
Editors' Introduction

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When we titled our journal *Writers: Craft and Context*, we envisioned the many and varied “crafts” our contributors would bring to our pages. As editors, we continue to welcome (sometimes tentative) queries from (sometimes timid) authors who are sending us work representative of the wide range of genre and content we value and published in our inaugural issue. In this second issue (V2n1), we emphasize the concept of *context*. So much has happened since we published the first issue (V1n1) of *Writers: Craft & Context* in August 2020. We’ve lived through a harrowing presidential-election season along with troubling developments in overlapping pandemics. We have a long road ahead and unprecedented challenges to face. Nevertheless, the cover image by artist Lisa Grossman captures the hopefulness we feel in this moment. Our readers, writers, and reviewers give us hope. Indeed, our writers (in this issue and our inaugural issue) have spoken.

Our 2020-2021 context has certainly provided time and space for writers to critically self-reflect on aspects of identities, learning and living environments, and depths of emotion such as grief, anger, frustration, compassion, and solidarity. In this issue you’ll find Amy Robillard’s “Good Girl,” a personal narrative detailing a situation involving the author’s dog. The writer, who is also a writing teacher, reflects on words and language and their ability to “touch” others during a global pandemic in which touch is highly discouraged. Interspersed with critical self-reflection on experiences with domestic violence and abuse, with additional reflection on dog ownership and companionship, the author writes her way through past and present trauma toward a perspective that engages the concept and question of empathy.

In “My Year of Writing Through Diasporic Melancholy,” Shui-yin Sharon Yam reflects on her changing relationship to writing as she uses it to navigate the trauma, grief, and rage she experiences straddling complex geopolitics across two continents. With regard to context, Yam writes, “The dissonance I felt then as a diasporic Hongkonger would only intensify over the next few months into 2020. Because of the 12-hour time difference between Hong Kong and Lexington, I woke up to live footage of protests and police brutality on my phone.” Specifically, Yam explores how her experience with writing shifts as she has moved from writing primarily for academic purposes to writing for a more public transnational audience.

Gabrielle Kelenyi offers “For the Love of Writing: My Writing Process as a Form of Self-Love,” an autoethnographic-reflection essay in which she theorizes her writing process as an act of self-love through an examination of what makes writing both “easy and hard” for her as an author. Kelenyi argues we should teach writing *as or for* love so as to avoid (re)producing systemic inequities in literacy education. As such, Kelenyi hopes her autoethnographic reflection will inform readers of her lived experience as



Our Open Journal System (OJS) platform is maintained at the University of Oklahoma. We’d like to acknowledge that site as supportive, but also troubling. Oklahoma 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.

a writer and, in so doing, share ways writing instruction in school contexts can help students develop individualized writing processes that help them love writing—even when it’s hard.

Shelley Galliah’s “Grieving While Dissertating” continues this issue’s focus on context with an exploration of the embodied and the emotional. One reviewer commented, “As the COVID and other crises ramp up, this essay will be a balm to many. It offers a crucial perspective grounded in wrenching personal experiences . . . the author gives us all the means to reflect on graduate programs’ exploitation of graduate students and the violence our programs can cause.” This essay is mined from a deep concern about the normalization of depression in graduate school and the unhealthy workaholic culture of academia. As editors and reviewers, we feel this essay enriches our understanding of graduate student writers’ ability to compose through grief and trauma, which is something we absolutely need to remain cognizant of, as the world, and our academic contexts, remains unable to recognize the issues facing the most vulnerable learners.

Continuing the thread of lived realities within the context of the academy, Alex Hanson contributes “Making Space for What Lies in the Interstices: The Composing Practices of Single Moms.” In this essay, Hanson examines how composing processes are influenced by lived experiences and material circumstances of single moms. Given this journal’s pointed focus on context, the following comment from reviewer Nancy Alvarez is illuminating, as it demonstrates how Hanson’s piece surfaces and reaches across resonant contexts:

As I sit at my desk typing up this review, my 6-year-old is rolling around on a stability ball, pulling on my chair as he rolls back and forth, while occasionally rolling close enough to me to dig his elbows on my lap as he looks to see what I’m writing. The juggling it took to find the free time to write this review is something only another mother can truly understand and I love how your piece really outlines the writing experiences of all of these different mothers, including yourself. The kid(s) wants, demands, and needs the attention of his/her/their mother, but we have so much to do. All of the time. It doesn’t stop. So, as my kid continues to roll around behind me while watching an episode of *Sesame Street*, here I am, sitting in solidarity with all of the other mothers who schedule time to reduce focus on/ignore their kid(s) to write.

Employing testimonio, a methodology inspired by the Latina Feminist Group, Hanson blends research and creative nonfiction, drawing on her own experience with scholarly composing as a single mom to tell the stories of writers across disciplines, academic ranks, geographic locations, and single-mom identities. In doing so, she advocates for transforming support structures and policies in higher education to be inclusive of nonheteronormative families.

