



The Museletter

News and Resources from the National Association for Poetry Therapy

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FEATURE

Story Embodied Within The Story

*Contributed by Katy Roy**

This article comes from a speech I gave at the NAPT Conference in 2015. It outlines the main components of a bibliotherapy project that took place at l'Institut de réadaptation en déficience physique de Québec (Quebec Physical Disability Rehabilitation Institute, IRDPQ), from October 2014 to March 2015. The paper presents a work approach based on metal imagery that I use in my bibliotherapy workshops. The stories of two participants will also be conveyed through excerpts from a journal I kept throughout the project, as well as poems that I wrote in order to poetize and synthesize the shared experiences.

PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Story Embodied Within The Story, or *L'histoire en corps l'histoire*, is a six-month in-residence workshop that I conducted in 2014 and 2015 at IRDPQ, with my own project *La Bibliothèque Apothicair* (The Apothecary Library). That residence-workshop received financial assistance from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (Quebec Council of Arts and Literature).

IRDPQ is a rehabilitation center located in Québec city that treats amputees, burn survivors and people who have been left permanently or temporarily paralyzed after accidents. These people often stay in the rehabilitation center for a few months, sometimes even a few years. There, they receive rehabilitation treatments so they can re-learn to move, walk and talk. This



The author working with a participant — photo by Samuel Tessier

makes it easier for them to reintegrate into their everyday environments with their new physical conditions.

La Bibliothèque Apothicair is a project that I started in 2010 to offer workshops and individual meetings in bibliotherapy. At the time, I had a Master's Degree in Literature, and I had studied psycho-spirituality for four years, where I got to experience the approach of mental imagery. This approach using symbols and archetypes strongly inspired my working process with bibliotherapy.

The five components of the project are:

- Individual meetings
- Group workshops
- Poem writing
- Photographs
- Exhibition

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FROM THE EDITOR

Contributed by Karen van-
Meenen, MA, MA, CAPF

NAPT's April conference, held in Denver, Colorado, was a mile high and tapped into many deep creative and healing veins. The reflections and poems of participants included in this *Museletter* will serve as delightful reminders for those of you who attended and will give a taste of what was missed for others. It was truly a rich weekend. Save the date for our next annual gathering, near Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 26–29, 2018 (more information can be found herein) and explore the rest of this issue's offerings as well.

I recently enjoyed the new film drama about Emily Dickinson, *A Quiet Passion*, as well as a revival of the award-winning stage play *The Belle of Amherst*, so I will leave you with these few opening lines from one of her untitled poems:

Answer July—
Where is the Bee—
Where is the Blush—
Where is the Hay?

I hope you find your Bee, your Blush and your Hay this summer.



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Please address all submissions inquiries to:
Karen vanMeenen, Editor of *The Museletter*,
naptpublications@yahoo.com

Address all subscription inquiries, general NAPT inquiries, memberships, address changes and administrative business to:

National Association for Poetry Therapy
E-mail: naptadmin@poetrytherapy.org
Visit NAPT's website: www.poetrytherapy.org

To Contact NAPT

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Denver and the Beat Generation

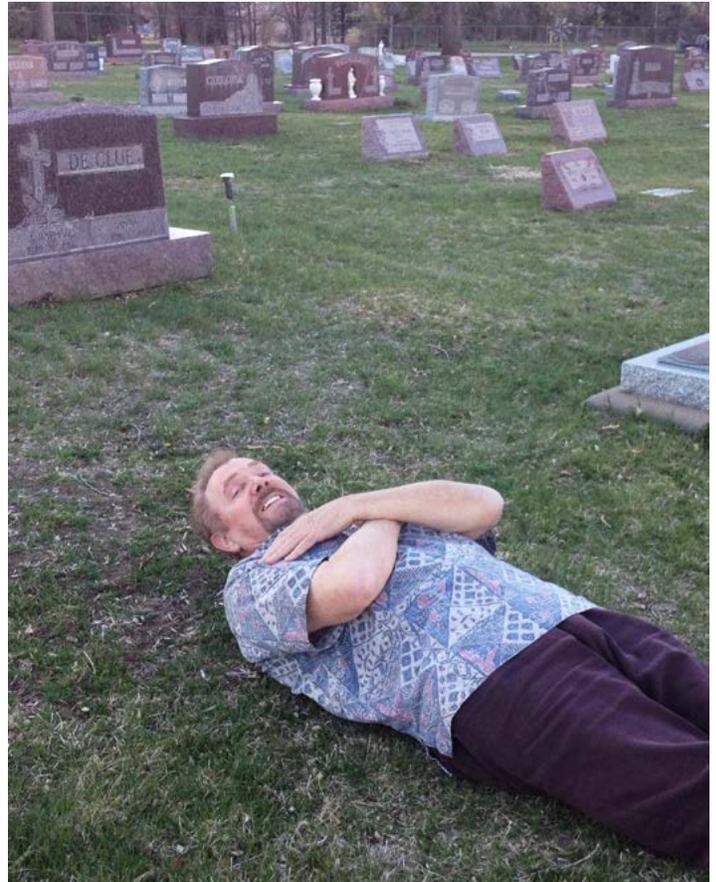
As we fly over the Rockies, the view is crags and glistening peaks pushing up through thick snow. The mountains give way, and we come out to the vastness that Jack Kerouac called *the great sea-plain of Denver*. Anne Bach and I have been coming to NAPT conferences since 1998, frequently presenting. This time we also want to see how the Mile High City plays with the imagination.

As usual, our parallel agenda is to see literary sites. Kerouac liked Denver. We track down the grave of his close friend Neal Cassady, better known as Dean Moriarty in *On the Road*. The still unmarked spot is in the big old Catholic cemetery. I lie down on the plot to commune with his rowdy energy. Being amid all the marble angels reminds me of Kerouac's comment that the classic Beat novel is... *really a story about two Catholic buddies roaming the country in search of God. And we found Him.*

Well, Kerouac found the novel in Denver. It was in a local park, watching a baseball game, that he wrote down the notes that became *On the Road*. The tale of travels begins with his alter ego Sal Paradise heading for Denver. *And there in the blue air I saw for the first time, far off, the great snowy tops of the Rocky Mountains. . . . I had to get to Denver at once.* Neal's home town became the hub for quests in search of the soul of America. Kerouac's stream-of-conscious style came from the long rambling conversations he had with Cassady on the highways and in the bars.

As I write these words, we are waiting for our food at their favorite watering hole. The joint is at the corner of 15th and Platte. It's a survivor of saloons from the boisterous days when mining wealth built the frontier city. There are pictures, letters and articles about the famed wanderers on the back wall. The waiter is nice enough to give me a copy of a missive Cassady wrote from prison asking a friend to pay his small tab at the bar. Neal was even hustling while doing time.

It's in Denver that Jack and Neal listened to bebop with Allen Ginsberg. The account of hanging out with unemployed cowboys and drifters is infused with a bouyant sense of adventure. Mostly, *On the Road* is a



The author at the grave of Neal Cassady — photo by Anne Bach

report on friendship. *I pictured myself in a Denver bar that night, with all the gang, and in their eyes I would be strange and ragged and like the Prophet who has walked across the land to bring the dark Word, and the only Word I had was "Wow"!*

We check out Writer Square downtown, named in honor of the Beats. The fine Victorian buildings on nearby Larimer Square have now become a fashionable cluster of cafes and boutique shops. This area was skid row where Kerouac and friends played pool with locals. *I walked around the sad honkytonks of Curtis Street; young kids in jeans and red shirts; peanut shells, movie marquees, shooting parlors. Beyond the glittering street was darkness, and beyond the darkness the West.*

In my teens, I sat around coffee houses and jazz clubs reading Kerouac. In those years of trying to find myself, there was comfort in the sorrow that runs through the beat canon. Like many young seekers, I felt some kinship with these lost souls. It seemed profound at the

time. They railed against the deadness of the culture, while fighting their own demons. Of course, there was a great haze of drugs and booze involved. Through it all, Kerouac managed to see his friends and random barflies as gallant figures. Cassady and Ginsberg weren't just pals—they were intrepid explorers of unseen worlds.

Anne and I are both grateful Allen Ginsberg was so kind to us. He was doing a series of writer's retreats in Santa Monica. We helped coordinate the events, and got to study with him. He set one of Anne's poems to music. It came out as a blues song.

In *Howl*, Ginsberg went on about the best minds of his generation ... *who journeyed to Denver, who died in Denver, who came back to Denver & waited in vain, who watched over Denver & brooded & loned in Denver and finally went away to find out the Time, & now Denver is lonesome for her heroes.*

As with a pilgrimage, outer movement can encourage inner discoveries. I usually find out the real reason I have gone to a place about a week after returning. This time, it is to be reminded that the imagination is not the private property of places thought of as the sources of great art. Creativity is where you are.

— Jonathan Young, Santa Barbara, CA

Reflections in the Rockies

Day Trip, 2017 NAPT Conference

I
 So for a space I now live
 Intensely and aware:
 Snow purest of white
 Unsullied by bruising footsteps;
 Marijuana incense wafting on
 New spring airwaves;
 Sturdy young pines,
 cones clumped in threesomes,
 Tightly fastened to stems;
 Deep green brush-like bristles
 Waving gently, sparkling subtly in sunlight.



Bench with Snow at Rocky Mountain Lookout — photo by Geri Chavis

II
 Where am I going? I don't quite know
 But I feel far from lost—
 If I were that feather-thin cloud,
 I would aspire ever upward to
 Deeper blue sky.
 If I were this crafted wooden bench,
 With snow for its plush cushion,
 I would stay weighted down with its cool heft,
 Patiently awaiting, in half-sun/half-shade,
 The inevitable spring melt.

