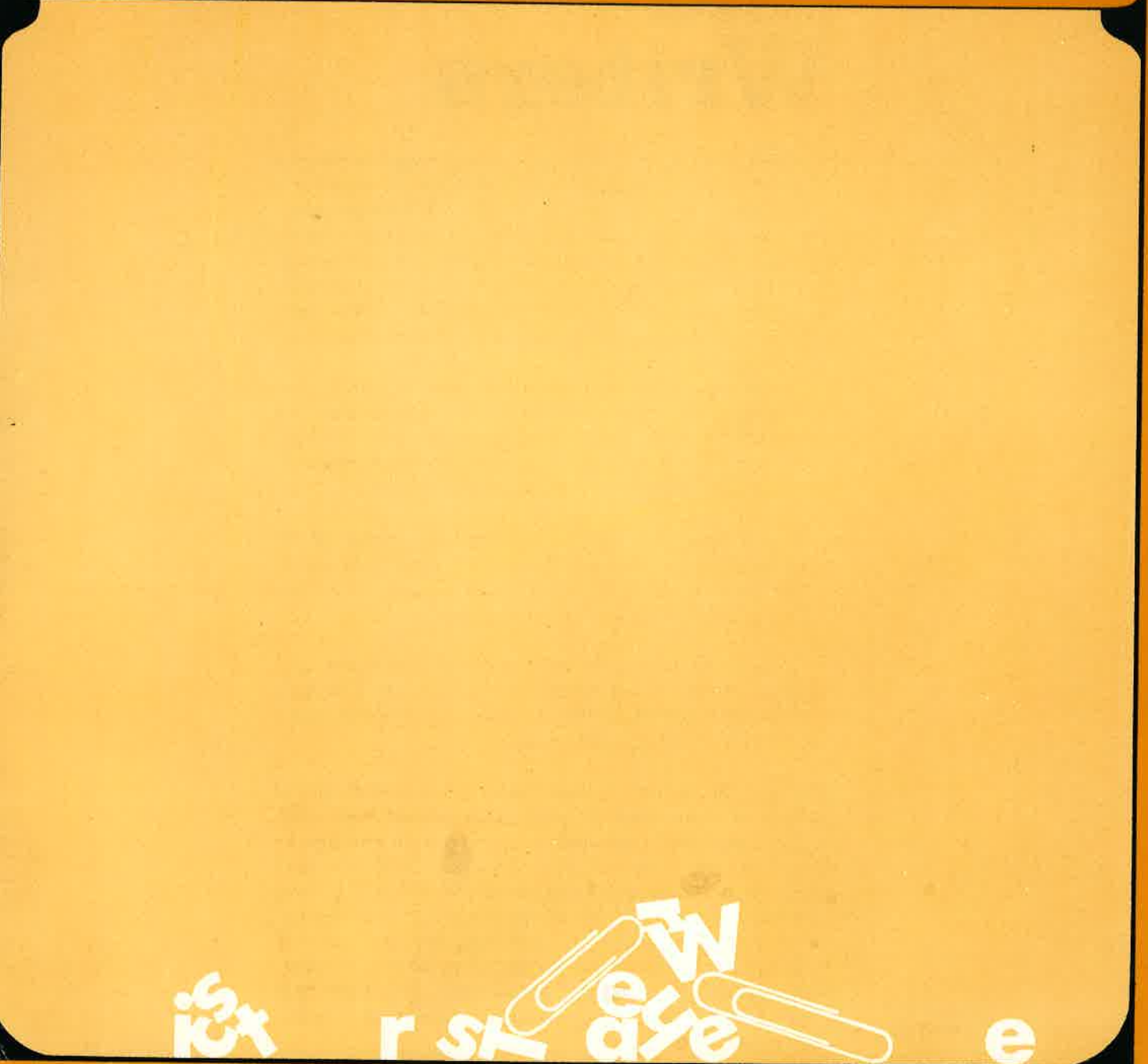


Teachers & Writers

Collaborative Newsletter

Volume 6 , Issue 2



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Teachers & Writers

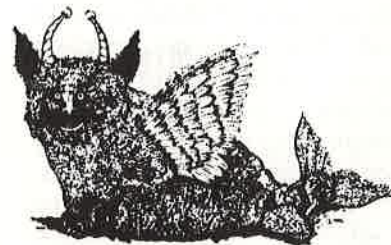
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winter '75

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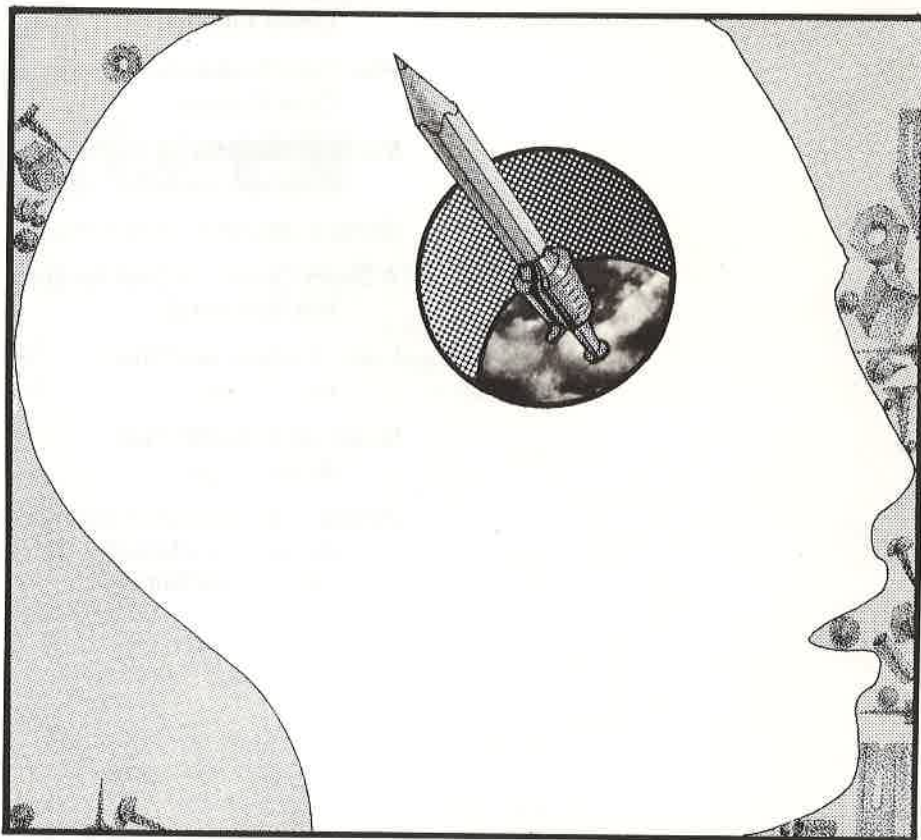
by Teachers & Writers Collaborative, Inc.

Four years ago I arrived at the Hart Island-Phoenix Houses not knowing a dope fiend from a prison warden. Not a single corpuscle was prepared professionally, emotionally or experientially for the job facing me. With 20/20-hindsight, I now recognize my lack of preconceived notions and training as the advantage of openness; however, during the actual learning of how to deal with another's world, confusion, clumsiness and frustration were the predominant feelings. The Michael Cosgrove, an ancient red ferry boat, links Hart Island to the "mainland" Bronx. For months during this ferry ride, feelings of being overwhelmed and in way over my head eked into me. On days when rain smashed against the boat's windows, I felt distinctly like a refugee landing on Ellis Island.

The opening task for any foreigner is to begin understanding the new language, gestures, and values. While straightening up my office, sentences like, "Yo Flako! Your awareness is for shit. Pull yourself up, or you'll go to the swills!" carried through the hallways. Street axioms, popular psychology, and bop and jive metaphors formed a curious syntax. Many residents carried their bodies in highly stylized fashions. The jailhouse strut, jitterbuggin', a pimp's bop, the trickin' ass sway, and a "broken" tilt to the wrists and elbows were some of the more popular modes. Everybody needed to look "Bad". Fingers clicked and jutted, eye brows curled, and legs crossed in unfamiliar tempos, and people spoke with ear-jarring emotional intensity and volume. Words avoided the dictionary while taking on double and triple meanings. "Stuff" meant heroin, lies, being a homosexual in jail, and to inhibit one's real feelings. "Square" was still digging the

Ronpiendo el Coco

"Yo, flaco! Your awareness is for shit. Pull yourself up, or you'll go to the swills."



Platters' records, anyone who wasn't a drug addict, and doing things legally.

The use of language and gesture in this community jarred at my insides. There was a crack in the air as words were spoken; the cadence of electricity tingled through me. The residents were common language poets without reflexive awareness, academic techniques, or pretense. Somehow they escaped all the formal rules of grammar and context, and spoke with an open informality

laced with cursing, tenderness, and power. I imagined what Walt Whitman would have been like walking across the Brooklyn Bridge in the 1970's needing a fix.

After I cracked the code and began to start feeling comfortable in this new environment, I began formal classes with my students. Schools for years have been occupied with stamping out all forms of slang and curse language. I felt that their language must be encouraged and allowed to flow. However, I also felt that they

needed an added flexibility with their use of language. If a person can only speak in slang, he or she is just as narrow and rigid as the most pedantic college professor.

The students were extremely hungry for new words and concepts. Words like translucent, paradox, oscillate, buxom and demented were devoured; concepts like socialism, free association and evolution became chosen topics for discussion. I hoped intuitively that these fresh words and concepts would temper and give added shadings to their value systems. The shared fallacy of this community was the same that our society at large cherishes. Experience, people, and the world were divided into the Good and the Bad. There were two warring sides, "the squares" and "the dope fiends," and they were totally different and at odds. Everything in my life had pointed out that this just wasn't the way the world really worked. Complete villains and heroes exist only in the comic books. I gave reading assignments, like Flannery O'Connor short stories, where the characters were real-flesh blends of good and evil. I explained the combinations of intentions and ethics involved in my own experiences, and encouraged them to be neither glib nor black and white with themselves. A typical student would have a "Born to Lose" tattoo on his bicep, and be emotionally convinced of the inevitability of that line. He would feel completely evil because he had stolen from his own family and been a dope fiend. I would try to point up that his personal history of rats in the kitchen, sisters who prostituted, a drunken father who beat the children sadistically, and no education or legal skills training didn't make him evil, but only unfortunate. What he did was a response to a painful set of circumstances, not the malicious efforts of a charred soul.

A therapeutic community could be most tersely described as an

enormous, family orientated, rhythm and blues, old testament Skinner box. The day is tightly mapped out into behavior modification modules using rather large doses of negative reinforcement.

Almost always, the residents who "make it" and really change are the ones who form solid friendships during their treatment. Friendships not based on old habits of mutual manipulation and hustle, but a caring for others for what they are, not what they can steal or give to you. In slightly different terms, I've seen a similar thing occur in the classroom. The students all begin with a similar stark duality—the "squares" and their world opposed to "us." They don't have to become my friend, but the students who give up labeling me and other teachers as "squares" and members of an alien world also seem to grow and change most during their other phases of treatment. It also appears in the writing that becomes increasingly open and less ideological.

Teaching in such a highly scheduled and emotionally charged environment presents certain difficult problems. Therapeutic communities function as pressure cookers of stress, intensity, and perpetual change. The classroom can be in no way separated from this. Even the most relaxed teacher has been known to bounce around the room from the strain. I have felt during class like a nursing mother animal with six breasts, but with fourteen mouths to feed all demanding attention at once. The students can display intense energy levels while demanding non-delayed gratification and approval. After an entire class at this pitch, it seemed I had worked out at Stillman's gym and had become a little punch drunk. A teacher must learn to help the students utilize this energy and intensity toward creative and productive processes, and at the same time retain his or her own balance during these

"They have a shared history of tearing up all the writing, painting and other things they have created."

hyped-up situations. To do this well is an art; just to do it at all is no easy task. Despite all the demands and strains, this is my favorite and most satisfying temper for a lesson. Excitement, curiosity, and pep scoot around, and the writing flows easily.

The real quagmire occurred when a student or students became extremely depressed. Their pain forces them into a pouting and near-frozen state that could induce a case of the blues into Peter Pan. This mood is a real poison to any form of learning. Creativity gets tied in knots. Only a fool would push the Boasting Poem assignment on a class when one of the student's brothers o.d.ed yesterday. Getting them to express and understand the causes of this depression must become the teacher's main task. Since depression always contains both anger and longing, the teacher must come to terms with these powerful emotions himself or herself before he or she can aid the students to ventilate and control these emotions. These are the classes that really grind my teeth and eat at the stomach.

THE STUDENTS

In the classroom creativity is viewed as something other people have, and creative writing is something these other people can do. They have little awareness of or belief in the talent and uniqueness inside of them. They have a shared history of tearing up all the writing, painting and other things they have created. As a

beginning, the students need a teacher around just to point out and applaud their creativity, and who also gets them to save their work. Once the students begin feeling themselves as writers, their writing gets bolder, more subtle, and really starts jumping off the page at the reader.

What makes them most clearly poets, (rather than prose writers), is their unrelenting combination of rhythm with surprise. The training and preparation for their writing took place in overcrowded apartments, various street corners, roof tops, and assorted training schools and prisons. I envied the naturalness of their creativity and their attachment to the earth and feeling. They envied my ideas and persistence. We worked well together because we both had something good to trade.

Rhythm is the placing of stress and emphasis exactly when and where required. It forms the blood and pulse of a poem or song, and dances are built upon it. It exists to be let in. Storytellers, bards, and good comedians feel it in their bodies. Much of traditional education is spent avoiding or squashing it. Most of my students had what could be termed impoverished developments in many areas, yet they are rich with this sense of rhythm and movement. This, more than anything else, is what informs and propels their speech and writing. Their work demands performance, not absorption. Read it aloud, sing it, chant it, do anything to give it movement off the printed page. It frequently has a childlike texture mixed with very adult phrasings, images, and situations—a sort of "switchblade playfulness." As with children, the world exists to be acted out, and not just understood.

An honest appraisal of the students' strengths and weaknesses is a necessary preparation for the classroom writing. Both the teacher and writers must work with and from what's really there,

and not what they think should be there. Since almost all the students grew up in the oral culture of a ghetto, I decided to work primarily with their already developed ability to "rap," and let this lead to skills building in reading and writing. Much of their writing is transcribed directly from the voice (a "scribe" student writes down what another student says) or based on tape recorded "raps". These writings show their street-taught mastery of slang, tangible metaphor, and emphatic inflection.

The students also exhibit poor reality testing, quicksilver attention and concentration spans, and limited perseverance. At times these qualities have tempted me to

seek another form of employment. As they succeed at writing, their ability to "work at" and persist increases dramatically. When they gain control of and flexibility with their defenses and feelings, they learn to modify self-destructive patterns like lead-piping someone over a slight insult or telling the boss to kiss your ass. Over the course of a year, I introduce lessons that take slightly increasing amounts of concentration and follow-up. Increases in this direction are absolutely necessary, because it's trite and unfortunately true that to do anything well demands commitment, time, and effort.

The fear of failure, while strong in most everyone, approaches

"WHEN I AWOKE"

When I awoke, she said:
Lie still, do not move.
They are all dead, she said.

Who?
I said.

The world,
She said.

I had better go,
I said.

Why?
She said. What good will it do?

I have to see,
I said.

Raymond Patterson from
Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man

Shit, girl
I got to go home
My cigarettes are there
Not here.

Linwood Claxton

Well, who the hell is you
in my bed.
Damn with your fine self
under my black silk sheets
I don't know how you got in
But anyway hang around
Lay there with your beautiful self
While I comfort you with wine
Lay back and enjoy the music
of Barry White or Al Green

But if you can't dig it brother
get the hell on out
Because I don't want no jive
Out of nobody
Who can do nothing

You got your own mind
So you should know what to do.

Rosalee Richardson

paralysis with my students. If all the students don't feel some degree of success and pride after a lesson, then the lesson was a failure. Despite all the tough exteriors, they need approval and success in a way fairly similar to young children.

My work with these students has reinforced a long-standing psychological assumption. People don't change their basic personality structure; their attitude toward the self just becomes more accepting, and they learn to use their personality and natural skills more constructively. A quote from J. J. Johnson, an actor in the play "Short Eyes," explains this quite specifically.

"... the drugs seemed to

destroy my money and most of all my body. I decided now it's time to get my head together and so I drilled it into my head that drugs were not for me so I knew I had to believe it and prove it to myself so I did. So I sat back while I was in jail and asked myself what have I ever completed in my life and I couldn't find anything. So I got involved in stage work . . . I knew I would love expressing myself in this way and from what I have learned in the streets. I'm going to put it on stage and make it work for me. Because if a man can sell drugs in the city,

he's doing nothing but acting the way I see it. If it could work in the streets I'm sure it will work on stage. To me this is my way. It's all the same!!!"

THE LESSONS

A successful lesson is one that keeps Andre from staying in the toilet. On the surface this definition might appear slightly bizarre, yet it became both a standard of measurement and a class joke. Andre, an exceptionally clever and creative teenager, had the habit of vanishing to the toilet to think, masturbate, and read the *Daily News* whenever a lesson got boring. When it was exciting, Andre stuck around and became a

When I woke up this mornin' I layed in the bed with my woman. And we started talkin' 'bout the good times we had, and about when we'll get old. Then we start kissin', huggin', and playin'. And then we put the baby to bed with us; kissin' all over the baby. Then the baby wetted; then we changed the baby. Then it went to sleep and we started makin' love. Her body was so gentle and sweet. Only I couldn't say it would last forever. But, we'll grow old soon, and then we'll have nothin' but the memories. That is life. When someone die, what do a man and a woman do then? Memories are not enough. It's way off in time. Think about reality, and then you'll know what I mean.

James Hampton

When I awoke, this morning
I said, "I have to go."
She said, "Why?"
I said, "Because I have to go get my methadone."

She said,
"Please do not go
I want you to make love to me
I have some dope
You could have if you stay."

I said,
"No,
That won't do me no good
I will not feel it."

Then she said,
"How about
If I give you some methadone
I have a bottle in my pocketbook
You could have it all
But please come lay down
Next to me.
I'm so frustrated"

I said,
"I don't care
If you are dying
God-damn it
I'll see you this afternoon
Good bye"

Pedro Melendez

All of this explanation has an air of patness and formula about it. This is not the point at all. The feelings the writing generates are what are finally important.

class leader. Andre became the weathervane of each lesson. When he was bored, the majority of the class was also forcibly holding their eyelids up. Andre just had a more obvious manner of showing it.

