-discovered” nature of truth is, for me, an
affirmation of the need to learn to live well with the indeterminacy that is always and already
part of our poetry and our pedagogy -- of our living. Truth, then, like knowledge, “is not a
cognitive possession. It is an event: the singular event of a discovery ... [that] ... has to be
repeated, reenacted, practised each time for the first time” (Felman, 1987, p. 12). So each
reading of my poem, each revisit, is a re-verb-eration in the way that we might coin new verbs
from existing nouns -- a “shift from the done to the doing ... an enacting (not an enactment)”
(Davis, 1996, p. xv).

I resonate strongly with the intimate details of Dennis Lee’s own workings with words -- of his
asking words to perform the unimaginable: to mean. And to breathe. Life. All the while
performing the contagious and contradictory act of attempting to write about the presence of an
experience by cutting oneself off from that source. Lee continues,

... More and more I sense this cadence as presence --
though it may take 50 or 100 revisions before a
poem enacts it -- I sense it as presence, both outside
myself and inside my body opening out and trying
to get into words. What is it?...

... But the cadence of the poems I have written is
such a small and often mangled fraction of what I
hear, it tunes out so many wavelengths of that
massive, infinitely fragile polyphony, that I
frequently despair. And often it feels perverse to
ask what is cadence, when it is all I can manage to
heed it ...
You heard an energy, and those lives were part of it. Under the surface alienation and the second-level blur of words there was a living barrage of meaning: private, civil, religious -- unclassifiable finally, but there, and seamless, and pressing to be spoken. And I felt that press of meaning: I had no idea what it was, but I could feel it teeming toward words. I called it cadence ... And hearing that cadence, I started to write again.

In listening in to cadence, the closeness of my poem and those lives who were a part of it -- its presence -- is most strongly felt in its absence, the distance that grows wild between the lines and the lives that helped to grow the poem in the first place. As Madeleine Grumet, in her poignant description of our work as teachers and researchers, states, "So it is the shadow of the experience of teaching that we pursue here, hoping that we might catch a glimpse of its distortions and of the ground on which it falls ..." (1988, p. 61). The farther away as you get closer, eyes forever adjusting to the light. I offer a re-presentation of the poem in this interlude, not for the answers it might reveal but for the questions it helps me to continue living:

II. Trust Me I'm (Almost) a Doctor: Poetry and Pedagogy and Teachers Writing Lives

words spoken
with voices polite and earnest:

"Excuse me, but how much will the final assignment be worth??"
and ...
"How many words should that include??"
and ...
"Should that be single or double-spaced??"
and ...
"Can you tell us how it will be graded??"
and ...
"Does punctuation count??"

words unspoken
with voices angry and confused and earnest:

"I've been burned too many times in other courses to trust this one nutty professor."
and ...
"This creative stuff sounds good but I've got my grade point average to consider."
("Yeah, and what about jobs next year.")
and ...
"Hey, I'm actually being asked to write what I really want to write."
and ...

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7 This poem appears in *English Quarterly*, 26 (2), p. 17-20.
"This stuff is not going to go over too well in the school where I'm practice teaching."
and...
"Just give me the usual assignment please, tell me what to do, spell it out, I don't have time."

all these words spoken
and unspoken, tough to digest
hard to swallow
uttered and unuttered
muttered
by soon-to-be TEACHERS
TEACHER candidates
those who would TEACH

fine honest intelligent
people searching questioning
people meaning-makers

an elite band of women and men
well-schooled
well-intentioned
well-off
well-educated
well-honed
well-meaning
well within the bell curve
well — what happened?

when these

teachers-to-be were offered a taste of freedom
a drink from the well
a shot in the arm
a chip off the old block
a bird in the hand

an opportunity:

to take risks with their writing
to bungee jump with pen and paper
(see Jack) run and (see Jane) jump and (close both those books and) play with language
to be playful in language
to slip and slide and
skip and skate
celebrate the
slipperiness
of language

what happened?
when they were challenged

to construct
to deconstruct
fall down
get up again
fly
tune an ear to the slippery scales of discourse
to make a renewed commitment to their own writing
claim ownership
write and write and write and write:
personally creatively expressively

what happened??
when they were given
a call to experiment without clinical details or
pre and post tests
no white lab coats
a chance
to acknowledge the value of expository essays but write a play a poem a radio drama

an invitation:
to build a campfire with words
explode sentences into brilliant flashes of fireworks
dig holes in the backyard and bury the bones of favourite lines for
safekeeping
for later discovery
to spill and splash buckets of blue and yellow and purple ink
over familiar and not-so-familiar experiences (like learning and teaching)
ride the rapids ski the slopes bag the peaks fly the sky

an affable offer
to be reflective
to be self-reflexive
to be
to discover that writing
is like a love letter to the world
is like walking on water
is like waiting for the tide to come in
is like pulling teeth
to discover that writing
is a sweat-stubbed pencil
is the dust in your cuffs
is water flowing uphill
is heavenly
is hellish
is braving the visit
to discover that writing is like scaling the outside of a downtown office tower during rush hour:
alone in a crowd
to discover that writing is like being given the first volume of a set of Encyclopedia
all these discoveries
but still
an invitation for teacher candidates
to live writerly lives
to work with words
to word their worlds
sculpt their own stories
rearrange their narratives
write themselves into/out of existence

an unlimited offer
for teacher candidates
to take pen and paper and scratch out a sermon
scribe a poem
shed tears over a story
exalt over an essay

to discover
epistemological graffiti
the anatomy of voice

to shape polish and sculpt sentences
experiment with artifice
question coherence
engage in decorative doodling
try on new hats
throw off old clothes
swim in an ocean of signs and symbols and signifiers

recognize that language is
everything
everywhere
a sea of
textuality

time to go for broke
time to get and give pleasure through
jotting
journalling
joking
jesting

well, WHAT HAPPENED?

well,
as you might guess
the course was
exciting
invigorating
liberating
confusing
chaotic
troubling and
tricky -- it was disturbing

all of these students set free with pen and paper and nothing but their lives to back them up:

some to float up into the giant steel blue sky in a colourful hail of helium balloons
(not particularly worried about coming down)
some to water ski their way over blue-green lakes of glass
(at high speeds, breathless and waving through the wake)
some to ride slow and steady, John Deere-like, on backyard tractors
(self-mulching mowers moving in carefully calculated circuits)
some to sink slowly in the brown and earthly mud
(up to the axles in self-discovery)
some to plunge headlong over cliffs
(and disappear at the bottom in a puff of smoke like Wile E. Coyote)
and some to stop dead in their tracks
(rabbits frozen by the icy white highway stare of oncoming headlights)

and many left to wonder:

WHAT HAPPENED??
and
WHEN do we get to do this kind of writing and living again?
and
WHY didn’t this happen sooner?
and
WHERE does schooling end and life begin?
and
WHO was it that told me I couldn’t write in the first place?
and
HOW do I help my own students to write personally and expressively and creatively?
and
HOW will we be graded
on this assignment?
CHAPTER SIX

Teachers Writing Lives

In writing, we can rest and float; move and yet not move. It shows us the patterns we are weaving with our lives; it can help us to make the patterns and to change the patterns all at once.

— Cynthia Chambers 1

Who do I want to be as a teacher? I want to be a facilitator of joy, a friend, a guide along the journey, an establisher of comfort. I want to be a source of reassurance, enthusiasm, and encouragement. I want to be a human being. I want to be like the girl with the flashlight who works in the planetarium as the star guide, pointing out constellations and planetary configurations in her beam. I want my students to see the universe of language ... K.S., May 1994

These are the words of a teacher candidate written sometime around the middle of the course; they are part of a teacher's writing life, part of an unending process of a teacher writing her life. There are only eighty-four words in this passage. Not that many words with which to write a life but they provide a location from which to begin talking about writing. About living. About teaching. About identity.

The passage is polished. It is poetry. The words seems to catch small pieces of sunlight in their turning. They reflect. They refract. We are different for the light that passes through. The passage is also pedagogy. The words begin to write a (teaching) life. Both are hope-full. Full of promise. The words lead. Lead to other places in ways that open up possibilities for living and teaching. The living leads. To words, to wordmaking that makes other words possible. The words also mis-lead, as does the living. They create a sense of unity and completeness, of wholeness, even. As though the teaching life were (already) written. So words also close down possibility. They constrain.

If we were to begin to "workshop" this teacher candidate's piece of writing, which is also a piece of living, (the writing is attached to a life being lived), we would be engaging in a curricular

1 From an unpublished manuscript presented at WestCAST '96, March 10, 1996, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

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act. One that is pedagogical at many levels. Within the space of the writing workshop — which in this case is also a place of teacher education — we might choose to establish the kinds of conditions on any given day that would enable us, as learners and teachers and writers, to engage with our writing and our words in different kinds of ways. If we were to treat a particular class as a writing workshop, in some of the ways that the writing workshop has been conceptualized, for example, then the focus would be on a work-shopping of our words — of our lines. We would be learners and writers (who are also teachers) working with our words, working with our texts, engaged in various writerly acts (anything from writing process to copy editing). If we were to treat a particular class as a “teacher education workshop,” borrowing some of the writing workshop’s pedagogical underpinnings, then the focus would be on a work-shopping of our words — of our lives. We would be learners and teachers (who are also writers) working with our words, working with our texts, engaged in various teacherly acts (writing ourselves into real and imagined roles in classrooms and schools).

