

Inkwell

The Writing Center at The Evergreen State College*

The staff of the Writing Center is a dynamic group of peer tutors dedicated to the growth of writers through genuine conversation. We promote writing as a form of communication, not as a solo act. The tutors of the Writing Center are excited to work with writers at any

stage of their writing process and with writers of every skill level. The work we do in the Writing Center is about more than just writing. As tutors, our main goal is to illuminate every writer's process and empower each writer's voice.

Writing Center Locations

The Writing Center

Library 2304
(360) 867-6420

Tacoma Campus

Room 126
(253) 680-3031

Non-Sexist Language

Sometime in the 20th century the habit of using the masculine signifier was challenged. As an alternative has yet to be found, agreed upon, and achieved, the *Inkwell* Editorial Board has chosen to let each writer decide for ___self how to address this issue.

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*For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.evergreen.edu/writingcenter>.



"The inner dialogue about how to be a better person,
about how to be more human, must take itself
into a public arena."

The Editors wish to dedicate this issue of *Inkwell* in memory of Sarah Langer Thorn '04, who dedicated her time at Evergreen and beyond to creating spaces for people to be seen and heard. Supporting writers at our Formica tables from 2002-2004, Sarah also developed the Writing Center's first anti-oppression staff trainings. Her legacy remains vibrant in our daily support of cultivating voices and in the pages that follow.

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Thank You

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with!), the Writing Center (props!), Shaun Johnson (for crafting a visual look that fit our words!), the individuals who staffed the Editorial Board (you rock!), Samantha Sermeno (the hands, the hands!), and the photographers whose images grace our pages.

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Editors

Dimitri Antonelis-Lapp
Wendy R. McCutchen

Visual Design

Shaun Johnson

Visual Artists

Jhaleh Akhavan
Emily Kinney
Atsuko Nishimura
Samantha Sermeno
Nicky Tiso

Editorial Board

Jhaleh Akhavan
Amanda Jenkins
Samantha Sermeno
Rebecca Taplin
Nicky Tiso
Sandra Yannone

Visual Proofers

Shaun Johnson
Matthew Kreiling
Rebecca Taplin
Sandra Yannone

10 Lily Greeniaus

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DIMITRI ANTONELIS-LAPP &
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Welcome to Inkwell.

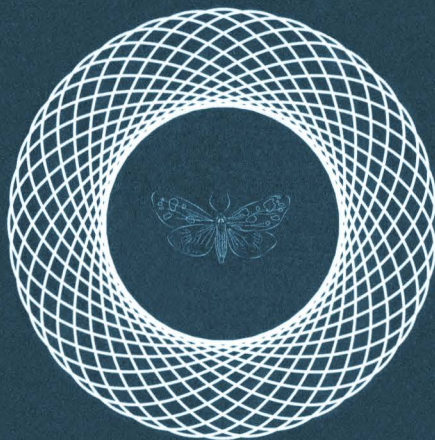
Each page is inviting you into its content, and the content of its neighbors. These articles are excited to meet you, and the words have been waiting—ready whenever you're ready, come on in whenever and wherever you feel comfortable! There are word searches and doors and a linear progression laid out for you. The choices being offered are suggestions and don't mean to overwhelm, or to order, control, demand, or command your journey through this text. Signposts have also been erected to help facilitate directions you choose.

For your adventure you need:

- Pen or pencil*
- Scissors*
- Scratch paper*
- Self!*



The *Inkwell* has arrived; a depth of pen collaboration and free-spirited writing. That is, until the Deadlies get you, until Mr. Red Pen paralyzes, and until the Inner Critic dominates your mental processes. Fear not traveler. Though these creatures you may have seen prior to this reading, they are in fact within these pages. Know this, these creatures can be analyzed in their own specialized habitats, understood for whom they are, and conquered if need be. So tread lightly and freely, as you explore the realm known as the *Inkwell*. **There's no path like your own!**



LILY GREENIAUS

Conversation in Composition

Introducing the Writer You Are to the Writer You Aren't Quite Yet

A year ago I limped into the Writing Center frightened and broken up over a terrible experience with a professor. Looking back, I don't know how I mustered the audacity to apply for *Cultivating Voice*, the course that trains Writing Center tutors, when I was so insecure. Whatever my motivations, my experience in the class actually mended a lot of the damage done—but only gradually. I was still struggling when it came time to write a paper titled “How I Write,” and I realized I didn't consider myself a writer. My classmates seemed so certain, poetic, creative, and sure that they were Writers, Artists. Meanwhile, I was just a nerd who really liked reading books by dead people and writing essays about them.