A lesson must immediately grab the student's attention, be based on a subject they are familiar with and understand, and offer a completed gestalt by the period's end. They need to create a completed product that is theirs and that satisfies them.

Hopefully they will learn to feel that whatever they write is good because it is their own creation. Failure is rooted in competing against standards other than your own. A spirit of "equals in the room" brings both the best feelings and writings from the students and me. It's a variant of egalitarian education where people grade themselves. However, I do encourage them to be lavish, gutsy, and flexible with their words and ideas.

The "blurt" method of writing is usually utilized. Here the writer first expresses whatever comes to mind however he or she chooses. Then editing and emphasis is added after the flow has subsided. This method seems to have the double benefit of being fun and closer to what they really wanted to voice.

I, visiting teachers, and the students are all writers during class time. The teacher as objective observer or director has little place in our clan.

I have found a certain game

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

(1681)

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day;
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood;
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingéd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor in thy marble vault shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honor turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning glew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like am'rous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one ball;
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life.
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run

Andrew Marvell

"Memories of Someone I used to Know"

Time gives me great opportunity
to write this poem
about someone I cherish very much.
I remember the time we walked in the park,
joined hands running, playing, rolling in the grass
saying all loving things to each other.

Now's the time for me to get serious—
only if we were home, under some candlelight
naked with the warmth of your body
your passion marks and your kisses warm and gentle.
Now we lay in bed
eating out of each other's mouths.
Let's get down now!
And then you tell me "no"
because you are afraid
the time is not right.

Time is running out on us
because your husband will be home soon.
The telephone rings and you answer it
and your husband is on the phone
and I kiss your body and you laid down the telephone
then we made love with all the passion.
The thrill went from my soul into your soul.

James Hampton

"Little Time"

We don't have all the time in the world
We better get down now
Or, it will be too late

Life is not just working, my Dear
But having a little fun
Whether in the front or in the rear . . .

Because when we die
All we'll take to the grave
Is all the pleasures
We have experienced

Do not be scared Baby
I'm not going to hurt you
All I want
Is you to give it up
Or I will damn sure take it
I'm tired of your bullshit.

Pedro Melendez

quality removes the "seriousness" and inhibitions that are frequently attached to writing. After an initial "warm-up" (classes start with a "free rap" about whatever holds our interest), I introduce a game-flavored minimum structure for writing. The minimum structures are used because just stating, "Write about whatever you want," usually results in dull stares and confusion. Beginning writers seem to flounder in absolute freedom.

An example of a minimum structure would be, "you can write anything you want provided it has a surprise ending." This surprise ending criterion seems to give them something to moor their writing around, and sets their energies free.

All this explanation has an air of patness and formula about it. This is not the point at all. The feelings the writing generates are what are finally important. A look of glee on Rochelle's face, Raymond's proud walk after his first short story, me cracking-up over how forced my own writing can be—this is the core. When there is electricity, the rest is secondary.

The writing that follows all evolved from minimally structured lessons. The first part contains translation-type writing. I presented the students with two poems: "When I Awoke" and "To His Coy Mistress." After discussion, I asked them to work with the mood of each poem. The style and concepts of the original poems were of minor importance. I wanted them to treat the poems as if they were written in a foreign language or in code. Then, using the mood of each poem, translate that poem into their own words.

The second group contains four of my favorite writings during the last year. "Harlem" developed after a discussion of territoriality. "Product of a Broken Home" and "The Exhibit" came during a class on early childhood development and trauma. "Freedom" was a collaboration effort on a subject we all dug and desired. ■

"The Mistress's Reply"

Your arms have stolen 'round my waist
Your lips are hidden in my breast
It seems a father furtive place
For love's light beauty come to rest.

Yet I sometimes hardly know quite why
I turn away as if to find
A holy kiss form the sky
Some inspiration in your eyes.

I feel instead, your human form
That seems to labour at a task
And nothing's being built or born
Your sudden strength is quickly past.

And though I see within your passion
The rising sun and fiery dusk
They're earthly things, in godly fashion
A replica turned red with rust.

It's true that you have come to be
Through grace of all the sweet and pure
Yet I cannot give you all of me
Wait awhile, I'm still unsure.

Debby Silberstein
(She was a high school
intern who sat in on my classes)

"HARLEM"

Short skirts, long legs, white pants
leanin' on the cars; hearin' the yells.
Hey Slim, how the hell are you?
Bustling cars, horns honkin', people running
Police Police
Taxi

Demolition crew, tearing down the old
Make ready for the new.
Hustlers, pimps, jostlers
Getting over in their own ways
Shoot outs Killings

"Yo, Jim, my main squeeze. What's happenin'?
Got anything for me?"
"Yeah, I'm ready to get high
Like a motherfucker!"

Hot, humid, sweat pouring off my face
Damn, it's hot
Wish I had some scratch
To get away from this bad mother fucker:

See the same faces everyday
'hores walkin'
"Hey Daddy, you lookin'?"
I'm going to Smitty's to get some fish-n-chips

I'm hungry but I ain't got no money. The store just
opened up. I know where to get it—yeah, it's hellfire.
Got to see my homey to get this thing. I need a shot of life.

Andre Fuller

"Product of a Broken Home"

Some people say money has no friends
Money is two faced
It don't stay in the same person's hand to long
It's a cop and blow world

I had to beg, borrow, and steal to make ends meet
I had to hustle for my muscle
Use my brains playing a game of survival
As a child my mother taught me to be strong
So I could make it in the future
Maybe one day I might be President

As a teenager I was young and handsome
Strong like Samson
Shoulders like boulders, arms like bombs
T. N. T. in one hand
Sudden death in the other

I'm so cold
I'd kill my mother.

Eric Grant

"The Exhibit"

Being an orphan is like:
The flash-backs of the questionnaires you took in school;
Always looking for answers to match the questions.
Knowing that things could of been otherwise,
And then wondering, why me?

Being given about like paper money
Having parents like a check that bounced
Wanting to be part as a half to a half
Knowing that substitution is like an I. O. U.
Having loneliness like a broken dollar.

The time of birth was quite an ordeal. Here I was alive, but unknown to the woman my mother. The changes of hands were like being an exhibit for people to see. So after going from museum to museum, I was finally put in a frame to dwell in my projections. (It seemed like) Every few years this painting was brought into focus to be viewed by people interested in buying something up for auction. Finally the auction stops, people leave, the painting becomes just another painting.

Willie Florio

"2 by Rosealee"

1.
My skin is soft
My body is warm
My heart is sweet
 like brown sugar
My voice is sexy
When I talk to you
 it may blow your mind
My eye is mysterious
 like a cat
When I with you
 in our own like world
Listen to sweet soul sexy music
 in the air
 be free doing our thing
 be under the moon and star
Let the cool breeze go through
 our nude bodies
In the air nothing
 but cherry incense
 all over the air
Because I know
I can do it to death.

2.
Touch me in the morning
with a sweet soft gentle
kiss
Holding me like a Teddy Bear
I know I am going to
feeling good all day
That's how a morning starts.

Rosealee Richardson

"Freedom"

Freedom is claiming the sun as one's own ----

Walking upon our own path, and choosing our own destination
Released from our pains and thoughts of being institutionalized
Allowing our fantasies to be fantasized by others
Freedom is freedom which brings forth freedom.

Freedom is hanging off the Goerge Washington Bridge,
and jumping if you feel like it
Freedom is dying
The judges will give you thirty years,
while the priests condemn you eternally.

Running and never stopping; liquid time is freedom.
Freedom is the air I feel.

To sleep without anyone disturbing you:
passing out in dreams.

Freedom is riding a bike without getting a flat
Sitting in the middle of Central Park not getting bit by mosquitos

Freedom is living in a home in the suburbs,
and happening to be out when the landlord comes for the rent.

Freedom is eating with your fingers and making noises in your mouth
Freedom is opening a can of beans, and being able to throw it out
It is what you were, are, and will be
If for once you could use your eyes without sunglasses.

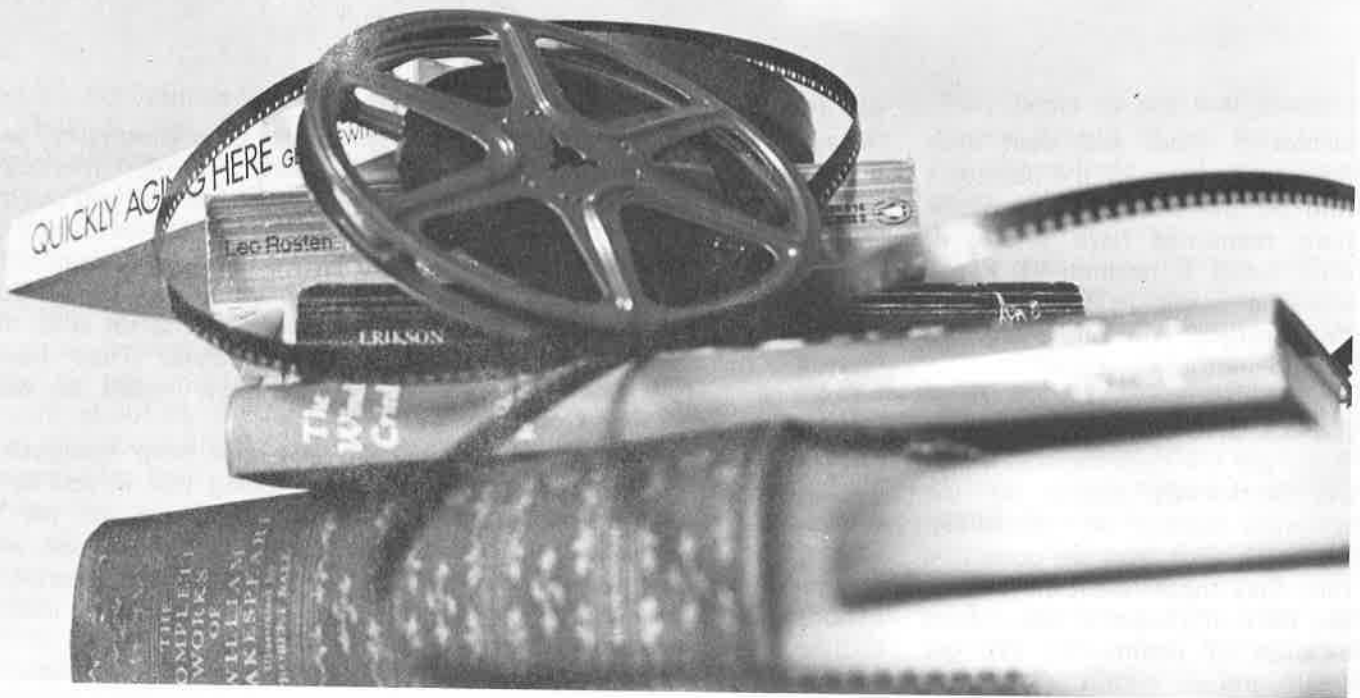
COLLABORATION POEM
MADE BY: Eric Grant, Lester
Hildridge, Tom Straw, Willie
Florio, Edwin Bermudel, Joni
Gilberti, and David Fletcher

"You Make Me Feel So Good"

You know one thing girl,
I'm sure glad that you
are here, because I
have been wondering, what's
been happening with you.
Sitting here in this room
with you, feeling your soft
black hair, touching your sweet
lips, stroking your beautiful
legs, feeling your titties, kissing
your neck, oh come on girl
let yourself go, you got
what I need, I want to
get down with you, bite you
on your neck, bite you on
your stomach. I could make
love to you until the morning
comes, from head to toe
kissing every part of your body.

Oh, are you ready for this
100% hunk of all-beef Man.

Willie Douglas



MAO

Five Film Problems in Search of Solution

Dina DuBois

I've read a lot of articles about rationales for film courses, and other articles on how to use film instead of concentrating on the film itself. So, again, I ask myself, "What am I doing?"

IN THE DARK

One thing I thought film would do was bring together a group quickly through mutual shared experience. A class needs a sense of its own uniqueness. They can feel this by opening up their feelings and thoughts to others in the group. But, it takes twenty five hours for a group to become a group (that's five weeks of classes) and we spend 10 hours or more in the first five weeks in the dark watching films. The students are shut off from each other except through their sense of participation as an audience. (one class laughs easily, another one doesn't. Why?) I found it hard to reconnect the group, to pull them out

of the dark into their reactions. The bell would ring five minutes after the film was over. I need more than one period!!!

REACTION VERSUS PASSIVITY

How could we go from the blank stare, the gaping jaw passivity of watching a TV or movie screen to a reactive state? How could we come out of the unconscious state of the dark, the dissolving with the film to the light, the conscious world of the class and the need to talk about things that had been touched on in this unconscious state, to feel them more deeply, to recognize them and transform them through verbalization?

I ask the kids to take notes as they watch so they have something tangible to refer to that is theirs. In doing this I'm asking for concentration that melts some of that dissolving into the film. It creates an awareness and allows them to see more clearly. I choose

something different each time for them to concentrate on. The choice is carefully structured to enhance their understanding of the concepts of film and the item will relate to their reading in *Real to Reel*. For example, In *Chickamauga* I ask them to concentrate on motion, the motion of objects and people and the motion of the camera. Then when we have a discussion everyone has noticed something and has a list to refer to even if we can't talk until the next day.

At first the kids can't concentrate at all. I start with a three minute film, *Faces*, with 192 images and ask them for five images that repeat themselves. Then we can explore why the filmmaker has these images repeat. We can get to the meaning and feeling of the film through the structure of the film.

I play the tray game to train them in concentration. Put ten objects on a tray, unveil the tray. Give the students one minute to

memorize them and then have them write a list of the objects. I find by the end of the semester their memories have improved, their recall is heightened. I've a sneaking suspicion it applies to their reading. Am I misusing film to gain another objective?

SMALL GROUP WORKSHOPS

To get the class together I also use workshops related to the technical aspects of filmmaking. By doing what they see done in a film, they appreciate it more fully. But the doing together also creates a sense of community. To get small groups within a class to work well, I find it is necessary to set a specific goal for them to focus on requiring joint effort to accomplish it. Group work that implies that individuals can work alone denies the idea of a group.

Everyone chooses a chapter that they like in the book, forms a group with others who have chosen the same chapter and presents that material to the class in any format they choose, realizing that they must be interesting and get the class involved. The lighting group may decide to do a demonstration. The sound group

may decide to give visual examples and ask the class to imagine the sounds they would hear with that image. The motion group might bring a dog to class and use the VTR to record motion.

An exercise I initiate the second week is the making of a 60-second Coke commercial that uses young people from other countries. The groups have two days to plan the location, the costumes, the countries. They have three class periods to shoot the scenes. They must plan their time and assign functions to each group member from director, camera, assistant camera, grip, gaffer, actors, props, continuity.

Also the assignments for groups must be as real as possible. I try to work in films as much as possible in order to translate this reality and professionalism to the students.

READING AND WRITING IN FILM CLASS

This is the shocker to the kids. They complain they write more in film class than they do in their other English writing classes. They write an evaluation of each film they see that includes analysis and

examples of photography, sound, direction, editing, intention or concept of the film and use of the media. After ten weeks they begin to write critiques of feature films that show that they are developing their own criteria for what makes a good movie. They have to develop their voices as well as their eye.

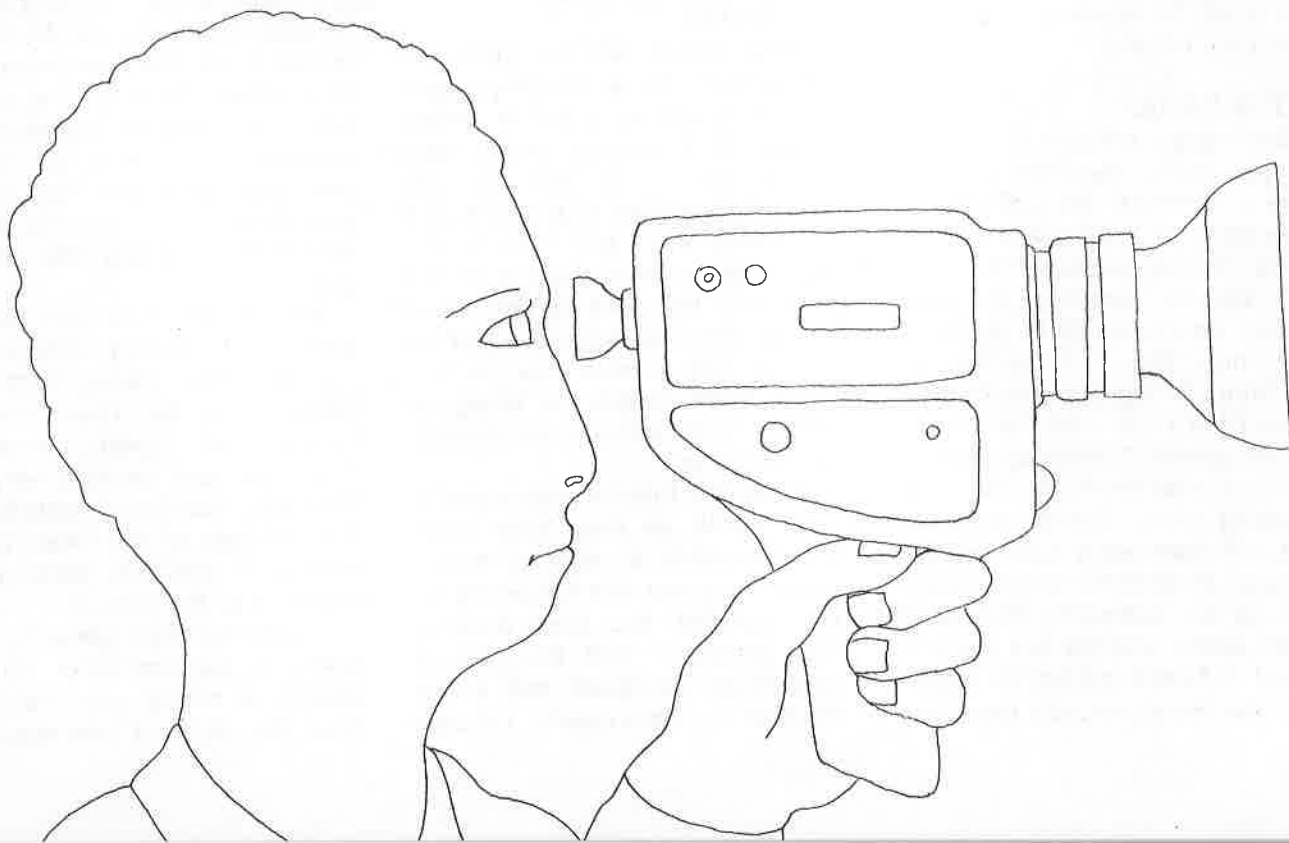
They also keep notebooks on their reading that relates to films they've seen and to the films they're making. They also write a treatment, shooting script and storyboard for their individual film projects.