Of course, the question of whether it is, in fact, possible to make such neat and tidy distinctions in our writing and our living is itself open to question — is itself a deeply pedagogical question: when are our words simply words? What does it mean, in our textual living, to move a word, remove a word, suggest that a student, or a colleague, or a friend — or all of these combined — change a word in their writing? In the teacher candidate’s passage of words above, for example, what might it mean to work with “just” her words, workshop her words? (As though it were poetry.) To make editorial kinds of suggestions:

“I’m not sure about your choice of the word ‘friend’ here” ...

A line break after the “I want to be” might create an interesting effect. The reader receives an invitation to read existentially: e.g. “I want to be,” before the eye drops down to the next line “a teacher” ...

“I love the image of ‘pointing out constellations’!” (Constellations and planetary configurations make a lovely sounding pair. What about arranging the words on the page to create some kind of night-skyed visual effect?) ...

“Why have you chosen to use the word “girl” here? At first it stopped me but now it really works ...

“That last line is beautiful: ‘I want my students to see the universe of language.’” (Wow.)
This series of "editorial" questions might carry different meaning when they are directed toward her (teaching) life. (As if it were pedagogy.)

"I'm not sure about your choice of the word 'friend' here (what does it mean to call a teacher a friend? A friend a teacher?) ...

"I love the image of 'pointing out constellations'!" (In what ways are you pointing them out? Is it important to name the constellations? Do you leave room for the students to also point the constellations out to you?) ...

"That last line is beautiful: 'I want my students to see the universe of language.'" (Wow.)

But when are we "just" work-shopping the lines, the writing that might be a poem or an essay or, in this case, the words that make up a deeply personal manifesto for a life that includes teaching? Can we act primarily as writers, who are also teachers, where the decision to change the word "girl" to "woman" or "whatever" might be based more on the way that it changes the look or "feel" of the sentence? And, when are we work-shopping the lives, the living that goes on in the lines? In between the lines? Can we act primarily as teachers, who are also writers, where the decision to change the word "friend" to "partner," or -- to "facilitator" to "mentor" to "counsellor" to "co-learner" to "collaborator" to "teacher" -- might be based more on a pedagogical sensibility that bears philosophical and/or theoretical underpinnings about the nature of the teaching relationship than on the sounds and signs of poetry?

Either way, the manner in which we choose to work with our words, our own and those who we learn and teach with, is a highly charged and significant pedagogical act/ion. How much more charged can it be when one person in a position of author-ity suggests that another person (who has his or her own authority) make a change to a line? To a life? ... In writing, we can rest and float; move and yet not move ... My interest, after spending a significant amount of time with teacher candidates engaged in curricular acts of writing and learning and teaching, is in conceptualizing the workshop as a location that is also a "work-shop," or "word-shop." A place where we work with both lines and lives ... It shows us the patterns we are weaving with our lives ... I have come to think of the ENED 426 experience as a place of "work-shopping," where
"word-shopping" takes place. The hyphen introduces a space for the lines and lives to come together and apart: We are our lines. We are not our lines. We are our lives. We are not our lives. Our lines are our lives. Our lines are not our lives. We are our words. We are not our words ... *it can help us to make the patterns and to change the patterns all at once* ...

My identity -- my role -- in the re-presentation of this particular teacher candidate's writing life in the opening passage -- as well as in a particular group of teacher candidates' writing lives in this dissertation -- is not only that of a researcher. I am also a poet, a writer. A teacher. I am drawn to words, to the lines *and* lives, in ways that sometimes seem to converge, other times seem to contradict. In each of these roles, however, I am seeking to engage with other human beings who are, in turn, engaged in acts of meaningmaking, most often through acts of wordmaking. My role -- my identity -- is an ambiguous one, both productive and precarious; it is in flux, as are the identities of the future teachers I have shared lines and lives with. We write the teaching life as it is written for us.

Work-shopping offers a place of both convergence and contradiction, a curricular location in which to practice word-shopping, to try on both lines and lives in a living that includes the practice of writing. And teaching. Teachers' writing lives. Teachers writing (their) lives. This play on words is also the play of pedagogy, a pedagogy that attempts to "make space for students to perform differently." The work-shop, then, offers a commonplace to entertain various and varying forms of identity negotiation through word-shopping.

Maxine Greene writes, in *Releasing the Imagination*,

> Neither my self nor my narrative can have, therefore, a single strand. I stand at the crossing point of too many social and cultural forces; and in any case, I am

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2 I have, with the help of other readers of this work, begun to use the term "word-shopping," to describe the *work-shopping* of words that took place within the language across the curriculum workshop. My initial use of the term "work-shopping" was to emphasize the notion of teacher candidates trying the "work of teaching" -- that is, the "job" called teacher -- on for fit. Word-shopping, on the other hand, more closely describes the work of the writer or poet (or teacher) engaged in a form of writing practice which, in this case, deals explicitly with trying on the practice of teaching. Thus, word-shopping holds the possibility of transcending an activity in a workshop as it becomes a life practice of trying on both lines *and* lives.

3 Omer, M., Teaching for the moment, in *Theory into Practice*, (35), 2, 72-78

Forever on the way. Yes. This seems an appropriate way to characterize ourselves as students of teacher education. Works-in-progress. In-process. Wanting. To know. In flux. Subject to entropy. Everything depending. Who are we? What names do we place on ourselves and our actions? Our complexities. Our identities. How could we? Should we? Ever? When, simply: it depends. Yet, we are required, for equally appropriate and necessary reasons, to forever stop and define ourselves, as teachers and learners -- as human beings -- who choose to do this rather than that, be here and not there. We wrestle with questions, always, of identity: needing one, not wanting some. Living with/in the familiar strangeness of identity’s disciples of desire and curiosity and compulsion, of necessity and refusal and uncertainty. Living with/in the strange familiarity created by the tension between who we are and who we are not, who we want to be and who we may not want to become.

Identity is ambulatory, it moves as we move yet resists motion detectors. Caught up in the world of teaching and learning, we are swept along by the current of classroom living, sometimes steering, other times adrift. As part of a larger social and cultural web of meaning, we assume responsibility for many aspects of the process of identity formation; constructing as we are in turn constructed. But the world never stops long enough to provide any more than a fleeting glance of our selves. Moving. Somewhere else. We live with an ongoing, chronic sense of loss and hope, with the potential dis-ease of never-really-knowing. Who we are. But needing to know. Living under the old adage: to steer is heaven, to drift is hell.

It seems we must learn to be in two places at one time. Simultaneously. We must be in the river and also on the bank. This is the curious time of pedagogy. Of course, this is not necessarily news to the countless (self) reflective/reflexive souls, born out of several decades of productive dilemmas and mindful engagements with teaching and learning, who are constantly re-minding themselves and those they live and work with of the need to honour the complexity and the difficulty and the ambiguity of “making pathways through [the] world” (Greene, 1995, p. 16). What does seem news-worthy, at least to me and to those I share classrooms with, is the possibilities that wordmaking and wordplay offer for making such pathways. For becoming a
teacher. For becoming a learner. Infinite moments lived with such delicacy and deliberateness. Moments. Waiting to be born. Waiting to be crushed. Crushed beneath the pedagogical weight that staggers even the imagination. And born out of that same weight that also gives wings and the possibility of weightlessness to those who might imagine otherwise.

My experience of writing and word-shopping with preservice teachers reminds me of the river and the river bank and gives me reason to think that we can be in both places at one time. Writing can create a “textual place for transformation” (Sumara & Davis, 1997, p. 5), a place to consider this forever-stumbling as a necessary movement. Always on the way to somewhere else. Returning to Sumara’s notion of the interpretive location, the writing-styled workshop (or word-shop) in teacher education offers opportunities to collect our experiences of living and teaching and learning and writing, to collect our selves. Paradoxically, the interpretive location points to how it is impossible to locate any of these acts in and of themselves. Rather, the invitation is to re/consider these acts in all their relations.

Britzman and Pitt’s words continue to burn shadows -- through this curious time of identity negotiation -- into my writing (of) pedagogy ...

... this may seem 
reminiscent of reflective
practice ... casting the
time of learning
backward and forward
... something other than
a linear recall ... a
notion of time not yet
recognized in teacher
education ... how
knowledge is
constructed in moments
of unresolve ... how to
stage a pedagogy that
is exploratory rather
than content driven
...in cases of both
assumed familiarity
and unfamiliarity, what
seems to be at stake is
the teacher's sense of
self (Britzman & Pitt,

Some Notes to My Selves: "TeachingThroughWriting"

Journal Entry: The recasting of time in teacher education ... The curious time of pedagogy: May 25, 1994. Another class finishes. Teacher candidates scribble quick notes called "exit slips" on to scraps of paper which provide asked-for feedback to the instructor about how the course is going for them. They drop them onto the desk and then they are gone.

July 16, 1997: Still writing. Still thinking about May 25, 1994. Rereading. "Exit slips." Quick notes. Scraps of paper. Sorting through teachers' writing lives. I'm writing teachers' lives. Here's one, for example. The teacher candidate says, "Part of me is scared to take a risk, yet the rest of me is saying -- What could possibly go wrong?" Striking. Is she talking about writing or about teaching? "What could possibly go wrong?" In what ways will my response to her question, write this teacher's life? This is what I am scribbling down in my journal as the train skates across Summer leaves scrolling green pages of grass and birch wind and pines fields glass blue windows.