I finally completed the paper, which was a major step in the growth that the Writing Center has been nurturing in me since last spring. Yet as wonderfully at home as I now feel in the Writing Center, I got a little stuck and nervous when I began to draft my *Inkwell* article. So, as I often do when I am called upon to be a writer, I wrapped myself especially tightly in the role of a reader—with rewarding results. Exploring my biggest bookshelf,

I noticed a little slip of white paper jutting out between the burgundy spine of a collection of Rainer Maria Rilke poems and the turquoise cloth of a copy of *Ulysses* that I inherited from my grandmother.

Somewhere in the gradual bookshelf shuffle, a little zine landed between those two literary giants. The zine is named *Listy* because it is composed entirely of lists. Some lists are author submitted, like "Andrew's Fave Dance Moves." Others are found, like "Eleven Tips on Getting More Efficiency Out of Women Employees" from 1943, or an email of driving directions from 1998. Shopping lists have their own section. My favorite: "Found Grocery List Reviews." I love seeing a column of scribbled cleaning supplies analyzed, admired, and critiqued, almost as if it were intended to be art. The lists reveal so much about their authors, and I think that says a lot about the everyday ways we express ourselves.

We write all the time. Emails to our

professors. Emails to our moms. Letters with stamps. White board notes left for our roommates. Sticky notes left for our faulty memories. Field notes. Lecture notes. Lecture "notes." Covertly-passed-in-class notes. Book margin notes. Thank you notes. Christmas cards. The little folded square of paper in a bouquet. Diary entries. Agenda entries. Calendar jottings. To-do lists. Whatever you write on that line where you say what the check you're writing is for. Text messages. Recipes. Yelps. Scrabble turns.

And that's writing in the most literal sense. Really, every act of speech is a composition. Jokes, seminar contributions, curses. The piece of your mind you plan to give so-and-so but don't. The one you do. Reasoning with pets. Negotiating with malfunctioning technology. Prayers. Songs. Instructions. Hints. Outbursts. Requests. The half of a conversation you have when you're driving alone.

The other half you imagine when you're driving alone. White lies. Worse lies. How you explain something to a little kid, a teenager, an adult. Gossip. Political debates. Pep talks. Pick-up lines. Less gross kinds of flirting. Compliments. Criticisms. Clichés.

Everyone has mastered a language. We have the right words a million times a day, but something so common is easy to overlook. We tend to only take notice when our words don't work or when we know they are being judged. In a struggle with academic writing, we are especially self-aware. As a result, we often base our whole identities as writers on this one particular context. If it's difficult, we might not see ourselves as writers at all.

But we are writers, all of us. The languages we learn from our families and use with our friends are crucial and healthy and immediately rewarding. They are what we learn first, learn best, and think about

least. Meanwhile, school has its own language, but it isn't very social. It's written more than it's spoken, for instance. The writing isn't even *for* anyone the way a letter is. But it isn't for ourselves, the way a diary is, either. It's a lonely language, and that makes it hard to learn.

