

WHAT'S INSIDE

IT SEEMS IT WAS JUST LAST WEEK we were looking ahead to the long, lazy days of summer, and now suddenly it's September and the start of a new school year. As always, we enter the classroom—students and teachers alike—with high hopes. Finding the place where these hopes intersect is the challenge at hand. The great mix of articles in this issue provides some snapshots of the many ways this can happen.

We kick off the issue with an interview with the poet Kevin Young, whose soulful explorations of “memory, and home, and history” are a lifelong attempt, he says, “to describe what is impossible to convey.” To prepare his students for poetry’s “long journey,” Young says it’s essential to focus not just on the work at hand, but on “the poem they’re going to write”.

Merna Ann Hecht offers a primer on using the work of poet Naomi Shihab Nye to help middle-schoolers give voice to their burgeoning global consciousness. In her smart and funny essay on life in a second language, Rachel Dewoskin tells of the pitfalls and surprising gifts she’s found—in her own life and in her work as a teacher—in the territory between the old language and the new. A pair of essays by teaching artist David Stoler and high school student Angel Contrera show how teaching artists and classroom teachers at an inner-city school came together to develop a wonderfully successful approach to teaching the personal essay. And closing the issue is a piece by Michael Copperman on the surprising connection he made with a particularly difficult student. The story is a potent reminder that success in teaching comes when we take the time to listen as well as instruct.

We hope you find some inspiration here for this season of new beginnings.

— Susan Karwoska

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Fall 2009 Issue

From a Place That is Necessary and Almost Unspoken 3

Interview with Kevin Young
Susan Karwoska

IN THE CLASSROOM

How Long Peace Takes 9

Writing about World Issues Using the Work of Naomi Shihab Nye
Merna Ann Hecht

EDUCATING THE IMAGINATION

Lost and Found in Translation 17

Life in a Second Language
Rachel DeWoskin

CHANGING THE STAKES

Recreating the Playbook 23

Teaching Essay Writing at Harlem's Frederick Douglass Academy
David Andrew Stoler

The Real Me 26

A Student's Perspective on Becoming a Better Writer
Angel Contrera

END NOTE

You Can't Learn What You Do Not Love 29

Teaching to Student Interest
Michael Copperman

T&W Blackboard Letters 32