The journal waits,
not burning so much
as sitting there
like a cheque book or a
toothache. Or a life waiting
to happen. A mirror
with a marred surface. Out the window
we see our selves reflected,

identity fleeting, like poems
sliced into postcard
scenes that change more quickly
than we can write
them down ...
Through Writing: Through-Writing: ThroughWriting

Let's forget our selves as teachers through writing (poetry).

Let's remember our selves as teachers through writing (poetry).

Discovering that remembering and forgetting are how we re-member our selves.

Through writing: through-writing — throughwriting as an ambulatory pedagogical experience.

Through-writing as an ongoing process of identity negotiation —

on the way through to someplace else satisfyingly confusing to be on the way.

Poetry and pedagogy: more than a play of words more than just Wordplay:

making poetry—making pedagogy identity negotiation:
writing as-if we were poets: pretend poets writing as-if we were teachers: pretend teachers.

We are always laying a path while walking, while writing, while teaching walking the lines of our writing watching our words watching our selves forgetting and re-membering.

Reconceptualizing the hyphen ated space: student-teacher ...

Student Teacher
Student-Teacher

reworking rewording re: wording reimagining student teacher:
student teacher ... stuteachdenter ... stedachenturte
making (up) words,
making non-sense with words in order to make sense
of our selves
see our selves
differently.

This is word
making. Word
play. This is living
un/grammatically: forever on the way ...

July 11, 1997. More writing
in my journal:

As I continue to reflect on our time spent together in the course, I am continuing to entertain the possibility that maybe we "learned nothing." And I'm not stretching for cleverness here, nor for some nihilistic view of how we spend our time in teacher education. Instead I'm wondering out loud over the possible importance of forgetting as a way of re-membering pedagogy. Is it conceivable that we need places of "time out," places of forgetting in teacher education in order to re-member ourselves? Is forgetting a part of the dynamic of identity formation and negotiation in teacher education. Forgetting who we were/are/were in order to remember ourselves differently. Perhaps playfulness is a serious part of this dynamic. Taking our selves less seriously, even if only for relatively short periods of time within the longer course -- a lifetime -- of becoming a teacher. Can play be/come an important form of work?

The research of Vivian Gussin Paley (1979, 1990), well known author and early childhood educator, would answer the question in the affirmative. She points to the important role of play in the work of learning and teaching. Paley calls play "the original open-ended and integrated curriculum" (1979, p. 142) ... a "practicing of problems" which gives all members of the classroom "a sense of communal purpose" (1990, p. 80). Throughout the course, I was always aware of the sense of play that took place each and every morning (despite the 8:00 a.m. start). The invitation, always, was to write and reflect, interrogate and celebrate the ways we write and are written. The generous allotment of time to engage in writing exercises outside of the classroom space, to "wander for wonder," or "look for language" -- two exercises that involved looking for poetry in the world -- seemed too good to be true. In fact, I became uneasy on occasion, thinking that maybe time was being given out too generously...

Journal entry within a journal entry:
May 18, 1994 -- second day of class ...
Carl outlines the next writing exercise called "Wander for wonder"... "feel free to leave the room," he says -- "go wander outside (it is May in Vancouver after all), look for something wonderful. Sit for 15 minutes write about" ...

(Note: As a general rule coffee breaks were tacked on to these outside writing activities, combined in a sense, so that edges between writing and coffee, coffee and writing would be given the opportunity to blur. Longer coffee? Longer writing? Somewhere in between?)

Afterward I wrote: Carl is being extremely generous with TIME. Overly generous? I'm wondering if the teacher candidates think he is a pushover. Maybe they'll take advantage of his
generosity, take advantage of the course structure, go for one long coffee, linger with lattés instead of words. Well, maybe they did on occasion, but I know that over the length of the course, teacher candidates writing (lives) came to life. They used this time, opened up to it, expanded into the time.

An e-mail exchange took place among a group of us in class around this issue of time and play and enjoyment and fun in class. (There were 8 or 9 other sections, in this very large running of the course, which apparently were not having near as much fun as our section seemed to be having.) One teacher candidate wrote:

... those outside of our experience view [our class] with suspicion. I was describing to someone this morning about what a great class we have and the response was, “Oh, you’re in ‘Playdough Leggo’s’ section. I heard it was slack-assed.” It’s a sad comment that people refer to a class in which I learned so much as being slack-assed just because it was fun. It fits with the concept that unless it is unpleasant, it’s not for real ...

Yes, I believe we need to create a location that enables us to play with pedagogy, not just with words. A chance to play with the real: a time out, a breathing, a loosening, a re-minder through play -- through writing -- that all of this becoming a teacher is difficult work. And worthwhile work, too. So go. Give yourself permission to stare at the shadowplay on the side of the building for fifteen minutes, forty minutes, an hour. Not instead of learning but because of learning. Give yourself to the page. Move your pen across its whiteness where no words have been written, where every word has been written. Write your words to whatever rhythms the pen appears to hear. You may end up with a quiet poem about a tiny window of a world that opened because you were there. Or, perhaps

other voices intrude -- your own
loud (inner) voices with thoughts --
about an upcoming teaching practicum,
an idea for an assignment
the rent that’s due,
lunch ...

If writing is a composing -- “composing a life” -- as Mary Catherine Bateson (1989) has so beautifully described it, then maybe we need a place, a location, to compose ourselves. But when you begin to compose your Selves your
Self you risk getting into Serious

Wordplay: Composition ... Com-position ... Calm position ... Composition

It’s difficult to remain composed in composition. If we are going to compose ourselves do we need to first learn to read and write? Notes? Words? I believe we can become composers on the way toward composition. We can make music before we know the names of the notes, before we are familiar with lines and spaces. We can learn to break the “rules of writing,” before we necessarily know what all the rules are.

If we learn to forget about the notes, learn to become less self conscious about the lines we can be surprised, startled even, at the notes that “appear” as music. We begin to change our “definition” of music, of poetry, of teaching. Our identity slides, shifts ...
Living Un/grammatically: A Poet’s Pedagogical Soliloquy

In my work with preservice teachers I face daily a dilemma. My student-teachers come to me with an urgent practical agenda: What do I need to know in order to survive the world of school? In effect they want me to tell them how to fit into a world that they assume is structured like a grammar, with traditions and conventions and rules and patterns. They are seeking ways to conform to the pedagogic world as it has been written, but I hope they will seek ways to transform the pedagogic world, always written and always in the process of being written. I hope my student-teachers will seek ways to write, actively and deliberately and imaginatively, the pedagogic world of students and teachers. Of course, I acknowledge the sense of urgent need expressed by my student-teachers for practical strategies and advice that will sustain them in Monday morning’s grade eight language arts class. My student-teachers live in the space of the hyphen which connects their identities as students and as teachers, not sure who they are, their sense of authority unsettled, rendered tentative and unsure, by hyphenated hybridization. But instead of fearing this place of the hyphen, I encourage my student-teachers to dance in the space of the hyphen, to explore the possibilities for new identities. I want them to learn to challenge the ways in which the world has been written for them, to know that they are not only written, but that they also write the world. I invite my students to write the unwritten sentences, the sentences that interrogate and subvert syntax and semantics, the sentences that create spaces where my students can live un/grammatically (Leggo, in press, emphasis is mine).

The above passage from Leggo comes from an essay titled “Living Un/grammatically in a Grammatical World: The Pedagogic World of Teachers and Students” (in press). I chose to re-
present this particular passage because of the way I believe it underscores some of the dramatic tensions of working with teacher candidates. It points to the ways that teacher education can sometimes be/come driven by dichotomies unwittingly perpetrated by those who spend time together in the hyphenated spaces of learning-to-teach. We are, after all, all in the relational space of the hyphen. As teacher educators it is, relationally speaking, impossible to simply work with a group of people who are, themselves, in the unsteady space of hyphenation without being in that space ourselves. All of us live in and out of the space and, in turn, often live the space-as-dilemma -- in a complex and serpentine tangle. Perhaps, as Leggo suggests, learning to teach -- the process of negotiating an elusive identity called “teacher” -- might also involve a learning to live un/grammatically ...

Writing Un/grammatically -- Living Un/grammatically: A Series of Identity Negotiations

The prefix un is generally used to mean not or the opposite of (e.g. unhappy), but the prefix un can also be used to add an intensive force, as in unloosen. This is the way that I use the prefix in un/grammatically -- to add the intensive force that suggests that to live un/grammatically is to live ultimately with more attention to the spirit of grammar rooted in gramarye. 4 To be un/grammatical is to be not in accordance with the rules of grammar, not staying in place, questioning the assigned place, disrupting the order of place, but to be ungrammatical also means asking where do these rules and principles come from, and what are they, and who knows them? To be in accord with the rules or principles of grammar is to acknowledge the ways that the rules are generated and created and transformed. And because the rules of grammar are written, they are always available for re/writing, always open to un/grammatical re/generation. Hence to be un/grammatical is ultimately to be grammatical, and being too strictly grammatical can only lead to the betrayal of the spirit of

4 A more in-depth exploration of the notion of “gramarye,” introduced by Leggo within the ENED 426 experience, can be found in the essay cited in the body of the chapter (“Living un/grammatically in a grammatical world”) which is forthcoming in Interchange. Briefly, Leggo uses gramarye as an etymological root to grammar, related to the old French gramaire or learning. Leggo states, "Gramarye means magic, occult knowledge, alchemy, necromancy, and enchantment. Now I want to use this new (or old) notion of grammar to support a poetic return to language that subverts and disrupts and eructs and deconstructs, always playful, always purposeful ... I want to pursue gramarye which invites mystery and openness and poetry" ... (in press).
And because the rules of grammar are written, they are always available for re/writing. Work-shopping, then, offers a location in which to practice word-shopping, to practice writing and living with words; rethinking, reconceptualizing writing as a practice of rewriting — through wordplay — the practice of grammar — the grammar of writing and the grammar of living. This ongoing textual negotiation — the grammar of identity negotiation — becomes easily entangled in the lines of our living — in the tangle of our lines and lives.