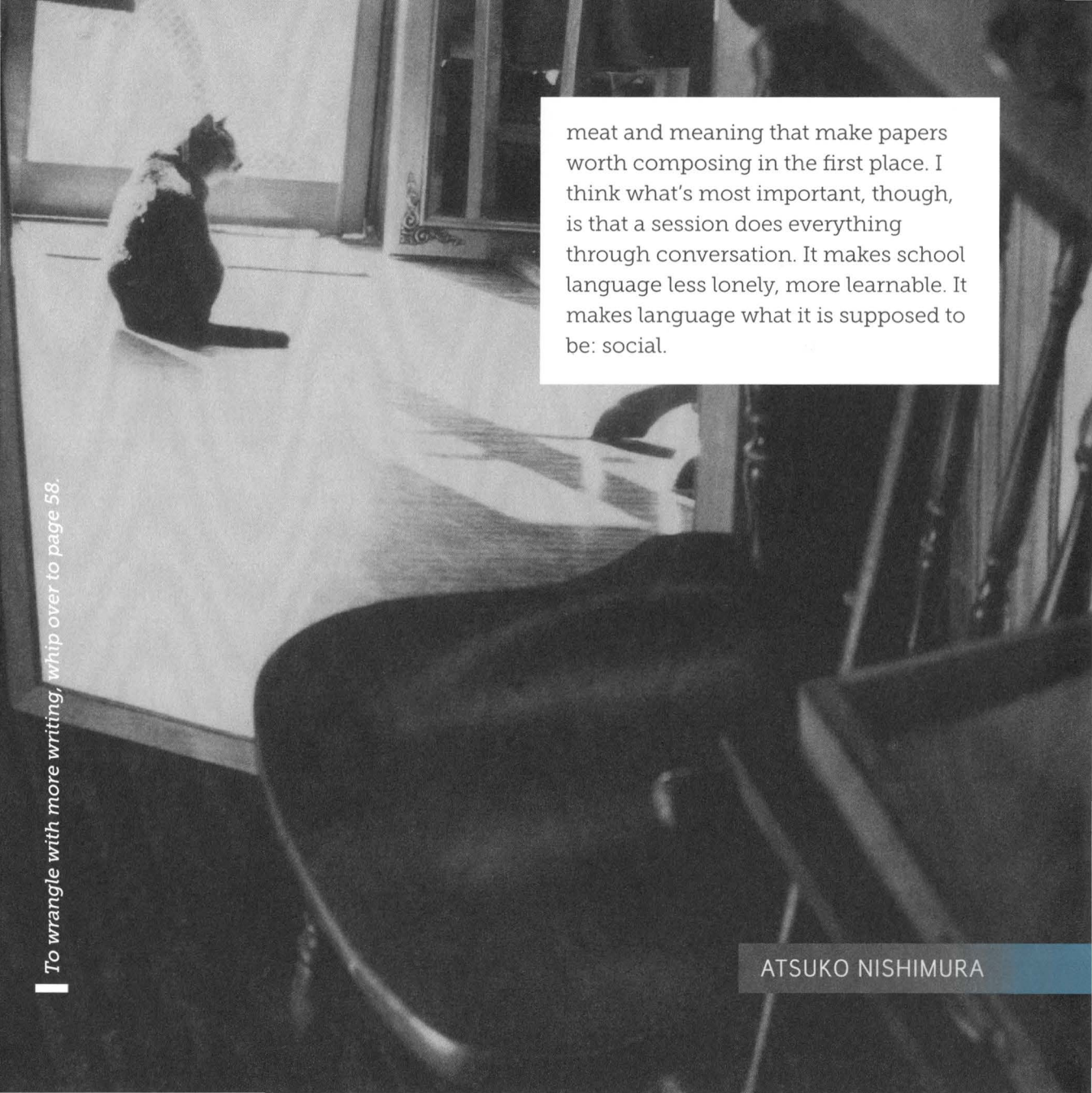
How much learning students have to do depends a lot on their backgrounds. For some students, the ways they express themselves outside classrooms are totally different from what their professors expect in papers. They have abundant ideas and at home or with friends can express these ideas naturally, confidently, comfortably. But when it comes time to sit down and write, all those communication skills are stifled because they don't match standard academic English. A student may know what she wants to say, but not know how to cite sources or punctuate subordinate clauses. I have met many students in positions like this while working in the Writing

Center, and it has been great to work with them through conversation: to experience their amazing brains and to collaborate to transfer the complex thoughts, intensity, and personality that come out in our discussion onto the page.

As a writer, I locate myself in a different position from that of the writer described above. The language of my family and friends was not too far a cry from standard academic English. I have the kind of brain that remembers grammar rules and word spellings pretty easily. In fact, I can put on a formal and impersonal tone, tie it up with complicated but correct syntax, and cite the hell out of it, no problem. For years I avoided the red markings so many students dread, buried anything recognizably me in superficial correctness, and employed an attitude of certainty and cool logic that kept my biases, inner conflict, passion, and complexity off the page. At Evergreen I learned I could write

without being totally soulless. At least until my nightmare junior year when my bloodthirsty professor sent me right back into the writer I thought I'd left in the halls of my high school: the boring AP exam-acer who would rather use papers to hide herself than to express herself. I started to dislike the act of writing and outright hate my own. The activity I had enjoyed as a freshman and sophomore was suddenly miserable. Because I thought the Writing Center was only for students seeking an editor, I robbed myself of an experience that could have enabled me to reconnect with composition as creative, rewarding, and personal.

