



WHAT'S INSIDE

Each day of the week, here in New York City and across the country, teaching artists walk into classrooms in high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, colleges, and community centers to share their passion for writing. Too often, they find the stories their students have to tell are ones of trauma.



What can they offer in response to a child who is ill, a teen who has lost a friend to violence, a veteran plagued by the war he left behind? What can the act of writing give to those who are suffering? The violence that occurred this past December at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, put these questions in stark relief, but they are questions teaching artists struggle with often.

In a special section in this issue, Writing through Trauma, we asked writers in the schools from programs nationwide to describe their work with children and adults whose lives have been changed by violence, illness, the death of a loved one, or other tragedies. Each of their experiences is unique, but together their stories offer insight into how words can help comfort and heal in the face of such grief.

In better times, these same words allow the kind of freewheeling and joyous creativity that Joanna Fuhrman describes in her essay, which recounts how she used a surrealist drawing exercise to elicit wonderful metaphor and persona poems from a class of ninth-graders.

We close with a piece by Adriana Añon on her experience teaching with a struggling young writer, and how this helped her work through her own struggles and doubts as a teacher.

We are grateful to all the writers who responded to our call for stories for this issue. We hope their experiences can ease the burden of those who are struggling by helping them find the words to make sense of the senseless, to tell us what it means.

—Susan Karwoska

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