Trinh-T. Minh-ha writes about the notion of a “sentence-thinker who radically questions the world through the questioning of a how-to-write” (1989, p. 17). This seems a more radical notion of writing-to-learn than the one emphasized in the Language Across the Curriculum movement; it is an embodied form of writing to learn. Similarly, learning to live un/grammatically, in the context of teacher education, involves “sentence-thinkers” who radically question the world (of teaching) through the questioning of a how-to-teach, and of a how-to-write. Through writing. Trinh-T. Minh-ha continues, “a sentence-thinker, yes, but one who so very often does not know how a sentence will end ... And as there is no need to rush, just leave it open, so that it may later on find, or not find, its closure” (1989, p. 19). Trinh-T. Minh-ha’s jewelled cluster of words speaks worlds within the world of teacher education. Of writing teacher education. Of writing ourselves as teachers. In our negotiation of identity — in our writing of identity, we so very often do not know how a sentence will end ... and as there is no rush just leave it open so that it may later on find or not find its closure ...

Living and writing un/grammatically brings our lines and lives together. And apart. This is potentially disturbing: we do not know how a sentence -- or a life -- will end. Yet we need to know; in this need we most often feel the rush -- to apply. Ourselves as teachers. As those who know. Our identification with teaching -- our identity of “teacher” -- is partially wrapped up in
what we know (to be a teacher). And we are, of course, being written. Always, the identity of “teacher” writes overtop of our writing as though we are palimpsests only ... It shows us the patterns we are weaving ...

If we work-shop identity, experiment with lines and lives by a questioning of how-to-write and how-to-teach, we become sentence-thinkers who question the grammar of how we write and how we are written. Writing un/grammatically, we re-member our selves and our writing as “question marks” – as an ongoing questioning of marks -- of markings that scratch the page written ...

Writing Identity: Questioning the (Question) Mark(s)?

(Aren’t our identities always question-able?) Aren’t our identities always marked by questions? By a questioning? of the grammar of writing identity? How often we don’t question grammar. How often we simply identify grammar as the rules -- the lines we follow in order to write our lives -- our living. For example:

When is a question mark a question of identity? And when, if ever, is it simply a question mark? that tells us what to do at the end of a sentence? When we come to a “period,” for example, do we come to a full. Stop?

The grammar of the line is also the grammar of the life. The grammar of identity negotiation is (question) marked with/by textual innuendo.

A question mark is also a symbol: ? that enables us to question the marks we scratch out as symbols and signs that signify our living and our writing.
We can question these marks through living ungrammatically which is a writing-as-questioning, a writing as-if we are always just learning to question: the line, as-if we are always just learning to question: the living so that we are always negotiating the lines of our living, the living of our lines as-if we always just learning to write as-if we are always just learning to teach as-if we are always just learning ...

Living and writing un/grammatically highlights the performative nature of living, of writing the tangle of identity negotiated by our lines and lives through writing throughwriting identity ...

In addition, the grammar of psychoanalytic insight, through the work of Felman (1987), would suggest that, we are always “mobilizing” many more signs than we know so that writing practice -- word-shopping -- involves writing practice without necessarily knowing (all of) what we are doing ...

As a form of writing practice, wildmind writing is itself un/grammatical. It is a kind of writing practice that explicitly invites writers to break the rules of writing. Interesting to note, however, that the “breaking of rules” through writing practice, in the ways that Goldberg has espoused it, can also lead to a convention or grammar of its own -- an ungrammar that we begin to identify differently with on the page. An ungrammar that, with (writing) practice, begins to identify us differently on the page -- enables us to begin to identify ourselves differently on the page. Goldberg’s “rules” for writing practice are, themselves, rules for learning to live un/grammatically; they are, in a sense, un/rules:

keep your hand moving ... lose control ... be specific ... don’t think ... don’t worry about punctuation, spelling, grammar ... you are free to write the worst junk in the universe ... go for the jugular ...
As Goldberg herself states, “writing practice will help you contact your first thoughts. Just practice and forget everything else” (1990, p. 4). So writing practice, as espoused by Goldberg, seems to involve a losing of yourself in order to find yourself -- differently. In this way writing practice is itself an ongoing process of identity negotiation; it is both a living practice and a practice of/for living. This making and breaking of rules, this losing and finding, this forever moving, but with specificity, with detail -- in the face of the particular -- all play in the liminal space of the work-shop, which itself houses “ongoing, shifting, ambiguous nests or communities of interrelations which are constantly in need of renewal, regeneration, rethinking” (Jardine, 1994a, p. 510). Interesting, too, how so many teacher candidates find it so terribly difficult not to follow the rules of learning to write and, significantly -- of learning to write a life -- even with the most generous of invitations. A work-shop, in the context of teacher education, helps to collect our experience of learning to live a life that includes writing and teaching and learning -- to write, to teach, to learn. The ways that we play with words create new conditions of learning that show us some of the ways we come to understand ourselves.

Trying on rules. Trying on roles.

Invited to write poetry, we tighten up. When we call it wordplay, however, “just” a form of (writing) practice, a form of practice in which we begin to practice calling our writing poetry -- we tend to loosen. The invitation into poetry -- as we came to understand and interpret poetry -- as a group engaged in wordplay proved to be wonderfully writerly in its invitation to question the lie of the line, sometimes by questioning linearity, by breaking up the line, disrupting the lines with our lives. Disrupting the life with our lines. Wordplay offers a generous textual form; it leaves openings for interpretation, it encourages experimentation (with lining our living or with living our lines).

It’s a fine line. We are our words. We are not our words. The only certainty seems to be the uncertain lines drawn between “categories” we have come to call private and public, playful and serious. “Following the line” has taken preservice teachers to places they may not have expected. To lived experiences remembered both painfully and playfully. Writing -- one word
after the other -- has also led to a reconfiguring of certain lived experiences in ways that enable us to view our(selves) differently. Private and playful. Intimate and public. Or, none of these. A writing exercise can trigger a string of words that we might then choose to work with -- as earnest autobiography, as lavish fiction, as poetry, as essay, as story, as lavish autobiography, as earnest fiction. Moving forward and backward with words toward a place there are sometimes no words for. Writing the cliff in order to climb up or step off ...

“Word-shopping”: Writing Identity

This is the classroom on edge, everyone afraid of falling off.

-- Mary Aswell Doll

Everyone afraid of falling off. Or happy to explore the fall, to explore falling. Writing practice (including wildmind writing) in a writing workshop-styled setting -- a place-turned-space where preservice teachers wrote together and shared their words with one another -- sometimes felt like falling. Yet the experience of engaging in writing exercises together through intense periods of time -- within any given session as well as over the extended time of the course -- also offered opportunities to think about falling in directions other-than-down. The experience of writing alone and in small groups, of shaping freewriting into poetry and other genres, of interrogating language use within various subject disciplines, of reading words aloud to one another -- all of these curricular acts were a way of becoming curious about learning, about writing, about teaching, about falling. The experience of writing practice created conditions of learning that enabled us to become curious about our own experience of the practice of writing -- of writing practice.

Certainly, a very common occurrence for many of us in the workshop was to experience writing as a stumbling. Writing-as-stumbling: there was a sense in which this kind of writing was accidental in nature -- a stumbling on to something. Sometimes this “something” was experienced as “nothing” in particular. [Although, keeping Don McKay’s words in mind, “Nothing that happens is something,” and our words offered ways of working with “nothing.”] Nothing being, perhaps, those things of which we are unaware until writing practice brings them

The metaphorical image of “stumbling” made more visible in/through writing process offers a way to think about learning, and learning to negotiate identity in which stumbling is a requisite part of the process. Stumbling is serendipitous. Stumbling is movement -- sometimes sudden -- in which we aren’t necessarily walking or falling, neither and both. We are neither upright nor fallen. Vertical or horizontal. Neither here nor there. Stumbling calls for immediate adjustments and leads to places we can’t always anticipate. The result can sometimes lead to a “happy accident,” other times to an unanticipated fall. Writing practice invites us to suspend judgement on the fall; it creates conditions that enable us to consider this in-between place for writing and learning and teaching. Within the context of teacher education, writing within the work-shop space enabled many of us to become less self-conscious about falling and in turn to become more conscious of the Selves that are caught up in an ambulatory kind of identity negotiation and formation: writing “as if” we were teachers. A sometimes stumbling. Toward teaching. Learning always.

“Following the line,” then, is serious wordplay that can lead to a con-fuse-ion, a tangling of lines and lives.

Writing practice itself can create a commonplace location -- a chunk of words that enables us to see our Selves fashioned through form. When we write with wildmind we often see our own writing differently as the lines fall out in ways that catch our ear attract the eye
allow us to think about calling our writing poetry.

When we practice writing we gain insight into our writing and our learning and our teaching as it becomes visible to us. We become curious about our writing and our learning and our teaching. Our writing helps us to locate ourselves between knowing and not knowing. Closer to knowing what we don’t know we know which brings us closer to knowing. Re-membering that knowing is “a weave of knowing and not-knowing” (Spivak, cited in Lather, revisited).