After the textbook reading is completed, the students choose a book that interests them in the areas they've developed an affinity for. They keep a journal as they read that book.

These assignments are a part of the way out of passivity. Recognition and new definitions are not enough. They need to assimilate and filter the new vocabulary and definitions by using their own interests to show their growth and experience in and of the media.

VISUAL ILLITERATES

As you can see by now,



teaching film sounds like teaching any English class. There are the same problems, but are the solutions any different due to the nature of film? Is it fair to subject films to categorization by theme, by genre or by historical perspective? Why not just show any film you think is great and let the kids relate to the unique experience brought about by that one film? Then they could sift out what film is by creating their own ideas and notions through the diversity and lack of structure behind the choices. I've done the film appreciation part of the course by themes and genres and next year will have a Film II class by historical perspective. See how old fashioned and traditional a film teacher can be?

Why do I teach film this way? Despite McLuhan and the thousands of hours in front of TV, I find my students are visual illiterates. The definition of visual literacy from the National Conference on Visual Literacy in 1969 says a visually literate person can "discriminate and interpret visible actions, objects and/or symbols, natural or manmade, that he encounters in the environment."*

The students simply cannot discriminate and interpret ... at first. Throwing them into a random format or into feature films at first would be like asking a fourth grader to read *Ulysses*. In fact, they may not even be fourth graders in terms of their visual literacy. Film class in a high school where visual literacy has not been emphasized is like going from K-12 in one semester. I've got to give them fundamentals.

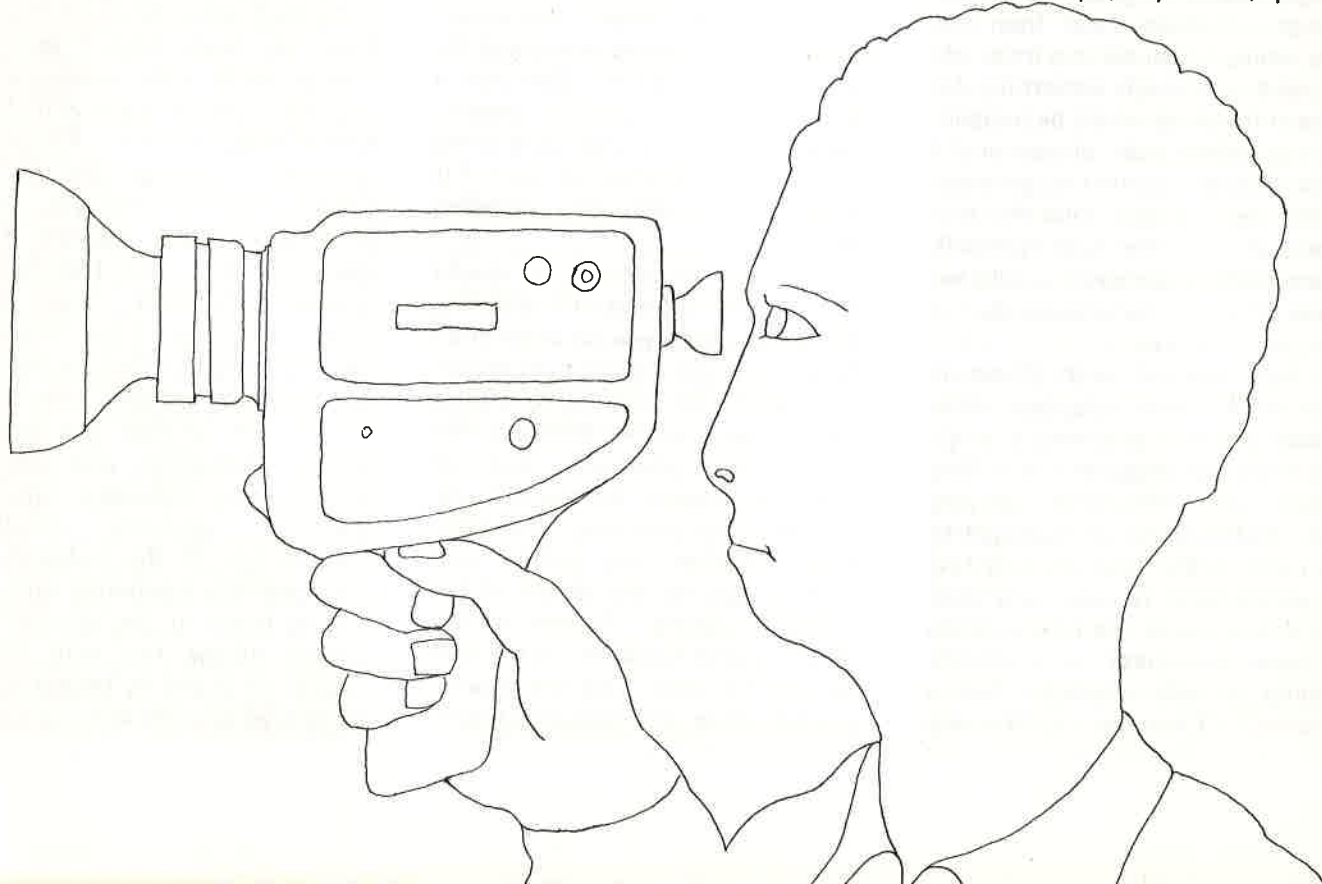
I know film people hate films compared to literature and I don't deal with transformation from short story or drama to film because it does deny film its uniquely cinematic expression. But, I will compare the process of gaining visual literacy to learning to read and interpreting literature. After the students have conquered the grammar, if you will, of the technical aspects and structure of films, then we go on to analyze style. This process makes them more aware of style in the written realm also. If they have a feeling from a film, I ask what image gave them that feeling. They begin to see that it is how the piece is put together that creates an effect, not just what happens in the plot.

They begin to see that selection creates a work of art, they begin to discriminate and understand what effect certain choices will have on an audience.

To gain visual literacy without making films is like having children learn to read and not write. The students love making films even though the discipline and planning in order to make a film is far greater than that required of writing. They complain terribly about having to write, but how simple that is for them in comparison.

By making a film, they are proving their visual literacy in a way not dissimilar to proving written literacy by writing essays, short stories and research papers. All three of these areas come forth in making a film. The planning and intentions set out in the treatment equal the essay. The film itself and its use of creative imagination taps the resources used in writing fiction and the editing process is like research in its detailed analysis of parts that build to a whole. ■

*Chen, Yih-Wen, "Design Features of Visual Symbols", *Audio Visual Instruction*, (May 1972) p.22-24





Marlene Jeanette— The Writing of a Romance

Karen M. Hubert

Christine and I had known one another for three years. We would meet in the hallway, discuss things, people, gossip and exchange amenities, and then her eyes would begin darting from left to right as though something far more interesting might be happening on either side of me and I knew that she wanted to get away to the next person, into the next room, or onto the next stairwell. It was nothing personal, we shared a real affection for one another, it was just Christine.

I had worked with Christine once before, with videotape. With friends she had prepared a script based on the popular *Lady Day* movie. But Christine, playing Billie Holliday, never managed to get beyond the first act, insisting on performing it over and over again. As a result, the tape consists of over ten takes of Christine begging a cafe manager for a "chance," Christine auditioning

and triumphantly landing the job. The rest of the script was superfluous; to Christine the magic of that repeated acceptance was all that mattered.

She was a pretty sixth-grader, more physically developed than her classmates. She had an eye for cute boys, was accepting and knowledgeable about sex and had a sophisticated sense of humor about it.

Christine was well known around school. She was rarely alone and never at a loss for company. I always wondered why her friends remained so loyal since in certain respects Christine was like a Doberman Pinscher, ready to turn on anyone fast and unreasonably. She would have only to sniff unfairness, see herself as unjustly accused, unfairly treated, and she would lash out with accusatory rage. She was, however, more likely to curse than to slug. It was satisfying for her to hear her own voice—loud with righteous indignation. But her moods were quicksilver, within minutes she'd be sweet and generous again, turning on her special smile of seductive innocence.

She was not the most popular child in school but she did have a following, who shared the knowledge that Christine was good for some kind of action. She was a show. And in public school, entertainment is a cherished thing to be sought at any cost, even if it means the possibility of being bitten.

She was an actress, no doubt about it. Her intonations, gestures, her whole body was on stage at all times. As the mother-confessor, she attentively listened to a poor friend pour out her troubles, her whole face positively tortured with compassion. As the protector, her eyes squinted, lips tightened together and puffed out, walking aggressively ahead of her friend shouting, "Where is he? Where is that bastard! Let me bust his ass for you." As the dewey-eyed dreamer, she appeared femin-



ine, soft and far away. And then there were the athlete, the singer, the dancer. And so many others.

Although these are the same roles that most children know and take on, never have I see them played with such intensity. No one took center stage with Christine's concentration. All of her seemed to change. She did not break character and yet, like a professional, she seemed to be conscious that she had become someone different. There is no other word for it but dramatic. Christine had a flair, a vocation for changing persona and dramatizing. She sniffed out possible dramatic situations and acted the proper and necessary emotions (outrage, sincerity, loneliness, sociability). If she suddenly and unexpectedly happened on a fight taking place in the corridor, she would elbow her way to the middle of it and by taking sides or as referee turn herself into the star



MAO

of the situation. She could not resist an audience. Christine changed her roles as often as she changed her moods. So although her performances were intense, they were short-lived. They were energetic bursts of talent in particular and concentrated spasms.

The same changeability present in Christine's moods and character changes showed itself more ruinously in her school work pattern. Off stage, and in class, Christine lacked what teachers often refer to as "discipline"—that ability to work on one thing with consistent interest or effort until it is brought to completion. In matters outside the short dramatical bursts, Christine had that hard-to-channel energy, enviable in its amount and intensity, but formless in its direction.

Interestingly, Christine also suffered from a slight but perceptible stammer, and it sometimes seemed



"She sniffed out possible dramatic situations and acted the proper and necessary emotions (outrage, sincerity, loneliness, sociability)."



to me that even her voice could not sustain a single uninterrupted flow.

I was curious to see how and if this type of energy might accommodate itself to the writing process. It never occurred to me that the writing process might be too confining, too permanent for her. I didn't realize that Christine had chosen her medium, and that for her acting and writing were not so easily interchangeable. The demands of writing were far more rigorous than the demands of acting. Although she could play a part, she did not necessarily know how to explain the way it felt, or how to translate what she felt during those moments into words. I assumed that her intense portrayals of jealousy, anger and love denoted understanding, that these could be dipped into like ink and used for writing. It was an easy translation, I thought, acting to writing. The key would be in tapping that energy—Christine's inexhaustible, changeable energy.

Working with Teacher's & Writers is usually perceived by our students as a treat; at most it's an opportunity to really express yourself, at least it's an opportunity to get out of class. Christine accepted my invitation to "go to the Writing Room" much like a major star accepts a minor engagement—just to keep busy, keeping an eye open for something more glamorous. As we walked down the corridor from her classroom to the Writing Room, Christine kept turning around, looking around her, peeping into the doorways of other classes, waving and frowning to acquaintances. Friends flew to Christine like flies to honey. By the time we reached the Writing Room, it was mighty hard work to pry Christine and her friends apart. Keith, and Halina, and David, and Lisa, and Alex, and Madeline, and Walter all wanted to come with her into the Writing Room. She seemed willing. I, however, had my arguments. "No, they can't come in. This is your hour, Christine, yours alone."

"But Christine had no patience for writing. She did not like waiting for all those little words to come on out when 'my mind is so far ahead.' "

Christine's penchant for Love, Betrayal and Fame led her to an idea for a Romance-Success story in which the heroine finds the Love of Her Life while also rising to stardom. But Christine had no patience for writing. She did not like "waiting for all those little words to come on out when my mind is so far ahead." So I offered my services as secretary, to whom she could dictate her story. I felt justified in using this mode with Christine because I felt it was more important that she sustain and finish a project than that she train her hand to write it. But even the verbal telling of the story proved too difficult for her. Something inside her seemed to be waging war against her power of concentration. I never anticipated the degree to which Christine's nervous energy would get in the way of her ability to stay with her story and tell it. Soon into her story she'd get a far away look in her eyes, her feet would begin to twitch, she'd rock her chair back and forth, start stammering, forgetting where she was in her story and soon she'd be standing, stretching and twisting her body until finally she'd be walking around the empty Writing Room, searching for something else in which to become briefly absorbed—string, some rubber bands, a bouncing eraser. She appeared to have a phobic response to staying still, or staying concentrated on one thing.

I was further surprised to observe that Christine, during the few minutes when she did func-

tion, told a very surface, flimsy story. It lacked details, substance. It was a this-happened-then-that-happened story. She wanted to get it over with, without stopping or lingering in places and really letting forth. This was surprising since the process of dictation lends itself to indulgence in language; the student may bathe in his own language for he has no hand restriction slowing him down. Sometimes, to get at the richness of student imagination or experience, the teacher taking the dictation may ask questions, for he is functioning as a reader-audience, and as such has the right to express his curiosity. It is best that he only ask questions of detail (what color are x's eyes) and he ought not press for answers when he sees the student has no interest in giving any. He should also control himself from making the plot go in any direction but that of the student's. It is a process that yields rich results but requires great control and sensitivity on the part of the teacher taking dictation. The act of handwriting is so powerful that it is possible to forget that the story belongs to the student.

However, when I asked Christine a question, the purpose of which was to make her go deeper into her fantasy, she recoiled. For instance, I would ask, "What color are Marlene's eyes?"

She'd think. Sliding her hand along the window sill, playing with her hair, bending to the floor. "Blue. No, brown. No—" She shook her head. "I don't

know, Karen!" she'd finally tell me angrily, implying in her tone and manner, "Leave me alone, stop trying to pin me down to one thing. Can't you see that's asking too much of me?"

I soon saw that any attempt, however gentle, honest or contrived, to help Christine stay focused only made her feel more trapped and anxious to get away "to the next thing."

It was a curious problem. The fantasy behind Christine's story was the same fantasy which supported her real and imaginative lives. In her everyday life she was an actress who changed her moods and roles, confidant, mother, sexpot, gossip, protector; roles that seemed to take her over. She could play all her parts with convincing passion. She was a quick-change artist, jumping into the skins of various roles, provocative sexpot to religious innocent. Just as in the wink of an eye, her mood would change from cruel and paranoid to generous and sweet.

When she spoke of her imagined future, which she did frequently and unsolicited, she saw herself as a Star, which is to say that she wanted to continue doing what she was already doing, but on a larger and more glamorous scale. Christine was the actress-star who changes moods and roles, isn't tied down to one mode of personality, and, as her popularity attested, was loved and admired for it. I had expected that since she lived so closely to this basic fantasy, she would tell "her story" quite

easily, and even relish doing so. However, instead of feeling comfortable within it, she felt trapped. In telling her story, one that no one else could tell in the same way, she was in fact alone. My presence in the room did not matter. She was left alone with herself. And with herself she felt trapped, as if in a room with no doors.

Although Christine could stay within a character, she could not stay within herself. In the act of telling her story, her real and imaginary lives came together, but instead of energy, fear was released. She was without an audience, she was concretizing herself on paper as a composite, standing still in one skin.

I was not interested in changing Christine, altering her personality. I wanted to give her an experience in writing and story telling. I decided to try to work *around* Christine's difficulty by going along with whatever clues she would give me. Let Christine tell me how she wanted to work with her problem.

Although one aspect of Christine's personality held her back, another came to her rescue. Because she was always flitting from one person to another, because she *had* to be with people, she had a large number of friends, and inevitably some of these friends were always with her when she knocked on the door of the Writing Room. "No, they can't come with you," I was always saying. "This is *your* hour, Christine. Don't you want *your* hour?"

Well, it soon became clear that the way she wanted *her* hour was to share it with other people, for her best, most concentrated powers came out in the presence of an audience, however select or small.

During our first three solitary lessons, her friends had been knocking on the door, giving her important messages, arranging to meet at lunch. Christine was continually excusing herself to the bathroom. The knocks on the Writing Room door became more and more frequent as Christine's problem grew more frantic. I took the cue and decided to join 'em rather than lick 'em. We let in a small, select audience. Soon a group of four boys and four girls would show up alongside Christine at the beginning of every writing session. Although they started out as a silent audience, it soon proved impossible, as well as too boring, for them not to share in the telling of the story. They began with small suggestions, which grew. If I asked Christine a question, the others would raise their hands. I even remember one of them biting her lips so as not to blurt out by mistake. I was concerned about Christine's response to this, but she did not seem to mind. In fact, she gave me (her secretary) orders to take down what particular friends said, "That's good, Karen, you can use *that*," she'd tell me.

Christine had obviously told her friends the gist of the story, that it concerned one Marlene Jeanette who was fighting her way to love and fame, and so their suggestions were in keeping with her idea. The



more responsibility her friends took in telling the story, the more she took in directing it and the more relieved and freer she felt to relax, which for her meant walking around, in and out of the Writing Room whenever she wished. I watched for signs of her annoyance or withdrawal, but there were none. I began to work around what was already happening and so let the hierarchy and the division of labor work itself out. Christine was in charge of the plot, she controlled where the story would go next. Whenever she dropped into the room during the writing hour, or was present among us in mind as well as body, we would consult her on the plot, asking for more to go on with. The group asked her questions concerning turning points and tone, "Did that sound right to you, Christine?"

Soon I began to anticipate the time when her friends would complain and resent being so controlled, but this just never happened. They very agreeably wrote the story, stopping and elaborating when and wherever they wished, but according to Christine's basic directions. She created the skeleton, and the group filled in the flesh. Descriptions of emotions, place, the mechanics of movement and action were left to the group.

Each member of the group had specialities. Christine said that Marlene was sexy, but it took David to say she had a body "like nice moving whip cream." Halina was especially fine in understand-

ing and verbalizing emotions, sometimes humorous, "She suffered for not having a big fat kiss," sometimes serious, "She felt unwanted, like hated, guilty for her personality." Lisa had a talent for names, Bill Williams, etc. She also had an ability to describe body movement: "She leaned over sideways, pointed her finger at his face, her head and finger were really shaking. . . ." Keith liked to describe architecture and action.