III
 Winter trees—Where is your bud,
 Your flower,
 Your life,
 Hidden strongly in tiny hard pods,
 Stubborn, closed,
 At least, seeming so?
 Despite your shell-like cover,
 I find a fissure,
 a burst of potential bud,
 assurance that we are moving toward green
 shoots, leafy festoons
 that will conceal your skeletal,
 but oh so finely
 symmetrical form.

—Geri Chavis, Minneapolis, MN

Denver Pre-Conference Outing

The jostling busload of kindred spirits heads up to Lookout Mountain, high above the city. We traipse around in the winter splendor and take in the views. We are a gaggle of poets on an outing. We have come to open ourselves to nature, and let its vitality seep through our fingers and pens.

The next stop is the Red Rocks Amphitheater. The venue is a confabulation of massive sandstone formations showing off for the ages, and a place for fleeting songs that touch our hearts.

I step out on stage and sing a few notes to check out the acoustics. I am standing where the Beatles belted out *Yeah, Yeah, Yeah*. Wonder what John Lennon thought of the illuminated boulders surrounding the proceedings? Of course, John is gone now, as is George. For that matter, Paul and Ringo will not last forever. But the rocks will be here. Stone doesn't much notice bands or travelers. If you have been around to see dinosaurs come and go, you might not be all that impressed with what a great beat Ringo lays down.

It's a bonding experience to go sightseeing with old friends. Memories surface from attending these gatherings over the years. This is our scholarly tribe. It is not just a symposium, it is a homecoming. The colleagues are a kindly bunch. It is always affirming to be with good souls who appreciate the inner life. I treasure people who can describe heartbreak so well it reveals an essential elegance.

— Jonathan Young, Santa Barbara, CA

As a writing professor, I have used poetry consistently as a means for students to approach issues in creative ways. Sometimes the issues are explicitly related to a writing task, and sometimes the issues are deeper. In writing classes, these deeper issues come to the surface more regularly than other courses for fairly obvious reasons.

I was somewhat familiar with bibliotherapy, but it was not until the tragic deaths of multiple students

at my university in a short time, that I began to research community loss and using poetry to promote collective and individual coping and healing. This is when I came across more specific information on poetry therapy and learned about the National Association for Poetry Therapy. I developed a university-funded project, eventually entitled "Empowering University Students to Empower Themselves and Peers Through Poetry," and I had the opportunity to continue to travel, discover and reflect on poetry therapy for an entire academic year.

Despite all that I was learning, I was less than confident about my place in the poetry therapy community until I attended this year's conference. I did not feel like I had authority to truly engage and share because I am not professionally trained as a therapist. Through workshops and conversations with facilitators and fellow attendees, a wider spectrum of what one can offer became apparent. I feel I was granted permission to continue to adapt my initiative based on my strengths and encourage others to use poetry in ways that can help themselves and others—ultimately the best goal there is.

— Katy E. Whittingham (First-time attendee),
Bridgewater, MA



Red Rocks — photo by Geri Chavis



Opening event with poet Jovan Mays — photo by Laura Santner

Weeping Rock

Written after and inspired by workshop with Nicholas F. Mazza titled “The Place of Poetry Therapy in Expressive Arts Therapies”

I’m still.

Here the water journeys
over my shape,
uses me.

Still, I’m here
for your interpretation.

Thousands of what you
name lifetimes spill
secrets like water
shaping me
in your eyes,
but it’s no secret
that you name me,
see this water as tears
because it’s you
who is crying.

— Katy E. Whittingham (First-time attendee),
Bridgewater, MA

As I entered my final year in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at Webster University, I had never heard of the National Association for Poetry Therapy. In an effort to beat back the malaise of a student nearing the completion of a degree, I selected an elective called “Creative Arts in Counseling.” The air was pregnant with portended promise.

In my reading of a text by Dr. Samuel T. Gladding, I discovered NAPT. Urgently, I appealed to the power of Google and, in the waning hours of the evening, discovered that not only was this a group with which I wanted to be involved, but that a conference was imminent for which a scholarship was available. Incidentally, this was on the deadline for application and all I had to do was produce an essay before midnight. With apology to Dr. Gladding, I ceased reading and began writing. I was awarded the scholarship.

I took a 900-mile pilgrimage and found a home among the mountains. I climbed like Sisyphus transcending his eternal return, choosing, just once, to leave the red rocks where they lie and, unburdened, marvel that they should exist at all. The depth of spirit and generosity that I encountered were not dwarfed even by Lookout Mountain. And if the air was thin and still, the creative energy was not. I stood shoulder to shoulder with titans in those conference halls as surely as I stood amidst the Rocky Mountains, and I was welcomed among them.

— Matt Wilkinson (First-time attendee), Edwardsville, IL

Lifetime Achievement Award winner Nicholas Mazza — photo by Laura Santner





Opening event with poet Jovan Mays —
photo by Laura Santner

Poetry Therapy

*Written in the morning
Triple Workshop,
facilitated by Nancy
Sherlong*

Today, astonishing,
tender. You ask what
did I notice. The red
delicious rolling across
the floor. The woman
welcoming me across
her bridge. The man
wearing a hat on
thoughts I'd like to
know. The call and
response of giving,
giving hearts. The
soprano's red rock
spirit singing through

my hair. My sovereign nation unfurling her flag. Tear-
weary hands loosening their grip around my throat. I
read a poem aloud without crying too much.

—Jacqueline Rigoni (First-time attendee), Belmont, CA

Three Poems

On arranging flowers

One flower at a time
is elegance, purity,
two flowers in a vase
the yin and yang,
three the ancient mystery.
But oh a crowd, a mass
of flowers bursting brilliant
from feathery greens
is exuberance, plenitude,
is joy. I adore them all,
one, two, three, many,
give me flowers
today every day
I must have flowers.

Today I woke up
to mountain air. Now
I remember how
you loved the mountains.

After the swings
the child dances
among pink and purple
rhododendrons.

—Alma Maria Rolfs, Seattle, WA

**SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE MEMBERS AND
ATTENDEES WHO DONATED ITEMS TO OUR RAFFLE
AT THE CONFERENCE IN APRIL:**

**Kay Adams
Carleen Brezney
Bookbar bookstore (Denver, CO)**

LOOK FOR INFORMATION ABOUT DONATING TO NEXT YEAR'S
AUCTION IN THE NOVEMBER 2017 ISSUE OF THE MUSELETTER.

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The **individual meetings** at IRDPQ took place around a small bookshelf that had been custom built for this project. The meetings were offered twice a week. During the first month, I gave the meetings in the corridor, next to the snack bar. This allowed me to enjoy great visibility. However, since people would come and go all the time, the place was also very noisy. It did not provide the calm and intimate environment that facilitates the encounter with oneself.

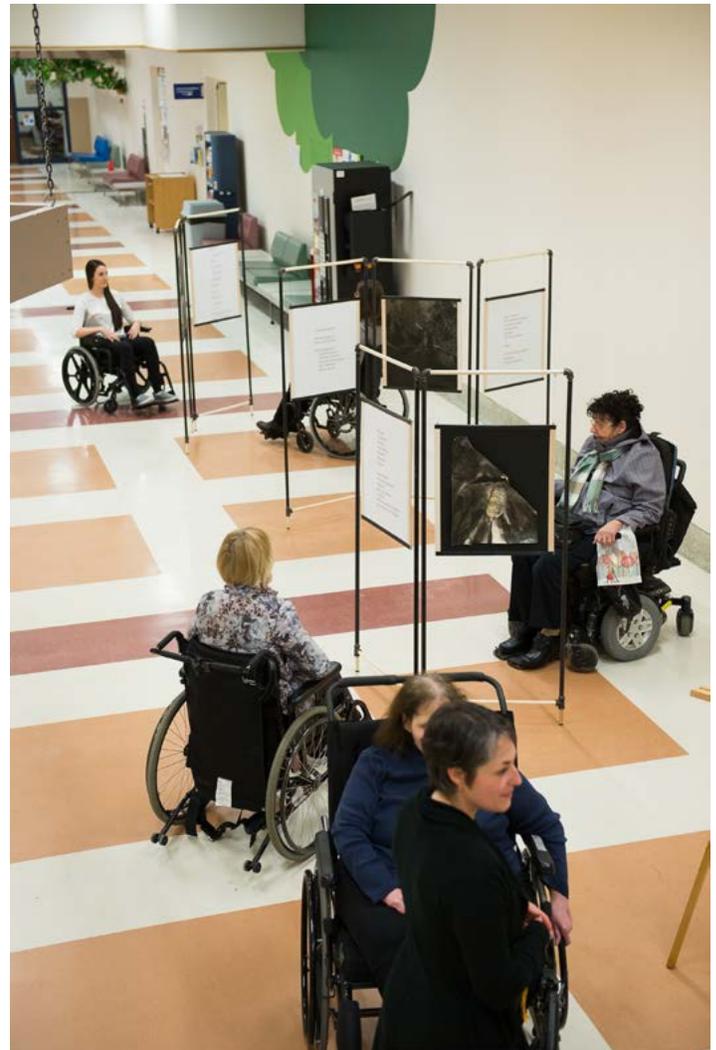
There was a quiet and beautiful chapel a few meters away. Since people would seldom go there, I held the meetings there for the five following months. During the encounters, I chose a text—tale, poem or page taken from a novel—relevant to the concerns and aims of the person I was working with. I work with a repertoire of about sixty texts. In a nutshell, 150 individual meetings with about fifty different residents and ten employees were given.

Once a month we had a **group workshop**. From October to December, we addressed the themes of trust, autonomy, and self-initiative. In February, during three meetings, participants wrote *kasàlà*, a genre of self-praising poetry.

The readings and the meeting gave me the opportunity to collect stories that the participants voluntarily shared in reaction to the texts we read. They were a source of inspiration for the **poems** I wrote. So were the moments we spent reading together and the life events we shared as well as my personal experience.

The texts were illustrated by the **photographs** of Rachelle Bussièrès, a Quebec artist who studied Arts in San Francisco. We choose six abstract photographs among her works made in response to the poems.