Word-shopping becomes writing as if teacher education was an imagining. Writing as-if we were teachers. Writing as-if we were poets caught up in a poem unending in which learning is everything and we can’t imagine it otherwise. Word-shopping becomes (more than) just wordplay:

Learning to teach through writing ... Learning to write through writing ... Learning to learn through writing ... Learning to teach through learning ... Learning to write through learning ... Learning to learn through learning ... Learning to teach through teaching ... Learning to write through teaching ... Writing to learn through writing ... Writing to teach through writing ... Writing to write through writing ... Writing to learn through learning ... Writing to teach through learning ... Writing to write through learning ... Writing to learn through teaching ... Writing to teach through teaching ... Writing to write through teaching ... Teaching to learn through learning ... Teaching to write through learning ... Teaching to teach through learning ... Teaching to learn through writing ... Teaching to write through writing ... Teaching to teach through writing ... Teaching to learn through teaching ... Teaching to write through teaching ... Teaching to teach through teaching ...
Word-shopping is thinking
about Jeanette Winterson's
words: The rope is
hand produced
the writer makes it
as she walks it.

Word-shopping is Imagining
we could perform
a never-ending interchange of
writer with teacher with learner ...

...with writer with teacher with learner with teacher with writer with learner with teacher with writer with learner with teacher with learner with writer with learner
with writer with teacher with learner with teacher with writer
with learner with teacher
with writer
with teacher
with ...

Word-shopping is Imagining a life
that includes
writing.

***

Madeleine Grumet argues that “the personal is a performance, an appearance [or mask] contrived for the public” (1995, p. 37). She further argues that “these masks enable us to perform the play of pedagogy” (p. 37). Word-shopping offered an invitation to write in ways
that enabled teacher candidates to “perform” pedagogy through an act of doing, an act of making. Masks. Of making insight. Making words. Wordmaking. Making identity. Masking identity. The work-shop promoted what Science educator David Hawkins has called a kind of “messing about” ... [a] “free and unguided exploratory work (call it play if you wish [says Hawkins] I call it work)” with language (Hawkins, 1974, p. 38). Preservice teachers were thus able to try different (teaching) Selves on for size through wordplay.

Grumet’s essay is part of an important collection of essays which attempt to re-think pedagogy “at the place where the personal becomes impersonation” (Gallop, 1995, p 2). The work of Gallop and her colleagues, when read alongside the ENED 426 work-shop experience, helps to break down the traditional binaries of personal (where personal equals authentic) and impersonation (where impersonation equals a false performance). The result of this collapse is a new, hyphenated term, “im-personation”: “a new configuration in which the personal and the mask are not mutually exclusive alternatives” (Gallop, 1995, p. 8). This is tricky ground. My intention is not to mask the fear of becoming a teacher but, rather, to give this fear a different face. The work-shop is, after all, about lines and lives, real lives to whom we are responsible in our roles as teachers and researchers and meaningmakers. This is not about teacher education pretend. But, as Gallop (1995) reminds me, in a way that provides reassurance, “[t]he scare quotes around ’pretends’ ... suggest that the student is not simply pretending, that the student is in some way ‘really’ in the position [s]he is impersonating” (p. 6).

The work-shop was thus a location in which to “raise the spectre of a less-than-certain self exposed by a fascinating array of poststructural fashions” (Willinsky, 1990, p. 221), in which language is used not so much to reveal as it is to create a self. The self in this instance, is constructed, negotiated, shared. This can be an unsettling experience, particularly if we are looking for a self “that reeks of ‘authenticity,’ ‘sincerity,’ and discloses privileged glimpses into the human heart” (Graham, 1991, p. 149). Within the workshop walls, however, this slippery sense of self also proved to be liberating with its “potential to ease the responsibility and the burden of autobiography as a solemn process of psychotherapy, or a self-righteous thrust towards empowerment” (Rasberry, 1993, p. 8). The intent of much of the personal writing of
the preservice teachers — the literacy narratives, the poetry, the storying — was therefore not always aimed at a “deadly coherence” (Grumet, 1995, p. 38). (Though a good deal of the writing was, in fact, raw, emotionally-charged material.) There was a sense in which the writing allowed teacher candidates to “act out” — or in a less Freudian sense of wordplay — to act on their ideas for teaching, to participate in an ongoing pedagogical play, to go word-shopping — for a Self, for a living, for a life that includes teaching. Preservice teachers were, in this way, able to write their way in and out of the “largely inherited and constraining context” of the teacher education program. They were encouraged to experiment with the multiple roles and identities of teacher: critiquing, celebrating, problematizing. In a very direct and immediate fashion, language offered a way for preservice teachers to find some of their own ways across the curriculum.

Wordplay thus offers a text — readerly, writerly, and researcherly — that helps create “curricular locations for the interpretation of the teaching identities student teachers negotiate as they learn to teach” (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996, p. 65). And further, keeping with Sumara and Luce-Kapler’s work, wordplay, through writing practice, highlights “the need to become creative with the print texts used in teacher education” (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996, p. 71). Writing practice, framed within the growing body of research in teacher education that continues to interpret identity negotiation, offers, in the words of Jill McClay (1997) at the University of Alberta, “expanded and expansive conceptions of the roles of writing in our learning.” As McClay notes, these kind of writing practices “offer beginning teachers both forum and form for the creation of new fictions, new narratives for their teaching lives” (McClay, 1997). McClay’s work, stated most clearly in the title of her essay, “Writing Lines to Compose Ourselves: Performing Fictionalized Identities,” offers parallels to the work-shop experience of teacher candidates where “writing itself also serves as a locus offering space and possibility in which to develop identities as writers and teachers ... their writings become sites for re-consideration of their experiences of learning and teaching.”

Wordplay can help teacher candidates perform the difficult work of identity negotiation. The practice of writing — to learn or to teach or research — is a practice of creating conditions that
enable one to continue to practice writing -- to teach or to learn or to research. Learning and teaching and researching, then, become a life practice. In turn, a dissertation that offers an invitation to experience a life that includes the practice of writing and researching, teaching and learning, is not an invitation to experience the completion of any of these inextricable parts of our living; it is, rather, an invitation to a tangled journey into the curious time of pedagogy that is never complete, will never be complete.
At the edges, where lines are blurred, it is easier to imagine that the world might be different.

-- Mary Catherine Bateson 5

Painting is trying to paint. What you cannot paint. And writing is what you cannot know. Before you have written. It is preknowing. And not knowing. Blindly. With words ... We can take a class from a writer but it is not enough. We can't make that kamikaze leap. So writing is always over there ... We can rest and float. Move and yet not move ... Imagine ... Through the tangle. Teachers' writing lives. Through the tangle. Teachers writing lives. A curricular location for teacher candidates to imagine education through a life that includes writing. To imagine education through poets' I's: I want to be like the girl with the flashlight. Through educators' eyes. To imagine: Here is a broad stone wall flicking alive small green flames of lizards. The wall is low. We sit on its back watching the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea. Imagine ... This is what I find when I look back. Over my shoulder. Toward the future. A record of obsession. A bowl of yellow flowers. The sea is always itself. Restless. Forever altering. Its colours. Like a sad eye. The road itself. Never shifts. The squat wall I balance on ... Wait here. For. Some kind of unfolding. Word upon word. I cannot yet say what this something is. Maybe it's only the promise. The tangle. Immersed. Entangled. Complicit. Can a study of the self? Studying education. Create. New conditions. Of learning. And the making. Of pedagogical insight? Imagine instead a blank space on the wall -- a perfectly empty circle that does not return our watch-full stares. I want my students to see the universe of language. Recognizable, like stars floating liquid on a dark surface. Painting is trying to paint. What you cannot paint. And writing. Is what you cannot know. Before you have written. A weave of knowing. And not-knowing. Which is what knowing is. The tangle is itself. Blindly with words. A fanzine. Simply. A complex gathering. Through writing. Throughwriting. A mirror. Writing reflects. Tangled Lines and Lives. Becoming curious. Through a poet's I. A life. Lives. Ambiguity. Every statement we make in educational writing. Must be able to be read. As the answer. To a question. That could have been answered otherwise. Self-reflexivity. Never. Does one open. The discussion. By coming right to the heart. Of the matter. The heart of the matter. Is always somewhere else. To write. As if your life. Depended on it. No real beginning. Middle. End. Curriculum Objects. This study is part of my doctoral research. You may refuse to participate. Please indicate your consent. At least not a 20 out of 20 poet. Yes, you are sure now about the wall. The wall is why you have come. Putting the hex on cliché. Whisper the incantation as it was given. Words fall. Plant themselves. Waiting for the world. To imagine itself. Out of a seed. Or run. It's course. Like an avalanche. Down a garden path. Ripping up colour. As it goes ...
the reflexive practitioner
(a self-reflexive aside)

________________ a next to last INTER-LUDE________________
The Reflexive Practitioner: A Self-Reflexive Aside

Is it NOT reelee onlee a bunch of words ... [?]

-- Bill Bisset 6

WaRniNg: Wordplay is Full of Adumbrations that May Cause Excessive Wordplay ...

Turning curiosity

into (a turning that is) a tangle is (not) always (or necessarily) recommended and may cause excessive un/tangling that can often lead to the need for serious textual un/tangling which is by way of saying that a tangle of lines and lives can often lead to the curious practice of Footnoting ...