Once in *Cultivating Voice*, being trained in the Writing Center's philosophy and meeting with tutors regularly, I realized that a tutoring session cannot only move ideas toward a polished paper. It can also enliven writing that is superficially proper but actually hollow—lacking the



meat and meaning that make papers worth composing in the first place. I think what's most important, though, is that a session does everything through conversation. It makes school language less lonely, more learnable. It makes language what it is supposed to be: social.

ATSUKO NISHIMURA

AMANDA JENKINS

Why We Should All Write Badly

A Story of Writing, Pain, and Mending

My inner critic worries:

My writing is my treasure. What happens when you read it? Do you say, "What is this ugly *thing*? Why does the crazy girl value *this*?" Do you read and wonder why I took the time? Why I cared?

My writing is a love letter written to you, a stranger I can't see or hear or know. Will you understand my letter? Will your heart stir, feeling the vibration of my silent voice?

My writing is me. It stands, naked before the world, waiting for judgment. How can I send it out if it isn't perfect? How can I let go? How can I begin?

I'll begin with Holly.

Holly's hair, makeup, and clothes are meticulous; nothing is out of place. Sometimes her bearing reminds me of Audrey Hepburn, poised and graceful. We met in a coffee shop in California to talk about her writer's block. Our partners worked at the same hardware store, and they put us together after a

conversation about my experience as a writing tutor at Evergreen and her looming academic probation from University of California at Santa Cruz. Holly had established a pattern of dropping out of classes in the middle of the quarter after accruing an intimidating backlog of unfinished essays. She was on the cusp of dropping another required class. She told me about her writer's block and was surprised when I told her I could relate.

Perhaps I should begin again, a little earlier, so you know a bit about my history with writing and pain.

When did it start? When did writing become painful? The first instance I remember was in grade school when vocabulary assignments epitomized excruciating boredom. I was given a list of words and told to copy their definitions from a dictionary. Then I had to write sentences using each in context. My arm became heavy. Time stood still. The teacher wouldn't let

me into the advanced reading group because my grades in vocabulary were too poor.

But that wasn't my only experience with writing. I also loved writing because I loved books. In the fourth grade I decided what I would become: a writer (as well as an artist and architect). I kept a notepad and pen under my pillow. At night, after I could tell my older sister was asleep on the top bunk, I liked to write in my little book. I snuck through our house, tiptoeing to the entry of our bright yellow kitchen. The first drawer on the left held flashlights. I would steal one and run as quietly as I could back to our dark bedroom. Back on the bottom bunk and safely hidden under blankets, I turned on the flashlight and wrote in my notepad.

A few years ago I talked with my sister about my late night escapades. She laughed with me and said, "Oh, that's what you were doing. We used to wonder why you had little pen marks

on your body when you woke up in the morning.”

Academia is a world of words: writing, talking, reading. It is a world I love. Despite my love for (and success in) this world of words, my personal writing process can be very rocky.

I started my BA at Evergreen in 1997, and as an undergrad I suffered severely from writer’s block. My memories of those times reawaken a sourness inside my body, a painful tension associated with writing. Writing involved lamenting, avoiding the essay, empty staring, talking to myself, shaking with anxiety, and crying. Sometimes I vomited the mornings assignments were due. I skipped class to continue writing. I couldn’t let go of essays that weren’t “done.”

But other times I vibrated with words. I laughed, sang, and cooed my essay. It was my play, my love, my voice, my heart. And creating this essay for *Inkwell* isn’t about rubbing salt in

long festering wounds—it is about mending.

You see, despite my struggles, I was successful. I worked hard to hide my pain from my teachers, and I received praise. I spent five years, fall 1998 to summer 2003, working as a tutor at the Evergreen Writing Center, and I loved it. I left to pursue my PhD, longing to become a teacher and an academic.

Back to Holly.

We met, and I listened, shared some of my tricks, and tried to boost her confidence. But Holly’s pain was deep, and mending can be difficult. We talked about the essay she was working on. She was interested in the topic; and she had ideas about what to say, but her constant refrain was concern about whether or not she would do the subject enough of a service. When she tried to write, fear froze her to the core. The beauty of the subject made her feel that her words were unworthy. She imagined lovely essays but felt her

work didn't fulfill those visions.

