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POSTSCWRIP

SCWriP To Establish a James Moffett Archive

by Camille Despain ('07)

It's not stuff, it's an archive. It is the SCWriP Archive and Library.

Why does anyone save stuff? What are the questions we ask or the memories that we recall when we save materials and later review them? I have a collection of recipe books, and they transport me through experiences as well as invoke reactions to ingredients. What do you have in your personal library that does this? Often referred to as the family historian, I am the repository of materials that my siblings think others may appreciate or find interest in. An old photo, a handwritten card, a hand-stitched blanket. All are items worthy of saving and appreciating. The items are part of a story.



As the 50th anniversary of the first Summer Institute at the Bay Area Writing Project approaches, we recognize that SCWriP and all of you are an important part of a story of educational improvement in the South Coast region, the state of California, and the nation. As part of that story, SCWriP is archiving materials created by author, teacher, and language learning theorist James Moffett. Moffett was a supporter of the writing project and a frequent presenter at writing project events. Just as I asked myself about my personal story and what I find of value in the archiving process, I ask the same questions about the collection of James Moffett's artifacts. What is the purpose of archiving materials like correspondence, curriculum, and book collections belonging to or authored by James Moffett? What does it mean for the writing project, and does it matter where we house the materials? Who will be interested? Not only who will be interested, but *how* will they be interested?

SCWriP is taking inspiration from The National Archives' Citizen Archivist Program. If you haven't heard of it and you are interested in history, it is worth a look. The National Archives posts historical artifacts and invites the community to analyze, transcribe, and share comments with other members. The ignited collective knowledge creates a richer interpretation and more thorough understanding of the documents and photographs. What interests me about this project is the variety of people who join the community in transcribing and identifying the materials. People from all walks of life, age, and backgrounds bring their collective knowledge and personal experiences to interact with, make sense of, and discover historical connections. Some collections are amazingly unique, and every piece of assistance leads to a greater understanding of the historical material. It's like putting a puzzle together—everyone in the community matters, even if one community member focused only on the blue bits.

The South Coast Writing Project invites you to join a SCWriP Fellow Archivist Community. Your expertise and lived experiences are valuable as we review and archive the materials in the SCWriP library. We are not trying to capture the past; we are looking forward with a lens on the works and collection of James Moffett housed in the South Coast Writing Project Archive and Library. As we examine the curriculum, what ideas develop for reconsideration? What can we learn from the collection?

James Moffett developed the curriculum, *Interactions*, to bring into classrooms his theories of writing and language development. The curriculum was developed for Language Arts teachers interested in creating a space for their students to develop as writers by acknowledging the life experience and constructed knowledge they brought to the classroom. He created *Interactions* to enact his theoretical understanding of the work of Vygotsky (student-centered activity structures), Dewey (relevant curriculum), and Bruner (scaffolding strategies) to support students as they learned about and developed their writing abilities. Moffett recognized that the then-contemporary language arts curricula did not reflect the needs of children or allow for student choice in writing activities. Some noted features of *Interactions* include individual activity cards, a diverse variety of readings and activities, and an open-ended teacher guide as an approach to the sequencing of the curriculum. (This curriculum incited violent controversy in Kanawha County, West Virginia in 1974.)

SCWriP has been given the Moffett curriculum and related materials to save and preserve. It is a legacy project, a history project, a research project, and a personal story project. We hope you see yourself as a part of this story and help us by participating. At this stage, we are working intently on preserving the artifacts. We are cataloging and organizing every piece, and along the way, we are making connections to familiar practices and wondering aloud about the significance of this curriculum model. We are asking you to help us think about the curriculum by bringing your specialized experiences and knowledge to the project. We are interested in developing questions, connecting theories, and creating classroom applications.

If any part of this sounds interesting to you, and we hope it does, please reach out and join us. We welcome your questions, thoughts, and ideas as well as your presence if you are able to work on campus with us. We'll even have a parking pass for you. Contact Camille Despain camilledespain@ucsb.edu or Tim Dewar dewar@education.ucsb.edu

From the Editor

by Cynthia Carbone Ward ('01)

It was a very good now. Otters frolicked, a scissor-tailed flycatcher soared from a tree, and creek and ocean carved new rivulets in the sand. Ten million years earlier, a particular whale met its death near here, and on this day we stood and beheld the strand of its vertebrae, unearthed in cliffs once were covered by the sea. A sleepy little boy who is almost three FaceTimed me from England, and I held up my phone and showed him the beach, and he said, "I want to go back there now." I lack the magic carpet to make that happen, but the day still seemed to be teeming with miracles.

Days earlier, I had come upon an old journal that I had written in my twenties. I first marveled at the meticulous penmanship, then felt sickened by the anguish of its contents, and finally tore it into confetti shreds, because, really, what's the point? It was all about desperation, sadness, stupid choices, and self-flagellation for abandoning and disappointing people I loved, filled with voices from a previous life, and none of them were happy. But I'm very glad I had the habit of writing. Even beyond being a form of time travel and a rich source of retroactive insights, the document is proof that one can survive and transcend. I am a poster child for late-blooming, messed-up young people who veer close to the edge. Take heart, young people.

As for joy, well,
that's another thing
I have learned. It's
there, many times
daily, if I give
myself permission
to experience it.