7 “Freudian slips” — A Play-Full Footnote for 2 Voices;

voice1: Is it just me or have I used a(n) (awful) lot of brackets in the (word)making of this dissertation? voice2: No, you have. Definitely. voice1: What does this mean do you think? voice2: *I think it means whatever you’d like it to mean.* voice1: No, seriously. Not “the-readerly/writerly text” again, please. voice2: OK then, it’s likely because (being) (in) the tangle means (that) meaning gets really tangled. There are so many possible meanings that it gets quite difficult --(tangled, if you will) -- to decide which meaning you mean ... the “signify-ability syndrome” becomes a factor. Yes, you’re right, that’s it! Yes, so you (begin to) introduce (some) brackets to help ensure that the poetic neurons are firing at appropriate speeds through multiple (tangled) pathways. Yes, I see what you mean. (Sorry, bad joke). Anyway, I see now that as I move deep/er into the tangle, the pathways seem more complex, right? (Write?) Right. And (more) ambiguous, too. And, questionable, even? Yes, in a strange sense; there will be a lot more questions possible and a lot more possible questions. Lots of strange opt/ions: (a) weird way(s) to indicate meaning(s). Some readers won’t like it one bit. They’ll ask, Why so many brackets? It makes it hard(er) to read! It makes (for) (a) (crazy) read(er)ing: rendering. But others will get into it. Open (up) to it. Think (it’s) open. Readerly. Roll with/in -- (with) (in) -- waves. Writerly. Following the line, just like it was a line from a set of cryptic line(r) (notes). Others will (think) (it’s) refuse to read (it). They’ll claim it makes no(n)sense. They’ll say that it’s closed. They’ll say it’s hermetic not hermeneutic. Herme(n)(eu)tic. Some will think it’s just plain questionable to write words this small in a footnote and expect others to read it. Yes, I see what you mean: ((no) pun intended). That is, no-pun-in-tend-ed. Nopunintendo. No puns tended to. No uns pending ...Wordplay. As the poet Bill Bisseett would say, “It’s veree why’s, veree wise, indeed.” ME? I think it’z kwite inter-est-ing. Isn’t it? Voice1? *Voice2? Voice, too? Voice ... Voice ... Voice ... 1,2,3 ...
the refractive practitioner
(a scientific poem of refrangibility)

____________________a last INTER-LUDE_____

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The Refractive Practitioner: A Scientific Poem of Refrangibility

ReFrAnGiBLE: capable of being refracted. Capable of bending, of changing direction in passing obliquely from one medium into another ...

The poet’s I which is (also) the poet’s eye -- like any other eye is able to refract light so that upon entering the eye light forms an image appears on the retina. According to this refrangible theory of wordplay, then, the practice of writing, or writing practice helps create new conditions which help the eye -- and the “I” -- to learn to refract light in ways that enable it to form images on the retina: differently. Further, this theory of wordplay suggests that the poet’s I is not a privileged I. The poet is not necessarily one who sees differently. All eyes have it. [Or, by way of wordplay (if we were to take a vote): the eyes have it.] All eyes -- all I's -- are able to practice writing. Practice learning. Practice teaching. Practice learning to bend light so as to see the world in words. The I's, through writing, through writing, can learn to create new conditions for further learning. To write. To learn. To write to learn. To practice. And even further: poetry is in the eye of the beholder. The I of the beholder:

Beautee is in the I of the bee-holder as we begin to buzz with wordplay.

ReFrAcToRy: Hard or impossible to manage: like the tangle. Resisting ordinary methods. A theory of refrangibility suggests that the refrangible practitioner would be well-suited to pass through the tangle yet the tangle is itself a refrangible object so that each time one practices theory it changes unpredictably due to the refrangibility factor which in turn causes one's theory to practice differently in each passing through the tangle. As it turns out this is a curious way to frame the curious time of researching pedagogy: through a poet's I...
POSTSCRIPT

Closure is hard to imagine.
— John Moss

Kingston writer Kent Nussey says,

the practice of writing, the extended act of creation, might cost the writer the very
things she's trying to capture and illumine in her writing ...

What becomes pedagogical in this post-script, read backward and forward through the pre-face, is what the curious time of researching pedagogy has both offered and demanded of a study of a self studying education: the possibility of both losing and finding oneself within the curious pedagogical relations made possible through the self's encounter -- both with its own otherness, as well as with the otherness of others (Britzman, in press). Yes, the practice of writing costs, but never does it diminish the worth of experiencing the richness of the in-between place, the place between living and writing -- the space that makes both possible.

I now live with/in the tangled conviction that any life that includes the practice of writing offers opportunities to read the above words from Kent Nussey differently each time. As if for the first time. The practice of writing -- writing practice -- is writing pedagogy that writes pedagogy with both promise and portent. It is not only fear or desire that compel us to put one word after the other in order to compose our selves and our living, but fear and desire. Always the unsettling juxtaposition of opposites. Always the necessary risk of moving through the deeply ambivalent living that is part of how we imagine our everydayness. Through the tangled experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing.

What is the experience of living a life that includes the practice of writing? The shortest route, through the tangle, to an answer might read -- it depends -- an answer which itself might be read as a tangle of postmodern playfulness with hermeneutic underpinnings, a poetic rendering informed by psychoanalytic insight, an existential quandary scratched by the curious time of

1 Moss, Enduring dreams: An exploration of arctic landscape, x.
researching pedagogy, a bowl of yellow flowers through a poet's I, a theoretical practice, a practicing of theory, a wildmind writing exercise (aka, a five-year timed-writing), a seriously long poem, a piece of researcherly fiction, a piece of fictional research, an epistemological stumbling toward quiddity -- a pedagogical offering open to interpretation.

All of these, perhaps, but in the end it is as David Jardine stated at the outset, an answer to a question that can always be answered otherwise. Meantime, "I have taken my eye off the world to write about it" ... cut myself off from pedagogy in order to write about it. I have discovered the writing of this practice/the practice of this writing to be a richly ambiguous experience, troubling at times in its contradictions, but most times a satisfyingly obsessive way to forever practice living. (While forever living practice.)

The curious time of researching pedagogy. Not just imagining writing about pedagogy. But imagining writing pedagogy. Yes. Of course. This is how it must begin:

words
falling
on open
fields,
planting themselves
and waiting
for the world
to imagine itself
out of a seed
or run its course
like an avalanche
down a
garden path
ripping up colour
as it
goes ...
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a bowl of yellow flowers stains the canvas
A Bowl of Yellow Flowers Stains the Canvas
Karen Connelly

Here is a broad stone wall flicking alive small green flames of lizards. The wall is low: I sit on its back watching the road that curves around the wet blue belly of the sea.

The sea is always itself, restless, forever altering its colours like a sad eye; the road itself never shifts; the squat wall I balance on is like the tough arm of an old fisherman. It keeps children and old women from dancing off the cliffs.

Here we are, los domingueros, the Sunday people, drunk to exhaustion with light and the dusty scent of African wind. The bright blue benches behind me are soft with the bodies of old people, tense with the knuckles and knees of young lovers. The old people wait patiently for the farther darkness, the young for the closer one. They sigh anxiously, almost painfully, glancing in happy anguish at each other’s fingers and chins.

If you sit on a bench, the wall cuts the landscape in half: you cannot see the road below or the little restaurant on the beach where black guard-dogs sit on the roof, glaring at customers. From a bench, the landscape is picturesque: you receive the sea rising up like a mirror to the sky, slow ships sweeping the harbour like women in evening gowns, the grand old mansions reigning the far cliffs.

If you sit on the wall (but no one else does, for sun, olives, and wind unbalance, and the drop would be lethal), you get a wider angle. The back-arch of the waves stretches toward you, warm as a cat begging hands. There is something about the sea that makes you want to reach out ... Below, the beach is speckled with people, scurrying with energetic crabs and children and dogs. The dogs are bounding through the sand, barking, pleading with stones to come alive and throw themselves into the air. The dogs see, blissfully, with their noses. They are enthusiastic about dead squid. From here, it looks clean, children tumbling playfully, doll-limbed, the people (featureless, really, at this distance) fine and strong, leaving well-formed footprints behind them. But you also recall occasional smudges of tar, the condom-scatter of spent Catholic boys on Saturday mornings, the shredded glitter of dead fish. Still, from the wall, the scene gleams, glassed-over, lovely.

But the view includes the road, which I watch in amazement. The thud bangs in my bones as I realize what I’ve seen. A child and a car have collided with the grace of birds; it was choreographed, her skipping down off the path and the black swoop of metal speeding around, catching her at the waist. Her scream is mistaken for a seagull’s. There are thirty people behind me, oblivious as I watch a shadow dyeing the road (it does not even appear red -- simply dark, like dirt spilling from a bowl of yellow flowers, her head).
There are shouts below, the single wail of a woman, but still no one around me hears this, no one leans over to look. I wonder if I am imagining all of it. I blink away sunlight and the cracked body remains down there, utterly still. The people around me (half-hearing the female cry) think only that the beat of the waves has changed.

The old people are gazing at the cliffs, ignoring the white threads of cataracts, seeing perfectly the greenness of other lives, other decades, thinking of the ancient lime trees towering beyond them -- they were smaller once. I hear serious talk about green beans and rose gardens, the cost of carrots. The laughter of sparrows rings from the trees as always, and the young men and women listen to it, imagining their hearts are birds. A girl with hair the colour of clean straw is staring at her watch, desperate for time to slide open. Her hand flutters at the boy's silk-brown arm and I can see what her fingers are thinking: There has never been flesh this warm. Their hair is tangled and heavy with dropping light. The sun rolls down the hill like bleeding fruit.

