

WHAT'S INSIDE

"CAN YOU REALLY TEACH CREATIVITY?" Janet Bland asks in this year's Bechtel Prize-winning essay, which starts off this issue. It's a question she's heard often, she says, mostly from those who insist that writing teachers are "deluding" themselves. The answer to that question—a resounding *yes* in case you were wondering—runs like a thread through every article in this issue. In her essay Bland argues that creativity is not "a rare and fleeting exception," but an integral part of everyday life. The writing teacher's job, Bland says, is to help students recognize and cultivate the creative sense they already possess.

t&w teaching artist Joanna Fuhrman writes of how her teaching—like that of many poets working in the schools—has been deeply influenced by the work of poet Kenneth Koch, a pioneering advocate for bringing creativity to the classroom. Fuhrman describes how she uses the "wildness and structure" of Koch's poems to inspire the creativity of her own students.

In our latest Teaching Artist Snapshot, poet Rebecca Wadlinger of Houston, Texas, talks about the importance of bringing the work of poets she's excited about to her students "because sincere enthusiasm is invaluable inside the classroom." The result? At the end of class, her students are "jumping from their desks in hopes of reading their work."

Rounding out the issue, writer and teacher Kim Stafford tells of using great first lines from literature to give students "creative momentum"; Amanda Gardner chronicles her experience teaching writing at a homeless shelter, where the fragile community of the weekly workshop lent support and encouragement to the shelter residents' creative endeavors; and Robert Hirschfield describes a "poetry moment" with some young students being taught by the poet Robert Hass.

In their own way, each of these articles insists that not only is creativity an essential part of any curriculum, it is, in Bland's words, "a natural and inevitable response to being alive." We hope you enjoy the issue.

— Susan Karwoska

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