In fact, on my 27th birthday, in a florid flourish of self-indulgence, I had written a message to my future self. (And now here I was, with my numerals reversed to 72, reading it.) I was living in an apartment in Albany at that time, wrapping up a silly degree in sociology so I could finally be a college graduate and move through whatever doors this dubious achievement opened. I had left my husband in a manner so gradual and clumsy I compared it to doing surgery with a butter knife, and then stumbled into a melodramatic and abusive relationship with a horrible man I had met in Syracuse. I had not yet extricated myself from the latter, but I was beginning to see it more clearly. The message goes on and on, expressing love for my family and compassion for soulmates everywhere, proclaiming my determination to move forward, and in a nutshell, hoping that I would eventually have a home, be loved in a healthy way, and be happy. (Apparently, I did believe that happiness was at least possible.) Seven months after I wrote this birthday entry, my beloved father died of a heart attack, the first great loss of my life. And yet, somehow, in the years that followed, most of the things I wished for Future Cynthia eventually came to be, many in unimaginably wonderful ways.

Somewhere in that message to Future Cynthia, I resolved to start "championing" myself, taking my own side, yay Cynthia. I can appreciate the need I must have had to convince myself that I was worthy of self-love and self-respect, but the declarations seem fatuous to me now, and the decades have taught me that this fondness for oneself is far more likely to be achieved when not consciously aspired to. It's not a goal but a peripheral outcome, and it happens when living with gratitude, kindness, and joy. As for joy, well, that's another thing I have learned. It's there, many times daily, if I give myself permission to experience it. Does it eradicate all the sorrow, worry, and mistakes? Hell, no. But it's real, and what a shame it would be to turn away.

Maybe the ultimate secret known to wise old crones like me is that we make a choice every morning about the lens through which we want to view the world. Those words in blue ink between the covers of a composition notebook were still talking 45 years later—and isn't that amazing? It's the miracle of writing.

We also saw a rocket launch last week, and I've been perfecting a recipe for lentil soup just like my father used to make, and my little plum tree is beginning to yield fruit, and I am test-driving hearing aids and rode my bike yesterday in silvery drizzle. I'm doing a storytelling event in town with two talented performers, and a former student of mine said he still thinks of me when he writes, and the yellow birds keep coming back. A few clicks on the computer yesterday, and the room was filled with Beethoven. I realize it's easier to perceive the miracles here where the grandfather oaks almost nod when we pass, and bodacious clouds are sailing above green and yellow hills, where a whale rested his bones millennia ago and a little boy in Oxford talked to me on a cell-phone screen while I stood on a shore five-thousand miles away. But they're everywhere, these miracles, if we choose to pay attention. As Mary Oliver said,

*Belief isn't always easy.
But this much I have learned --
if not enough else --
to live with my eyes open.*

And lo and behold, here is a new edition of PostSCWriP! Did you think we had gone away for good? No, we've been teaching, learning, and writing all this time—it's what we do. There's been a lot of loss, change, and complexity to navigate, but this edition of PostSCWriP is crammed with contributions from and about folks who touch lives, dream hopeful dreams, and bring their hearts to their work. In our cover story, Camille Despain has written about an ongoing effort to archive the accumulated materials of author, teacher, and language learning theorist James Moffett, and the value of pondering and curating such artifacts. Michael Tapia offers thoughts and resources to promote inclusion, harmony, and respect in our diverse schools and communities. Tim Dewar recalls a bit of crucial wisdom from his dad; Kelly Keene imagines a life of technology-fostered bliss; Vickie Gill sets a graceful example of how an old, retired teacher can still step up and make a difference; and Alexa Levesque presents the bittersweet history of a house, which mirrors the history of her family. There are poetry ideas from Cie Gumucio and Camille Despain, and poems by Ron Herz, Teresa Mateo Girona, and Dorothy Gagner Jardin. We dedicate this edition of PostSCWriP to all who remain open to the miracles and do their best, with heart and hope and kindness.

Let's keep sharing.

*And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy,
a remote important region in all who talk:
though we could fool each other, we should consider—
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.*

*For it is important that awake people be awake,
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep;
the signals we give — yes or no, or maybe —
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.*

William Stafford



A Message from the Director by Tim Dewar

If you sent me an email in April, you probably received an out-of-office reply. I was on jury duty for most of the month. Not just calling in, but actually impaneled on a jury, my first time ever. It has not been like "Twelve Angry Men." We have not been sequestered. No lunches brought in while we deliberate. I'm fortunate; I can walk to and from. Others have to pay for parking.

As you can imagine, this experience has given me much to write about. I won't take-up space here to recount the trial or all its implications, but I will share a few thoughts. First, where did I learn all this legal vocabulary? "Impanel," "Deliberation," "Sequester". I have never been in court before. It's from books, reading lots of books. Not books about the legal system, but fiction, everything from *To Kill a Mockingbird* to John Grisham. Reading builds knowledge.

Second, listening to testimony (there's another word!), I am struck by how important a skill it is to be able to narrate what happened and to follow a sequence of events, seeing cause and effect, to understand actions and their actors. In the push to prioritize argument above all other writing, we risk overlooking the fundamental ability to "note down," to use Moffett's term. It all starts with what is happening in front of us in the present. This is where our lives happen.

Third, jury duty has made me more hopeful. In the bustle of our 21st Century, post-pandemic, recovering economy, social media-saturated America, this case is a small crime. The results of the trial will not be reported in any newspaper. Yet, the dozen of us jurors take this work very seriously. Our jury service has upended the complicated arrangements of our daily lives, but the disruption to our lives cannot compare to the turmoil in the defendant's.

So, we show up on time, take copious notes, and deliberate. We are not of one mind. We have different opinions and lived experiences. We are unlikely to interact outside of this setting. And yet, as we read and reread the judge's instructions, we listen carefully, ask clarifying questions, propose and weigh tentative ideas. It has all the features of the best classroom discussions. The best features of democracy.

The biggest of all my many thoughts is that the work we do in classrooms, with writing, with teachers, with writers, *matters*. Case closed.

