

WHAT'S INSIDE

EACH YEAR THE BECHTEL PRIZE entries we receive give us an interesting glimpse into the innovative work being done by teachers and writers across the country and abroad. Our winning essay this year, selected by Phillip Lopate, is a wonderful narrative by Garth Greenwell describing a literature class he taught recently in Sofia, Bulgaria. Greenwell had his students—high school seniors—write stories anchored in the streets and milieu of their native Sofia, inspired by Joyce's *Dubliners*. The students' poignant responses to this assignment reflected their love for the troubled city mixed with an "eagerness for elsewhere." Greenwell's description of the assignment offers a compelling portrait of how literature and life can inform and illuminate each other.

We follow Greenwell's piece with an engaging mix of articles we hope will support and inspire your own work. A lesson by poet and teacher Beth Copeland on writing collaborative "lunch bag" sestinas with grade school students shows how to make this complicated form accessible and fun even for younger students.

In the first of a series of teaching artist "snapshots" we offer a glimpse into the life of poet, playwright, and long-time T&W teaching artist Melanie Maria Goodreaux, who describes her writing and teaching with wit, wisdom, and humor, and offers a lovely sample lesson from her work in the classroom.

An excerpt from *Our Difficult Sunlight*, by Georgia A. Popoff and Quraysh Ali Lansana, forthcoming from T&W in spring 2011, argues for the importance of "demystifying the poem" for students, allowing them to pursue an open-ended investigation that will enrich, rather than limit, their understanding of the work. Popoff follows up with a lesson that gives practical guidance for how this can be done.

We close with a meditation by Nicole Callihan, who reflects on her life as poet, mother, and teacher of autistic children and how these overlapping—and sometimes conflicting—roles ultimately give her deeper insight into her work. Or, as one of her students puts it, "Life without dreams is like a heart without wheels!"

— Susan Karwoska

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Winter 2010–2011 Issue

The Bechtel Prize	2
<i>Winner and Finalists</i>	
<i>2010 Winner of the Bechtel Prize</i>	
A Native Music	3
<i>Writing the City in Sofia, Bulgaria</i>	
Garth Greenwell	
<i>IN THE CLASSROOM</i>	
Lunch Bag Sestinas	13
<i>Writing Collaborative Poems</i>	
Beth Copeland	
<i>TEACHING ARTIST SNAPSHOT</i>	
Melanie Maria Goodreaux	19
David McLoughlin	
Classroom Snapshot	22
Melanie Maria Goodreaux	
Demystifying the Poem	23
<i>Excerpted from Our Difficult Sunlight: A Guide to Poetry, Literacy, & Social Justice in Classroom & Community</i>	
Georgia A. Popoff	
<i>LESSON PLAN</i>	
Recipe for a Simple Start	26
Georgia A. Popoff	
<i>END NOTE</i>	
Thinking in Pictures	29
<i>On Temple Grandin, French Toast, Mothering, and Teaching Children with Autism</i>	
Nicole Callihan	
T&W Blackboard	32

Cover art © 2010 by Darwin Nordin.
Front: Centers Speaking (detail), from a hand-bound book with seven spreads done in collage and acrylic. The poetry, done in the tradition of the Dada, Fluxus, and Beat Poets, is prompted from fragments of text attached to the page. Back: Disappearing Orbits, a hand-bound accordion book in acrylic, pastel, and graphite. Inspired by fragments of text from the poems of Pattiann Rogers.