And on the road below (all I do is swivel three vertebrae in my neck) the scene changes, a world bursts, the magic shadow spreads like a dark angel stretching its wings under people's feet. The bowl of yellow flowers is rust-red brown.

While above, in the little town, old women gossip, girls touch lipstick lightly to their mouths, men grunt at the government, and I sit on the wall, watching all of it, looking back and forth like someone at a stunning tennis match, trembling (remembering all the world itself, the wars in the back pages of atlases, whole countries spreading with shadow).

This is where you are now. Then you turn your head away and you are somewhere else. The only truth is that there is none: it moves when we blink. The trick of seeing is not seeing everything. If you see everything and feel all you see, you unravel the wrinkles of your brain like a ball of kite string. You drift off and disappear. It is easier to be blind if the choice is between blindness and madness. Learn to see with one eye or both eyes half-closed. I look at the lovers, the lavender-haired old ladies. I look with great concern at my bony feet. Absurd tears there, gems of wet salt sliding toward my toes.

Because, below, a child drains. The moment was a pebble-brained shark, and her life a bloody tear in time's soft belly. Now an ambulance clangs everyone awake, the people, even the lovers, crowd to see the crowd below, to glimpse the broken doll, the shadow. A shattered body collapses in my eyes, but I look beyond it. I examine the elegant web of veins on the backs of my hands. (You must look beyond.) I see the Bay of Biscay. I slide off the wall and walk towards a new place. The blood on
the road will be gone at dawn and perhaps I'll forget I've written this.

Here are the pastel hues (skylight, sea, warm green eyes, pearled skin). And here are the dark oils. And here is your life. This is the only canvas they'll sell you. Do not just paint what there is. (You'll be dust before you've done that work.) Paint what you want to see.
a life that includes writing: poems
To Do:
On busyness and keeping lists and becoming a writer
(the struggles of being a plain ordinary human being)

Open Tunings: Contrapuntal Musings on Poetry and Pedagogy

Why We Don’t Write?

I Can’t Stop Writing: A Poem

Further Distractions: More Reasons Not To Write

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1 I have chosen to present these poems in an Appendix knowing full well the ambivalence of the term. The appendix in scholarly terms refers to supplementary material at the end of a book or body of text. The appendix in anatomical terms is a “wormlike tube” that extends from the cecum of the large intestine. Always the question, “What to do with the appendix?” Ignore it, remove it, hope it doesn’t rupture -- into the body? In keeping with the spirit of “A life that includes writing,” I offer these poems as a kind-of Post-face to the body of this work. As part of a writerly text, the poems are open to being read, ignored, or removed, but more hopefully, to rupture into the body of the text that made them possible in the first place. Some of the poems were, in fact, written through the tangle of the ENED 426 experience and were, in turn, re-visioned, re-worked, and re-presented as part of the work-shop experience.
To Do:
On busyness and keeping lists and becoming a writer
(the struggles of being a plain ordinary human being)

When I grow up I want to be
a writer. I love
to write
(when I can find the time that is).

When I write I like to be
organized and in control so
I write only after I have
tidied up
eliminated
crossed off
the very last item on my list
of Things To Do.

Maybe tomorrow I will hide my list
of Things To Do
in the sock drawer.

But first I must re-arrange my socks:
wool socks to the left
coloured socks in the middle
white cotton athletic socks to the right
Stubborn and static-clinging to this sock drawer apartheid policy --
odd socks: strays mismatches hole-in-heel socks tucked away towards the back of the drawer
dress socks: dark and thin argyles expensive socks in a tiny pile just behind the wool ones

Always a new category waiting to be born:
tie clips baseball cards condoms bandanas hankies
all pretending to be socks,
seeking to rent space in the top dresser drawer,
but not underwear, never
underwear.

Ready to write now but better check my list one last time ...

Things to Do

1. organize sock drawer
2. clip toenails
3. vacuum the cats
4. make up tomorrow’s To Do list
5. re-check yesterday’s To Do list
6. fret and worry over future decisions
7. regret past decisions
8. place the names of all my friends on index cards
9. itemize and inventory spice rack
My To Do List keeps me busy
it feeds my monkeymind makes musing difficult
at best but maybe tomorrow
I will create a sacred space
for writing.

Place a crystal in my window to
re-direct the sun’s rays toward my desk for
inspiration. For
enlightenment.

My pen will weave its way
through sparkling rainbow splash lines,
black ink making love
to a solar-powered spectrum of colour
that allows me to paint words
arrange them
in unlisted ways.

Tomorrow’s To Do’s:

1. purchase crystal
2. find invisible thread in basement
3. hang crystal in window
Open Tunings: Contrapuntal Musings on Poetry and Pedagogy

Part 1: Cliff Dweller

I have come to the ocean with questions
high on cliff,
the smell of blue
in my eyes.

A tug boat oblivious to impossibility
treads water, pulls on mountain range,
everything huge and imperceptible.

A single leaf dances tiny world
rhythms. Sunlight and wave
breathe.

The sky gives the world blue and blue and
blue and I have come to the edge
for answers. What

language brings me here?
What letters spell this living? What words
name this living-in-the-middle of things?²

What words tell me
I'm ashore. Adrift. Dying
to leap. Plunge. Discover the world

below, recognize the importance
of the fall, the crazy need to measure
Mystery -- to (never)
resolve.

Part 2: Poetry & Pedagogy -- Twenty-One Reasons and the Crazy Need to Measure Mystery

Poetry and Pedagogy 1:
Together. Forever. Two P's
in a pod,
outgrowing their green skin. Waiting
always to bust open. Not burst or
flower. Needing one another,
despising one another. The
green gravity that keeps them on the vine,
growing toward blue
sunlight.

² David Smith (1994) (by way of Ted Aoki) talks about a language that honours the condition of "perpetual non-resolution ... in which we are mysteriously, even mystically sustained." (see "On Discursivity and Neurosis: Conditions of Possibility for (West) Discourse with Others" published in Pedagon: Meditations on Pedagogy and Culture by Makyo Press)
Poetry and Pedagogy 2:
Checks and Stripes.
Cotton and Polyester.
Plaid. Needing one another,
clashing with one another in their need
to cover the couch. Outrageous
upholstery that always draws
a crowd.

Poetry and Pedagogy 3:
A lovely juxtaposition
that hungers
for sunlight, loves the dark,
begs for
interpretation.
I have come to the ocean ...

Poetry and Pedagogy 4:  3
Ped: having a foot.
Poe: port of embarkation ... a port of entry.
Poetry: the use of heightened language and rhythm to express an imaginative interpretation.
Pedagogy: the function or work of a teacher; the art or science of teaching.
Why all these
definitions?

Poetry and Pedagogy 5:
Setting out on foot,
feet fall on the road. The earth.
The journey starts here, or here, or
here. Find the rhythm. Find the opening(s).
Work: poetry, too, is
manual labour, the
real work 4 -- to live to wrestle to wonder: with questions ...

Poetry and Pedagogy 6:
High on cliff,
helping others to line their
worlds with fractions and fractals,
the science of spellingmathlanguageartshistorygeography.
The smell of blue
in my eyes.
The art of ecology -- to
name our place in space: You Are Here.

Poetry and Pedagogy 7:
Poorly practised environmentalism:
how do we close things down enough
so that we can understand
them? Manage them?

3 Digging through the Random House Webster's College Dictionary ...

4 I was introduced to Gary Snyder's poetry (in which "real work" is discussed) through David Jardine's work.
Try Snyder's (1980) The real work on a rainy Saturday afternoon ...
Ecological foreclosure. Suburban language:
strip malls, obedient shrubbery, nature-under-glass, the
living-ness of the alphabet on display -- pruned plants for sale, hedges that behave -- the
alphabet returned to the (wrong) nursery.
*A tug boat oblivious to impossibility* ...

Poetry and Pedagogy 8:
*treads water, pulls on mountain range* ...
The young child teaches the lesson: "*What mean?*
The teacher responds: "*Try this. Add a sprinkle of that. Hmmm ...*"
The teacher grows as/into a child: "*What mean?*
The child offers wisdom, stirs the letters and adds a bit more colour.
The teacher mixes in some mud. They approach one another,
hover around meaning,
contemplate meeting. *Everything huge and imperceptible* ...

Poetry and Pedagogy 9:
Student-teacher-learner-learner-teacher-student:
*ambulatory hyphenation.*
They need each other, want to tell
each other the world. With/out words.
With/in words. *A single leaf dances*
tiny world rhythms ... 

Poetry and Pedagogy 10:
The letters are so many sticks and circles, loops and
hoops pointing this way and that.
The world is not ours
to be named, yet we must try
to tell one another all about it.
Here, try this secret decoder ring.
Join me in this cloud
of unknowing.
We are in need
together.
*All of us. Sunlight and wave*

Poetry and Pedagogy 11:
Lean here against this H; it seems
steady. *Slide down the J.*
Take a kick at the K. *Fall for the W.*
Rest inside the O. *I don’t know*
what the Q is for.
*breathe* ...

