

WHAT'S INSIDE

WHILE WE ARE STILL ENJOYING the last sweet days of summer, the excitement of a new school year lies just around the corner. In his poem "Art Class," James Galvin writes "*Let us begin with a simple line/Drawn as a child would draw it/To indicate the horizon...*" The poem evokes the sense of new beginnings and the promise of new discoveries that come each September, whether the classroom we enter is a kindergarten one or a college one. In the spirit of the season, we offer this back-to-school issue of the magazine, full of ideas and inspiration for the writing classroom.

Teaching artist Matthew Burgess describes how he used the formal experimentation and sense of wonder in E.E. Cummings' poetry to inspire the budding writers in his first-grade classroom. Caron Levis relates how a serendipitous discovery of a quote from *Through the Looking Glass* on imagining impossible things helped reenergize both her teaching and her students' writing. Jason Schneiderman introduces the abecedarian, a form of poetry structured around the alphabet, offering "the thrill of "writing making itself heard." Harriet Riley tells us how her class of city kids learned to listen to nature on a visit to a local arboretum, recording the "advice" of the turtles, trees, and other natural wonders they saw there. And Wilson Diehl relates her adventures teaching creative nonfiction to high school students, whose questions and reactions help clarify what "truth" in writing really means.

In addition, in the third our series of "Teaching Artist Snapshots," we meet Peter Markus, a teaching artist from Detroit's InsideOut Literary Arts Project. Markus shares his perspective on teaching and writing, and offers a glimpse into his classroom with a poignant poem written by one of his young students.

We welcome you back from your summer adventures, and hope the articles here can help jump start your writing plans for the school year ahead. *Let us begin with a simple line...*

— Susan Karwoska

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