An **exhibition** that showcased the poems and photographs was held at the IRDPQ for one day in March. Over eighty people (participants in the program, staff and visitors), saw the exhibition.



The exhibition — photo by Samuel Tessier

MENTAL IMAGERY IN BIBLIOTHERAPY: APPROACH AND PRACTICE

Even though bibliotherapy is a complete approach in itself, it can definitely be enhanced by pairing it with other approaches.

Mental imagery, which I have been trained in by the Centre d'intégration psycho-spirituelle de l'Estrie (Psycho-Spiritual Integration Center) founded by Léandre Boisvert, appeared to me as a particularly good complement for bibliotherapy.

The mental imagery practiced by Boisvert is a process of symbolic work of the imagination. When people experience a difficulty or are aiming for something, Boisvert's method allows for a symbol

to come out of the Shadow. This “Shadow”—in the psychology of Carl Gustav Jung—is the part of us we resist the most strongly.

But then the symbol emerges. In spite of everything, it emerges into the light, and when it’s in motion within us, it lets our story go forward and reach a clarifying conclusion. The therapist guides the person to his or her own symbols and inner activity by staying very close to each person’s language and particular symbolic system.

In the context of bibliotherapy, I use mental imagery to deepen the experience of the reading. I suggest to the participants that they let a symbol emerge from the text, or that they use an element of the text as a starting point.

By closing their eyes and picturing this element, participants can then let their imagination loose and allow that symbol to develop into a scenario. The scenario will indirectly represent one’s relational dynamics and portray his or her way of being and interacting with others.

A thing that I particularly admire in the practice of mental imagery is Boisvert’s absolute confidence in a person, in that person’s autonomy. This requires us to remain always alert during the meeting, alert to what is being said and done. Not to analyze what is going on or to dig back into our file of knowledge to try to classify the person we’re facing.

For there are inside onself things that need to progress. The therapist simply has to follow the road proposed by the symbol by guiding the person toward letting resistances fall, having faith in the person’s strengths and richness.

Now let me bring these explanations down to earth, somewhat, by sharing two stories with you—the stories of Maria and Jack (fictitious names).

THE MOTHER: THE ONE WHO IS LOST AND THE ONE WHO TAKES CARE

I saw Maria seated in her wheelchair in the recreation room. It was my third meeting with her. Maria had been living in this institution for the past three weeks.

I approached her quietly and gently, and I said hello to her. I ask her how she was doing. She turned to me, her face sad, and her reply was also sad. “I’m doing badly,” she told me.

I asked her if it would help if I read something to her. She reflected on this for several seconds, and then said: “Yes.” Her right hand rose and then came to rest on the wheel of her wheelchair, and she made the chair move forward with great difficulty.

Would she like me to push her? “Yes!,” she said promptly. So, I pushed her gently to the chapel, where *La Bibliothèque Apothicaire* was set up. To this day, every step I take reminds me of that moment, of the privilege I had of being with this woman, feeling her fragility and being accepted by her.

We arrived in the chapel and settled in front of the small bookshelf. Maria fixed her eyes on a painting on the wall, an abstract entitled *Le temps qui passe*. She looked at it intensely; I even felt she was looking at it with some anger. I turned my chair to the painting, and I also looked at it.

After a moment of silence, I asked Maria what she got from the painting. “I don’t understand,” she said. She read the title aloud: “Time Goes By.” She repeated: “I don’t understand.” So, I said, “Yes, you can’t understand the title. But the painting itself—what do you see in it?” “Nothing. It feels hostile to me.” I asked her what it was that upset her. “There’s too much. Too many colors, too many specks. I don’t need that this evening. Reading would be better for me.”

“What do you need this evening?”

“For things to stop going badly. To stop being sad, and hurting.” Maria closed her eyes and became introspective.

I asked her what image expressed her hurt. She immediately replied, “My mother.” And she explained to me that just two days before, her eighty-five-year-old mother had fallen as she was walking to Maria’s house to pick up some things for her. Her mother’s left tibia was broken, as well as her right wrist, and she already had an artificial hip.

At that moment, I chose what I would read to her: a tale by Clarissa Pinkola Estès. In this tale, “Three Golden Hairs,” an old man who has been walking to the point of exhaustion makes it to a cabin in the woods. An old lady lives there and she invites him in. She takes him in her arms and rocks him through the night, and as she does so, the old man grows younger. She tears out three hairs from his head and throws them onto the floor. First, he becomes a fine-looking child. Then he is a baby. The morning comes, and he flies up to heaven and becomes the sun, and he shines down.

Throughout my reading, Maria kept her head low. Her body seemed uncomfortable on her wheelchair. Her sweater was askew. I’d seen her on other occasions upright and proud, so this posture told me that she was suffering.

When I had finished reading, I asked her what this text meant. “I don’t know.” But I remained silent, and a little later she shared her thoughts: “At first, I thought the old man was quite a bit like my mother. But afterward, my mother was the old woman in the cabin.”

“I find that interesting, what you’ve just said,” I told her. “Your mother takes two roles, first the man, then the woman. It’s as if you were telling me that we have both of these characters inside us, both the lost man, worn out and in despair, and the woman who takes care, who consoles, who nurses us back to health.”

“Yes,” she said. “That’s true.”

I asked her how she felt about it. She answered: “I don’t feel anything.” And yet I had a strong sense that, in her fragility, Maria was closer than she had ever been to feeling what was inside her. This was in spite of having her left arm and leg paralyzed as a result of a stroke. In the preceding weeks, I had seen a Maria who was self-assured, almost severe. She was rational, she wanted to show her knowledge, and she put forward her intellectual capacities.

Later that evening, as I was relating this meeting in my diary, this thought came to me: it was strange of Maria to say that she felt nothing anymore. Felt nothing. . . in what way? Isn’t feeling a state of being immersed deeply into yourself, with your rational and social sides scarcely operating anymore?

I thought to myself that sometimes we take note of a state we’re in, that state is already past. To take note, we must already be pulling out of the state. We are no longer blinded by that state but are starting to perceive it, to be in the light again. Even if we still feel we’re plunged into darkness.

Then one evening, a tale is told to us. This tale accompanies us in our fragility, and thereby we discover a new road we can walk on. This road isn’t completely clear. But it’s clearer than the former roads our brain used to limit itself to.

Here is the poem I wrote to transcribe the experience of Maria:

Ma mère	My mother
Ce vieillard	This old man
Ma mère	My mother
Cette femme	This woman
Ma mère	My mother
Ma peine	My sorrow
En moi	Within myself
Le désespéré	The desperate one
celle qui prend soin	She who takes care
L’épuisé	The exhausted one
celle qui console	She who consoles
Le perdu	The lost one
celle qui conduit à l’enfant	She who leads to the child
qui conduit à l’or brillant	who leads to the glistening gold

THE OGRE, THE WILD MAN AND THE DONKEY THAT MAKES ME LAUGH

Here is a fragment of Jack’s story. Jack arrived before I even had time to finish setting up the bookshelf. He was waiting patiently. It was my fourth meeting with him. He was a man of 32 with four children. He had broken up with his partner about a year before his accident.

I was curious to see what he was gaining from our meetings so far. He never missed a single session. “It’s better than staying in my room,” he said. “And you always choose good stories that I like.”

Every time I asked Jack what he wanted, in order to give me a starting point so I could choose a reading, he would answer: “I don’t know, whatever you want.”

Since I had no doubt that I would see Jack often, I proposed reading a longer tale that we could spread over several meetings. I thought about “Iron John” by the Grimm Brothers because of the main character’s quest, his interior beauty and the help of the mythical title character.

Every time we met, Jack would denigrate the people who receive social assistance. He would repeat the same sentences many times and complain because we had to pay for them and because, according to him, they didn’t even try to find a job.

His speeches were filled with anger whenever he talked about this subject, something he would do every time we met. He clung to judgments and preconceived ideas that seemed to intertwine with a subjective moral code. I would patiently listen to him and, then, suggest that I read to him.

During our first meetings, we did not spend a lot of time reading. He spent most of the time complaining. But that day, something was different; he seemed to be more attentive and more open to what the text could tell him. As I suggested, he chose to dedicate the tale to his 8-year-old son. I asked him to focus on the part of his own body that took up most of his attention.

“It’s my left leg that gives me the most trouble,” he said. “The muscles don’t work because I don’t use them.”

Jack was a truck driver, and while loading a truck, he had been hit in the face with a metal hook. The right side of his face was now disfigured and his left leg paralyzed.

I suggested he focus on this leg and listen to the fairy tale. “It’s hard to focus on this leg,” he said. After that, he closed his eyes for a few seconds, and his right leg stopped jittering.

I read him the first part of the fairy tale, the version found in Robert Bly’s 1990 book *Iron John: A Book About Men*. He liked it. There was something about the text that stayed with him, a question that got to him: “What is the wild man doing in the pond?”

I asked him what he thought about it. “He’s hiding from something,” he said. From that moment, we had crossed the door that leads into the imaginary world.

I continued to focus on the symbols and images that Jack had given me by answering my questions. I would guide him in order to create a personal scenario that would suit his own dynamics, and that would allow him to travel into his unconscious.

It was the first time Jack answered my questions so willingly and so spontaneously. Until then, rationality had always prevailed, and it had been impossible to enter the world of the imaginary. Following is an excerpt of the dialogue that allowed us to build the imagery.

— Who is the wild man hiding from?
 — From an ogre, Shrek.
 — If you were a child and met him, what would you do?
 — I’d try to kill him. The neck is the best target because there is a big vein.

Then, I remembered Boisvert saying that you cannot kill a symbol. Symbols are there to help you, to guide you.

— What about letting the ogre slowly come to you?
 — I turn away, and I run.

At that moment, I felt the need to let another character—an archetype—intervene and help him. Jack answered me before I even get to ask him the question.