In “Abandon This Palace of Language: On the Rhetoric of the Body in *A Yellow Silence*,” poets Katie Marya and David Winter offer a blended-voice dialogue in which they reflect on a collaborative, sonic, intertextual, outdoor art installation created with architects Hilary Wiese and Holly R. Craig and based primarily on the poetry of Alejandra Pizarnik. *A Yellow Silence* originally showed on Centennial Mall in Lincoln, Nebraska, as a part of the Lincoln PoPs: Global Frequencies public art exposition in the fall of 2019. Informed by feminist theory, this richly layered essay opens, in the words of one *WCC* peer reviewer, “a discursive place to consider the role of listening and social healing through sculptural space and sound,” reminiscent of the practice of “deep listening,” a term coined by the late avant-garde musician Pauline Oliveros. The piece theorizes contextually specific connections among silence, listening, and the body and enacts that theoretical work on the page. It is a beautiful demonstration of the collaborative, multimodal, interdisciplinary, embodied, identity-based disruption of normativity we are committed to centering in this journal.

Invoking feminist theory through radical solidarity and practice, Vani Kannan offers “Archiving the Third World Women’s Alliance: A Conversation with Sharon Davenport.” Kannan’s research project focuses on the Third World Women’s Alliance (TWWA)—a multiracial women’s organization that grew out of the Civil Rights/Black Power movements and maintained active chapters in NYC and the Bay Area during the 1970s. In particular, this essay traces the labor of archiving the papers of the TWWA next to Kannan’s own embodied experiences as a cross-disciplinary teacher/scholar of rhetoric and composition and women’s and gender studies. Her identity as an organizer who prioritizes behind-the-scenes, feminized labor—and who braids together the work of internal document preparation and childcare—orients her to the labor that scaffolds more public-facing work like building theory and speaking publicly. Drawing on an interview with Sharon Davenport, who processed the TWWA’s archives, this article situates archiving as indispensable, feminized, and often-invisible labor that builds the context for feminist writing, theorizing, and teaching in institutions of higher education.

Closing out our second issue is Pauline Baird’s genre-bending book review of Vivette Milson-Whyte, Raymond Oenbring, and Brienne Jaquette’s (eds.) *Creole Composition: Academic Writing in the Anglophone Caribbean*. In traditional Caribbean villages, the bell crier made important announcements from street to street. People listened and carried the news further. Like the proverbial bell crier, Milson-Whyte, Oenbring, and Jaquette, along with 14 contributors, announce “We are here. And we doin’ dis—‘write [ing] our way in’ to academic spaces (2019, p. x). Baird highlights how the authors provide current perspectives on postsecondary composition pedagogy, academic literacies, and research across multiple academic disciplines, while drawing from her own experiences with Caribbean culture and teaching globally. Baird’s review exemplifies the ways our personal connections to scholarly work need not be left out of academic genres, such as book reviews.

Baird's piece represents one of the first of what we think of as a *reconsidered* book review—a hybrid genre that opens a space for the writer's experiences; unlike most book reviews, Baird the reviewer is very much present. One anonymous journal reviewer (yes, we send out book reviews just like any other scholarly submission) acknowledged this fresh approach to book reviews in their note: "Although the review is classified as 'review,' I think it creates a new genre, as the essay continually expands on its subject, deftly combining material from the book under review with the reviewer's lived experiences and references to scholarly work." We plan to include reviews of this nature in future issues of the journal.

As we launch into a new year, much is changing in our global, national, and local contexts; of course much is the same, and so very much remains uncertain. In the midst of it all, we hope readers find connection in these pages, solace and inspiration. We invite you to read, listen, *feel*, share, ponder and then . . . we invite you to write. If there is one thing we've noticed in our journey as editors over the past year, it is that writing matters, writers matter. Writing is how so many of us make sense of our worlds and our places in it, how we find each other, bolster each other, how we doggedly pursue meaningful change in the midst of chaos and how we feel a little less alone in our efforts. So keep reading, keep writing, and send us what you write. We are eager to cultivate *Writers Craft & Context* as a generative space for writers to engage with whatever comes next.

CALL FOR INVOLVEMENT

Our inaugural issue attracted a wide audience and prompted readers to reach out via email and social media to share their experience with *WCC*, which they reported was so unlike their engagement with typical journals. Readers described getting lost in the pages, devouring every article, essay, and word. They described the journal as "a breath of fresh air," expressing gratitude for a new publishing, knowledge-making space that "create[s] and nurture[s] hope." Two pieces, "We Read Your Letter" and "Still Christmas," were nominated for *Best of Rhetoric and Composition Journals* as representative of the alternative kinds of writing academic writers (and readers) engage with and value.

We try to communicate the spirit captured in the inaugural issue when we visit with writers and reviewers about the journal; we reiterate our desire for writing that engages the human, that grapples with multiple subjectivities, that opens space for writers and readers to bring their entire selves to the diverse acts of collaborative meaning making writing invites. We regularly witness embodied reactions to our vision. We see eyes widen and tear up, smiles spread and lips tremble, hands cover hearts, heads bow. Academics and intellectuals crave the connection that happens when we stop hiding behind "objectivity," "data analysis," the structure of a research article in STEM or social sciences. We hope all writers feel welcome to tell, and honored to receive, the stories

behind the performances and products within traditional academic contexts and publication venues.

For many, writing in this way can feel unfamiliar and scary. To support the process, we invest in mentoring all kinds of writers in all parts of the process. Our reviewers read rigorously and generously with a commitment to work with writers to accomplish their own goals for their manuscripts, whether that means publishing with *Writers: Craft & Context* or finding a more fitting home for the work. So, if you feel hesitant to submit your writing, if you can't shake the feeling that it's "not ready," send it anyway. We are eager to be in community with you as you develop your ideas and drafts. 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 V2

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Whitney Douglas
Genevieve García de Müller
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