As the story progressed, I noticed Christine perked up whenever we came to the parts of the story that required descriptions of clothing or style. Here she was an expert. She obviously considered dress very important to people's attraction to one another and she proved that she had studied this very carefully.

Because of the group's relationship to Christine, their tolerance of Christine's bossiness and eccentricity, this manner of collaboration was possible and the project proved successful. I don't necessarily advocate a "plot director" unless the situation calls for it, as this one did, and lends itself to it so well.

Characteristically, Christine did not finish her story. We had begun work in May, but after two months we were only half finished. June came and like all the other sixth graders, Christine attended commencement exercises, looking and no doubt feeling like a star as she marched out of the PS 75 auditorium past an audience of parents who must have all noticed her dramatic floor length

dress.

I was sorry to see her go. We kissed each other goodbye. She promised to come back and visit, but for social reasons, not to complete unfinished projects.

My summer began with a bout of teacher-guilt. I chided myself with regrets. If only I had caught her just a few more times on the way to recess, or lunch, or pulled her into the writing room while she was hanging out in the halls, cajoled her with sandwiches or coke. It was hard to accept "my failure," to accept the project as unfinished and abandoned, and to let it go at that.

Although I thought about Christine over the summer months, I began to think more and more about Marlene Jeanette. Would she forever remain in a state of suspension, as her writers had left her, having just fled from a torrid scene wherein she discovered her boyfriend kissing in a closet with her rival Janey? How would her audition go? And what was she anyway, an actress or a singer? Marlene Jeanette had experienced brief romance and bitter betrayal, but would she never taste satisfaction, love and success?

I returned to work in September. Christine was gone, but she had left her mark. While walking around the halls, and visiting different classrooms, five of the original, remaining writers of Marlene Jeanette approached me, all separately. They were putting out feelers, wearing that reminiscence-of-something-good look and

saying things like, "Remember that story we used to work on?" and even "Whatever happened to Marlene Jeanette?" I discovered that one after another Christine's friends were as engrossed in the story as I was and as eager to find out what happened next to Marlene Jeanette.

We began to meet again, in order to complete the story. Although I was open to any plot change, they preferred to follow Christine's original story idea. I wondered whether this was loyalty to Christine or to the story itself. There were the usual differences of opinion: should Marlene faint from stage fright and be carried off the stage by James? What color dress was she wearing? In the end, would she choose Bill or James? As it always does within groups, one will exert itself and makes the most convincing argument. After having won one such victory, (or compromise as we teachers like to call them), Keith said, with great certainty, "Christine would have wanted it this way." I was touched, as well as taken back by the solemnity of his tone. It was as though she were dead. The others seemed to like Keith's sentiment, for it became a Victor's standard phrase of self congratulation. The group finished the story that Christine began. Ironically, Christine's sporadic and inconsistent energy had inspired them to sustain a long and difficult effort.

For them, as well as myself, Christine had become a dear departed one, but her spirit lives on in Marlene Jeanette. ■



Marlene Jeanette was a pretty, young sixteen-year-old who attended Brandeis High School. She was 5'4", weighed 110 pounds. She wore an afro. She had olive-tone skin, lovely round eyes, brown eyes, and a flat mouth. She had a sexy body, it came in and it came out. Like nice moving whipped cream.

She was fixing her hair thinking of the day ahead. She just knew that the day was going to be a great day. It was summer so she had no school. She could hear the birds, the trees; and the cute, fine boys came out, whistling in front of her building. And as she looked out the window she could see her sister and her best friend coming down the street. She thought, "My sister has someone, Michael, a big, tall, handsome young man, and what do I have? Nothing. I want one." She felt as if she were left alone, without a friend in the world, not having no one to care. She suffered for not having a big fat kiss.

She called up her friend, Shirley, at her house and said, "Shirley, do you want to go swimming today?"

"No, I have a date with John today."

She felt hurt inside because she was wondering why all her other friends had dates and she didn't. But she wasn't so unhappy because she knew she had a date with James for Mary Jane's big party tonight. James was kind of tall, a warm, friendly personality, doing whatever he could for other people. He worked at a gas station.

She sighed and decided to go over to her cousin's house and go swimming over there. Her cousin's best friend had told her about this audition place where she could be tried out for different roles in the movies. And she figured she'd try it because she had nothing to lose.

Marlene called up her mother at work and told her she was going over to her aunt's house to swim. Her mother was over-protective, but meant well.

"Yes, but be back by 8:00."

"Sure."

Marlene caught the nearest bus, but discovered that her cousins went out also, to the movies. So since the movies were right down the street, she decided to go down there so she could see them. Sure enough, they were sitting in the front row, eating popcorn and watching the movie. She called

out their names, Anne, Lisa, Julie and Jackie. The movie was "Black Belt Jones" and Lisa told Marlene to "take a seat because the movie is good."

7:30 came, she got out of the tub, dried herself off, put her bathrobe on and she searched for what to wear. She had the finest clothes in the whole block. Stylish clothes that fit each season. She took her brown pants, long sleeved, low cut V-neck brown body suit and her short sleeved smock and her black Marshmallows. Her hair was corn rolled. She put on her brown and white rabbit jacket and waited for James downstairs.

James was dressed up in green pants, black shoes, green turtle-neck, and a white cornella over his green turtleneck.

"Hmmm, you look great. Come on. Let's get in the car. We're running late." He helped her into the car, getting in on the other side, put the key in the ignition and drove on over there.

The record player was blasting loud. Everybody was grinding and doing the bump, which is the latest dance. And she just knew she would have a nice night.

As soon as they got there a girl

Marlene Jeanette — a love story

by

Christine Ward
Keith Horowitz
Haline Langrod
Madeline Martin
David Valentine
Liza Lee Carter
Raphael Duenas
Alex Moran

named Janey asked James to dance. She felt lonely again and talked to herself. "Why did I come to the dance. Now I realize nobody even knows I'm here."

Janey was Spanish. She wore a long dress with blue and pink flowers. She had on light blue Marshmallows. They are shoes with a white rubber sole. They even have Mushrooms now, something like Marshmallows, but they have brown soles.

Marlene hated Janey. She found that Janey wanted James about two years ago. And when she saw Janey and James dancing the Boogie-Down she hated her even more. There was a lot of glow on his face.

Nobody asked her to dance. She felt unwanted, like hated, guilty for her personality.

One of the cute fine boys who had been whistling in front of her building that morning asked her to dance. He looked handsome, 6'5", and his name was Bill Williams and he wore a flowered shirt. His pants were blue. He had a big afro and wore a big blue and red bowtie and blue chalkies and his car was beige. He asked her to dance. She said alright. He fell in love with her and saw sky rockets, but she kept looking towards James. Everytime he looked at her it was like the Fourth of July—red, white and blue sky rockets.

"I like you, Marlene."

"I can't believe it. I go out with James, not you."

"But don't worry about James. He's not here now. Let's just talk about you and me."



"Marlene smacked him. She leaned over sideways and pointed her finger in his face, her head and finger were really shaking."

"Why should we?" She felt wanted and loved, but she knew she belonged to James.

"Let's get engaged."

"Well! I've never heard such a thing." She had only just met him and he was already asking to engage her—in one night—in one hour!

Marlene smacked him. She leaned over sideways and pointed her finger in his face, her head and finger were really shaking. Her body was moving along with her finger. And she told him, "I don't ever want to see you again in my life!" And she stomped off into the bedroom to cry. The lights were off. There was a big double bed and a pink bedspread with a couple of red flowers on it. She laid on the bed and started crying with her face to the bed.

She was mad and hurt at the same time. Fifteen minutes later, after she calmed down, she heard noises in the closet. She slowly walked over to the closet door. She felt half-scared and half-curious. Like her heart was going to pop out. She put her hand on the doorknob and waited a couple of seconds, and then she slowly opened the door. She saw James

and Janey tongue-kissing.

They looked so startled with their mouths open and their eyes looked like their eyes were falling out of their heads.

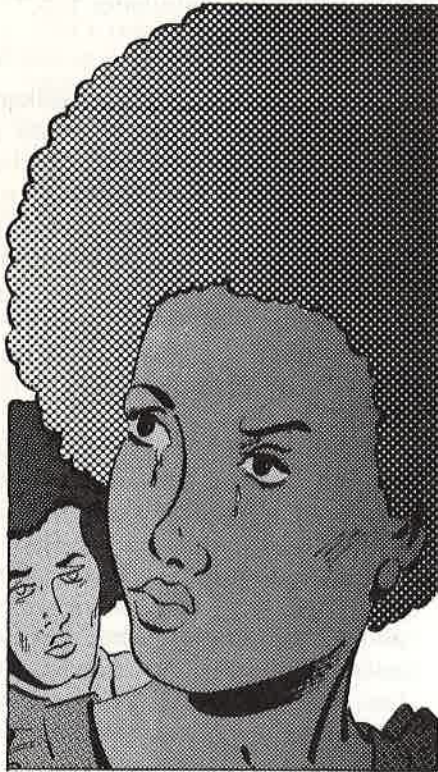
When she saw them she started crying real bad and got very excited and nervous. Marlene took Janey by the neck and started fighting. She threw Janey onto the bed and grabbed her by the neck. And Marlene made Janey black and blue in her eyes. Then James broke it up.

"There's no need to fight over me!" He looked down on the floor and felt guilty because he felt he made the whole thing start. He'd done the wrong thing.

He said, "Marlene, can I talk with you for a minute?" Janey thought that now James had picked Marlene for his girl-friend. So she went out and got Bill. She knew Bill from school for three years. She asked Bill to help her get back at James and Marlene.

"What the hell! You think that I'm going to separate Marlene and James? Just because they love each other? I love her, but I ain't going to doublecross her!"

Marlene felt bad because she wanted James back, but she hated



him. She looked down at the floor. She was mad and crying and wasn't listening to him at all.

"I'm sorry all this happened. We should make arrangements to have a cup of coffee in a coffee shop."

They sat there for a couple of minutes and didn't say anything. She ran out the door as fast as her legs could go. She ran through the crowd of people. And people were asking themselves what was wrong with her. She felt like she was running through water. The water pushed her and slowed her down. The people started staring at her and they were thinking that she must be crazy.

The next day walking to the

audition she met James on the corner. She felt like something struck her like lightning. He looked at her with love. She looked at him with sorrow and hate. She started crying and started running to the audition.

She was inside the Tentell theater. She felt scared and at the same time she felt as though she were in show business.

She felt scared and embarrassed because she was running into the auditorium and everybody was looking at her. She was thinking, Oh my God, I feel like hiding my face. She saw James all around the theatre. She felt that all the actors were him. She was seeing James everywhere. Everything she saw she thought was James. She felt scared, shaky, like biting her nails and she almost fainted because she was about to audition. Then she saw a line of five people, all trying to get a part in the play. She thought all five people were James.

The director said, "Marlene, will you come up here and do your act and read your script?" She felt embarrassed because everyone stared at her.

Her feet went one, two, one, two up the stairs. She picked up her paper and saw an empty auditorium; it looked like she was in a theater all by herself. She said, "I'm all alone. I can do my act without anybody staring at me." She was in a play called "Romeo and Juliet." She played Juliet, a princess of the South, young and very romantic and she encourages herself, she likes her-

self very much. She had a soft face, very beautiful.

The story was about two people in love and the King, Juliet's father, doesn't want Romeo to get in love with Juliet because his family had a war with Romeo's family. Romeo was fighting for Juliet's love.

"Romeo, Romeo, where for thy, Romeo. Where for art thou? Come, Romeo, let's go away together. We live in a cage of birds. We'll elope to Paris."

The director said, "Come here. You've got the part. I liked your acting very much. I think you may become a star."

She felt terrific and a little scared. Half she felt scared because she remembered about yesterday about when she saw James and Janey kissing in the closet. She was very sad on the inside, as though her bones could break. She was smiling on the outside because the man said she was good for a star.

It was seven o'clock in the night. It was time for the play. It was opening night on a summer day and she had practiced every night. She said to herself, "I'm going to make it to be a star." She put on her costume. It had silver on the arms and silk for the main dress. The crown had beautiful feathers on it and it glittered. She felt so proud of herself. "I'm going to make it. I know I'm going to make it."

She walked out on stage. Everybody applauded. She was nervous. It sounded like happiness. Like they liked her. She

was really going to make it. Like she was Queen of Arabia. The reporters were taking pictures of her. The camera blinded her eyes, but she didn't care.

The actors got in their places and started the play. The curtains opened and in a sudden moment she saw James in the front aisle. She felt like going down there and kissing him, but her career was at stake. She began the act. She felt very scared, but knew she had to do everything right. She did everything right except for one part. The part was where she had to say, "Romeo, Romeo, where art thou, Romeo?" She felt frightened. She felt full of guilt because she was saying she loved Romeo instead of James. She was on the balcony. She kept glancing at James, looking down over the side of the balcony. And she'd keep coming back to Romeo. "Oh, my goodness, I wonder if he still loves me. I hope he still loves me because I still love him.

While she was glancing at James, she noticed Bill was in the audience. "Wow, Bill's over here, too. I just hope they don't get together because they're going to talk about me and find out they both love me and have a big fight. Oh, God. I wish I could finish this scene fast."

When she finished she went to her dressing room to change into her natural street clothes. She saw James in the hall outside the dressing room. At the moment she was going to turn back to go to the exit door, she saw Bill.

"Oh, goodness, I wish I wasn't so beautiful. They both love me."

James came up to Marlene, grabbed her two arms, squeezed

them tight and said "Marlene!"

"Let go of me James, I don't want to have anything to do with you anymore. I was humiliated. Oh don't you talk to me. Oh no, not anymore."

Bill came towards Marlene. He had a sorry face. "Marlene, I'm sorry about the other night. I must have been drunk. Maybe I could get to know you better. How about tomorrow night."

"Well, you had just met me, and then you asked me to get engaged, and I felt you were being fresh, and trying to tease me and make fun of me."

James broke in. "You'd take him instead of me?" He looked surprised and yet real low down and ready to fight. He took off his coat, and slapped Marlene in the face. She started crying. Bill took off his coat and punched James right in the face. James took a slug to the right and Bill took it right to his stomach. Bill gave James a kick in the stomach. James had asthma and couldn't catch his breath. He had an asthma attack and fell on the floor.

Marlene was crying and told Bill to call the police. "Call *somebody*." She ran down the hall, back into her dressing room. Bill ran back to Marlene's dressing room. "Marlene! We *have* to get out of here. James could be badly hurt."

"I'm not going to leave James. You can go, but I'm staying here."

Bill left the theatre.

(Background Song)

"Bill left the theater

" " " "

Faster than light

" " " "

Ri-ght behind him

" " "

Here comes the ambulance too."

Suddenly the director walked into Marlene's room. "That was a fantastic show you gave. The audience loved you. They want more. Marlene, they yelled for more. Marlene, they loved you. They've been screaming for five minutes 'More! More! More!'"

He noticed that she was crying.

"Marlene, what are you crying about?"

"Everything my day has just been—In the morning, before the play it was fine, after the play it was terrible."

"Marlene, it'll be alright. Marlene! Get out there! They're calling for you." She started smiling. She wiped her tears, shaking, and said "You're kidding!" She went out there and the audience started applauding. She felt happy. It seemed like she had forgotten about everything. She started to sing a song that made her remember what trouble Bill was in and how James felt. She felt funny, she felt like a fraud. She felt very bad at the moment. She finished her song and ran off stage. The audience applauded, still. She saw the other actors. "That was a great song," most of the other actors told her. She ran past them, even though they said that, and she ran into the director.

"Oh, Marlene! Watch where you're running!"

"Where's James?" Of course the director didn't really know who James was.

"James? Who's James?"

"My boyfriend. He was hurt."

"Oh. You mean the boy in the hall who was hit in the stomach?"

"Yes! That's him! Where is he?"

"He's lying down in one of the dressing rooms."

"Which one? I want to see him now."

"In yours."

He was lying down on the bed. He looked all beaten up. He had a black eye and his shirt was ripped. He was holding his stomach, and breathing a little fast.

She sat down beside him worried and concerned. "Are you alright?"

"I'm better than I was before. Where's Bill?"

"I don't know. Last I saw, he was running away."

Just then a well-dressed guy came in. He wore a white tuxedo with a white shirt and a blue tie.

"I saw your show. How would you like to be a movie star?"

She felt happy.

"I'm glad you liked my show, but I'll have to think about it." She was confused with the show, the audience, and being a movie star, and James.

"I'll let you think about it. Here, let me give you my card.— John B. Stenowitz, 445 Pear Tree Road, Hollywood, California. Business: Studio 10, Section 5, Hollywood, California. 617-4414. Producer and Director." John B. Stenowitz left.

James said, "I think you should go to Hollywood and become a movie star, if you can."

"Only if you'll come with me."

"Okay. I will."

And James said, "I'm feeling better now. Let's go to your house and discuss Hollywood." ■

SHE SLOWLY WALKED OVER TO THE CLOSET DOOR. SHE PUT HER HAND ON THE DOORKNOB AND WAITED A COUPLE OF SECONDS, AND THEN SHE SLOWLY OPENED THE DOOR. SHE SAW JAMES AND JANEY TONGUE-KISSING



“I don’t want to study creative writing; I just want to learn to write. You know, just writing.”

A Short Course in Just Writing

Bill Bernhardt

Knowing that I am an “English” teacher, people often ask me, “Is there a place where I can go to study writing?” When this first started happening to me, about ten years ago, I used to reply by describing the various writing programs I knew about, and I was surprised to find how uninterested they were in what I had to say about Iowa, Stanford, or wherever. “No,” someone would say, “That’s not what I mean. I don’t want to study *creative* writing; I just want to learn to write. You know, just writing.”

Once, only once, I answered the question by suggesting a course in English composition which I was teaching at the time. “Oh Christ!” my friend shouted, “Not another course in *English*. I don’t want to learn to write topic sentences or compare and contrast the probable causes of the French Revolution. I just want to learn to write. You know, just writing.”

Since then I have become aware that there is some place you can go and study almost every imaginable *kind* of writing whether it be radio scripts, directions for assembling stereo kits, advertising copy, concrete poetry, pornography, recipes for teenage cooks, or whatever you like. But there is no place where you can go for “just writing.”

