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# Editors' Introduction

**Sandra L. Tarabochia**

Norman OK

**Aja Y. Martinez**

Denton TX

**Michele Eodice**

Lawrence KS

**T**he selections in this issue circle around the tension between control and vulnerability. If the past few years have taught us anything, it is that control is an illusion. Though we may pursue it doggedly, we never really have control—over our environments (the objects, routines, and spaces in which we write), over the ways others perceive and mis/understand us, over how our often conflicting identities as writers and humans intersect, collide, reinforce, and chafe. Yet as these contributors remind us, to be human is to be vulnerable; indeed, we find strength, camaraderie, and collective resilience in our shared vulnerability. To be vulnerable is to honor individuality, our own and others', to seek out and protect difference by holding ourselves accountable to one another and surrendering to the generative tumult of unpredictability. To be clear, vulnerability is not weakness. Through reflexive praxis we move in and through vulnerable positions, resisting systems and structures that misconstrue vulnerability as fragility or helplessness. We gather transformative power in community and leverage it to challenge dominant forces that would have us armor up, wasting precious energy and resources to conceal the soft center, the fleshiness of our bodies, blood, sweat, tears, all that makes us who we are, all that makes alternative futures possible.

The authors in this volume take up these themes from various perspectives and different genres: through poetry, through narrative braiding of scholarly and personal voices, through counterstory, and through research writing. In "A Record of Revision," poet Rosanna Vail explores the vulnerable space of revision that compels writers to grapple with issues of agency and accountability. Who are we to write and read, and what if we get it wrong? Like broken bodies on an operating table, hearts at the mercy of medical machines, we lay bare our desires and delusions, our fears and failures, open to the violence and inspiration of our own self-assessment.

Jayne Stone considers the illusion of control over writing environments, particularly as experienced by single-mother graduate student writers (SMGSWs). Extending Alex Hanson's 2021 *WCCJ* article "Making Space for What Lies in the Interstices: The Composing Practices of Single Moms," Stone's narrative weaves research and personal narrative, using a materialist lens to analyze in situ writing scenes of SMGSWs. In "Putting It All on the Table: Making Visible the Material Realities of Single-Mother Graduate Student Writers," Stone argues that SMGSWs do, indeed, have preferences, objects, and routines that shape their writing environments and practices, and, importantly, their children's preferences, objects, and routines (or lack thereof) also shape their writing environments and practices, often in unpredictable ways.

Like Stone, Erin Green resists dominant narratives, in this case narratives that erase the historic and progressive activism of Black queer southerners. In her contribution, "The South Ain't a Lost Cause: A Counterstory," Green leverages counterstory methodology to expose racist power structures and advocates for investing politically in



Our Open Journal System (OJS) platform is maintained at the University of Oklahoma, in a state that is home to 39 tribal nations, each of which has a distinctive culture, history, and government. We acknowledge that the history of the university and the state represents settler colonialism and remains in tension with what we now understand about the lands proclaimed "unassigned" and opened for white settlement in 1889.

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marginalized communities. In the words of one reviewer, this counterstory about a Black queer community organizer “contributes to our development of (1) a clearer and more rigorous understanding of the experience of Black (Black queer, Black youth, etc.) southerners, (2) techniques of oppression, and (3) the dominant narratives and self-righteous attitudes one might experience while engaging in coalitional or activist efforts.” Indeed, Green’s piece illustrates the power of community to resist stock stories and amplify marginalized voices.

In a slightly different vein, Tabitha Espina blends research writing and narrative to examine how complex stories of the United States move across the country and the globe and intersect with the work of teaching writing. In “Bringing a Burden to Bear: Resistance to Colonial Power in the Writing Classroom,” Espina tells her story as a third-generation Filipina from Guåhan who has taught rhetoric and composition across contexts. She considers how her position as a multiply marginalized scholar teaching within vastly different spaces—including a neocolonized island territory of the US with a minority majority student population; rural, land-grant, and predominantly (overwhelmingly) white institutions on the West Coast; and a private urban campus in one of the original US colonies—prompted profound reflection on her responsibilities and complicity in carrying and confronting the complexity of “America.”

A new addition to our journal, which we hope will continue with your contributions, is a section including shared assignments, student writing, and teacher reflections. These pieces provide a window into what students are currently thinking and writing about and highlight the kinds of timely and relevant assignments writing teachers are creating.

The first collection is from Professor Debbie Mix and five graduate students from a fall 2021 Writing in the Profession course at Ball State University. Their researched article takes the form of a collaborative dialogue that grew out of conversations they had as a class over the course of the semester. In addition to their shared experience in the course, all authors have taught writing at some point in their careers. Along with excerpts from their course portfolios, the authors share questions and insights around core issues that emerged in the course, including (1) conflicting/conflicted identities as both writers and students; (2) tensions between concealing and celebrating individuality and vulnerability; and (3) the transformative power of writing in a community.

Aja Y. Martinez, Robert O. Smith, and students present content from a course on Critical Race Theory (CRT) conducted during a harrowing spring 2023 semester in Texas. In March 2023, the Texas state legislature presented several bills aimed at Texas state public institutions of higher education, bills proposing bans on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and CRT, in addition to provisions for denying/stripping tenure or outright dismissing professors ensnared in student and public complaints. Working within this context, the course included learning about the humanized

and storied history of CRT and crafting student projects that illustrate that when learners are presented the stories of CRT—content beyond merely extracted key terms, facts, definitions, and dates—they are able to develop a better understanding that nullifies rampant disinformation while fleshing out what CRT is and what it can be.

Will Kurlinkus offers a look into the potential of AI in composing for technical and professional writing, specifically for grant writing. His assignments, and the student work, are generous contributions to the growing bank of pedagogical strategies for critically engaging with AI tools and leveraging their value for teaching and learning. In addition to intentionally teaching students to use ChatGPT, the activities are designed to foster critical evaluation of the tools while developing potential affordances. In other words, what can it do for writers and should it?

As we enter our fourth year of publication with V4.1, we thank readers for spending time with *Writers: Craft & Context* and warmly invite readers to submit work that is creative, experimental, and genre pushing into places you didn’t think you could go with your writing. Again, we’re excited to feature for the first time in *WCC* the work of teachers in context and the writing their students develop. We are eager to be in community with you as you develop your ideas and drafts of counterstories, personal narratives about writer identity, course designs, student writing, or research on writers’ experiences in a complex world. And if you, like us, are sustained and invigorated when you are in conversation with courageous writers taking risks and pushing limits, send us a note so we can add you to our growing community of reviewers.

**Thank you -  
Reviewers V4.1**

Tamika Carey  
Neisha-Anne Green  
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Christa Olson

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OU Writing Center

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Kami Day