— I could let him come closer but only if he’s with Donkey!
 — Why?
 — Because Donkey makes me laugh!
 — And what happens when you laugh with the ogre?
 — He laughs at me!
 — Is there something you would like to tell him?
 — Nothing. I can’t tell him anything!
 — Then, what do you want to do?
 — I run away; I go to the swamp. I am the wild man. And I’m the one who’s being questioned.
 — And where are you when you’re being questioned?

Jack had taken some elements of the fairy tale and created his own imagery: the swamp, the wild man, then the cage and the king.

— I am in the cage, but I don’t want to stay locked up inside.
 — Why are you locked up inside?
 — I’m too wild.

- What could you do to get out of the cage?
- Try to convince the father, the king, that I'm not dangerous. I would tell him that I needed to spend some time in the swamp, to rest.
- How does the father react?
- He's a Santa; he wants me to take care of his realm.

(He wiped his hand across his sweaty forehead and continued.)

- He has a lot of work to do!
- How do you feel about it?
- It's better than staying in the cage!

At that moment, there was a silence between us, and I tried to take as many notes as possible. Jack then began complaining about the people who receive social assistance and how unfair it is that we pay for them with our taxes. I didn't give him any time to go on with his rant. I brought him back to the subject. He re-entered the conversation with ease.

- What about the child? Don't you think he'd rather play instead of working?
- Yes, but he can't!
- What if he could? Let's imagine he could.
- He goes into the forest and has fun.
- Can you take some time to picture him having fun in the forest?
- I can see him running and climbing trees!
- Picture him climbing and pay attention to what you feel in your leg.
- I can't feel anything in my leg!
- Can you associate a symbol with your leg?
- It's a peace & love sign!
- Can you feel peace in your leg?

He closed his eyes, longer than usual.

- Yes, I can feel peace in my muscles. But if there's too much peace, it's not good.
- Why?
- Some time ago, there was too much peace, and it hurt.
- Can you at least feel a little bit of peace and what it does to your leg?
- He took some time and said:
- Yes. Thank you. It feels good.

I told him that, whenever he wanted, he could go back to this experience, this sensation, and feel the peace again. He answered that he thought he had already made some progress. I also told him that he could reach this peaceful sensation again when having his other treatments. He answered it was a good idea.

This tale clearly shows how we work with mental imagery. It's also interesting to note that the participant was inspired by elements of the tale that I read him, such as characters and imagery.

Here is, in a poem, what's left from that mental imagery:

L'homme sauvage
se cache de l'ogre

Moi, l'enfant
je voudrais le tuer
par la grosse veine du cou

Le laisser s'approcher de moi?
Je vire de bord

et je cours

Sauf s'il est avec l'âne
Parce que lui
il me fait rire
Puis quand je ris
l'ogre rit de moi

et je cours

jusque dans le marécage

Je suis l'homme sauvage

Dites au roi
que je ne suis pas dangereux
Dans le bassin
j'avais besoin de me cacher un
peu

Beaucoup trop de travail
L'enfant voudrait jouer

Dans la forêt, il s'amuse
Voyez-le qui court
et grimpe dans les arbres

Alors dans ma jambe inerte
trêve de labeur
Jambe marécageuse
mes muscles
s'apaisent

By the big neck vein

Let him get close to me?
I turn back

and I run

Except if he is with Donkey
Because
He makes me laugh
and when I laugh
The ogre laughs at me

and I run away

Down to the swamp

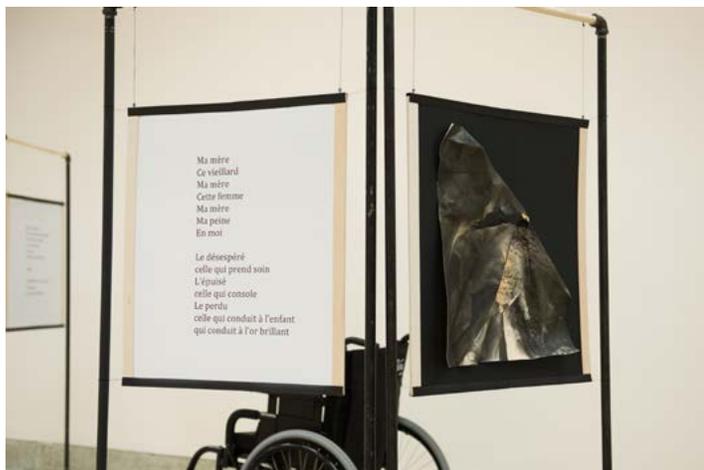
I am the wild man

Tell the king
That I am not dangerous
In the pond
I needed to hide a little while

Far too much work
The child would like to play

In the forest, he's having fun
Look at him running and
climbing up trees

So, in my inert leg
Rest from my labor
Swampy leg
My muscles
Are soothed



The exhibition (detail) — photo by Samuel Tessier

CONCLUSION

After visiting the exhibition at the IRDPQ, many participants wrote me a message telling me how much they had been moved by the poems and photographs. One of them said his body and soul had been touched. Another one saw the project as an invitation to open the imaginary world. “Where the scars are turned into completely different realities,” he said.

“It frees us from ourselves and our sufferings,” is what one of the patients said. He told me that during the exhibition he had entered into a place where suffering has nothing to do with how we conceive it in the real world. Once we dive into that universe, the pain disappears.

Literature and the imaginary can open new paths in our universe; they allow us to face our fears, sufferings and limitations and to create new harmonious feelings and relationships. Once a path is made inside the body and the brain, it is possible to travel it over and over and to continue to grow in self-confidence. Identity comes clearer, more balanced.

I will end this article with a poem I wrote after being inspired by the meeting I had with one participant. This poem also reflects my approach to bibliotherapy and mental imagery.

Comment guérir

Ma tête l'ignore
Mon corps le fait

Mon imaginaire
la porte s'ouvre
ma main s'avance
vers des personnages
que j'héberge
sans le savoir

Dans l'ombre
Des symboles naissent
Ni beaux ni laids
Je les ressens
Les suis
Où ils me mènent

Voilà

L'histoire est racontée
L'histoire
en corps l'histoire

How to heal

My head does not know
My body just does it

My imaginary
the door opens
my hand is moving forward
towards characters
that I host
unknowingly

In the Shadow
Symbols are born
Neither beautiful nor ugly
I can feel them
Follow them
Where they lead me

There

The story has been told

* Katy Roy holds a Master's degree in Literature and has studied mental imagery, a symbolic psychological approach. In 2010, she created *La Bibliothèque Apothicaire* (for which she received the 2013 Entrepreneurship Award in Quebec City), in order to offer bibliotherapy services. She is currently working toward her PhD to explore the influence of our inner significant characters and the possibility to renew those symbols inside us by using mental imagery in a bibliotherapy setting. For more information see labibliothequeapothicaire.com.

MESSAGE FROM NAPT'S PRESIDENT

Contributed by Geri Chavis

I write this still steeped in positive memories of the Denver 2017 NAPT conference. As in former years, there was a camaraderie and positive energy that infused the days we were together at the conference hotel or enjoying the daytrip to the Rockies, attending keynote addresses, readings and workshops, eating meals and chatting over a cocktail at the happy hours. Old-timers and newcomers had many opportunities to share their stories with one another, and so many participants expressed how grateful they were for the welcome they received.



In my opening remarks, I invited all participants to slip me notes—snippets or little gems that encapsulated for them something important about their experience at conference events, and I read these aloud when we convened for our closing activity.

There are two primary themes conveyed in these notes that not only reflect my own personal reactions at the Denver conference but also characterize my experience within NAPT over the last four decades. One theme involves the deeply held sense of belonging that is evoked at our gatherings, and the second theme reflects the joy of inspiration, of having the opportunity to engage our creative selves and come away inspired to do our work in the world. Regarding the first theme

mentioned, one participant referred to finding her “tribe,” while another indicated feeling “surrounded by like-minded souls,” while a third likened the conference to a “truly poetic home.” The sense of a nurturing space was captured in the remark of an individual who returned for his second conference: “The Spirit of the conference made it a retreat.” In a similar vein, another participant defined this experience as “not just a conference” but a “homecoming” and “a rare chance to be with kindred spirits who appreciate the inner life.”

The Wednesday trip to the mountains that Laura Santner facilitated evoked a similar set of responses, with one participant describing this excursion as a “bonding experience to go up to the snow together” and an opportunity to explore “new imagery” in “the creative space.” Another participant appreciated being led “into our own stories and the healing ways of nature.”

Those who focused on the creative aspects of the conference used phrases such as “Building a usable past out of the materials of our own worlds”; “leaping” into “the glistening future”; being “inspired to be inspiring; I am a poet after all”; and “the words land with a gymnast’s arched pride.”

I thank all those whose words are gathered here, and until we converge again next April, I hope that we stay connected with one another, building upon the contacts made and fostering our shared commitment to helping others through the magic of expressive writing.

Seeking Book Reviewers

The Museletter and the Journal of Poetry Therapy are seeking reviews of contemporary titles in writing therapy and related fields, as well as of poetry monographs and collections. [Note: Museletter contributors must be current members of NAPT, and neither publication reviews self-published books.]

Interested? Email naptpublications@yahoo.com.

Annual Conference: Past & Future

Contributed by Barbara Kreisberg, MS, CPT, VP & Conference Chair

I look back on our Denver Conference this past April as a very pleasant memory. What a wonderful conference it was! It was so heartening to meet so many new and enthusiastic attendees who came not only from the local Denver area, but also from far-away places to learn more about NAPT and how becoming a member of our organization can prove to be rewarding, both professionally as well as personally.

A highlight of the conference for me was the Thursday Meet and Greet where we broke into small groups and used the poetic form of haiku as a way of getting to know one another in preparation for the conference to come. It was heartwarming to see all the sharing that went on, and the laughter and connection that took place. Another highlight was listening to, watching and getting to know Jovan Mays, who was our Thursday evening Opening Event presenter. His honesty, talent and poetry were moving and real. What a treat it was to have him!