I have to admit that it took me a long time to realize that “just writing” wasn’t an empty phrase. It really meant something to the people who used it. What they meant was that they had studied verbs,

and adverbs, and sentences, and paragraphs, and essays, and creative writing, but they still couldn't sit down, pick up a pencil, and start writing without an incredible effort. Some of them had done well in school and some poorly, some could grind out a Ph.D. thesis and some couldn't cover half a page, but they all shared the same sense of blankness and dread when the word "writing" was mentioned.

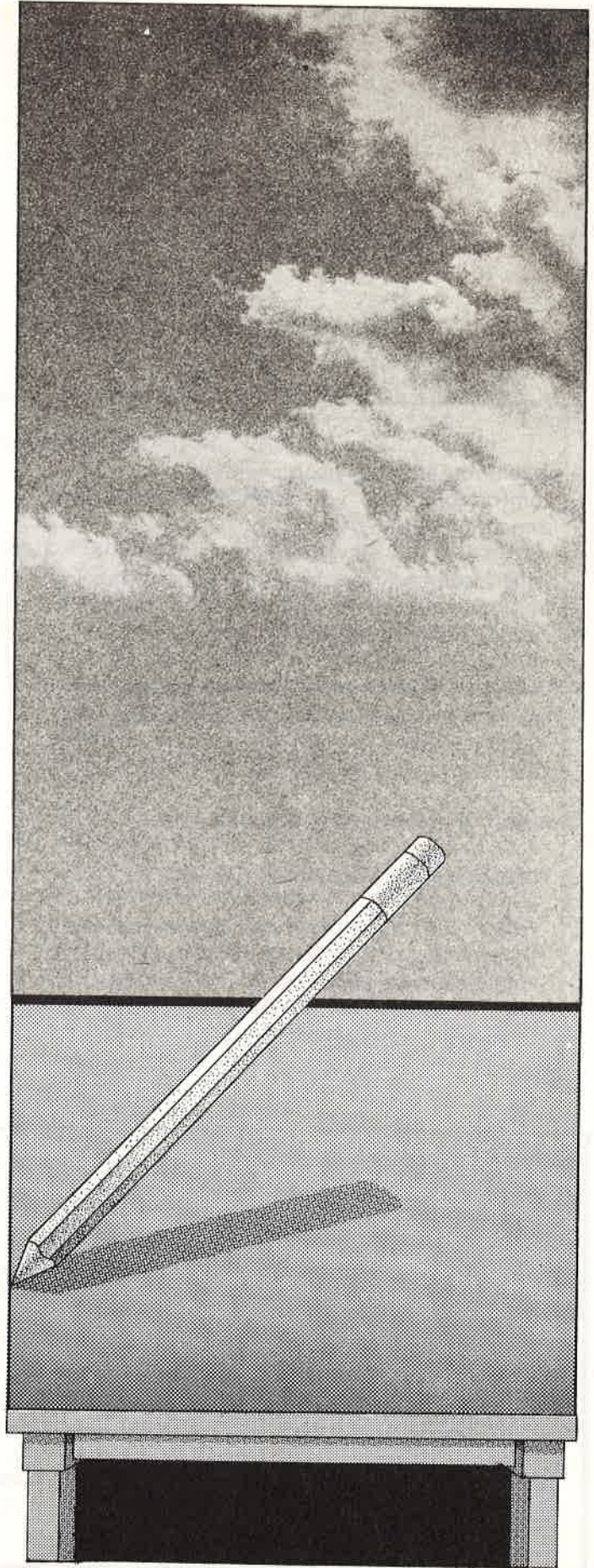
There *was* a time when I felt the same way, but it was so long ago that I really couldn't remember what I had done to overcome it. Still, I recognized that if I wanted to help others in meeting their writing blocks I had to recover a sense of the thresholds I had passed in learning how to write. Unless I could find out what I had done with myself in order to write, I could never really know what writing was. I would spend my time picking up what various self-styled experts claimed they knew but I wouldn't have my own basis for certainty.

Since I started seriously studying my own experience as a writer, I have found that there is a lot to be learned by remembering and reconstructing. But a lot gets left out and muddled in this way too. I didn't discover other ways of working on my own writing until I began attending seminars with Dr. Caleb Gattegno* in 1971. He made me aware that there are techniques for examining what I do now, in the present, which are often more powerful for illuminating the character of a skill, or know-how, than trying to revive the past.

What I want to offer here is an approach to "just writing" based on my own understanding of Dr. Gattegno's ways of working. I hope that the following "Short Course" of exercises can help others to learn for themselves what the activity of writing demands of us and the resources that every one of us brings to it. The purpose of these exercises is not to make anyone a "good" writer. I only want to provide an instrument for increasing awareness of what writing is. Just writing.

Each of the "pages" in my "Short Course" is concerned with all of the things that a person must do with himself or herself in order to write. There is, however, a slightly different emphasis on each page. Page 1 should be done first. The other pages can be completed in any order. Or one can leave part of a page unfinished and turn to another page. Of course, the directions for the exercises can be either read by the person working on the course or they can be delivered orally by someone else.

* Dr. Gattegno is the originator of an approach to literacy called "Words in Color." He is also known, throughout the world, for his contributions to education in the field of mathematics, languages, early childhood, and teaching of the deaf.



Page 1

- When you are with people with whom you feel comfortable, do you find that you have something to say? A lot?
- Which comes first when you speak, knowing that you have something you want to say or the words? Test yourself to find out.
- Once you start to speak, do you find that you have more to say as you keep talking? See what happens if you try to talk quickly, without stopping, for one full minute.
- Make a short statement out loud.
- Write down the same words you said.

Are you sure that you wrote the same words? How can you tell? Can you make a much longer statement and write down the words accurately? (It doesn't matter if you misspell.)

- Think of something else you could say but, instead of speaking, write it down without speaking.
- Can you think of something to say and write the words down as they come into your mind without taking the time to say them to yourself first?

Continue "talking with your pencil" for several minutes.

Can you make your pencil move fast enough to get all of your words down? (Don't worry about spelling or punctuation.)

- Experiment to see if you can think of what you want to say and write it down almost at the same moment.
- Is there anything you could say that you can't also write down?

Examples to accompany "Page 1"

- (a) The writer, a student from a parochial high school in Staten Island, N.Y., was shown a picture and asked to write whatever he wanted for 10 minutes.

A place in England a city which is very liveing spot a lot of people are leaving in this city and a lot of people visit this city to stay people come and visit this place to see thing old thing that they have not seen before thats what the city is being for old thing form the 1800s that people like to see.

- (b) The same person was then asked to utter sentences to himself and then write them down exactly as he spoke them. This exercise took about five minutes.

My recorder broke down and I put it in the shop. So now I am waiting to get it out in a few days. I hope it doesen caused to much I don't have that much to pay. The arm of the recorder was the problem so it shouldn't caused that much.

Page 2

- Take a pencil and a piece of blank paper and write continuously for three minutes without removing your pencil from the paper. Use script rather than print and pay no attention to whether what you write makes sense or is spelled correctly. If you can't think of anything to say, just write down all the words you can think of. When you finish, turn the paper over without reading what you wrote.
- Write for three more minutes on the reverse side of the paper, following the same directions.
- Write for three more minutes on a second sheet of paper.

Count how many words you wrote each time. Did your output increase the second and/or third time? Have you written more than you usually write in the same amount of time?

Read what you wrote aloud and listen to yourself. Does it make sense? Does it sound like the English you speak?

- Experiment to see if you can cover one complete page by writing continuously. As you write, catch yourself each time you start to think about spelling or whether what you are writing is "good" or "bad."

Read what you wrote to someone else. Does it make sense to them?
- When you write faster, do you find that you have more or less to say?
- Does your writing make more sense when you write slowly? Does "making sense" have anything to do with the quality of your handwriting or your spelling?

Example of exercise on "Page 2"

(a) First three-minute writing

I think that books should be given out free to all students in all education systems. I know that this sounds impossible because there's no money profit involved. But I do think students would benefit from this suggestion. Books that are used in college are very expensive and many students have to save for many weeks before they can buy all (61 words)

(b) Second three-minute writing

I could never imagine children growing up in a city. I myself have grown up in Staten Island, which had a country atmosphere when I grew up. I can remember playing in the field in the back of my house, running in the brook and getting very dirty. The most remarkable times I ever had were in woods. And around the brook. My older brother and his friends always built a swing over the brook in the summer. Climbing up the tree that contained the swing was no easy chore for a (92 words)

(c) Third three-minute writing

The worst job I ever had was in city. It was the best paying job I ever had but it was the most boring. I held the position of a cash clerk in the second largest stock firm, Bache and Company, Incorporated. The reason why this job was boring was because everything had to be done in the format A,B,C, & D. There was no intellectual knowledge needed for this job and it drove me up the wall. All day in work I had to day dream to keep myself from going crazy. The only pleasant thing I can remember was going to Chinatown to eat lunch. Another reason why I hated the was because (118 words)

Cathy Putkowski
(SICC Student)

Page 3

- Complete the following sentence by adding one word at the end:

As they turned the corner they saw

Copy the completed sentence onto the top of a blank sheet of paper and continue by writing a second sentence which begins with the following word: Maybe

Add a third sentence to the story.

Add five more sentences to the story.

End the story.

How much of the story was given to you and how much did you have to provide? Would anyone else write the same story

you wrote?

Could you see in your mind what was happening in the story? If so, was it like a picture or or a movie? Did you see all of it at the beginning or did more come into your mind as you continued? Can you see it all again when you read the story over?

- Close your eyes and picture in your mind a difficult or embarrassing situation which you would not like to find yourself in.

Describe in writing what the situation is.

Write what you would say to get yourself out of that situation.

- Does making pictures in your mind help you think of things to say or write?

Examples of exercise on "Page 3"

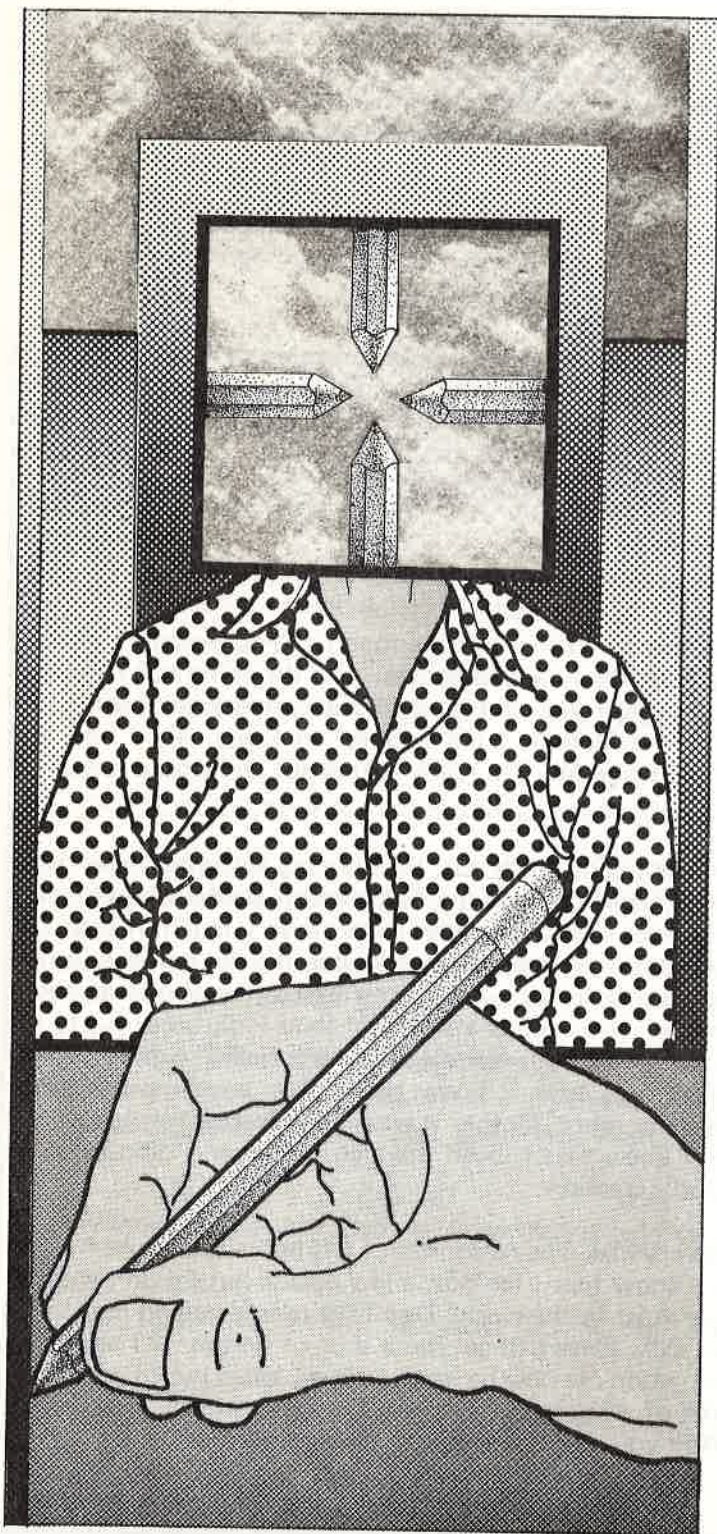
- (a) *As they turned the corner they saw* a thief. *Maybe* he wasn't a thief but a man in a hurry. The man was running in the direction of the police station. When he got to the police station, he told the officer that there had been a robbery. The officer asked him who was robbed. The man replied "Me." The officer then took down all the information that he needed. He told the man to have a seat and try to relax and he would put a man on the case right away.

After three days of investigating a police officer found the criminal. He was arrested and sent to prison for fifteen years. The police found out that he was wanted for a number of other crimes. He found out the hard way that crime doesn't pay.

Pam Ayers
(SICC Student)

- (b) *As they turned the corner they saw* Fred. *Maybe* Fred was going our way? So we asked him and he said he was on his way to the park. We told him we were too so we asked him if we too can come along. On the way we began to talk about the way we would like our future to turn out. Fred said that he would like to have a job that he would like and would have a lot of free time, to do what he wanted. My other friend said that he would be an accountant and make a lot of money. Fred said, what difference does it make if you make alot of money but never have enough free time to spend it. I said, I see both your points but I'd rather be in Fred's position. And then we got to the park and started to play basketball as we came here to do.

Frank Freeman
(SICC Student)



Page 4

- Close your eyes and sit silently for a moment. Imagine that someone you know well is talking to you.

Open your eyes and write down what they are saying. Try to capture the exact way they speak.

Can you hear the person's voice in what you wrote?

- Imagine that you are the President of the United States making a speech on television.

Practice making your voice sound like the President's and speak for a few minutes in his style.

Write down the speech which you made. Later on, ask someone else to read it aloud and listen to see if it sounds like the voice you had in mind.

- Write a dialogue between two angry people.
- Write any of the following which appeal to you:

A letter to someone you love.

A letter to someone you hate.

A script for a T.V. commercial.

A paragraph which will make someone you know angry.

A paragraph which will make someone laugh.

Examples of "letter to someone you love" on "Page 4"

(Names are withheld at the writers' request. All are former SICC students.)

(a) To my Father—

I love you and I hate you. Sometimes I admire you so much that I really want to be just like you and sometimes I can't think of anyone in the world who disgusts me more than you do. You have more charm and appeal than any human person deserves but underneath your charm and appeal you are so selfish and rotten—how can you be so deceiving?

It's so strange, everything reminds me of you; shoes in a store window, a jacket that B— wears, Scrabble, frames of buildings, little red sports cars and more than anything else—other men. I am constantly thinking that someone has your color eyes, your shape nose, a face just like yours, but never quite so handsome. I miss you madly but I never want to see you again. However, you are still my Daddy.

Love forever,

(b) To Susan

You are the most possessive female I have met in my life. Your gall is only surpassed in its enormosity by your big mouth. You never cease to put your nose into other people's business. Instead you should take care of your own business which is in a greater need than that of the others you worry about. The perplexities of your life should be ample enough to keep you out of mischief. And last, but definitely not least, you'll get along with me better.

(c) Dear Mother,

As you know there has been a change in my character in the last few months. You probably noticed that I'm harder to get along with. I've been very edgy lately and sleep alot. I'm dropping out of school because its no longer important to me. All in all, I guess I just said the hell with society as a whole. My feelings are this because I am now a drug addict. Yes Mother, I am hooked on Dope. Right now and forever more, my only want, need, and desire will be for heroin. I'm really strung out and would rather die than rehabilitate.

It all started out in the very way almost every other junkie starts out. I was young and wild. I was ready to experience any new thing that seemed interesting. I sped through the first stage of alcoholism. I quickly moved to smoking reefers in the parks with the fellows. I enjoyed reefer smoking very much. It surprised me that you never found out about it. Then I took my first part of my last step. In the concrete jungle called New York I somewhat graduated. I moved up to heroin. I took my first blow (sniff) at about sixteen. I was always curious about the use of heroin. The addicts always did look look beautiful to me when they were in a deep nod. When I first used heroin the high was the best I ever had. (I went on to get better highs as I used more heroin but for the first time using it it was better than anything else I ever used.) At first I said to myself I shouldn't use this any more. Mother it wasn't the fear of heroin itself, it was because I knew that after only trying it once I knew that I loved the high. However, I didn't stop so now I am one of the lowest species of man since God's creation.

I know that you won't understand Mother. Its very bad. The reason that I left home is because I didn't want to bring any disgrace on you or Pop. Also, I know that I am now a low person but I didn't want to sink as low as to steal from you, the person I love most in the world. Don't try to understand me Ma, its impossible. Right now at this very moment I am sick. I need to get me a shot of heroin. If I am lucky Mother, if I am very lucky, if God is looking down upon me now he knows what I mean by if I am lucky. Mother, if I am lucky I will take this shot and die of an overdose because I'm dead already and I don't bring nothing but hurt and pain to other people. And you didn't raise me to be like that.

Your son,

– Write rapidly for 10 minutes without stopping or pausing to make corrections. When you have finished writing, put the paper aside, without reading what you wrote, for at least 20 minutes.

– Read what you wrote aloud, making sure that you do two things:

(1) Read *exactly* what is written on the paper.

(2) Listen to yourself reading and catch the points when what you hear fails to make sense or sounds "funny."

If you find anything which doesn't make sense, change the words so that it does make sense.

If you find anything which sounds funny, change it so that it sounds right.

When you finish, read the corrected copy over again to see if you need to make further changes.

Show what you have written and edited to someone else and ask them what they think.

