

ing with language. This poem encourages the reader to think about time, what it means, and the fact that a fifth-grader wrote it is more than exciting; not only does it charm with its beginning, "I hate bedtime," telling the reader that the child is only a child, but then shocking with the next phrase, "when time blinks away," The reader is now confronted with student writing that clearly shows the student is learning to think, which is, after all, the basis for all learning. The poem is philosophical and obsessive, yearning and sad, the nature of a sonnet. 📖

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# Dear T&W

## Letters to the Editor

### Abel Garcia—Homeboy Poet

In the summer of 2007 (*T&W Magazine*, vol. 38, no. 4) I wrote an article about my experiences teaching poetry and creative writing to the young ex-gang members and ex-cons of Homeboy Industries. I wrote how many of them found their voices for the first time and began to write themselves into a new narrative and for some, a new life.

This was perhaps no more evident than for Abel Garcia. Sadly, Abel, known to many of us as Mousey, was shot and killed on Saturday, November 15, 2008. He was 20 years old.

We all mourn our beloved friend and brilliant Homeboy Poet. Abel was so passionate about his writing that he would often write a hole right through the paper. For Abel, the pen had indeed become his sword, the page his weapon. We have lost a peaceful, passionate, and memorable poet and friend.

To honor him, I reprint here one of his best and favorite poems—this in loving memory of Mousey, may he rest in peace.

#### Imagine This

**ABEL G.**

I am whatever I imagine.  
I desire, I admire  
but I am trapped in a circle of fire

trapped in my own world, these wires  
just deciding to be what I am.  
What is my name?  
I struggle and still trouble comes  
I could be whatever I want

in my own thoughts.  
an astronaut, a fire fighter, a cop  
or this—a criminal getting caught

It's my own mind leading me to  
my own short timeline  
I could be blind and next morning  
see the sun shine.

It's a new day to be.  
Again, who I am.  
Abel, in vain, to entertain, i could do it  
and even more in my brain.  
I could be insane, or in pain.  
I could heal my sins like the saints

So I am.  
A new day to be

(June 19, 2007)

LESLIE SCHWARTZ  
Los Angeles, CA

(cont'd on next page)

## Fall 2008 issue (vol. 40, no. 1)

I just want to commend you on a wonderful comprehensive Fall issue of *Teachers & Writers*. I read it from cover to cover the minute I received it. I hope you can start publishing this quality magazine more frequently. It's so informative, and the topics are well presented. Good luck with future endeavors.

KAREN RIPPSTEIN, CPT  
Hawthorne, NY

I am delighted you've republished Nicole Callihan's article, "The Story of C. Teaching Poetry to Children with Disabilities," in your magazine.

I first read the piece, at a colleague's recommendation, last spring on the NYU blog. At the time I was conducting a needs assessment of arts education and special needs students in New York City public schools, K–12, under the auspices of VSA arts, an international arts and education organization and affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in

Washington, D.C. Besides being eloquent, thoughtful, and moving, Nicole's article spoke to a very important issue—providing sufficient professional development to teaching artists working with special learners. Her description of that first class with autistic spectrum children and its aftermath—the teacher telling her the students “do not get the imagination thing,” her confusion as to what that comment could possibly mean—is truly a classic. What Nicole did next is a testament to her and teaching artists—their dedication, professionalism, artistry. She dug in, researched, learned, and got better and better at working with a group known for its literalness and non-verbal leanings.

Thank you for bringing her excellent article to a wider audience along with its implicit call for more focused, sustained professional development.

STEPHEN YAFFE  
Independent Consultant  
New York City

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*Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, Teachers & Writers magazine, 520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 2020, New York, NY 10018. The e-mail address is [letters@twc.org](mailto:letters@twc.org). All letters should include the writer's name, address, and daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We are unable to acknowledge or return unpublished letters.*