Holly and I became close friends. I taught her to knit. We shared our stories, and I felt honored to know the complex individual underneath her composed exterior. When Holly dropped out of college, I made sure she knew that I supported her decision and would not judge her for her choice.

While working on this essay, the one you are holding in your hands, I found Holly's name written in the margin of my copy of Peter Elbow's *Everyone Can Write* next to the following quote:

The audience of self derives from the internalization of external audiences. So when people find it painful to write for themselves alone because of the harshness of their inner critic, it is the experience of writing for ally or caring readers that helps them gradually learn to internalize a more supportive reader. (Elbow 42)

I wrote her name there, years ago, when I read the text for a graduate course on writing pedagogy. Her internal critic was so loud and dominating that she couldn't do anything without facing layers upon layers of fear, self-consciousness, and guilt.

And these are things I relate with.

Let me explain the guilt a little more. There was a piano in Holly's small apartment that I never saw her play. All of our friends struggled financially, but Holly kept paying the monthly fee to rent the little piano. I talked with her partner about it once. He complained, "It fills half our living room and she never plays it, but if I suggest we get rid of it, she blows up." Holly sincerely wanted to play the piano. She wanted it so badly that she sacrificed money and comfort to have the piano, but she was so afraid of not being good enough that she rarely touched the keys. Occasionally she would mention to me that she was thinking about

getting lessons, but she never brought herself to do so.

Graduate school is difficult, and my husband and I have sacrificed in order for me to live in this world of words. But I haven't earned my place completely. Not yet. Sometimes, when I sit to write my dissertation, it's hard not to carry those years of sacrifice on my shoulders, a guilty weight. It tells me that my words should be gold and gems, falling from my typing fingers, glittering on the screen, shining beacons. The guilt challenges me: *You've had years to work, to learn; you should be done now.* But that's not how it works. My dissertation won't strike, like lightning, and that's ok, but sometimes it's hard to remember.

How do we mend the pain? How do we find solace, relief? When will this be easy? Should we untangle ourselves from our writing? What would be left if we did?

I like to think my history with writing and pain has made me a better teacher. I am sincerely sympathetic with my students and constantly open to new ways to approach writing. Really, my primary strategy for avoiding writing anxiety became varying my process. Essay composition looks like a jumble of activities, something like this:

Think. Free write. Make lists. Be messy. Start on the computer. Talk it out while writing. Print and work with a pen when stuck. Revise sentences. Read out loud. Make more lists. Write questions and then answer them. Find quotations and write about them. Write the paragraph inside out. Reorganize. Edit. Call someone and tell them about the paper. Revise the introduction. Repeat as necessary. Always remember: *I can do this. I have done it before. I don't need to worry.*

The feeling never completely goes away. No matter how much I write, no matter how much success I achieve, I feel it inside, the sourness in the

pit of my stomach. But over time my struggles have become assets, and through tutoring and teaching I have learned more about writing than in any formal class. When I offer students

my strategies, stories, experiences, and enthusiasm, they regularly reciprocate by sharing their accomplishments, growth, discoveries, and hopes. By sharing tales of my writing



EMILY KINNEY

challenges, I help others dismiss their preconceptions about “normal” behavior and feelings when writing—and I remember how to dismiss my self-doubt.

So, don’t let a vision of sparkling perfection intimidate you into silence. The best writing is an exploration. It’s an opportunity to go spelunking through our brains, and those dark muddy tunnels aren’t always pretty. The deeper we go, the messier it can be.

As Don Finkel, a former Evergreen faculty, explained to me when I was 18, one approach is to write a complete draft entirely for exploration. We can then turn around and write a second version of the essay for communication. Writing badly doesn’t mean thinking badly—sometimes it’s what we need in order to think freely, experimentally. I like to imagine Don Finkel’s two drafts as two paths. The first we wander freely. The second we build for others to follow. Discovery

can happen on both paths.

Turn off the inner critic and internalize the following:

I am your ally. I want to know what you have to say. Don’t worry if it’s perfect. Don’t judge yourself. It’s okay to follow the messy path first. You’ll have time to wash off the dirt and trim the edges later. Don’t weed all your sprouts before you know what’s in your garden. I want to hear your voice squeak a bit.

Let this internal voice be your co-conspirator, your collaborator in the writing process. Fight together against the challenges of communication, against the fear, against the pain. Later you can invite your critical thoughts, but not until their time.

First let’s mend. Find your child self. You are safe under the covers. Sometimes we all need a chance to write badly.