– Ask someone to read a few sentences to you from a book so that you can write them down. Each sentence should be dictated with normal speed and expression and the person should not stop except at the end of each sentence.

After you have finished writing, ask the person to read the same sentences over again while you follow on your paper. See if all the little words have been included in what you wrote. Have any letters or syllables been left off the ends of words?

Give your paper to the other person and
cont. on next page

Example to accompany "Page 5"

(a) A monologue, written first non-stop and then corrected by reading aloud, listening to oneself, and looking. The writer is a student in "Developmental English" at SICC.

with these glasses

Where did I leave my fucking car. I can see shit ~~because of my glass~~. Now I can't see my car. In fact I can't

tired

see anything because I am too fucking ~~tired~~ to see. Now where am I, I thought I was in the city. Man I must

of smoked

~~have sucked~~ a lot of weed last night. The hell with the car. ~~Now~~ I just want to go to bed/~~I might as well go~~

now. But while

I am up I might as well go to the store and then go to the camp. And take it all on the men. Then I drill ~~to the house and go take it all going to drill these fucking men, like they have never seen. I'll just throw~~

those fucking men like they have never seen before.

I'll put them throw the ground. When I get throw with them.

M.P.s and say

~~them the ground when I get there with them. SHIT!!~~ Now I have to go to the fucking ~~cops and say~~ my

stoling

go to

time. SHIT,

s

fucking car has been ~~swipes~~. Now that is ~~got to~~ taken a fucking long ~~time SHIT~~ I have report to do. That

takes

shit that time. I wish I had some fucking time off. I would go to bed and not think at all. This fucking

sucks. You

you

shit!

camp ~~sucks you~~ eat shit, you almost sleep in shit! and when ~~do~~ anything in here you feel like ~~shit~~ But this

me,

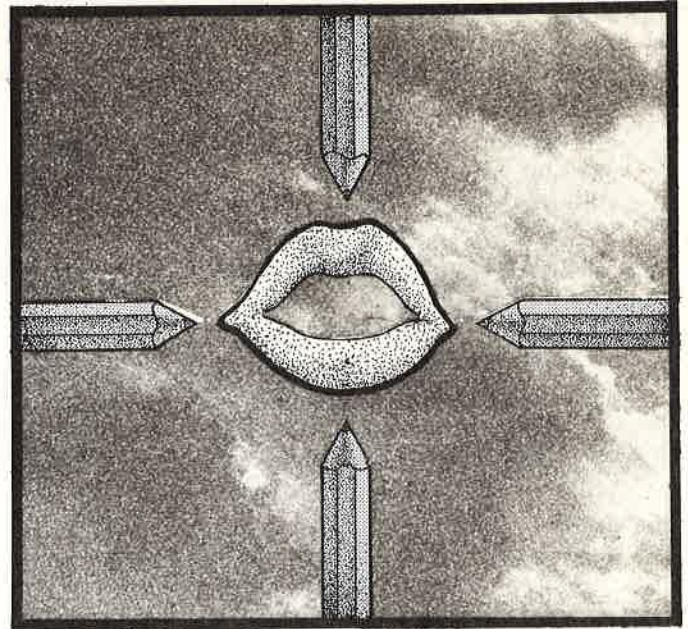
have

is just a bad day for ~~me~~. I just ~~home~~ to settle down.

cont. on next page

read from the book while they check what you wrote. Do they catch anything which you missed?

- Is it easier to make corrections and improvements at the same moment you are writing down what you want to say or at a later time?
- Do writing and making corrections require the same state of mind? Different states of mind?



(b) A sample of the same writer's regular in-class writing

I guess this weekend I am going to get stone. over my friends country place, up in New Jersey. His place is about 3 miles in the woods. You probably can get lose they, If you don't know the way. We going out to hunt and kill bare, deer and some times hawk. But you have to be good as a shoet to kill a hook.

(c) A sample of the same writer's dictation to someone else.

I was born Nov. 11, 1954. I was born in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. I went to P.S. 105. When I was in 6th Grade my friends and I beat up a teacher. Then I was sent to a 600 school. This was in 7th Grade. We used to throw chairs and hit teachers. A couple of months later I came home to see my parents. My friends and I formed a gang when I was in 7th grade. We stole a few cars and we used to have rumbles.

Example to accompany "Page 5"

Ten minutes of "free writing" followed by reading aloud, listening to oneself, looking and correcting/revising. The writer is a student in "Developmental English" at SICC. The corrections are written above the line.

On monday when I went to work my friend peter came to me and told me that he told carmen that I like her. I
^{up}
 told peter why did you had tell her that, he reply because I want you to get together with her. But Peter I'm
^{to go and}
 very happy that you want me to get together but you should have ask me first. But anyway what did she ^d ~~said~~
^{with her} ^{ed} ^{her}
 when you told her that I like her. She was very excited and ~~told me to get your~~ ^{asked me to get your} telephone number for ~~she~~
^{number}
 so she can call you. But why did you ask me for my telephone for and you waited until her sister came up to me and
^{ed} ^{forgot}
 ask me for it. And he told me I'm sorry Elvis because I ~~forget~~.

When I was first looking around for groups to work with at P.S. 84 last February, a 4th/5th grade teacher, Russ Seymour, presented me with a group of six students. He said that they were the ones he felt were not able to express themselves in the class and were in need of realizing more of themselves. Their classroom was a very warm open-style classroom. Both Russ and his assistant, Doris, are very sensitive and involved with their students. There are many interesting projects going on at all times.

The group was composed of three boys and three girls. The boys were hyperactive, with lots of energy and ideas, but unable to maintain focus. Over the months, they had produced wonderfully creative work—alternating with destructive behavior. During our

work together it was the boys that took up most of my attention but it was the work of the girls that was most interesting to me.

Lucy, Darleen, and Myra. All three were Latin, shy and extremely well behaved.

When we first began to work I suggested that everyone just draw. No definite directions—there was a great deal of interest in the crayons—they spent a long time laying them out in neat rows, separating the yellows and the violets, arranging them in related color rows. They said they loved them.

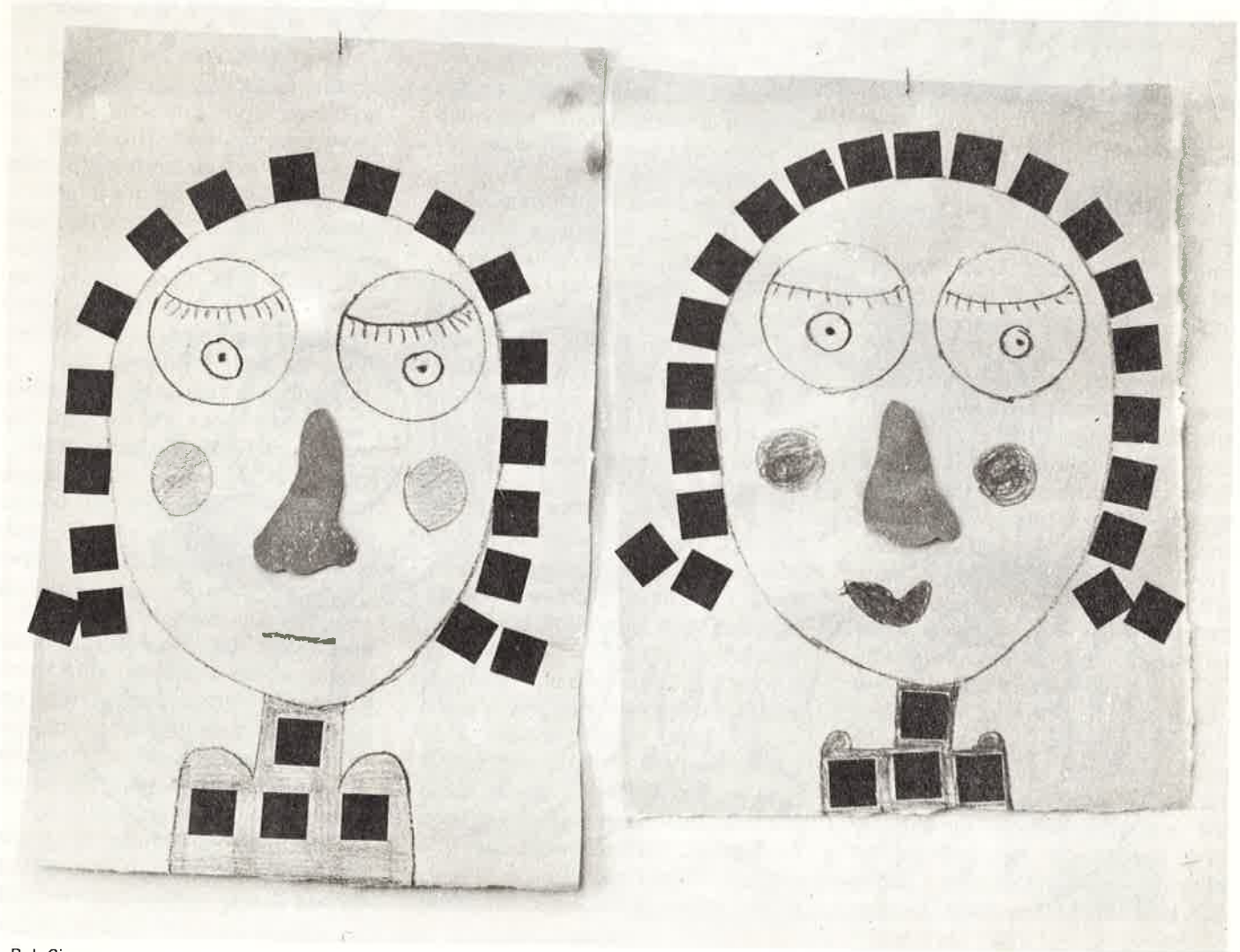
Drawing did not come easily to them. They asked for rulers. I gave them rulers. They made lines and crumpled papers. They smiled and were clearly embarrassed. I felt their desperation. The floundering and delaying was torture for us all.

Lucy, Darleen and Myra

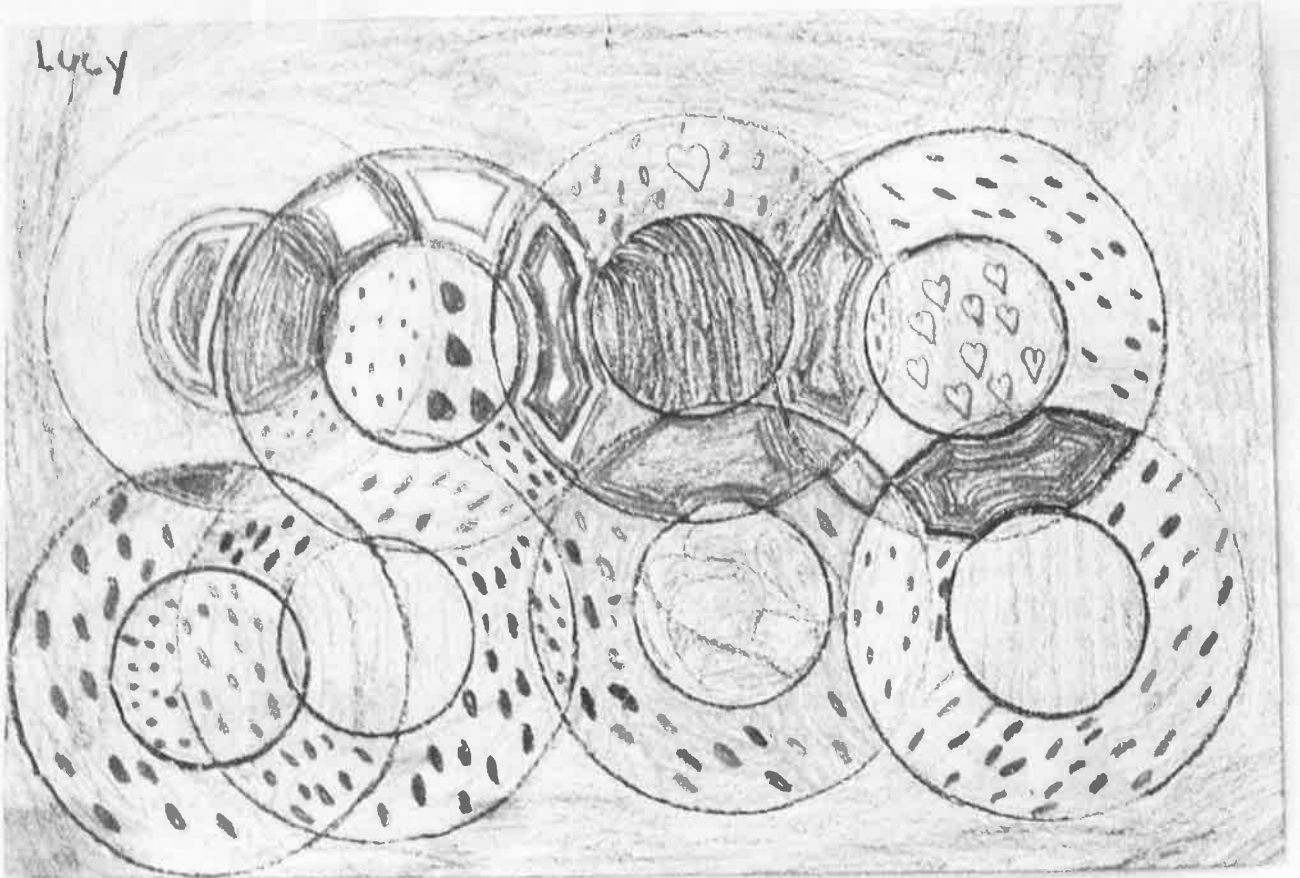
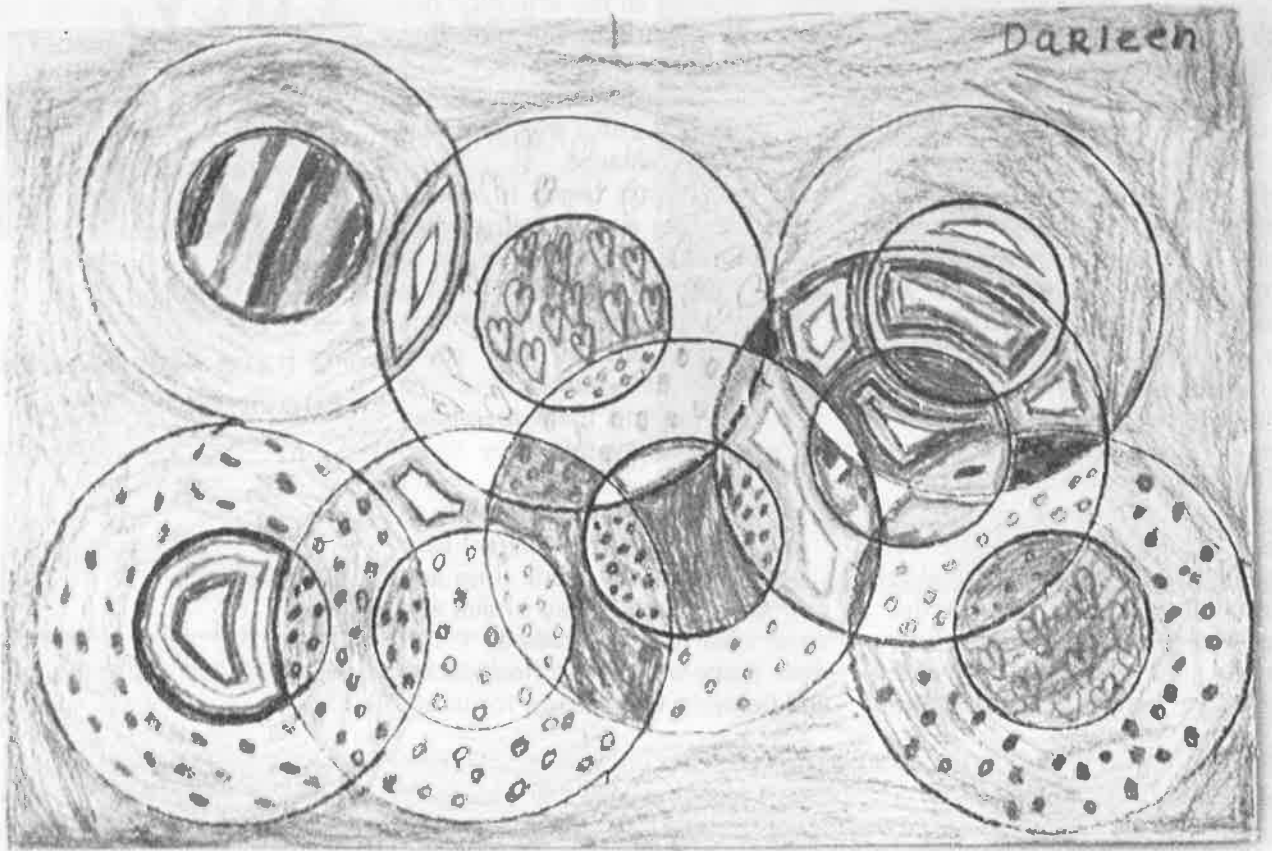
"I have only learned by copying."