Write soon,

Tim

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Promoting Acceptance, Respect and Harmony in Our Diverse Communities by Michael Tapia ('94)



After twenty-six years in the classroom with an additional nine as an elementary level principal, I retired in 2015. I didn't really have any plans for retirement other than expecting to have more time to garden and travel with my spouse, Steven. However, beginning in the spring of 2016, I had the first of three post-retirement experiences working as an interim principal for several weeks in the Ventura Unified School District. In the fall of 2016, I served as an adjunct professor for CLU teaching two cohorts of middle school teacher candidates and in the unexpectedly challenging spring of 2020, I worked as a CLU Fieldwork Supervisor for three teacher candidates, also in the Ventura USD.

During my tenure as a principal, I became a member of the Association of California School Administrators, better known as ACSA. Along with Steven, I participated in various activities and professional development experiences and took on leadership roles in our local charter. I continued my membership in ACSA after retiring in order to maintain my relationships with colleagues still working and offer support for meetings and assorted events.

One of the positive practices of ACSA was/is its equity advocacy on behalf of students in our K-12 schools. However, while it often highlighted racial and ethnic issues, it was silent on LGBTQ+ concerns. Steven and I reached out to ACSA about this lack of representation and the organization's Director of Equity responded favorably to our request for LGBTQ+ inclusion under the ACSA equity umbrella. Shortly thereafter, an out lesbian ACSA member serving as a superintendent in the Inland Empire held the first-ever meeting for ACSA LGBTQ+ administrators and allies. In the spring of 2016, Steven and I decided to replicate her efforts here in Ventura County. We held our meeting in Ventura where approximately thirty-five LGBTQ+ local administrators and allies gathered. From that meeting evolved the ACSA LGBTQ+ Network that still exists with resources on the equity page of the ACSA website.

During the same time frame described above, I began spending time learning as much as I could about the kinds of issues our LGBTQ+ students were dealing with in our schools. I also began learning about the extensive resources available to support not only students but their teachers and administrators, as well. In November of 2016, with two colleagues, Steven and I provided a workshop at ACSA's annual *Leadership Summit* held in San Diego. We shared information and suggestions for supporting LGBTQ+ students, families and staff. As we continued providing presentations at conferences and other events throughout California, I expanded my research of LGBTQ+ (or LGBTQ-inclusive) organizations and their websites. While the pandemic and Steven's health issues this past year affected the frequency of our presentations, we are still engaged in the work providing support primarily through virtual platforms.

While we are both still active with ACSA at the local, region and state levels, I have expanded my own DEI efforts in a variety of ways. Since joining the board of directors of the *Ventura Education Partnership (VEP)* in 2020, I have had opportunities to develop resources for the grant applicants for *Diverse Books for Kids* and *Arts and Social Justice*. For the former, I curated book lists for 11 different demographic groups. For the latter, I developed a comprehensive resource guide that included access to lesson plans/activities, articles/guides, booklists/related resources, *Learning for Justice* film kits, and videos.

When I was an elementary school student, I did not see myself in any of my classroom materials.

This school year, drawing on my past experience developing resources for LGBTQ+ professional learning and VEP grants, I started curating resources for the various affinity group celebrations and recognition that occur annually across the country. While I was initially hesitant to develop these *Resource Guides*, one of the important particulars of these celebrations relates to their genesis: members of each respective affinity group were responsible for creating them and advocating for them via the political process including at the national level. And while I support year-round inclusivity, in light of the high visibility of these

recognitions during certain months of the year, educators may consider delving more deeply into the contributions and experiences of each of these groups during the time frames of their celebratory recognition.

Starting with Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month that runs from mid-September to mid-October, I have developed guides for LGBTQ History Month (October), Native American Heritage Month (November), Black History Month (February), Women's History Month (March), Arab American Heritage Month (April), and AAPI or AANHPI Heritage Month and Jewish American Heritage Month (May). My final guide for the current school year will be for LGBTQ+ Pride Month (June). For the coming school year, in addition to updating the documents developed this year, I plan to create several more: one that focuses on students dealing with the socioeconomic issues of poverty, homelessness and hunger as well as another that features students with disabilities/special needs. Again, it is important to consider our students' intersecting identities and expect that you may find some of the same resources included in multiple resource guides.

The resource guides are not meant to be exhaustive but, rather, a sampling of the kinds of materials available for educators to use in the classroom. Hopefully, they pique interest and/or provide additional background knowledge for each respective affinity group. Each of the guides offers lessons, articles/guides/publications, book lists/related materials, and videos. For the elementary level, there are usually many lessons based on literature while at the secondary level, the lessons often incorporate the use of videos or other media. With the demands placed on today's educators at all levels, I am hopeful that these guides are viewed as quick and helpful sources of information related to the affinity group being addressed in the classroom. As I state in each Resource Guide:

While the custom of cultural monthly observances may seem out-of-date, please consider them as additional opportunities to highlight the achievements and contributions of a particular group of our citizenry in greater depth — a worthy goal. At a time when there is a critical need to promote acceptance, respect and harmony throughout our diverse communities, please consider engaging students in experiences that lead to a greater appreciation of the collective contributions made by others of similar, as well as differing, identities. Please also remember to provide adequate context to these accomplishments in light of the challenges our marginalized citizenry had to overcome to reach their goals. Hopefully, these learning experiences help students understand we are all woven into the rich cultural tapestry of humanity in this place we call America.

When I was an elementary school student, I did not see myself in any of my classroom materials; not in my Ginn reader nor in my textbooks. On the rare occasion of coming across a storybook with someone who was brown like me, it was usually a stereotype with the character dressed as a peasant, shoeless and accompanied by a burro. Representation of diverse people in the curriculum has progressed since I was a child though there is still room for improvement. I am hopeful that providing our students with more mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors will assist them in becoming more self-aware and self-confident, as well as more empathetic and accepting of others.