The Embassy Suites went all out to make sure all of our needs were met. The rooms were comfortable and spacious, the food was superb, and the workshops all went well without a hitch. I want to thank Kay Adams for her thoughtful and beautiful Keynote presentation, and David Rothman for his sharing of his own poetry, which was both moving and descriptive. I also want to thank our workshop presenters who shared with us their own talents and ideas for us to bring back home and use with the populations we serve.

SAVE THE DATE!

I am pleased to announce that our next conference will be at the Oak Ridge Hotel & Conference Center in Chaska, just outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 26–29, 2018. This beautiful and natural setting will serve as an excellent venue for some outdoor poetry writing as well as some stimulating workshops and special events. The theme of next year's conference will be "Poetry Therapy in a Changing World: Pathways to Growth, Healing and Social Justice."



Oakridge conference site

We will be working on shaping the new program around the conference theme toward the end of the summer and will be asking for proposals that relate to this theme in September. I look forward to being in touch during the year, either by e-blast or on the conference website: www.poetrytherapy.org. If anyone wants to be a part of the conference committee or serve as a volunteer at the conference itself, I would love to hear from you! Volunteers are always welcome and will receive a discounted conference registration rate. Please contact me at bkexpres@aol.com if you are interested. Have a relaxing summer!

SEEKING WRITING PROMPTS

The "Poems as Process" column of the Museletter takes poems from the "American Life in Poetry" series, adding writing prompts (written by NAPT members) that promote writing for personal growth and healing.

Would you like to contribute by writing prompts for recently posted poems? Email naptpublications@yahoo.com.

Turning Your Language Usage Upside Down in Your Journal

Contributed by Beth Jacobs, PhD

When we read a poem we love, there is almost always something that strikes us as original in the *usage* of language. For an example, here are some lines from “Cliffs of Moher, County Clare” by Perie Longo, which many of us had the good fortune to hear at the open mic at NAPT’s Annual Conference in Denver this April (printed here with permission of the poet):

They whiz toward the dark cliff rise,
 then tour j’eté back to sea in a kind of tease—
 coming home, just kidding—like exultations
 of souls unbound from flesh...

So much is beautiful and novel in this language, but I heard “tour j’eté” applied to birds and felt a real jolt of recognition. I remember long ago in ballet classes attempting tour j’eté’s, which aren’t so difficult. They are leaps where you do a half turn in the air and land on your leg facing back to where you came from. There is a visceral feeling of the twist in the air that so precisely conjured up a vision of what those birds might have been doing in their playful swoops in Ireland. Maybe sometime in the history of humanity, every word has connected to any and every other word, but right then “tour j’eté” and “bird” clicked together in my mind in a particularly compelling and physical manner.

This kind of novel usage of language is central to creating poetry and to its beauty and power. It’s enjoyable to experience the sensual emanations from such a description, but it is also a kind of shock of illumination. Language is such a profound fundamental of human mental structure that it is imbedded in the very neuronal connections of our wiring. Language is woven into our core processing. When we find a new way to twist or braid that processing of language, we refresh our experience on a basic level. And the more we can refresh our basic experience, the more alive we feel.

Anna O. Soter described a similar concept in her article “Reading and writing poetically for well-being: language as a field of energy in practice” (*Journal of Poetry Therapy*, 2016, Vol. 29, no. 3, page 162). She described the alive and integrative quality of language under its structure. “Renaming language as a ‘field of energy,’ *physicalizes* it, endows it with the capacity to manifest experience, to make thought ‘happen.’ Through its inherent properties (attention to sound, rhythm, visual imagery, and in general, the use of language in ways that activates all our senses at one time or other or collectively)...” language holds phenomena and opens them up also.

The more we write, the better the writing tends to become, but our language habits tend to become more ingrained also. Even in poetry writing, we can begin to rely on known paradigms of language. A journal is an ideal place to experiment and play with language on the ground level, when we can write without purpose or communication imperatives. In the journal, we can try really getting to our personal constructions and breaking them up to make more creative space.

It is always useful to try different forms to refresh your writing, and in past “Journalers’ Corners” I have written about some of the benefits of switching genres and techniques to cultivate expression of emotion, unconscious content or insight. Ideas for ways to refresh actual language usage are more basic and playful ways to *feel* the words, to arrange the words to actually release constraints of language.

One rather crazy way to start a process like this is to go backward. It’s fun to figure out your own name with the letters backward. This is also a very easy, tension-breaking way to do introductions in a small group. My first name, Hteb, is a bit difficult, but I think Sbocaj sounds funny, like a vegetable that’s a little too healthy to love.

Sensory words are another basic place to work on jarring the system. We have so many standardized pairings and expressions for our senses. Try doing a kind of association game with senses and think of one word for, say, vision. Most of the time we will think of a primary color, and the smell of a flower will almost always go straight to a rose. To break up

the usual, you can cultivate synesthesia, which is defined as a sensory stimulus leading to an impression relating to another sense or part of the body. Another way to think of it is as the blending of associations between senses, where one sense's language works into another sense's experience.

To do this, you can make a list of distinct and varied sense experiences for you, and then try to think of what color each experience might seem like. What color is the sound of cicadas or the feel of drizzle on your face or the taste of a pecan or even the thought of a multiplication problem? Then you can switch it up and ask what does magenta smell like? Or, what three smells combine when you sniff a leaf? Or, what do you smell when you touch a piece of velvet compared to touching glass or the screen on your back-door? The capacity for this kind of sensory hodgepodge has been considered both a symptom of spectrum disorders and a characteristic of the artistic mind, but purposefully developing it a little has a power to widen the range of sensual perception and materials for description.

A fun game of language deconstruction is called The N+7 procedure, and was invented by Jean Lescure of Oulipo (short for *Ouvroir de littérature potentielle*, or Work of Potential Literature). In this procedure, you replace each noun in a text with the seventh one following it in a dictionary. There are computer programs that will do this for you and turn your text into a new one, with some of the same feel as the original plus some wackiness you wouldn't expect. This game has worked well in writing groups with younger members who need help generating ideas or energy.

Another type of inversion is to focus on the negative in language, like examining negative space in paintings. An easy technique in this area is based on the book/project called *A Humament: A Treated Victorian Novel* by Tom Phillips (1980). Phillips set about to buy a book for three pence in a used bookstore in England and then convert each page into a visual masterpiece as well as a poem, by covering up most of the words on the page with paint or collage, and leaving bits that worked visually but autonomously arranged meaning. This project has turned into a series of six works and the pages are both beautiful and strangely apt as poems. The idea of finding the poem through elimination as opposed to building it can be done with newspapers or even old books. Just fairly randomly draw boxes around words or phrases and then paint or cross out the rest with thick markers. The message then emerges instead of developing with a plan.

Negative meaning can take the lead on the journal page if we focus on describing Not-things, in a Zen-like take on reality. In some Buddhist philosophy, form and emptiness are not only complementary, but synonymous, and there are chants that list the existence of No-eyes, No-ears, No-nose, No-color, No-sound, No-smell, etc. It's very hard to dive into what that means exactly, but it certainly shakes up the usual patterning of language to ask about the not of things. What is the world like that is not visible? What is today like with no appointments? What would life be without a particular person? Asking "not" questions or just difficult questions tends to yield surprise.

The most basic source of fresh language is awareness of the whole body, yet we often neglect being direct with bodily experience in writing. I frequently think of Tristine Rainer's instructions for a free write in *The New Diary* (1978): "...write from your feelings, write from your body, accept whatever comes" (page 34). I think most of us find it easier to understand what she means by "write from your feelings" in our journals than by "write from your body." This could include the kind of muscular inclusion that Lucia Capacchione writes about in *The Creative Journal* (2015) when she describes the necessity of writing by hand and sometimes including art and big paper and large gestures in your work. But it can also mean choosing the words that bubble up from the gut, whether they are written with the whole body or on a keyboard.

Eugene Gendlin, the famous philosopher and psychologist, provided a framework for finding that bodily collaboration in his work. His book *Focusing* (1978) describes a systematic process of identifying a problem, locating it in bodily sensation—which he calls an "unclear felt sense"—and then letting a word, a phrase or an image come up from the felt sense itself. He elaborates a therapeutic system of resonating with the word and the felt sense, and working with the problems that the body incorporates, but his most important instructions that apply to writing involve developing a tolerance for bodily feeling without label. If we can just focus on this felt bodily sense as pure experience without a name, the words will arise from the event instead of being grabbed by the mind to frame up the event. When journaling, you can either think of a problem area or just breathe and notice what is already there in the body. When a sensation is noticeable, just stay with that raw observation until words, thoughts or images attach to it naturally. Then throw down the descriptions and see if you have the core of

a poem, a clue to your state of mind or a catalyst to a free association cascade.

These exercises are meant to be a starting point for playing with your own language usage in ways that loosen it up. Seasoned writers do tend to create and reinforce habitual linguistic pathways through repetition and desensitization and might benefit from experiments such as these to enliven their work. These ideas also vary standard writing processes so much that they tend to work well with expressive writing groups of children, teenagers or very inexperienced writers who might be intimidated by writing together.

Every creative act is both a physical and mental process. All species have ways to communicate and our elaborate verbal language is a basic human body/mind structure and pattern. People who use sign language or know many languages may have a better sense of just what language is because of viewing it from a few angles. Playing with the basics of language may also increase perspective. We can use language self-consciously to make language itself an interior object of observation. The more deeply we understand how we use language, the more room we have for variation and the awakening power of novel usage.

The Journaler's Corner discusses personal writing as a therapeutic and artistic process. Please write with comments or suggestions: jacobsbeth@att.net.

REGIONAL GATHERINGS GRANTS NOW AVAILABLE!