WENDY R. MCCUTCHEN

How to Survive as a Writer within the Linear Constructs of Academic Time

Or What to Do When the Deadlies¹ Are Out to Get You

This is not an article about how to “use your time wisely.” It’s *your* time, and I have no intention of taking ownership over what is rightfully yours. You will find none of the typical advice posited by black-bordered motivational posters or those pesky little tips found in the corners of agendas.

As a writer at Evergreen it is highly likely that in the approaching days, weeks, and months, a professor will say to you something along these lines: “You have [x amount] of time to write this paper.” Regardless of the way you might expect this progressive, contract-allowing, interdisciplinary, program-driven institution you have entered to behave, you will encounter deadlines. In many ways, deadlines and due dates can feel arbitrary, as if they are a force being exerted over you—a force which means to control you as a writer. Even though they may feel aggressive, due dates are usually chosen

¹ What happens to deadlines when their teeth get too sharp

to facilitate communication and are necessary to fostering collective thinking. Sometimes, in the case of seminar papers, for example, it is simply a way to ensure that individuals studying the same text or subject are on the same page (both literally and figuratively).

My own relationship with writing has been rife with the difficulty of fitting the practices and intentions of my writing process into the time and space assigned by institutional forces (professors, deadlies, etc). I used to think I could weasel out of these constraints. Once upon a time, in a far away Week 8, I realized that one of my mischievous essays had become something that no longer fit the challenge of the assignment. I began working on another piece that better approached the challenges posed. I turned in two unfinished essays. While this effort ended happily, I haven't always had the luxury of an understanding professor or been able

to count on the prospect of extended deadlines. For me, avoiding them has not involved a happily ever after conclusion.

Just this quarter I received the news that the amount of overdue homework compounded with several unexcused absences would disqualify me from being able to continue onto the 2nd year of Evergreen's Master in Teaching program. While there were many paths untaken which led my professor to hand me this decision, there was one very clear contributor to my struggles over the past few months (and for much of my college career). If you could walk into my room, you would see all the classic signs of chaos: all manner of papers and books and bed sheets populate each patch of floor in disarray. I was alternately pulling all-nighters early in the week and deciding to sleep through class on Friday mornings. I churned out writing that was often mindless. My engagement with my ideas steadily

declined and I found fewer and fewer reasons to value the work I was doing. I felt completely controlled by the seemingly insurmountable list of tasks. I was without my own space to breathe.

To better clarify: I moved into a new place first week of spring quarter—hurriedly, while recovering from a nasty cold. I had little chance to settle in before the quarter's work really got rolling. While the physical disorder of my academic life was not the source of the underlying disconnect I had with my program, it certainly catapulted the difficulty of the situation to terrifying heights. Stacks of papers became my own personal monsters of self-doubt. Suffice to say I have had somewhat limited success in my own endeavors to manage my time and meet deadlines. I felt like a failure. I was a smart, driven, committed writer and student, yet I continued to have trouble with deadlines (which I continue to misspell *deadlines*).

Sometimes even looking at a schedule makes my stomach feel gushy. Of the many thorny lessons I learned from this attempt, I am proud to say I am more certain about the kind of physical resources I need to be a more productive learner and writer.

My struggles with fitting my writing process into the margins between due dates often have been compounded by seemingly nonsensical advice about better managing my time. Each piece of advice seemed impersonal and unhelpful: "Be practical about it," or "make a to-do list," or "turn off the internet." Implicit in each of these messages is a command. One of the reasons it has been difficult for me to take to heart the advice about dealing with deadlies and due dates is because I don't like being commanded. I feel as if it is an additional takeover of my practice. I am resistant because I like the way I do things, and the advice given to me feels like it is dismissing the pleasurable and

mostly functional ways I already get things done. I have so often brushed off suggestions about organization because they ask me to compromise my practices without considering their current application. Because the way each writer approaches and feels about creating a text is personal and incredibly distinctive, any one-size-fits-all approach to organization can be stifling. And while we may regularly feel our practices are stifled, it is imperative that we approach navigating the compromises asked of us.

As the Co-Editor of this publication, I am more than aware of the necessity of inflexible due dates—people depend upon, rely upon, and communicate via deadlines (and communication is so often worth the compromise). However, my experiences and experiences writers have shared with me in tutoring sessions have illustrated that the processes of thinking and communicating do not immediately

play well with the linear structures of time measurement.