“This Will Help the Kids”

A Retired Teacher Organizes Homework Help in a Small-Town Library



Even in an idyllic little town like Los Alamos, California, folks often feel overwhelmed, angry, and helpless against the barrage of bad news from everywhere. One solution is to find a way to pitch in and help, starting wherever you happen to be.

In this spirit, retired teacher Vickie Gill ('01) created a Homework Help program at the Los Alamos library in 2017. It was forced to close due to COVID in 2020, but in January 2023, she decided it was time to start it up again. She sent emails to adults and former high school students who had volunteered as tutors in the past, posted a *Tutors Needed* flyer at the post office, and eight volunteers stepped up, most of them retired or self-employed.

Working with the local K-8, the teachers recommend students who are way behind in the basic skills needed for reading, writing and math competency. The tutors are currently working with 14 students but there's a long waiting list of kids who need help, and it is hoped that the program can be expanded next fall.

“We can't fix everything,” says Vickie, “but we can fix some things. Let's try. Sometimes we focus too much on who believes what, rather than on who is doing what. We reopened our library as a community, and we've found a common denominator: 'This will help the kids.' It's a good, tangible thing, and we feel a little less helpless.”

My Favorite Story about My Dad

John Barclay “Jack” Dewar, Jr. 10/18/30 —7/19/22

by Tim Dewar ('94)

I was a mid-year graduate from college. I would start a credential program in the fall, but I needed work to support myself over the winter and through the spring. After flooding the area with resumes for any kind of job related to working with kids, I ended up with a teaching position at a small, private school.

This would be the first chance for my dad to see me in my new life: a college grad, a teacher, an adult, making his way in the world.

Armstrong Preparatory was not an elite institution. I suspect it was some kind of tax write-off for Mr. Armstrong, whose main business was a “business school” for international students, where he charged outrageous sums in tuition in exchange for a student visa. Armstrong Prep consisted of a rather dowdy stucco building with a single hallway of classrooms and a gymnasium across the parking lot. Erase from your mind any images of wandering paths through manicured lawns. This school looked like the community that surrounded it: A product of the 1950s & 60s that had limped into the 1980s.

My job was to teach English and history to junior and senior high school students. Yes, the classes were small, but I had seven different preps, one for each period of the day. One of those periods was “Study Hall.” This counted as my prep period. My seventh period was “American Literature” for three high school students. As I often ran out of time and energy when prepping classes, the night before, my favorite lesson plan for this class was Scrabble. There were four of us, and American Literature used words, so there you have it.

A couple of weeks or maybe a month into this job, my dad told me he would be in the area on a business trip. He did not often come to the Bay Area on business, so this would be the first chance for him to see me in my new life: a college grad, a teacher, an adult, making his way in the world.

We arranged to meet at Spenger’s, an old school fish house near the water in Berkeley. It was not the kind of place that I went to as a college student, except occasionally for the strong drinks at Happy Hour or some kind of sorority girl date. Though Chez Panisse was only a few miles away, the revolution in California cuisine had not reached Spenger’s. A meal there was a shrimp cocktail, iceberg lettuce salad, fish, rice, and vegetables or steak and potatoes, maybe some sherbet to finish. Dinner there started with a mixed drink, a highball.

I got there first, waited for dad. Once he had arrived and we were seated, we ordered our drinks, Scotch and water for him, gin and tonic for me. It felt very adult, like I had left the world of being his kid and was now his son. We were two men, unwinding after our workdays. While waiting for our food, we talked, in fits and starts. My father was not the most gregarious man, but he knew how to make small talk. And he did listen. Eventually, the topic of conversation had come around to my new job, my work as a teacher. The world of schools was not one he was overly familiar

with. He had gone to public schools, graduated, and went into the army. He tried college for a semester or two, but instead joined his father's business, which he now ran.

Of course, it's hard. It's hard work to be good at something.

I explain about my day, the cast-off kids, the limited supplies, the nonexistent curriculum, and seven different periods with seven different preps. I am telling him how hard this is, how tired I am, how much I am working. I go on and on, venting all my steam, finally.

And in my imagination, he swirls his glass, ice cubes clinking, before saying, "Of course, it's hard. It's hard work to be good at something." Then he holds my gaze as he takes a sip.



I don't really remember what he did with his drink or how he looked at me, but I remember his words because they sent me swirling. I think he said something more, like gave me an example of somebody, maybe Mario Andretti, the race car driver, who worked hard. I don't recall because I was struck by the truth and honesty of what he had already said. I didn't take it to mean, "Quit your complaining" or "You think you got it hard". I understood him to be giving me advice about how I was to be successful in my life. Things that matter take hard work. That is what we do. I understood he was sharing with me how he lived his life and what he hoped I had learned from him about how to live mine.

I probably tell this story every year at some point in my teaching of credential candidates. I don't schedule it, or write it into a lesson plan. I just know there will come a class when the amount of work, and its difficulty, means it is time for me to tell this story, for

them to hear that to be good at something, something that matters, takes hard work. Good work is hard, by definition. It is not just teaching that is hard, but that all the things that matter are worth our hard work. If we want to be good at something, and we had better want to be good at what we do with our lives, especially something like teaching, it is going to take hard work.

My dad passed during the third week of the Summer Institute. And Spenger's closed in 2018. So, yup, things change. But the wisdom passed from father to son remains. I capture it in stories I tell and write.

I think this is teaching. It is good, hard work.