OVERVIEW

The grants will help current NAPT members defer costs associated with hosting regional meetings and conferences. These regional events offer presentations designed to further and/or discuss the use of language, symbol and story in therapeutic and educational capacities and promote the general activities of the National Association for Poetry Therapy. This support is both monetary and in the form of promotion of events to the general membership.

These grants are designed to provide necessary support for events that might not otherwise be able to be held. Attendance fees should be minimal, or even admission provided at no cost.

Regional conferences should provide an atmosphere where individuals can share information, learn about the field, present research (proposals and complete projects) and network with others in their region.

These grants are available for travel costs and speaking fees of presenters, room rentals, print materials, publicity, and refreshments. NAPT will also provide informational materials about the Association upon request as well as books for resale at events.

GRANT CRITERIA

Each grant application must demonstrate that the event is related to the field, provide a budget that is specific and appropriate, and

indicate that other funding sources have been investigated. Proposed matching funds must be clearly delineated in the budget and might include earned income from attendance fees, in-kind speakers, in-kind rental of meeting space, and donated printing and/or refreshments (with the exception of alcohol). Events that appeal to students and diverse audiences (through special sessions or reduced registration fees, for example) are especially welcome. The NAPT grant will not comprise more than 50% of the program budget. A brief final report form will be supplied with your grant confirmation and must be completed and submitted within four weeks of your event's conclusion.

Currently, grants are being awarded up to \$500 per approved regional event. Consideration will be given to trying to spread out the grants geographically. We hope they present opportunities for building the community of our organization as broadly as possible.

TO APPLY

Email a one-page statement of your purpose and proposed activities, including region, venue, schedule, and speakers, along with an itemized budget of projected income and expenses and full contact information for the lead organizer of the event, to Karen vanMeenen at naptpublications@yahoo.com.

This application cycle is ongoing, with applications considered in the order they are received each calendar year until that year's funds are depleted.

Writing suggestions contributed by Connie Banta, LPC, MFA

American Life in Poetry: Column 606

Here's a touching father-son poem by Jennifer Gray, who lives in Nebraska. If you're not big enough to push a real mower, well, you make a mower of your own.

Summer Mowing

He has transformed
his Tonka dump truck
into a push mower, using

lumber scraps and duct tape
to construct a handle
on the front end of the dump box.

One brave screw
holds the makeshift
contraption together.

All summer they outline
the edges of these acres,
first Daddy, and then,

behind him
this small echo, each
dodging the same stumps,

pausing to slap a mosquito,
or rest in the shade,
before once again pacing

out into the light,
where first one,
and then the other,

leans forward to guide the mowers
along the bright edges
of this familiar world.

Writing suggestions

- Write about a way/time that you mirrored a parent (or other adult) when you were a child—describe a scene in detail.
- Write about a toy that you built or about imaginative play that you invented as a child.
- Write about doing chores with a parent. Did it feel like play or work? Was the parent encouraging or critical? How did you feel about being asked to help?

American Life in Poetry: Column 605

Beginning writers often tell me their real lives aren't interesting enough to write about, but the mere act of shaping a poem lifts its subject matter above the ordinary. Here's Natasha Trethewey, who served two terms as U.S. Poet Laureate, illustrating just what I've described. It's from her book Domestic Work, from Graywolf Press. Trethewey lives in Georgia.

Housekeeping

We mourn the broken things, chair legs
wrenched from their seats, chipped plates,
the threadbare clothes. We work the magic
of glue, drive the nails, mend the holes.
We save what we can, melt small pieces
of soap, gather fallen pecans, keep neck bones
for soup. Beating rugs against the house,
we watch dust, lit like stars, spreading
across the yard. Late afternoon, we draw
the blinds to cool the rooms, drive the bugs
out. My mother irons, singing, lost in reverie.
I mark the pages of a mail-order catalog,
listen for passing cars. All day we watch
for the mail, some news from a distant place.

Writing suggestions

- Make your own list poem of simple things you do to make life a little less painful, a little more satisfying.
- Write about a time or a way that you sought “news from a distant place.”

American Life in Poetry: Column 630

I'm celebrating my 78th birthday by publishing one of my own poems. When an old guy like me is still writing poetry, he tends to write a lot of old-guy poems.

Look for Me

Look for me under the hood
of that old Chevrolet settled in weeds
at the end of the pasture.

I'm the radiator that spent its years
bolted in front of an engine
shoving me forward into the wind.

Whatever was in me in those days
has mostly leaked away,
but my cap's still screwed on tight
and I know the names of all these
tattered moths and broken grasshoppers
the rest of you've forgotten.

Writing suggestions

- Where might people look for you?
- Write about an object or place that tells about your aging—consider what has been lost, what remains, what has been gained.
- How does that object or place represent you?

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Introductions copyright ©2016 and ©2017 by The Poetry Foundation. The introductions' author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004 to 2006. "Summer Mowing" copyright ©2015 by Jennifer Gray from Plainsongs (Vol. XXXV, no. 3, 2015). Poem reprinted by permission of Jennifer Gray and the publisher. "Housekeeping" copyright ©2000 by Natasha Trethewey from Domestic Work (Graywolf Press, 2000). Poem reprinted by permission of Natasha Trethewey and the publisher. "Look for Me" copyright ©2017 by Ted Kooser. Poem reprinted by permission of Ted Kooser.

MEDIA RECEIVED

Blue Clouds: A Collection of Soul's Creative Intelligence by Carolyn Riker. Golden Dragonfly Press.

Environmental Expressive Therapies: Nature-Assisted Theory and Practice edited by Alexander Kopytin and Madeline Rugh. Routledge.

Transforming Memories: Sharing Spontaneous Writing Using Loaded Words by Liz Crocker with Polly Bennell and Holly Book. Bull Publishing Company.

[NAPT members interested in reviewing any of the titles listed in Media Received or other books or media that might be of interest to readers of The Museletter are requested to contact the Editor at naptpublications@yahoo.com. Note: We list, but we do not publish reviews of, self-published books.]

EVENTS

••• MINNESOTA •••

SAVE THE DATE! The next annual conference of the National Association for Poetry Therapy will be held April 26–29, 2018, near Minneapolis, Minnesota. For information on attending the conference, see the NAPT News column in this issue of *The Museletter* or visit our website at www.poetrytherapy.org.

••• CALIFORNIA •••

Creative Bridges is a weekend conference to explore and showcase relevant research and practice in the field of **words for wellbeing**. This will be a collaborative and interdisciplinary conference drawing on the professional, practical and personal experience of researchers, practitioners and participants to explore and expand the diversity of Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes (CWTP) from a range of disciplines including literature, counseling, psychotherapy, medicine and more. This two-day event takes place July 29–30, 2017, at Engineers House in Bristol, UK. For more information please visit www.creativebridgesbristol.com.

CLASSES / WORKSHOPS / PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

••• CALIFORNIA •••

The **Southern California Poetry Therapy Network** offers peer/supervision training hours for those working on their CAPF, CPT and PTR in Santa Barbara or Los Angeles. Others interested in the process are also welcome. Facilitation practice, group supervision, skill building, case studies and literature review are offered, supervised by Master Mentor/Supervisor Perie Longo, PhD, MFT, PTR. Jennie Linthorst, MA, CAPF, conducts a **monthly expressive writing group** on Thursdays evenings, which will continue

in 2017 through the UCLA Arts and Healing program. Contact Jennie Linthorst at jennie.linthorst@gmail.com for how to register. Open to all—writers and non-writers, educators, students, therapists, young professionals and facilitators alike—whether looking to acquire new tools for teaching poetry to adults and children, or simply wishing to deepen your artistic self-expression. Call Perie at (805) 687-1619 or email perie@west.net for further information and/or about the next scheduled meeting.

••• COLORADO •••

Life Coach **Susan L. de Wardt**, CAPF/CJF, M/S-P, is **accepting trainees** for the CAPF credential. With over twenty-five years experience as a coach using writing process and applied poetry facilitation with developmental populations, Susan brings a special perspective to CAPF-specific didactic training, mentoring and supervision for national and international students via teleconference, Skype and on-line classes. Training includes all NFBPT requirements in applied poetry therapy theory and facilitation, scope of practice and ethics for the non-clinician, plus specialized training in recognizing and developing opportunities for applied poetry facilitation in non-clinical setting as well as SMART business strategies for building a successful practice. For more information on courses and training opportunities visit www.mindworkscoaching.com or contact Susan at (970) 846-6562 or mail to sde-wardt@mindworkscoaching.com.

••• FLORIDA •••

Reflective Writing: A Women’s Writing Group meets on Monday evenings, facilitated by Barbara Kreisberg, MS, CPT. Through spontaneous guided writing experiences designed to awaken and nurture the self and through the reading of selected poems, participants will discover the process of personal growth and healing by using the written word. Participants are given the opportunity to be moved by their own writing as well as others, with the emphasis on gaining a deeper understanding of life events, obstacles and opportunities. Please call (305) 975-3671 or email Bkexpres@aol.com for further information and registration.

••• KANSAS •••

Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg, PhD, facilitates ongoing **workshops for people living with or recovering from serious illness, including cancer**, at Turning Point of Kansas City: A Center for Hope and Health; workshops on the craft and passion of poetry and prose; online classes through the Transformative Language Arts Network (<http://TLA-Network.org>) and The Loft (<http://Loft.org>); and workshops on writing and healing through many venues. She also offers talks and readings, including on the writing life, the Holocaust and Polish Resistance, mythopoeitics, and bioregional writing. With singer-songwriter Kelley Hunt, Caryn leads an annual Brave Voice: Writing & Singing for Your Life retreat each May in the Flint Hills of Kansas (<http://BraveVoice.com>). Her blog can be found at www.CarynMirriamGoldberg.com, and she writes regularly for the *Huffington Post* at www.huffingtonpost.com/caryn-mirriamgoldberg/.

