

## WHAT'S INSIDE

**A**FTER THE KIND OF WINTER we've had here in New York City, spring is a revelation. One day we open the door braced for more grey slush, and find ourselves squinting, stunned, at a world transformed. Art can do this too, and it is our faith in this that drives the work of T&W and other writers-in-the-schools organizations across the country.

Detroit poet and teacher Peter Markus kicks off our spring issue with an essay urging us to stay open to the potential in all students, and an eloquent reminder that "some fires are slow to ignite."

If you are going to teach poetry, says Alan Feldman in the piece that follows, you had best be writing it too, for your own benefit as well as your students'. Writing poetry can be an effective antidote to the occupational hazard of burnout, he says, "like throwing a bucket down into the well of your own mind." Feldman shares an excellent exercise for doing just that.

Jane LeCroy presents a fascinating lesson on combining science and poetry in "Haruspicy," the third installment in our series *Creative Writing and the Common Core*. The lesson calls on the ancient practice of divination to reinforce students' understanding of the body and expand it into the realm of metaphor.

The three articles that round out the issue all share a focus on teaching writing to students who present particular challenges. Maryann Gremillion writes of finding that a video game could be the basis of a successful writing project for a boy obsessed with nothing else; J.D. Mader describes how reading and writing flash fiction inspired his struggling high school students; and Nura Rose Sala writes movingly of her efforts to help a girl labeled a "problem" student.

We hope you find ideas in these pages to inspire the kind of response we received from Mahkai, a first-grader in one of our programs who recently gave us this poem:

Poetry is  
Music singing to me.  
He tells me,  
"Get up, Mahkai!  
It's time to  
write poems.  
Now go to school!"

— Susan Karwoska

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