Smart and Happy

by Kelly Keene ('21)

"Happiness in intelligent people is the rarest thing I know." -Ernest Hemingway



In response to a National Mental health crisis, researchers from around the world are doing a deep dive into what makes people happy. To highlight the complexity of this issue, one institution released this response from a 48-year-old subject. Known only as "Joe, A", Mental Health Care workers are fascinated by his response. When asked, "how did you become so happy?" he said:

"It started with the basics. I think we all had smartphones in our pockets before we realized just how smart they'd actually become. Then, once my phone was capable of talking to me, and following directions, my imagination ran wild. I had a camera, computer, calculator, and calendar all at my fingertips. It was a true revelation. In the fifteen years since then, I've been constantly looking for what else I could control with just a voice command. What other tools could I offload more bandwidth onto, in order to make my busy life easier? Happier?"

"Ten years ago, we got Netflix. The Smart TV was a natural progression from there. Netflix already knew my preferences anyway, so gone were the days of rushing home to catch my favorite show. At first, TVo helped, but now, I don't even need to pre-program something to record what I'd miss. It's all just there. Constantly available, like a backup date to prom. My shows now fit my lifestyle, and I didn't have to explore out-of-the box content that might expose me to the unfamiliar. I could continuously consume, and auto-play always has the next great episode ready to go. Now, I could dive deep into the only three categories of television I really cared about: true crime, sports, and *The Office*. We don't even bother with family movies anymore. Who has the patience for an entire film? Our separate accounts also spared me the monotony of learning what my family liked to watch. They would watch what they wanted on their own time, and I never had to compromise my interests. And, if I did want to mix it up with something new, I could just see the top ten list recommended specifically for me. Why gamble on suggestions from my wife when the algorithm knew my whole history of interests?"

"Siri was a revelation, my own personal maid. I could boss her around without any guilt about speaking in a tone that was too demeaning. She wasn't really human anyway. It's incredible to think that she's only been a part of our family for the past eight years. She's the same age as my daughter. We adopted Alexa next, and they all synched up with Google Home too. It has only been five years since our home became abuzz with all these new voices and updates about the weather, but I can't imagine life without them."

"My wife and I could finally relax. If we needed to recharge or simply change our moods, all we had to do was say, "play Marvin Gay" or "Beyonce's new album," and our tension would melt away with the tap of a foot, or sway of the hips. Those stressful conversations got less frequent, and when the air around us rang out with podcasts and audiobooks, there was no room to overthink tricky marital discussions. We haven't been to therapy in two years. It's as if we just programmed ourselves to get along instead."

“Our cooking improved too. We don’t need to think about what goes in the Instapot. Recipes and YouTube videos guide us from our countertops. And when the smart fridge got online, we had no use for grocery lists or farmers’ markets. We could program our needs and taste right into the appliance, and it could tell us when the milk expired, or if we needed more Trader Joe’s Cookie Butter Ice Cream. Instacart deliveries made homemade meals faster than fast food, and pre-packaged and prepped food services, like Blue Apron or Hello Fresh, made home cooking automatic.”

“Handing over the finances was a relief. Apple Pay, Amazon same-day delivery and one-click ordering made it all way easier. Before, when I had to sit down and think through the balancing of a checkbook, or our monthly budget, I’d get headaches. I would stress about what we spent, and if our spending aligned with our values. Now, I don’t have to think at all. Money itself has gotten smarter too, and I just let the technology decide for me, which cryptocurrency to invest in, or when it’s appropriate to Venmo my kids their allowance. The banks automatically transfer money around, so it seems as though credit cards are paying off themselves. There is no need to memorize bank account numbers or usernames. It’s all so much safer when I don’t even know my own passwords. Instead, my computer generates one for me. It is intimately aware of my face, my voice, and my thumbprint instead. And all that memorization of 16 digits, plus a special character or number, can fade away, into the past.”

By last spring, we stopped holding back. The house just took care of itself, and that took care of us.

“By last spring, we stopped holding back. Our doorbell could receive automatically delivered prescriptions. Our smart plugs brought to life Keurigs and microwaves. Even our mattress is smart enough to tell us when it's time to lay back and get some sleep. Our home became so advanced, we finally knew what true leisure really was. I’d come home, have a margarita pre-blended for me, my next show queued up and ready. Four hours later, my bed could recline, and I didn’t even need to clap for the lights to go out. Our Ring system could screen out any nosy neighbors stopping by to chat. No need to coordinate with the family about what we wanted in the air fryer for dinner. The house just took care of itself, and that took care of us. The smart Rumba would vacuum away any mess, and our toothbrushes buzzed to life when it was time for the kids to start their nighttime routine. My pre-scheduled update emails went out, automatically, to the grandparents on a regular basis. I’m pretty sure we have the smartest home on the block. And overall, I believe that these home improvements have really improved us.”

“More recently, I realized our newfound smartness could go beyond our property lines, and I handed over my safety to a smart vehicle. No need to wander to new places or plan for traffic or detours. Cruise control had been the tip of the iceberg. Now, I could zone out completely and my car always knew where it was going. I never felt guilty about walking out the door, and away from my responsibilities either. I could check on Fido’s automatic dog feeder from the app on my smartwatch or use Bluetooth to voice text the kids.”

“Despite the backup camera and hands-free steering, though, I haven’t been using my smart mobile as much these past couple weeks. Work became remote, and my Peloton felt more like a real ride anyway. I’d downloaded a dog walker for Fido and got my kids on Tik Tok and Snapchat so they could be independent and entertain themselves.”

“It may have been last Tuesday, (or was it Wednesday?) when my wife finally joined the Metaverse. Now, she could have what her extroverted personality demanded: connection and more dialogue with other avatars. As an introvert, I got what I needed too: self-care, and solitude. I don’t think we’ve ever been happier.”