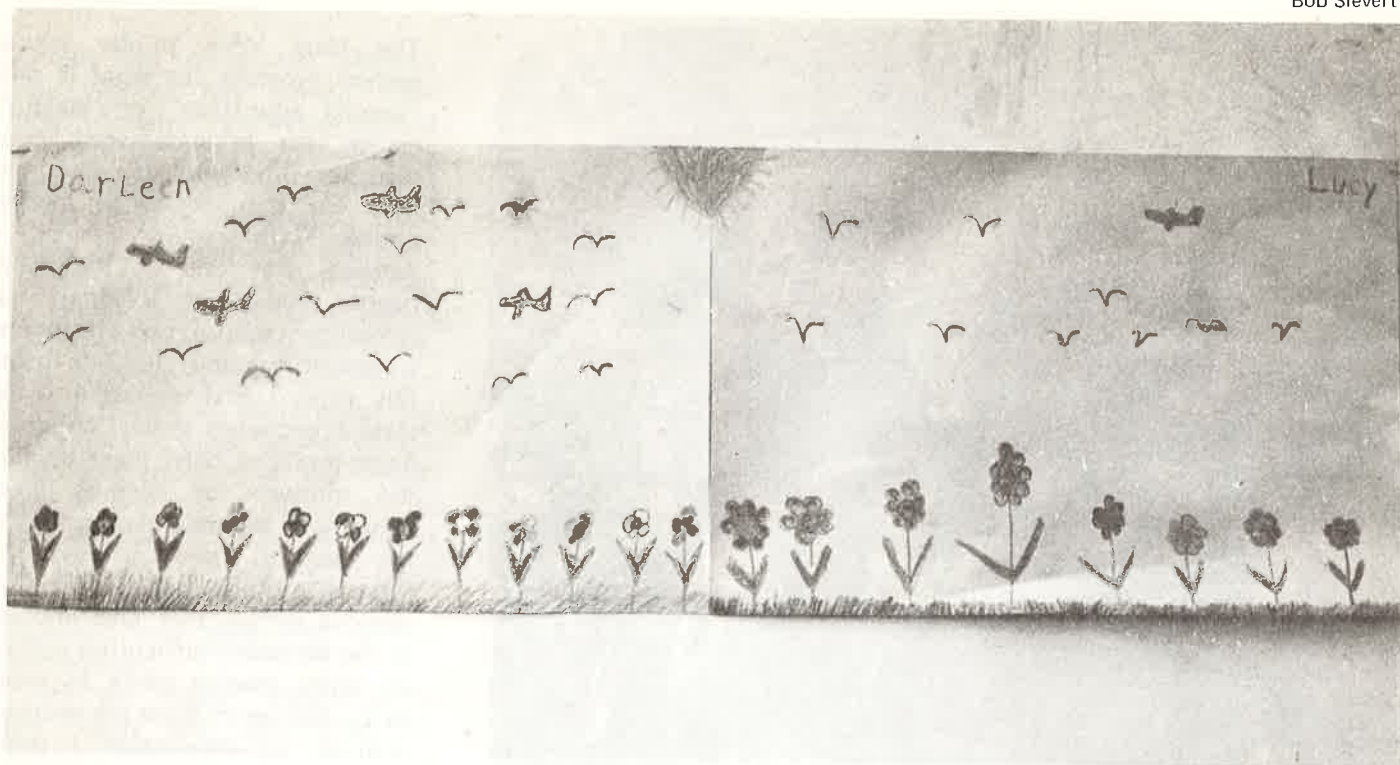
—Picasso

Bob Sievert



Bob Sievert





Finally Darleen hit it. She drew a house with her ruler, straight lines, a box crowned with a pyramid . . . few windows and one door. Quickly Lucy and Myra picked up on the motif. The finished work seemed identical to me.

Over the next few weeks a very clear pattern emerged. I would make suggestions for work: Darleen would begin and Lucy and Myra would follow. The initial periods of floundering grew shorter and shorter. The shyness between us gradually disappeared, and they became eager workers.

Russ asked me about their work several times. Things that concerned him were that they were so close in the classroom, copying each other. Lucy was so shy—she seldom spoke.

I began to feel it was my responsibility to do something about this matter. I began thinking of ways to counter this. I was hopeful some fabulous idea would emerge that would break through the whole thing. Nothing did.

But then I began to realize what was most interesting to me was no matter how much they copied one another—(Darleen was always

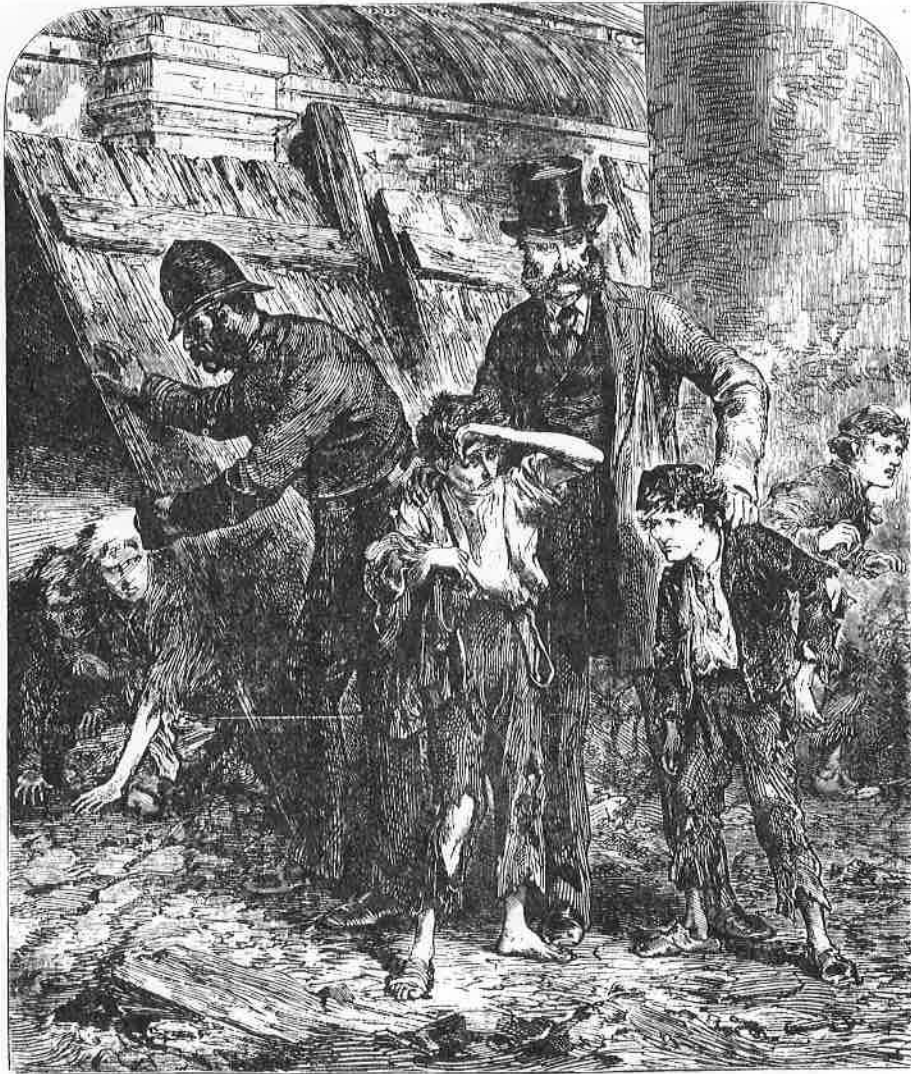
ready to use a good idea from Lucy or Myra too)—or how close the work seemed—there were always fascinating differences. Everyone would draw a flower—yet each flower was expressive of a totally different personality.

So gradually I lost any concern about the work of Lucy, Darleen, Myra being so similar. What I began to understand was that while each was producing work that was dependent on the other—the work was growing. It was no longer groping and primitive but was fast becoming strong and expressive. One day I discovered an envelope of sticker papers in the closet—I threw them out onto the table Lucy and Darleen were working on. (Myra had stopped coming regularly.) They examined them and then began to produce two wonderful collages of heads. While each used exactly the same motif and devices to produce the features, each head had a distinctive quality. Darleen's head was openly cheerful, intent and playful. Lucy's head was puzzled-looking. While Darleen's eyes were drawn exactly like Lucy's—Lucy's eyes held either a terror or a

sadness. But how beautiful they both were. How expressive of themselves, and what fine art these girls had managed to produce.

One of the last projects the girls worked on was a design tracing circles. It took them two weeks to complete. The first week only Darleen and Lucy came. They traced many circles over and over, overlapping and juxtaposing them. The designs afforded them many spaces that had to be dealt with decoratively. At first Darleen was the initiator of ways to fill the spaces. Soon, though, Lucy was thinking up patterns and color combinations and a real exchange occurred. The two finished designs were excellent, vivid bold work with real visual strength. While the work was still very related it had grown a great deal from the original stick houses.

On the last day of the workshop Lucy came by herself. Darleen and Myra were rehearsing for a pageant. She went about setting up some materials for herself and sat down and produced a very nice design with solid colored stars and then told me "That's all." ■



A LONDON SCHOOL-BOARD CAPTURE, 2.10 A.M.

Her manner toward her children at times approached the kind of things Dickens is always accused of exaggerating and never does.

Notes on a Health Class

Aaron Fogel

The New York public school system provides for what it calls "special education" or "health" classes, for brain-damaged, crippled, or otherwise sick children, who are thought to be incompatible with regular classes. I worked with one of the three health classes at a Manhattan elementary school, two afternoons a week throughout 1973-4. In the fall, when I first walked into the class I expected special children. Now that I've been there awhile, the motives for keeping these students in separate classes are not too clear to me—or at least the rational motives aren't. There are obvious details that give impulse to the decision—difficulties getting up stairs, reading levels, hyperactivity. But when these are weighed without pre-assumption I think the choice that has been made (what other voice to use than the passive?) to set these ones apart tells more about the limits of the concept of the classroom than it does about the students who've been excluded. My own experience, however, is only at one school. I didn't make any attempt to tour health classes, and don't intend to. What I want to write about, then, is just one year spent in one place, completely in the dark about administrative intentions and supervisions.

At 129 the health classes are all on the first floor, near the principal. The classes fall into three age levels. The oldest students with whom I worked stay on at school till the eighth grade. That way they avoid junior high, and go directly to high school or vocational training.

I came in as poetry teacher and left without any defined role. By the end we had done some writing, some reading, an over-ambitious puppet show project, a little magazine which was half pictures, some tapes of "trials" trying to resolve conflicts between members of the class. But the best moments (as has been the case with my other classes at the

school) are often just physical play without any fantasy trapping: throwing a volleyball around the room or going outside to play baseball. P.S. 129 seems to me an extraordinarily cramped, neat place. Many people in the community think of that as its virtue. To me it seems sad. The children brighten whenever they can move, one of those metamorphoses for which there's no picture but the dead coming alive. In my experience the children in the health classes and the children whom they refer with O'Neill-like pathos as "upstairs," are exactly the same in this respect: both need to go outdoors and play, and neither gets enough.

But the "health" class students get much less even than the regulars. When I first came to the class, they had a new teacher who worked throughout the year to change the notion of the health class as "special." He changed the name, and simply called the class by its room number, like the regular classes in the school. He worked against a years-long tradition of restriction set up by the teacher of the middle level "health" class, whose manner toward her children at times approached the kind of things Dickens is always accused of exaggerating and never does. And he worked to take the class outside, something previously forbidden. But the schedule for the "health" children, who were mostly between 12 and 14, called for an hour in "cot room" with the two younger health classes. The two sets of blinds, yellow and black, came down. And for an hour, after early lunch, which they ate separate from their peers, the health classes are supposed to sleep. Sleep perhaps the younger kids did. The diversions of the children in the eldest class were more wide awake, and consisted largely of boys and girls edging cots next to each other and committing the happy crime of "feeling culo," as they loved to

put it, and laughing. The trial which we recorded in the beginning of the year concerned the accusation by one member of the class that two of the others were engaging in feeling culo. Pretty obviously, he was jealous and envious, and his accusations were real, shrill, and oratorically moralistic. "You shouldn't do that!" he kept screaming. The culprits and the rest of the class were having a terrific time with the story, and there were gradual teasing admissions of the facts. These in turn led to reminiscences about their romances when they were ten, hilarious and beautiful. The small number of kids in the classes—around ten—I guess permits that kind of play.

After lunch the regular students went outside and played on the block near the school, a long sloping hill down which they like to charge. It wasn't till late in the year that the new teacher managed to get his class outside as well. At times they were shy and inactive, a good half of them



clinging around the teacher. When I arrived during lunch hour, they'd cling around me a lot. They were afraid, partly because of the conditioning. There was some ostracism and jeering from some of the kids, but there was also some integration. There was no reason for the kids not to be outside. This year, there's a new teacher again, and the kids are not going out after lunch. The disappointment and depression is intense.

At the beginning of the year they wrote some poems by dictation about the "cot-room" issue. "Why should we lay down? We don't need cots. Cots are for kids, not for me. I get enough sleep at home, when I be home."

Maybe it isn't impossible, but certainly it's pointless to teach poetry to people who are physically depressed. Those who wrote best in the class were those who were most visibly abnormal—that is, they were wild. There were a couple of boys who were fairly outside the range of social understanding—they did strange things that showed a lack of awareness of other people. These two were very productive within that depressed space, because I think somehow they didn't let it cramp their style. One wrote a "novel." One did endless pictures. On the other hand, there were two girls who were super close and spent all day talking to each other. They were both mildly crippled, and not brain-damaged at all. The class depressed and quieted them enormously, and if my observations of the year were accurate, they did very little work for the main teacher and virtually none for me. The class was intolerable for them, even though the teacher was excellent. Their activity and productivity were almost completely zeroed by their social receptiveness. They stopped doing because they could sit. (The same thing applies perhaps to the whole culture. Egomaniacs function well in institutions which tend to make

the people who are aware of others quiet and resistant.) No one could fully provide them with the kind of joyous physical environment which would have been necessary if they were to produce something beautiful. They disliked their own writings because there was too little good about the world that they had to say: they didn't want to be phony and "make up beautiful things"—so, one gets the impression, they just stopped thinking and tried to limit their seeing to when it was necessary for self-protection.

So, for example, one of the young women wrote a piece at the beginning of the year which began, "The Ghetto is a place where blacks grow up hard," and went on to say simply and eloquently that anybody who hadn't experienced it couldn't understand it just by reading about it. That was the only thing she wrote all year. I told her that it was good. At the end of the year we put it in the class magazine as her piece. But she didn't believe it was good and she wanted simply to read the books I brought in—books of poems, books of anything. So I brought in a lot of books. And she read them.

If this sounds like approval of her resignation I don't mean it to be. The problem was, however, that poems simply do not give anybody the kind of physical exhilaration that everyone needs. The kids who were totally self-involved could write novels about themselves and horses or paint vast murals about themselves and animals. They were working something out which was already in their own terms: dream images from inside. The others were much happier writing love letters to real people—whether they really had anything going or not—and then hiding them. I saw some of the letters but I wouldn't ask to hand them round. The "trial" on tape was a big success because it brought love or love play—the main issue—into the

community in a form that was hilarious and that dealt with the problem of slanders among them. We did other tapes, none as good.

When we went outside to play ball for the first time in the spring I was astonished by the change. They were different people. Big laughs, loads of talk and unmalicious laughter, clear happiness. I thought, why not do this every day? I came home thinking about the afternoon outside.

This year they don't go outside any more. The teacher's a woman who wouldn't play with them. So one afternoon we were in gym—there were only five kids present—and I played baseball with them. Enormous fun. Bad tempers. One of the boys, Kelly (the accuser in the tape) is a terrible loser, and had two very good hits caught on a fly by a kid who never should have been able to catch them. The second time he was caught out this way I fell on the floor of the gym laughing at the sheer unfairness of it. Kelly, who was always griping and grouching and was about to go into a tantrum of sore-losing, saw the joke, started laughing, and also fell on the floor and rolled around. That's the only way I know how to teach in this school—by the occasional physical uproariousness.

The same need for a physical breach in the cramped neatness exists "upstairs." It's no different. My best lessons there involved things like taking ten kids out of a class, and running around with a ridiculous plastic flute we found, playing unplanned notes in their ears, and having them write poems on the board while I did so. They wrote some of their simplest, prettiest poems. They nudged each other for space on the board: the weaklings ended up writing thin poems with short lines, because they couldn't get much board space. No doubt that's where short lines come from. Other times I let them run around like mad, undisciplined. I'd get

infuriated with them. Then I'd let them do it. What did it matter? But they wrote a lot of good poetry in between, on and off, here and there. So I have a grind to axe.

Downstairs, if I'd run around playing a plastic flute, it wouldn't have worked. They'd have shrunk away. Because I would be monopolizing physical space that they had no access to, that had been effectively beaten out of them—not because they're crippled or spastic—that doesn't stop them from moving. What stops them is the drugs, the image, the cots, the black blinds, the lack of gym, the lack of outside, the different schedule, the absence of sufficient physical activity.

I introduced a puppetry project which turned out to be a fizzle. The teacher had been the art teacher in the school, then a fifth grade teacher, and now was moving on to special education. Not knowing enough about time and the river, I chose a particularly fancy way of making puppets—by casting in plaster from originals they'd made, and then producing the finished product in plastic wood. The whole physical process of making the puppets was all right. I had some difficulty at first explaining what casting was all about, and of course it had to be seen. I wanted them to see casting and duplication because it had left a magical impression on me in childhood. They were tentative, and a bit repelled by the gooky materials involved: vaseline, oily clay, plaster, and worst of all plastic wood with its almost intolerable smell. Intoxicating. Dangerous. They made their own puppet heads in several sessions. Then they worked along on the process of casting, as apprentices work with masters—helping, never supervising. The finished products (after about four months) were really snazzy painted costumed puppets which were simply too immense and proper for them to handle with ease. We did a couple

of lessons on the gestures of puppets, and I tried to teach them how to render emotion. I tried to show them about exaggeration. Some of them got the idea and enjoyed themselves. Others were bored and resistant. We improvised a few little plays. We had an immense puppet stage which they'd helped build, which sat at the back of the room, with its curtains, and became another closet to hide in and play secret games. But before we got to the point of really putting on a play, we had a new thing going, which was a rexograph in the room. With that we made up pictures and put together the magazine. Then the term was over. I suppose the experiences of casting and building brought some pleasure, and I don't regret it. But I think the disappointment of the project is a lesson.

Another good physical scene: There I am, coming in week after week, time after time, the poetry man. They joke about me and my poems. He wants poems. Then one day we get a typewriter for the class. I can do 80. Till now I've been taking down poems and stories by hand. I've been reading them poems. Not much of an impression. But now they dictate to me their stories and I'm typing away fast as they can talk. Impressed! Wow! they said. This guy really knows something about words. They were joking, not naive—but they were seeing something go. And they worked.

A remarkable capacity to sum up their major experience concisely, so suddenly you've nothing to say. Connie writes about her thoughts at home: "I sit in my room all night and dream about lovebirds, singing in the night. They're at it all the time, you go up and ring the doorbell, and they have a sign that says, Do Not Disturb! Lovebirds at Business! Attorney At Law! For Lovebirds Only!"