Poetry and Pedagogy 12:
Pedagogy dwells
in a place where language lives. The alphabet is a
tangled vine that runs through our lines and lives. The
young and the old teach each other to live:  
new growth, old growth, regrowth.  
Coming back again.  
Living this way, learning  
to defy pedagogical gravity.  
Learning the joys of empty. Of being filled.  
Being-filled.  *The sky gives the world ...*

Poetry and Pedagogy 13:  
To live poetically is to live pedagogically:  
the World is never ours  
to name, yet we hunger  
for words. *Blue and blue and blue ...*

Poetry and Pedagogy 14:  
To live pedagogically is to live poetically:  
the connections are (not) ours to make  
or unmake, yet we dwell upon the Earth  
as living proof. *I have come to the edge ...*

Poetry and Pedagogy 15:  
*Always and already a deep, ambiguous kinship at work*  
where  
language takes us deep deeper to that place,  
strange and familiar: Home.  
There is nothing  
to be solved, only the turning over,  
where dark means rich.  
Opening ourselves to ourselves  
*for answers ...*

Poetry and Pedagogy 17:  
Living poetically is not  
a return to The Garden that never was, but a  
reconnecting to *ecopedagogical*  
roots that  
sustain life in the classroom -- sunlight and weed.  
*What language brings me here?*

Poetry and Pedagogy 18:  
The exchange is symbiotic, mutually beneficial.  
It is the pedagogue who will wither  
without the wisdom of the poet.  
It is the poet who will fade and

---

5 David Jardine's (1994a) interpretive work alerts us to the 'life of language' and a need for a deeper understanding of the elemental connections therein.

6 David Jardine (1994a) in the same essay, speaks of *ecopedagogy*, a term "meant to re-awaken a sense of the intimate interconnections between ecological awareness and pedagogy" (p. 509).
curl without the pedagogue's
nurture. This is poetry.
This is pedagogy. What letters spell this living?

Poetry and Pedagogy 19:
What words name this living-in-the-middle of things?
A coming to terms with the textual world, a
re-cognition that we do not weave the web.
of life, we are merely a strand in it ... 7
Full of wonder(ing). Moving. Always moving.
Conscious of the space that will never be
filled. Self-conscious of the space
that will never be. Not blessed, nor cursed, but
in between. Dying to leap ...

Poetry and Pedagogy 20:
Plunge. Discover the world
below. The crazy need
to measure

Poetry and Pedagogy 21:
Mystery.

Part 3: Cliff Dwellers

I have come to the ocean
with questions, the children here, too.
Cliff dwellers, we flutter as leaves, a
raven’s symphony, a
cloud’s dance. Our names
blowing away. The horizon stretches
confirmation.

I had hoped to tell them
(of) things, tell them some
Thing but I don’t remember
(the) words.
I want more
and more and understand less
and less.

We hold hands and let go
of language -- it wasn’t ours
to keep. I must remember to forget
none of this. There is only the
current’s steady pull, the leaves changing
colour. The sky giving the world blue
and blue and
Blue.

7 more talk of the interconnectedness of all things from Chief Seattle’s increasingly controversial speech “Home.”
Why We Don’t Write?

we don’t write because there’s laundry to do
we don’t write because we can never find a decent pen
we don’t write because there are mountains to climb
we don’t write because tonight’s hockey game should be a classic
we don’t write because we live off the on-ramp of the expressway
we don’t write because we live on the off-ramp of the expressway
we don’t write because a picture is worth a thousand words
we don’t write because a thousand words are required to discuss uses of symbolism in Othello

we don’t write because we were told we couldn’t write
we don’t write because we were told we’d never write
we don’t write because we were told we’d never get it right
we don’t write because we read Hemingway at a delicate stage in our development
we don’t write because our software isn’t compatible with our hardware
we don’t write because our hardware is hot-wired

we don’t write because we’re never sure when to use a ;
we don’t write because Mr. McCaskle always re-wrote our English papers in red
we don’t write because it’s inappropriate to appropriate someone else’s voice

we don’t write because there’s not enough time
we don’t write because there’s never enough time
we don’t write because it’s too intimidating

we don’t write because of Grade Eleven

we don’t write because we’re too busy living
we don’t write because there are too many voices in our heads
we don’t write because we’re intimidated by ambiguous antecedents and misplaced modifiers

we don’t write because writing reminds us mostly of rules of how and why and when to use: ;;;;;; or :::::::: or , or -- -- or ( ) ( ) or " " " " " " or i (before) e (except after c)

we don’t write unless we’re written to
we don’t write unless we’re forced to
we don’t write unless the planets are in proper alignment

we don’t write unless there’s reward money involved
we don’t write unless we hear a certain VOICE in our head

we don’t write unless we hear NO voices in our head
we don’t write unless the assignment is due tomorrow morning
we don’t write unless there’s a possibility of failing the course

we don’t write if there’s a chance to give an oral presentation
we don’t write if there’s a reasonable excuse not to write

we don’t write when there’s a full moon
we don’t write when we could be bowling
we don't write during hail storms or hurricanes
we don't write during lunar eclipses
we don't write during postal strikes
we don't write during recess

we don't write because
one day we were told to stay after school
and write
    on the blackboard 100 times:

I WILL WRITE IN MY WORK BOOK EVERY DAY
I WILL WRITE IN MY WORK BOOK EVERY DAY
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I Can't Stop Writing: A Poem

I begin with a series of incantations small as breath, pen warming thoughts stubborn metaphors for subtle inhalations. Exhale:

Close to the candle’s glare acknowledging night, my eyes adjust to the light, warm to the heat.

The fictionalized night runs down like a cheap cliche: darkness falling. The forest full of balsam wear black toupees.

I begin with a series of exhalations breath as small as a candle scared of the heat, cursing the light. Close to subtle. Eyes that pen the night falling down like a winded chime, like a winding out, a wounded animal.

A series of notes like a song of rising breaths singing the night, close to a glory or a falling down into light, the night wearing black leather: not dangerous so much as performance.

Adjusting the night like a subtle acknowledgement in solution with darkness, a pH-balanced cliche of an acid-test warming to thoughts like a winding chime, subtle as breath but singing the heat.

A chorus of poem with no line breaks but bursting at the seems, the pen acknowledging the incantation, the words subtle-as-fiction and turning the glare of the page into heat that runs down on balsam-black-as-night and a fictional sky adjusting to the balance, a series of PhD-tested conceptualizations of night theorizing blackness and metaphor — a breathless series of wax running down like a wounded night, all black and turning blacker.
The heat blue in its fiction of black, the light falling out as citations left unformatted, the page winding up empty or crowded over with weeds that spell beauty backwards.

A series of acknowledgings, a reminder of breath, of thoughts small in their singing, adjusting to the pitch and the gradual blue that wears the night as reminder of grace, acknowledging the smallness of the words and my thoughts not-so-subtle in their fictional epistemology of incantations, aware of their citation.

A series of cursing the pen like a candle burning at both ends, scared of the acknowledgement: (It’s only) Wordplay.

Winded like a solar plexus, boxed by the night, cliché’d like a blow to the stomach and falling down for the count and breathless.

Toupee adjusted by the spellcheck and put back in place like a poem counting its lines, endless really, but nailed down to fifteen or twenty lines according to the contest guidelines for writers of fiction or metaphysical pedagogy that won’t blow away for a candle.

A series of adjustable nights, sleepless in their incantations of citations according to the guidelines, a contest for academics with words to play with -- light formatted by candle and a series of hard-drives that heat up the wax spilling out as dissertation-on-night the ontology of morality, the ethics of fiction, wearing adjustable clichés for comfort of toupee.

A metaphysical candle that heats up the winding out, the moth preserved in wax but burning away to beat the night into a band of light abandoned by fiction but still ending in an acknowledgement of serendipitous reflexivity of self nailed down like citations.

A pedagogical index of gathered poetry found lying
in the margins, misspelled as fiction
but methodologically sound
and light: fifteen or twenty
feathers floating down
as night, adjustable formatting but

cynical as counting clichés or scoring
the tempo of a hiphop fugue, a minor
fiction on a major dissertation or a coal minor
in a series of keys with a major attitude, or
a seminar on “Performance and the Question of Formatting.”

Now waxing hypothetical as breath and ending
on a series of sleepless notes,
a cliché of a poem: black as night.
Further Distractions: More Reasons Not To Write

It seems I don’t have a desk suitable for writing or maybe the writing desk is in the wrong room.

Here in the kitchen, the light seems just right in the bedroom tumbling in through the window.

it splashes the plants somersaults across the carpet playfull inviting
calling me asking if I can come out to play with words.

Too bad I’m busy deciding which room is best for writing.

Memorizing this blank page, staring hard at its whiteness in order to recognize it in a crowded room full of blank pages.

Giving in finally moving to the bed room normally reserved for sleeping resting relaxing reading for making love but not for writing poetry (to sleep per chance to dream), and now the cats come to pad upon my page, purr in my ear
good company but writing must be done in solitude.
Alone now
with my thoughts
can't think

sinking down
deeper
into this

duvet better
get up.
moved back to the

knife-fork
coffee-spill
all-night

kitchen table
writing
room.
Some Poem Notes and Acknowledgements

Some of these poems have appeared in other places ...


"Why We Don’t Write," appears in *Inkshed* 12 (1), 20.

"Open Tunings," was presented at *The Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* Conference, Banff, Alberta, October 1994.

"I Can’t Stop Writing: A Poem," is currently under review by *Writing on the Edge*.

In addition, "To Do," and "Further Distractions," appear in *Savouring Ambiguity*, an unpublished manuscript of poetry.