8920 Haddon Avenue by Alexa Levesque ('21)

How do we grieve for a house? It's difficult when its loss is often overshadowed by bigger life events: new baby, new job, new school, or in my grandparents' case, their own demise. It's strange how even when empty, a house's halls still seem to echo with the footsteps of the life it carried before. The walls remember the photos once held, little holes filled in and painted over, but in the right light the indentations remain. No matter how much you clean the kitchen it still smells of rice and that one spice I never learned the name of. There would always be time, I thought.



The loss of a house, much like the loss of a person, is harder when it's unexpected. When I think back to my grandparents' house, I can't recall my last swim or our final Christmas. There would be others, I told myself.

When I was young their house was summer. Every July we'd drive to Philly and board a plane bound for L.A. Face pressed against the window, I'd watch fields of green slowly give way to stretches of barren brown. Houses spread far apart became tame, trapped in their boxes. We'd land and I'd see the palm trees that I only knew from TV. Papi would be waiting with the car, and he'd drive us the short distance to our summer home.

Entering my grandparents' house was like entering a new world; it was so different from my own. Their yard had sidewalks for bikes and chalk drawings, and the neighbors' houses leaned into each other as if they were gossiping. It was much that way inside the house too. Our family of four suddenly became a family of eight, everyone tripping over each other's toes and in each other's business.

My grandparents' room was always open: door ajar inviting little feet and little hands to delight in whatever treasures they could find. I'd try on jewelry and perfumes; walk in high heels and rifle through makeup kits. My mom, flustered, would try to shoo us out, but my Mimi would reprimand her instead. As the first *nieta*, I could do no wrong.

My grandparents spoke only Spanish and my sister and I only English. As we got older this gulf between us grew wider as I became more self-conscious and frustrated by my inability to understand and be understood. But for now, in this house, I felt like I belonged. As my grandparents often told us, we were "las reinas" and this was our domain.

So even when my mother's youngest and only sister kept her door closed, we took the fact that it was unlocked as an invitation to enter anyway. We'd knock and slowly open it, just a crack, until she inevitably let us inside. Her small bed, covered in stuffed animals reminded us of her own. She was at once so much older than us, yet just like us. We'd crowd on that twin bed, my sister, my Annie, and myself, and she'd introduce us to the shows of her youth. We watched *I Love Lucy*, *Bewitched*, and *I Dream of Genie*, the bedroom getting darker and the TV getting brighter with each passing episode. My aunt was the one who introduced me to my first Miyazaki animated

movie, *Kiki's Delivery Service*. My mother hated cartoons, but I felt understood by my aunt, which made it even more shocking when her door eventually locked, and she stopped responding to our knocks. She was sick, my mother said, perceiving enemies where there were none, but it was hard not to take it personally. I just missed my friend.

The only individual afforded any privacy during our visits was my mother's youngest brother, my Uncle Joe. He kept his door closed and locked, but we could still hear his crooning from underneath the doorway. We'd lie on the tiles, the cold seeping through our clothes, cooling our tiny bodies as we tried to see what he was up to. We'd track shadows and movements, one eye at a time, as he sang along to Elvis.

I think back to this house and how when we finally moved back to California it became not just a house of summer but family celebrations: birthdays in the back by the pool, waves lapping up and over the edge as kids in soggy t-shirts jumped in over and over again; Christmas in the living room, sliding off the plastic covers on the couch, waiting for the clock to finally strike midnight as a comically large baby Jesus watched from his manger. We'd be over every Father's Day and Mother's Day. I knew the freeway exit to their house as well as I knew my own.

Even now it's hard to unravel what loss hit harder.

When Papi was diagnosed with lung cancer it was a shock. Mimi was the one on dialysis, her kidneys destroyed years earlier by her unchecked diabetes. But she had finally received a transplant and as she put on weight in the coming months and my grandfather lost weight, I couldn't help thinking she was taking that life from him.

At this point the house rarely saw visitors. The cousins were old and grown, away at college or parents themselves. Birthdays were celebrated with friends and the pool lay still and quiet. My Uncle Joe had moved out and started a family of his own and my aunt, lost in her own mind, had left us long before. My grandparents were effectively on their own and too old to properly prepare for company. My uncles started taking turns hosting Christmas, but no one seemed excited. Staying up to midnight each year was less a badge of honor and more a chore. We even stopped opening the gifts, instead at midnight giving everyone a quick hug as we hastily shoved presents into black garbage bags to open and forget the next morning.

It's tempting to feel that if only we had kept the house, we'd still be together.

When Papi died, it was in that same house, finally filled again with family. When I picture that living room now, there's the ghost of his image superimposed on top. So pale and translucent, my Papi in his sick bed, this large man brought so small. He once told me I was like him. I never learned what resemblance he was referring to.

While my grandfather's diagnosis was a shock, we had months to contemplate his death. My grandmother's, however, came all at once. Five months after we had buried my grandfather, we were back at the hospital. Brain cancer, the doctor said. Her kidney, the one supposed to save her life, had been infected. She died while I was still driving, my mom telling me to hurry. There was no goodbye.

And that was it. My uncles, in a pack, descended on the house, arguing over fees and inheritance-my grandparents had left no will. By the time every last cent had been accounted for and divided, there was nothing left of the house, not even goodwill. My Mimi's funeral, so much smaller after my Papi's, was the last time we gathered as a whole family. Sometimes I get a text from a cousin, sometimes I "like" a photo on Instagram.

We traded culture for a house, language for success, and I keep asking myself did we lose more than we gained?

I remember, at my grandparent's house, the hallway to the bedrooms were lined with portraits, our family's Catholic heritage on display in an unbroken matriarchal line. Starting with my grandmother, a tiny child bride of God in black and white, eyes looking up toward heaven, there was a picture of each of us on our first communion. I could walk down that hallway and see eyebrows and noses passed from mother to daughter much like an old ring. No one ever said I looked like my mother, but in this hallway, I could see it. When my grandparents' house was sold, these paintings came to live in my parent's hallway. My Annie too, gifted to my mother as if she was another possession in the will. "Mom wanted you to have her," the uncles insisted. She now resides in my bedroom and it's *my* door that is closed and locked.