Or Elliot, who distrusted with good reason all the time. He wrote



“No one could fully provide them with the kind of joyous physical environment which would have been necessary if they were to produce something beautiful.”

a small novel called, "Me The Pinto Horse." The relationship between horse and master goes through ups and downs of affection and hatred. Here's the peripety:

"Then his master tricked him and said nicely to him, you have to do some work for me. Then the horse felt good, because he thought his master liked him then. And then the master said, you have to pull this wagon, it's very light, you don't have to worry. And then he hid all the heavy rocks under the cover of the wagon so the horse wouldn't know it. And then the horse had a feeling that he was tricking him. The master saddled the horse up and then he started pulling the wagon. Then the horse said, O my god, what's the matter I can't pull this thing. And the master said, I tricked you, huh? And then he whipped him and told him to go faster and faster. Then the horse got so angry, and so mean, he pulled it so fast, it was going at least forty miles an hour one horse pulling it. Suddenly he fell. He passed out. A horse can't pass out, can it? Then the master got down off his buggy, and then he felt the horse's heart. The horse whispered to him, I'm gonna get you back one way or another for giving me a heart attack.

"The spirit of the horse rose and started dancing. A horse can't dance, but the spirit of a horse can dance. It had one leg; three heads, one at the end one at the front and one at the middle.

"Then the master got frightened. He took a 210 year old gun, and shot the spirit. The horse vomited. The master died because he couldn't stand the stink of the vomit."

Is this a recollection and rewrite of a book he was reading? I don't know. I don't think it matters. Most of this was not dictated, but written out by Elliot by hand, while he kept asking me how to spell this and that. A very physical and emphatic story. ■

between the survivors and the stars

(excerpts)

The authors of these poems are my students. I met them in the spring of 1973 when they were 8th-graders at Martin Luther King Junior High School in Berkeley, and I came in to do a nine-week poetry workshop thru the Poetry-in-the-Schools program.

Vast room 107 Thursday afternoons with its cavernous 36 windows, I gave them inventions, things to write about, to get started. Dream poems, lies, sky poems, poems from wordcards, poems about the school. The awareness & power in their writing was startling; its fury and delicacy. When the school-time money ran out I wasn't ready for it to end. Some of the students wanted to go on also, so we started meeting in our houses, evenings, weekends, and sometimes went to poetry readings or walking in the green hills.

It's been a year now we've known each other, been writing together, learning from each other. It's not an easy age, 14 and 15, full of powerful, confused & frustrated feelings, desperate, choked, impossible. In some saner societies it has been a time for reflection & meditation away from the family, the childhood hearty. A time to listen within, to understand what path one is called to. Maybe the path of poetry. Now children have to do this amidst a daily run of hassles, commands and distractions.

I began writing poetry, nearly twenty years ago, in a time of particular isolation & hopelessness in the ninth grade. I remember my loneliness, my conviction that nothing would ever really change; and the rush of ecstatic power as I discovered the inward tool of language. I was lucky in having two adults at that time who understood what I was doing, criticized and supported me: John C. Adler, and, a year later, Jeff Cambell. Remembering them has helped me again as I've been a guide and teacher for these younger poets this year.

John Oliver Simon
Berkeley,
May 1974

"I always wanted to sing
and dance
sing and dance.
Perform on
stages with bright
lights
and my name
rehearsed by
onlookers."
Grandma
used
to dance
in the kitchen
at midnight
when the lites
were out
I could hear
her feet
tapping
and parading
against the floor
"Maria Felix that's what
we'll call you when you
get famous . . ."
Grandma used
to take me to her
closet
when Grandpa was
away
she'd bring out
ballerina slippers
and dared me
to a performance.
Sing and dance
Sing and dance
"But things don't always
turn out the way you
want . . . do they Lisa
dear . . . do they?"

Leesa Felix

The complete text of *Between the Survivors and the Stars* may be obtained from Galactic Approximation Press, 2209 California Street, Berkeley, California.

his mother
 wears peace signs
 and says war is
 no good.
 his father gets 20,000 dollars
 teaching
 anthropology
 and shuffling papers
 and the house is huge
 the music is soft
 and
 beautiful;
 and the bay shines from the terrace
 and the little boy
 lies in bed, terrified
 that a bad man will come
 and take it all away.

Leesa Felix

it's not nice to fool mother nature
 storms rage
 cities fall
 and the entire world
 writhes in its
 final throes of
 agony
 and death
 remember, mr. margarine man
 before you try to
 pass yourself off as
 butter,
 IT'S
 NOT
 NICE
 TO
 FOOL
 MOTHER
 NATURE!

Bill Rabkin

DARK ANGEL:1600-1915

dancing, bright lady, then began to be
 dark angel, with thine aching lust
 dark house, by which once more i stand
 dazzled thus with height of place
 dear Chloe, how blubbered is that pretty face!
 dear, why should you command me to my rest
 death, be not proud, though some have called thee
 death stands above me, whispering low
 diaphenia, like the daffadowndilly
 do not conceal thy radiant eyes
 do not go gentle into that good night
 does the road wind uphill all the way?
 done is a battell on the dragon blak
 downhill i came, hungry, and yet not starved;
 drink to me only with thine eyes,
 drop, drop, slow tears.

Bill Rabkin

Excerpted from "The Comfort of Death"

4.

He's living his
last few
minutes,
if he's
damned
hours.
I wonder
what
he's thinking.
Is his life
passing
before
his eyes
as they shoot
some
more
crap into
him?
Or is he just
wishing they'd
all leave
and let him
die?
The report says
he keeps pushing
away the
oxygen mask.

5.

Oh my.
This day
changing
to another
now
it's today—
the second hand
passes twelve
now it's
tomorrow.
What right does a
clock have
to wash away
all of yesterdays
joy and sorrow
One quick sweep
a new day
That's funny. I don't
feel any
different.
And neither does
my
granddaddy
who yesterday was—is
lying under
an oxygen tent
today.
There's no real
change
Time is endless
One red
carpet
extended
forever.
Then is it
a silly
question
to ask
Why is it
that we
develop
wrinkles
and become
Grandparents?

9.

The slow lock
of
the door
marks yet,
another
end.
To climb
the
stairs
seems
endless.

12.

The comfort of death
Someone dies
and you hold
each other.
The comfort of death
Someone dies
and you cry.
The comfort of death
Someone dies
and the family gathers.
The comfort of death
Someone dies—
you see him dead
knowing that at
last
it's
over.

Sarah Kennedy

spinal boys coughs like a whipporwill
 for a bath for a bath
 I sleep in a bed of pain
 and memories of the pain of the night before
 girl lying next to me
 stomach cysts swirling eskimo blue
 icicles of terror dance in her head
 of the operation to have today
 janitors wheeling babies down the hallways
 my pain seems like diapers lying next to hers
 and I am ashamed
 as Bullwinkle calls from the 2nd story window
 black soot lying
 steam pipes bellowing tears
 doctors pouring out like
 the hippo's jaws opening on the wall
 interns turning and jumping challenging
 each other to tennis games
 so they can forget forget
 a tape recording of robins singing
 hidden in the lilac tree I know
 anorexia nervosa is the name
 I cry out and weep
 in the hallways

Edith Hodgkinson

 it's Valentine's Day at the hospital
 the nurses come in in white
 red foil hearts pasted on rosy cheeks
 to take some people's blood away
 examining it in private rooms with the doors closed
 the nurses come in in white
 to pump some people's blood out
 poor little children with only half a heart
 cake crumble blood crumb
 pity in red lace
 for lunch they gave me a napkin with red hearts
 chocolate cupcake with red sugar on top
 blood is sweet and pain is even closer
 and then the nurses tiptoed in in white
 and took my blood away
 little children scream and little children cry
 and when they're dead and finished
 the nurses stumble in in white
 wrap them up in red foil
 with a big red bow and present it to the parents
 with a sad smile and a nod
 we're sorry we tried we really did
 and if it's not too much trouble
 we'd like the box back
 after you kiss your child goodbye

I sometimes hear echoes,
 echoes of a people
 who have seen
 so little
 and suffered so much
 watching constellations
 of stars
 and stars
 millions
 of stars
 and not being able
 to see
 the difference
 between
 the survivors
 and the stars
 but I can hear
 I hear
 the voices
 breaking through
 my obsidian silence
 as I sit
 watching
 looking in the mirror
 at my passing
 reflections

Claire Siegel

I think about death
 sometimes
 I think hard and get scared
 sitting at a bus stop
 in the middle of a crowd of people
 not knowing
 how much I want to
 step out in the street
 and let all the cars
 run over me just roll on
 swift smooth seagull curve sky and
 road mixing together
 people screaming and crying at something that is gone
 or sometimes, sitting in the house
 all alone
 staring at the knife in the kitchen drawer
 watching sun pour through the window
 birds and cars outside
 thinking how easy it would be
 and
 I don't know I don't know I don't know
 what to do

Edith Hodgkinson

it was all foolish
I thought
Another pill another death
Just another End//////////////////////////////////// (Stop)
Then I came back

to reality
And told them what i did
it was all a dream i said all a dream (Stop)

They rushed me to the hospital
it was all foolish i said.
all foolish
They never cared about me before. (Stop)

E M E R G E N C Y
the sign says emergency
i was an emergency ?
i?
an emergency ? (Stop)

They had to go
Good Bye
i said
"you're all alone"
Good bye i said.
A white coated man

S D
MILE
"your name please"
he said
Lisa i said Lisa
i was dizzy and sick dizzy and sick
was twirling and sad twirling and sad
crying and sad
i was sick i said i was sick. (Stop)
"Get dressed in this white"

said the doctor
I was dressed in white
Like Dr. Kildare
oh my Dr. Kildare
It was all so foolish Dr. Kildare (?)
(S T O P)

I was foolish doc said
so Y O U N G he said
I feel old i cried
i feel old i cried
"But you're young" he smiled
the doctor smiled. . . it was all so foolish
(Stop)

Don't PUMP my stomach i said
Let me die
Let me die
The doctor scared me
he scared me, he grinned
You're a coward he said a coward he said
(Stop)

Am i dying a cowards death ?
I asked
Only 51 aspirins . . . only 51 aspirins ?
The nurse chuckled
"A death ?"
(Stop)

This was all so foolish
So F O O L I S H
so foolish
This was all so.
(Stop)

Later on it was all over
Thank God
I said.
A L L O V E R
(Stop)

My blood was their next goal
a half a pint they said
only a half a pint
that is worse than death i said worse than death
The doctor dared chuckle, Chuckle i say.
(Stop)

The redness was all mine All mine All mine
It's fantastic i said that blood is all mine
(Stop)

Leesa Felix

Contributors' Notes

BILL BERNHARDT teaches reading and writing and coordinates the Developmental English program at Staten Island Community College.

DINA DUBOIS has taught fashion writing at Fashion Institute of Technology, art at the Rockland Project School (a free school) and is currently teaching film at Nyack High School in Nyack, New York. She and her daughter, Deborah, 11, live by the Hudson. Deborah likes classical music better than movies.

DAVID FLETCHER graduated from the University of Notre Dame and received a M.A. from C.C.N.Y. in education for the emotionally disturbed. He has worked with drug addicts during the past four years in P.S. 231, and has taught "the social-psychology of drug addiction" at the New School for Social Research. He writes songs, studies T'ai Chi Chu'an and runs for distance. Currently he is working on a series of autobiographical poems that fit into novel form.

AARON FOGEL teaches at P.S. 129 and at Lehman College. He studied at Columbia and was in England on a Kellett Fellowship for two years. He is finishing work for a Ph.D. at Columbia in English Lit. Poems and stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies, most recently *Sun* and *The Little Magazine*. A book of his poems will be published by Inwood-Horizon Press in 1975.

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ADALBERTO ORTIZ was born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico in 1947. He is a graduate of The City College. He was first-prize winner of the 125th anniversary CCNY art contest and received the James K. Jackett medal for distinction in theatrical design. He is now doing graduate work at NYU.

BOB SIEVERT is currently working at P.S. 84 in Manhattan and at C.S. 232 in the Bronx. He had an exhibit of his paintings this season at the Green Mt. Gallery. He has been a "street artist" (murals—street theatre). His theatre dance "Wolf Girl of London" was produced two years ago at the Intermedia Foundation.

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POSTER cover of the Fall 1973 issue of the Newsletter, full size (17 by 22).

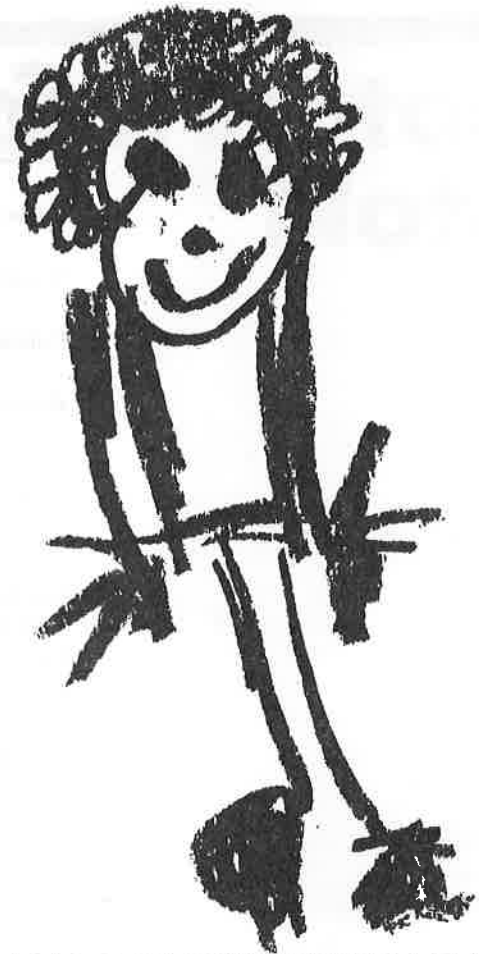
THE WHOLE WORD CATALOGUE (128 pages) is a practical collection of assignments for stimulating student writing, designed for both elementary and secondary students. Activities designed as catalysts for classroom exercises include: personal writing, collective novels, diagram stories, fables, spoof and parodies, and language games. It also contains an annotated bibliography.

IMAGINARY WORLDS (110 pages) originated from Richard Murphy's desire to find themes of sufficient breadth and interest to allow sustained, independent writing by students. Children invented their own Utopias of time and place, invented their own religions, new ways of fighting wars, different schools. They produced a great deal of extraordinary writing, much of it reprinted in the book.

A DAY DREAM I HAD AT NIGHT (124 pages) is a collection of oral literature from children who were not learning to read well or write competently or feel any real sense of satisfaction in school. The author, Roger Landrum, working in collaboration with two elementary school teachers, made class readers out of the children's own work, recorded the readers in a tape library, and designed a set of language exercises based on the readers.

TEACHERS & WRITERS COLLABORATIVE NEWSLETTER, issued three times a year, draws together the experience and ideas of the writers and other artists who conduct T & W workshops in schools and community groups. A typical issue contains excerpts from the detailed work diaries and articles of the artists, along with the works of the students and outside contributions.

Back issues of The Newsletter are available through Spring '73. Items of interest include: Anne Martin on the teaching of writing to first graders, Phillip Lopate on making videotapes with elementary school children (Spring '73); Ron Padgett on film making, Dan Cheifetz on theatre improvisation, Marc Kaminsky on poetry workshops with old people (Fall '73); Sue Willis on teaching the Middle Ages with a slant on writing and pageantry, Karen Hubert on literary genre in elementary school (Winter '73-'74); Bill Zavatsky on writing from paintings, Kathleen Meagher on the use of dreams in poetry (Spring '74); Jeannine Dobbs on teaching writing to the emotionally disturbed, Bob Sievert on visual arts (Fall '74).



Please send the following to the address indicated:

- _____ THE WHOLE WORD CATALOGUE @ \$3.00.
- _____ IMAGINARY WORLDS @ \$3.00.
- _____ A DAY DREAM I HAD AT NIGHT @ \$3.00.
- _____ SPRING 73; _____ FALL 73; _____ WINTER 73/74;
- _____ SPRING 74; FALL 74 NEWSLETTER @\$2.00
- _____ subscription(s) to TEACHERS & WRITERS COLLABORATIVE NEWSLETTER. three issues \$5.00.
- _____ POSTER @ \$2.00.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Please make checks payable to Teachers & Writers Collaborative, and send to:

Teachers & Writers	TOTAL
186 West 4th Street	ENCLOSED
New York City 10014	\$ _____

PLUGS

ART RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS is an organization of artists working in the public schools of the Chinatown area of New York City. Its storefront offers free materials, advice, and help with projects. Children have written and illustrated many lovely books, some of which are on sale for 50¢ each, 10 for \$3. Available titles are:

Arriving N.Y.C.
Chinese Folk Songs
Christmas in Puerto Rico
Chinese New Year Customs
Chinese Children's Games

Write to A.R.T.S., 98 Madison St., NYC 10002.

WHAT'S INSIDE YOU IT SHINES OUT OF YOU: POETRY GROUPS WITH OLD PEOPLE, a book by Marc Kaminsky, is now available from Horizon Press, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City, 10010. Price: \$7.95

MATH AND WRITING GAMES IN THE OPEN CLASSROOM by Herbert R. Kohl, a New York Review Book distributed by Vintage Books. Full of practical suggestions and techniques, a first rate book. New York Review, 250 West 57th Street, New York City 10019.

DREAMS AND INNER SPACE is a newsletter aimed at helping people get in touch with their dreams and teachers become more sensitive to this aspect of themselves and of the students they work with. Published 10 times yearly, September through June. Subscription \$5. Sample copy free. Dreams and Inner Space, Box 26556, Edendale P.O., Los Angeles, Calif., 90026.

A DIRECTORY OF AMERICAN POETS. The new 1975 edition, compiled by Poets & Writers Inc., updates and expands the 1973 edition. An exhaustive, state-by-state list of poets interested in working in writing programs in the schools. An invaluable resource for administrators and teachers interested in finding out who's available in their area. Paperback copies \$6. Hardcover \$12. All available back issues of Coda, the supplemental newsletter, are sent with every copy, plus the new Codas to be published. Copies available from Publishing Center for Cultural Resources, 27 West 53rd Street, New York City 10019.

Zephyros, a group based in San Francisco, is trying to set up a forum in which teachers can share and create new teaching ways and topics. They publish textbooks and other materials full of great ideas and practical suggestions. Check them out at: Zephyros, 1201 Stanyan Street, San Francisco, California 94117.

Teachers and Administrators in New York State interested in having a poet visit their school may inquire about the New York State Poets in the School Matching Grant Workshops. Address inquiries to (Main Office) Myra Klahr, 225 King Street, Chappaqua, New York 10514 (914) 769-4937 or 769-8561; (Branch Office) 57 Old Farm Road, Pleasantville, New York.

In other states the National Endowment For The Arts sponsors Poet in the Schools programs through the local arts councils. Inquiries should be directed to the arts councils in your state. A complete listing will be published in a future issue of the Newsletter.