••• MARYLAND •••

Internalized metaphors that encode a client’s experience and learned strategies for meeting the world are key players in his/her process of inner healing and growth. Mining Your Metaphors offers trainings in **Clean Language and Symbolic Modeling**, cutting-edge techniques for working therapeutically and experientially with these internalized metaphors. Director and lead trainer **Gina Campbell**, MEd, CAPF, is the author of the workbook series *Mining Your Client’s Metaphors: A How-To Workbook on Clean Language and Symbolic Modeling*. For more information visit www.miningyourmetaphors.com or email gina@miningyourmetaphors.com. Approved for credit by NFB/PT for those training in poetry therapy, with mentor-supervisor permission.

••• MASSACHUSETTS •••

Cheryl Buchanan is offering a new creative writing workshop at St. Francis House in Boston, a center for the poor and homeless

that provides housing, medical care, clothing, meals, counseling, vocational rehabilitation and programs in expressive art. The workshop is called “**Survivor Stories**” and aims to help improve insight and cooperative communication skills while sharing and creating poetry and literature for purposes of connection, support and development of one’s own voice. For more information email Cheryl-Buchanan@yahoo.com.

••• MICHIGAN •••

Nessa McCCasey, CPT, PTP, Mentor, is now **accepting trainees** for the Poetry Therapy Practitioner credential (through iaPOETRY). Nessa has worked as a poetry therapist since 2006. She has served NAPT as a board member (Membership VP) and as Administrator and received awards from NAPT (Distinguished Service and Outstanding Achievement). Now Nessa is Director of the credentialing organization iaPOETRY. She brings acceptance and openness to the process of training (and believes in the value of diversity in skills and abilities). Contact poetnessa@gmail.com for more information. Further information about the credential process through iaPOETRY is found at www.iapoetry.org.

••• MINNESOTA •••

Geri Chavis, LP, CPT, PhD, periodically facilitates a poetry therapy **supervision group** in Minneapolis. Since the early 1980s, the **Minnesota Poetry Therapy Network** has been meeting six times a year and is going strong. This peer experience poetry therapy group focuses on a particular theme, reading and creating together and sharing resources. We meet every other month on Saturdays from 10:30am to 2:30pm. For details contact Geri Chavis at ggchavis@stkate.edu or at (651) 690-6524.

••• NEW ENGLAND •••

Playback Theatre Troupe, True Story Theater offers a variety of training and performances in Playback Theatre in

the Boston area. For information contact Christopher Ellinger, Artistic Director, at christopher@truestorytheater.org or visit www.truestorytheater.org.

••• NEW YORK CITY/NEW JERSEY/LONG ISLAND/ LONG DISTANCE •••

The **Kint Institute** is pleased to announce our post-Masters certificate training program in the Creative Arts Therapies and Trauma, launched in Fall 2016. Explore www.kintinstitute.org for more details, including [training curriculum](#), [application](#), as well as information about our cutting-edge [faculty](#). Core faculty include Dr. **Shanee Stepakoff**, a registered poetry therapist and NFBPT-approved mentor/supervisor in poetry therapy. We are welcoming applications for our inaugural cohort of creative arts therapists and clinicians of other disciplines who are interested in the arts and trauma treatment. Please consider joining us, as well as sharing [the website](#) with colleagues who may be interested. For more information, email info@kintinstitute.org.

The **Creative Righting Center**, a poetry therapy training center, offers its program for persons who can attend the peer groups and supervision held one Sunday a month in New York City. It offers face-to-face contact and the support of a dynamic poetry therapy community. You are invited to join this warm circle of teachers, writers, therapists, librarians, pastors, and professional helpers. Individual mentoring is available for long-distance learners. For more information, contact **Sherry Reiter**, PhD, PTR-M/S, at sherryreiter@yahoo.com or call (718) 998-4572.

bridgeXngs Poetry Center, Inc., is a state-of-the-art not-for-profit comprehensive poetry center and intentional community pioneering on-line courses for poetry therapy trainees and others, directed by Lila L. Weisberger, a NY State Licensed Creative Arts Therapist. Lila is Founder, Creative Director and a Master Mentor with the International Academy for Poetry Therapy (iaPOETRY) and she offers training in poetry therapy to earn the cre-

dential of Poetry Therapy Practitioner. Training in poetry therapy is available for both long-distance and local trainees, in individual and small group supervision. Lila is an experienced, award-winning teacher, school psychologist, poetry therapist and creative arts therapist. Monthly peer groups are offered in Manhattan. Online courses are offered twice a year and include a peer group for long distance trainees; topics include a didactic and experiential course based on the text *The Healing Fountain: Poetry Therapy for Life’s Journey* by Geri Chavis and Lila Weisberger; Words on a Hat—Learning Abnormal Psychology Through Literature; as well as study groups of major poetry therapy texts. Special programs include poetry with altered books and creating three-dimensional poetry dolls. For information contact Lila at bridgeXngs@aol.com or (917) 660-0440.

••• UNITED KINGDOM •••

Lapidus is the UK’s national organization for Creative Writing for Health and Wellbeing. It publishes the online *Lapidus Journal* (www.lapidusjournal.org) three times a year (a benefit of membership), in which practitioners of therapeutic writing, writers and others working in fields where narratives or poetry are linked with well-being share their experience and ideas. Lapidus has regional groups across the UK and holds regular events, meetings and professional development opportunities. Visit www.lapidus.org.uk to see more about the organization, or join the thriving Lapidus page on Facebook, full of interesting posts and links.

Metanoia Institute offers courses in Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes (CWTP), including an MSc degree, in Bristol, UK, for those with an interest in literature and how it may be used to assist those experiencing life problems and for those currently working in the helping professions who seek a comprehensive training to prepare them for working in the field of creative writing for therapeutic purposes. For information email mandy.kersey@metanoia.ac.uk or see www.metanoia.ac.uk/msccwtp.

Victoria Field, Mentor-Supervisor, as well as her regular teaching and courses in therapeutic writing, is now bringing together her poetry therapy work under the umbrella of **The Poetry Practice** (www.thepoetrypractice.co.uk) and always welcomes comment and contact. Vicky is also now a tutor at the Professional Writing Academy and the successful 8-week course, An Introduction to Therapeutic and Reflective Writing, co-tutored with Anne Taylor, is now running on a rolling basis. For more information visit www.profwritingacademy.com/courses/therapy-and-personal-development-writing/

••• ON-LINE/VIRTUAL/ REGION-FREE •••

Therapeutic Writing Workshops: Journal to the Self®, the signature workshop based on the classic book *Journal to the Self* by author Kathleen Adams, is now available online. Let Certified Instructor Susan de Wardt, CAPF/CJF, M/S-P, guide you through the complete *Journal to the SELF®* writing process in the comfort of your own home and within your own time frame. Lesson modules are posted weekly to a group list where you can download and work at your convenience. Experience the writing process then post your discoveries for feedback and support. Whether you take this course for personal development or for training credit toward certification or credential renewal, you'll learn to use a journal to gently but powerfully explore the various aspects of your life, self and relationships. Discover unique ways to solve problems, relieve stress and celebrate experience. Explore your creativity as you develop your unique and authentic self through reflective writing practice. Thousands of people have taken this course and agree: Journal writing is a joy! For more information on courses and training opportunities visit www.mindworkscoaching.com or contact Susan at (970) 846-6562 or sdewardt@mindworkscoaching.com.

Running Writing Groups. Discover how to design, launch and facilitate your own writing group. This 6-week online course will furnish writers, academics and counselors with the skills and confidence to run writing workshops. As you work through each weekly session, you will explore what

makes an effective writing group environment, gain the tools and resources for designing a writing group of your own, and devise a strategy for delivering workshops. The course is led by experienced practitioners Victoria Field (www.thepoetrypractice.co.uk) and Anne Taylor. The next start date is September 18, 2017, and the cost is £399. For more information and to register go to www.profwritingacademy.com/courses/running-writing-groups.

Introduction to Therapeutic and Reflective Writing. This 8-week online course—the first of its kind—will explore the ways and range of contexts in which this type of writing can be used and allow participants to experience its value directly. It will provide skills, techniques and valuable resources for both personal exploration and for use with clients and groups. The course is led by experienced practitioners Victoria Field (www.thepoetrypractice.co.uk) and Anne Taylor. The next start date is September 11, 2017, and the cost is £399. For more information and to register go to www.profwritingacademy.com/courses/therapy-and-personal-development-writing

Margot Van Sluytman offers on-line courses in Expressive Writing: 1) Poetry and the Process of Healing: The Dance With Encounter; 2) Poetry from Soul—Soul from Poetry; 3) Writing From Wild Self—Real Self: Surrender not Control; 4) Writing and the Process: Out of Dark Night; 5) Writing and the Process Two: the Healing Art of Dancing With Words; and 6) The Other Inmate: Writing Your Voice of Reconciling With Trust After Crime. In conjunction with the publication of her two latest books—*Sawbonna: Dialogue of Hope*, which is a real-life restorative justice story about Margot sharing healing with one of the men who murdered her father and how writing saved her life; and *The Other Inmate: Mediating Justice—Mediating Hope*, as well as the recently released DVD *Sawbonna: Dialogue of Hope and Healing, Speaking With the Man Who Murdered Her Father*—Margot offers workshops on the kinship between Restorative and Transformative Justice in which Expressive Writing plays a vital, healing and transformative role. For information visit www.margotvansluytman.com/onlinecourses.html or contact Margot at info@MargotVanSluytman.com or (403) 454-1275.

Writing for Life: Creating a Story of Your Own by Sandra Lee Schubert. The journaling and scrapbooking techniques taught in this course provide a creative way to connect with the inner self and heal emotional wounds while documenting your story, your life in a fun and unique way. For more information and to sign up visit www.selfhealingexpressions.com/courses/writing-to-heal.