It's tempting to feel that if only we had kept the house, we'd still be together, that all our problems started once the house was sold. But if I'm honest, we had lost the house before my grandparents died. I wonder if my grandfather, in that space between diagnosis and death, looked back on his life. Did he feel proud? He traveled so far to a country so different. Brought over his wife and two small children, one of which he had yet to even meet. Together they bought a house and retired. By all accounts, they had lived the American Dream. And yet, this house, so full of promise when I was young, was so quickly hollowed out. Was this what they wanted? Grandchildren who couldn't say goodbye to them in their own tongue? Did they ever regret leaving the country of their birth? What would they think if they could see their family now?

When I think about that house, the memories that come first are still the earliest: a house of joy. I don't want to dwell on the silences, the neglect, the avarice. But it's a bittersweet house, as dreams can often be. I worry my grandparents were sold a lie, believing in a system that promised freedom and security. But not for all...with an asterisk, with an addendum. We traded culture for a house, language for success, and I keep asking myself did we lose more than we gained? Am I really grieving for a house?

Don't tell us
how to love, don't tell us
how to grieve, or what
to grieve for, or how loss
shouldn't sit down like a gray
bundle of dust in the deepest
pockets of our energy, don't laugh at our belief
that money isn't
everything, don't tell us
how to behave in
anger, in longing, in loss, in home-
sickness, don't tell us,
dear friends.

Mary Oliver

“What is the door to your imagination made of?”

by Cie Gumucio ('19)



This is the question elementary school students in Santa Barbara were asked to respond to in words and art in a poetry lesson offered by CalPoets in the Schools. The student responses were endlessly varied and creative: nature, music, sports, family, love...and some, you may be surprised by.

Each spring, for the last three years CalPoets, Poet/Teachers, Cie Gumucio SCWriP fellow (2019) Kimbrough Ernest SCWriP fellow (2009) have looked forward to collaborating with the Santa Barbara Museum of Art to combine lessons in art and poetry.

During the month of April, the Museum generously provides a display space for a National Month of Poetry exhibit highlighting student poetry and artwork. Past displays have included haiku-like art/poems to bring awareness of the plight of the monarch butterflies (2021), Odes to Red, for the Vincent Van Gogh exhibit (2022), and this year, students looked to local Montecito artist, Joan Tanner for inspiration. Students (8-12 years old) were invited to experience the free-flowing and unpredictable found in Joan's artwork and installations and write completing the lines: "The Door to my Imagination is made of..." and "I Write like..."

Students then added visual elements to their poetic lines using simple art supplies, including colored pencils and markers to explore color, scale, and imagery. The emphasis in their creative mark making was on experimentation, discovery and embracing imperfection.

These one-line art-poems were displayed in the Museum Gift Store window on State Street, and full length poems just inside in the museum. The Museum's Education Department team is led by Patsy Hicks.

This special joint effort is typically one lesson in a 7 or 8 week series of poetry lessons in classrooms led by a CalPoets in the Schools Poet/Teacher. Participating Schools include Mountain View Elementary, Vieja Valley Elementary and Montecito Union School.

The hope is that this creative cross-disciplinary experience will not only activate a deeper engagement with writing and expand the possibilities of language, but will invite community connections for students that can enrich and enhance their feelings of belonging and social emotional well-being.

Cie is Poet/Teacher & Santa Barbara County Coordinator for CalPoets in the Schools, Santa Barbara. For more information about bringing poetry into classrooms, contact Cie at MsCiePoetry@gmail.com

Eating Miners' Lettuce by Dorothy Gagner Jardin ('84)

Hungry seekers have scavenged the woods for game,
peering into flowing water for gold flecks,

and long grasses for a bouquet of green
barely rooted, briefly present.

How did the miners know to eat it?
How do I?

My teaching colleague Marc, called Treebeard,
held it up on one of our hikes and nibbled.

The kids and I nibbled an edge, the whole thing,
and reached for another, warned to not take too much

so next year, the year after
someone, or an animal could survive:

a deer, a rabbit. We felt
related to wildness. Stood still. Were quiet.

Followed Treebeard and his tall walking stick,
looking for what we could point at

to learn how else we could survive,
not starve or die because we didn't

learn how to learn by searching, touching,
tasting. By trusting.



Look for *Ripples*, Dorothy Gagner Jardin's newest volume of poetry,
coming soon to the Amazon bookstore!

Respecting Our Nation by Ron Herz ('86)



As star-spangled anthem blasted over stadium,
everyone stood in homage, except one.
With short, grey beard he sat there like Buddha.
Why he would not stand I could not say exactly.
It could have been his Good War memories,
when many of his fascist-fighting fellow Yankees
spoke unapologetically of niggers and killing commies.
For a thousand imperialistic schemes and murdered dreams
of what his "blessed" exceptional nation was supposed to be,
this elderly, non-amnesic man was determined to sit impassively.

Nearby, a muscular guy with crew-cut showed agitation:
"Hey, old guy!" he shouted, glaring at seated man,
"How 'bout showing some respect for your nation!"
Without rising or even raising his voice,
the old fellow uttered words I'll never forget:
"I've got three purple hearts, and I know
what does and DOESN'T deserve my respect."
The tough-looking guy stared and stood there silently,
not quite prepared to say or do anything.

Time for Some Poetry Activities by Camille Despain ('07)

It was April as I began writing this and the first April in many years that I was not planning a poem-in-your-pocket day celebration or lovingly laminating the National Poetry month poster from Poets.org. But in a belated celebration of National Poetry Month, or perhaps as an attempt to stay in touch with my classroom teaching roots, I present a poetry activity for your consideration.