The **International Academy for Poetry Therapy** (iaPOETRY) offers training in poetry therapy to earn the credential of Poetry Therapy Practitioner (PTP) and is currently accepting highly motivated people for training. Mentors are available internationally and use technology to bridge distances. The curriculum is adapted to meet the learning style of each trainee while covering all the material that leads to excellence in the field. Mentors teach in a supportive (and often collaborative) environment. There are offered both in person and through online peer groups. Mentors collaborate and cross-train to best meet the needs of all trainees. See the iaPOETRY website (www.iapoetry.org) for details about the training process and a list of mentors.

GRADUATE EDUCATION

Goddard College's Transformative Language Arts (TLA) Master's Program allows students to pursue social and personal transformation through the spoken and written word through a deep exploration of your personal TLA practice (as a writer, storyteller, etc.) as well as the social and cultural picture informing your particular focus of study (a focus you choose!). TLA students may also fulfill many of the poetry therapy certification requirements through this degree. TLA criteria include a community-based practicum, thesis project of your own design, and a balance between theory and practice in your study and art of words. Students also have opportunities to shadow poetry therapy and related practitioners around the world. TLA is available as a concentration in the Individualized MA, Health Arts and Sciences, and Social Innovation and Sustainability programs, all of which are part of the Goddard Graduate Institute. See www.goddard.edu/academics/goddard-graduate-institute or contact Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg at caryn.mirriamgoldberg@goddard.edu for information.

The Transformative Language Arts Network offers online classes as well as the first certification in Transformative Language Arts. Upcoming classes include “Playwriting for Social Change” with Darren Candy, “Making the Leap into What you Love” with Scott Youmans, and “Creating the Sustainable Story: Self-Care, Meaningful Work, and the Business of Creativity” with Laura Packer. The TLA Network Foundations certification is an introduction to TLA in theory and practice with opportunities for reflecting and acting on ethical work, community networking, and TLA in action. To learn more, read our answers to [common questions about the certification here](#), and also learn about how [a partnership with Goddard College](#) benefits people who receive the certification. The certification covers TLA in theory and practice, ethics and values, TLA in action, community and networking, and an introduction to right livelihood. Learn more at <http://TLANetwork.org>.

Pacifica Graduate Institute’s accredited MA/PhD program in Mythological Studies program cultivates the mythic imagination through a strong grounding in a variety of mythic narratives and religious traditions. Students discover recurring mythic themes in classic and contemporary literature, theater, art and film, while recognizing cultural and historical contexts. Fostering the confluence of scholarship and imagination, the program invites students into the art of writing. The program especially emphasizes the interpretative modes of depth psychology, particularly the influences that derive from Sigmund Freud, C.G. Jung, Marie-Louise von Franz and James Hillman. Joseph Campbell’s groundbreaking work and insights also inform the program. Pacifica has developed educational formats that are particularly well suited to individuals who wish to pursue graduate education while continuing their existing professional and personal commitments. When students begin their studies at Pacifica Graduate Institute, they join a cohort of like-minded students who are also enrolling in that particular degree program. A very real sense of community is soon established as students collaborate within their cohorts and share the intense experiences that are part of graduate-level work at Pacifica. The MA/PhD Mythological Studies program

is currently accepting applications. For more information visit <http://pacifica.edu> or call (805) 969-3626 x305.

CALLS FOR WORK/ PAPERS/ARTICLES/ PROPOSALS/ PRESENTATIONS

The Museletter is seeking writers of book reviews; “Profiles” of organizations and individuals; “Poems as Process” writing prompts; “Happenings” reports on conferences and other creative arts therapies events; “Chapbook” poems of up to 20 lines (with 150-200 word accompanying narrative about the therapeutic aspects of writing the poem); interviews with NAPT’s Muses, poets and creative arts therapies practitioners; and feature articles. The Editor welcomes proposals three or more weeks in advance of submission deadlines. As we are unable to publish all the submissions we receive, please refer to issues of the Museletter for general style and content or query the Editor before submitting a proposal or article. See this issue for upcoming deadlines and email naptpublications@yahoo.com for more information or with your ideas.

The Journal of Poetry Therapy: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Practice, Theory, Research, and Education (Promoting Growth and Healing Through Language, Symbol, and Story) (www.tandf.co.uk/Journals/titles/08893675.asp) is an interdisciplinary journal seeking manuscripts on the use of the language arts in therapeutic, educational and community-building capacities. *The Journal* purview includes bibliotherapy, healing and writing, journal therapy, narrative therapy and creative expression. *The Journal* welcomes a wide variety of scholarly articles including theoretical, historical, literary, clinical, practice, education and evaluative studies. All manuscripts will be submitted for blind review to the *JPT* editorial board. Maximum length of full-length articles is 30 pages (typed, double-spaced, nonsexist language). Style should conform to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). All articles must be original mate-

rial, not previously published or soon to be published elsewhere. Manuscripts should be submitted in electronic format (MS Word) as an e-mail attachment to Nicholas Mazza, PhD, Editor, *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, at nfmazza@fsu.edu. For book review inquiries, please email Karen vanMeenen at naptpublications@yahoo.com.

Submissions are now being accepted for publication in the on-line resource base **All Things Healing** (www.allthingshealing.com), bringing together a worldwide community of individuals and organizations dedicated to informing and educating people on topics relating to alternative healing of mind, body and spirit. Seeking all articles addressing innovative use of poetry/story for healing, poetry with healing message, testimonials on successful application of poetry in community or for therapeutic use, journal writing and other therapeutic writing process. Reprints and multiple submissions acceptable. Please email submissions to Healing Poetry Editor Susan de Wardt at susan@allthingshealing.com.

Call for Narratives in the Reflective Practice section of the journal *Patient Education and Counseling*. This section is comprised of selected narratives reflecting on healthcare practice. Reflective Practice provides a voice for physicians and other healthcare providers, patients and their family members, trainees and medical educators. The title emphasizes the importance of reflection in our learning and how our patient care and self-care, like other health care provider skills, can be improved through reflective practice. We welcome personal narratives on caring, patient-provider relationships, humanism in healthcare, professionalism and its challenges, patients’ perspectives and collaboration in patient care and counseling. Most narratives will describe personal or professional experiences that provide a lesson applicable to caring, humanism and relationship in health care. Submit manuscripts through the *Patient Education and Counseling* on-line electronic submission system at ees.elsevier.com/pec. *Patient Education and Counseling* is an international journal indexed in Medline and thirteen other related indexes. Manuscripts, including narratives, are peer reviewed. We aim to publish one narrative in each monthly issue of the journal. If you would like an electronic copy of the editorial describing the Reflective Practice section,

“Sharing Stories: Narrative Medicine in an Evidence-Based World,” please e-mail David Hatem, MD, at HatemD@ummhc.org or Elizabeth Rider, MSW, MD, at elizabeth_rider@hms.harvard.edu.

The Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal, which publishes on a variety of subjects relevant to Art Therapy and Expressive Arts Therapies, is seeking submissions. For more information visit <http://canadianarttherapy.org>.

RESOURCES

The website of the National Association for Poetry Therapy has resources on events, training and more. Visit www.poetrytherapy.org.

The Transformative Language Arts concentration at Goddard College has extensive resource pages on poetry therapy, poetics and poetry, expressive and creative writing, drama therapy, education and development, facilitation and leadership, journal writing, literacy and linguistics and language, memoir and life stories, mythology and much more. The resource pages include thousands of weblinks and very extensive bibliographies. You can click and visit many sites of people doing all kinds of poetry therapy-related work around the world! Please visit the TLA Resource Page at www.TLAResources.wordpress.com and if you have any additions, please contact Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg at mirriam-goldbergc@goddard.edu.

NETWORKING/ GET INVOLVED

Ed. Note: This section of PoemNation provides a forum for NAPTErs to exchange ideas and contact information pertaining to specific work being undertaken outside of the realm of NAPTE proper. Please send your text of 150 words maximum to napt-publications@yahoo.com with the subject line: PoemNation Networking.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Ed. Note: This section provides students and researchers a forum for obtaining information from and establishing connections with the poetry therapy community. Send information about your research projects, including what information you are seeking, from whom, for what purpose and by when (maximum of 200 words) to napt-publications@yahoo.com with the subject line: PoemNation: Research Projects.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREDENTIAL HOLDERS

The International Federation for Biblio/Poetry Therapy (IFBPT, formerly NFBPT) is actively seeking new members for its Board of Directors. As the Federation continues to expand its outreach globally we are in need of strong advocates willing and ready to support our mission of setting and maintaining standards for practice and training for our profession. Board service will strengthen your understanding of ethical standards of practice and your connection to the professional community as

you help strengthen the public perception of biblio/therapy as a creditable creative arts therapy. Any credential holder in good standing may apply by submitting a resume and letter of intent by email to Linda Barnes at president@ifbpt.org.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINEES

Ed. Note: This section of PoemNation provides a space to spread the word about opportunities for trainees to become directly involved in poetry therapy work and practice. Please send your text of 100 words maximum to naptpublications@yahoo.com with the subject line: PoemNation: Trainees.

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Videos of NAPTE conference keynote poets, including Rafael Campo (Miami, 2003), Li-Young Lee (Costa Mesa, 2004), Lawson Inada (Portland, OR, 2007) and Patricia Smith (Minneapolis, 2008) as well as Ken Gorelick (Keynote Speaker, 1998) are available on DVD for \$12 each, which includes priority mailing, or receive three for \$25. Also available for \$12 is the 2007 Rattlebox Open Mic session. The three LaperTapes documentary DVDs on poetry as healing are \$20 each, including priority mailing. These are “The Truth About Ourselves: How Poetry Heals,” “Tell All the Truth: How Poetry Heals A Multicultural Society” and “Moving Towards Truth: Poetry, Motion and Wholeness.” As a package, all three are specially priced at \$40 (one free!). Please email orders or requests for further information to jennylaper@yahoo.com.