In 2014, the Found Poetry Review created a project titled Oulipost. It was a blog with prompts and poems inspired by the idea of Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle (OuLiPo), or Workshop of Potential Literature. OuLiPo was founded in 1960 by Francois de Lionnais, a French mathematician, and writer Raymond Queneau. Together, they proposed the creation of verse using formulas or structural constraints.

First, I need to pause here for a moment and just revel in the title of “Workshop of Potential Literature”. It gives a whole new meaning to writing workshop in the classroom if we call it something like Workshop of Potential Novels, or amazing first drafts, or even rhyming couplets. Some pressure is removed if it is a workshop of *potential*—don’t you think?

To continue, a popular OuLiPo formula is “N+7”. The poet takes a poem and substitutes each of the nouns with the noun appearing seven nouns away in the dictionary. There is some negotiation of word counting to be recognized here. In some cases, seven words later may be a compound derivative or a word with a similar root. I also realized that not all dictionaries are created equal, so you may take this into consideration as well. I tried this with my students several years ago and we had great fun with the words we found. It became a word play game that inspired more poetry as well as discovery.

This time around didn’t disappoint. I learned a new word. Chiliad. A Chiliad is a group of 1,000. I had no idea. It was also refreshing to pull out a book instead of looking up a word on my computer. (How many of us still have a classroom set of dictionaries? Dictionary.com gives a list of words nearby, so maybe that will work.)

My first attempt was with a Billy Collins poem. (If you haven’t had a chance to take a look at his new book, it’s a delightful collection of small poems, and I laughed out loud throughout.)

Simplicity By Collins, Billy. <i>Musical Tables</i> . New York, Random House, 2022	Simulator By Camille and N+7
<i>Dalmatian</i> is hard to pronounce, so the children, pointing, say fire truck dog.	<i>Damask</i> is hard to pronounce, so the chiliad, pointing, say, firebox truckload dogdom.

I loved playing with words and assigning meaning to my new +7 poem. While certainly a constraint, there is also a randomness that produces a poem of interest. Sometimes, the formula is what I need to produce some writing. Don't we all appreciate a good sentence frame or table to get us started after a long day of intentional teacher wordsmithing?

If that is the case and you wish to continue this workshop of potential literature, try the "snowball" formula. The first line is one word long, the second line has two words, and so on. A snowball poem can feature individual lines or a progressive sentence. For the tech-bound classroom, it can be achieved. If students don't create their own words, they can certainly find words with the character limit and make their own rules.

Anyone play Wordle with their students? Confess, you have used the five-letter words online help, right? You can find the same kind of help for seven letter words.

I am...

I am for tiny candy iambic pizzazz.

I am for uber disco jargon qawwali.

There is a new rule in this one, do you see it?

The final OuLiPo constraint I will suggest for the classroom or for your own poetic enjoyment is the "Haikuisation". Select three sentences from a newspaper article, and "haiku" the sentences to haiku length. I enjoyed this very much. While I didn't have the opportunity to share this one in the classroom, I can think of its merit in terms of word selection and having students interact with words, play with words. Even if under constraints or rules, learning happens under the guise of wordplay. That's my favorite kind of learning.

Haikuisation #1

Kwame competed

His identity, his roots

Joyful, change the world

Sourced from NPR, May 5, 2023. (Chef Kwame Onwuachi wants everyone to have a seat at his table, Lara Downes.)

"Poetry heals the wounds inflicted by reason." (Novalis)

Found Poem: Book Stack and Cat
The Bedside Table Library
by Camille Despain ('07)

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While

Joy catches the light
Heather sums it up

And

Kate creates alpha poetica

Meanwhile

Pat shares movement in black

And

Billy plays musical tables

While reading

Horoscopes for the dead

In the midst -

Joyce is trusting

And

Jessica speaks to Mary Jane

As

Neil presents the Sufi

And

Robert talks,

Joseph stokes the furnace

And laying a foundation,

Mark shores it up with a house of leaves.

Camille currently resides with cat-in-residence, a ginger named Roast Beef. RB has specific requirements when allowing a human to check out a book from the bedside library. If interrupted at any time, the book stack will be toppled, as if by magic, during some point in the next twenty-four hours. It is best to allow the cat to maintain the checking out schedule and prompt the human to peruse the titles and share an offering of found poetry to the sitting cat. If done properly, the reading may commence—assuming there is space on the human lap. If not, the plant on the counter will be needing a new pot.

Monarch Butterfly por Teresa Mateo Girona ('22)

To my father

The Monarch Butterfly was in danger of extinction
Diseases settled on her body
She lost her place to live
The sun was shining excessively in the North
Researchers did not know the cure
Her instinct disoriented her from home
The world and the sun were bothersome to her
Her last flight was in the fall
The emptiness surprised the winter
Spring came senseless
Summer drowned the remains of her wings
Monarch butterfly, now free of threats
Paradoxically your extinction accomplished
With a new life break into our horizon



Mariposa Monarca by Teresa Mateo Girona ('22)

A mi padre

La mariposa monarca estuvo en peligro de extinción
Las enfermedades se posaron en su cuerpo
Perdió su sitio para vivir
El sol brillaba excesivamente en el Norte
Los investigadores desconocían la cura
Su instinto la desorientó del hogar
El mundo y el sol eran molestos para ella
Su último vuelo fue en otoño
El vacío sorprendió al invierno
La primavera llegó sin sentido
El verano ahogó los restos de sus alas
Mariposa monarca, ya libre de amenazas
Paradójicamente tu extinción cumplida
Con una nueva vida irrumpe en nuestro horizonte