For better or for worse, the system of minutes, hours, days, and weeks has become a collective constraint under which all social beings must preside. To be seen as legitimate, our social, and certainly academic, interactions must fit into the prescribed meeting points generally referred to as due dates or deadlines. Because the construct of time will be applied in linear fashion to the often nonlinear way in which we write, managing it is a concept which must be overcome. So what's a writer to do?

Luckily, this system of constraints has a structure which can be studied, then navigated effectively, if we take into account the ways each of us as writers process through our thoughts, mutterings, and textual creations. If we accept time as a force which can't be stopped, stemmed, or slowed, we can begin to see time management in light of what we can control; we

have to translate what we think of as controlling or managing time into controlling space, energy, and resources. In order to keep our voices alive, we can put to use our knowledge of these three things to better live and survive as writers beneath the constraints of the linearly structured system of academic deadlines.

I hesitate to use the word (because it is so tied to the unhelpful advice), but organization is key.

Now I don't mean an organization that is given to you (administered by a syllabus or professor) but one that you give to yourself. First you should examine yourself as a writer, a communicator, and as an individual to determine what makes the process you go through to write seem doable and sustainable. That process could include a host of distinctive techniques. One writer who frequents the Writing Center, for example, considers going to the sauna before beginning a paper to be an integral part of her writing

process. Every writer is unique in what supports their minds and bodies in the act of communication, and you can use your knowledge about your practices and intentions to strategize about meeting deadlines. When I am asked to write about new, big, and fascinating ideas, I know I like to try out fresh ways of writing. Because I am aware of this preference, I need to (in addition to considering the professor's requirements) meet requirements I set for myself. I need to:

- Collect ideas about new writing methods from my peers, colleagues, and mentors;
- Give myself time to think about these new ways of writing and which would be best suited to the idea;
- Find space and energy to try out this new method.

The initial difficulty of any survival tactic is finding the space and energy

to feel out your process and strategize. It's awesome if you can manage this on your own, but totally cool if every time you sit down to think about schedules and space and energy, you feel queasy and get up to play Ultimate Frisbee instead. There is a place on campus already carved out for this sort of thing. The Writing Center is open six days a week and is filled with resources, with space for your energy, and with other supportive writers. We would love to join you in your efforts to strategize about how to keep yourself and your writing alive after being bombarded by a series of deadlies.

If that's not the thing for you, that's okay, too. You could consult your friends, peers, and classmates if it helps (and usually it does). My hope is simply that you endeavor to build a structure for your writing processes with nuances of your own choosing, lest your processes as a writer and student be structured by those administering the deadlines. In the spirit of those who have been doing so against oppressive forces throughout history, organize (your physical and mental energy), organize (your physical space and resources), organize (your support network), or else you are bound to be organized (by due dates).

NICKY TISO

Narration Sickness

An Introduction

"Education is suffering from narration sickness." - Paulo Friere

"The swerve that makes change possible is the clotted moment of collision between what's expected and unexpected, a crisis of unintelligibility, a moment of indeterminacy. A moment that invites the making of meaning." - Joan Retallack

The practice of writing creatively is an intensive intellectual labor whose value I want to reunite with the world from which it has been divided. I trace the disembodiment of creativity from education, poetry from society, to the alienating social strictures of capitalism, which tries to make critical thought irrelevant to reality. My poetry follows this war of wanting a space outside the exchange economy where it can still exist in a relationship with others, a space between intimacy and society. This quest for the freedom to re-narrate what education can look like depends ultimately on dialog but also a transformation of what that means. Such a form "puts knowing the world back together with changing the world, and at the same time unites

an ideal of praxis with a conception of production" (Jameson 204). This may be different than the normative ways we're conditioned to read, and indeed it's just that normativity I want to question. I'm not interested in answers so much as what questions can undermine them, so that the conversation can continue, so that we can have a shared experience in this text outside positions of mastery.

I'm going to give you an experience you're not prepared for; it requires taking a chance, the same kind of chance I took in documenting my own unintelligibility. I'm going to give you a kind of knowledge that cannot simply be received, but must be constructed. It will be uncomfortable, and I'm going to ask you to embrace the incoming irregularity on the faith that you will in the end feel freer. And if you don't, I'm going to ask: Was it really a loss? Because if you haven't taken a chance, is anything at stake?

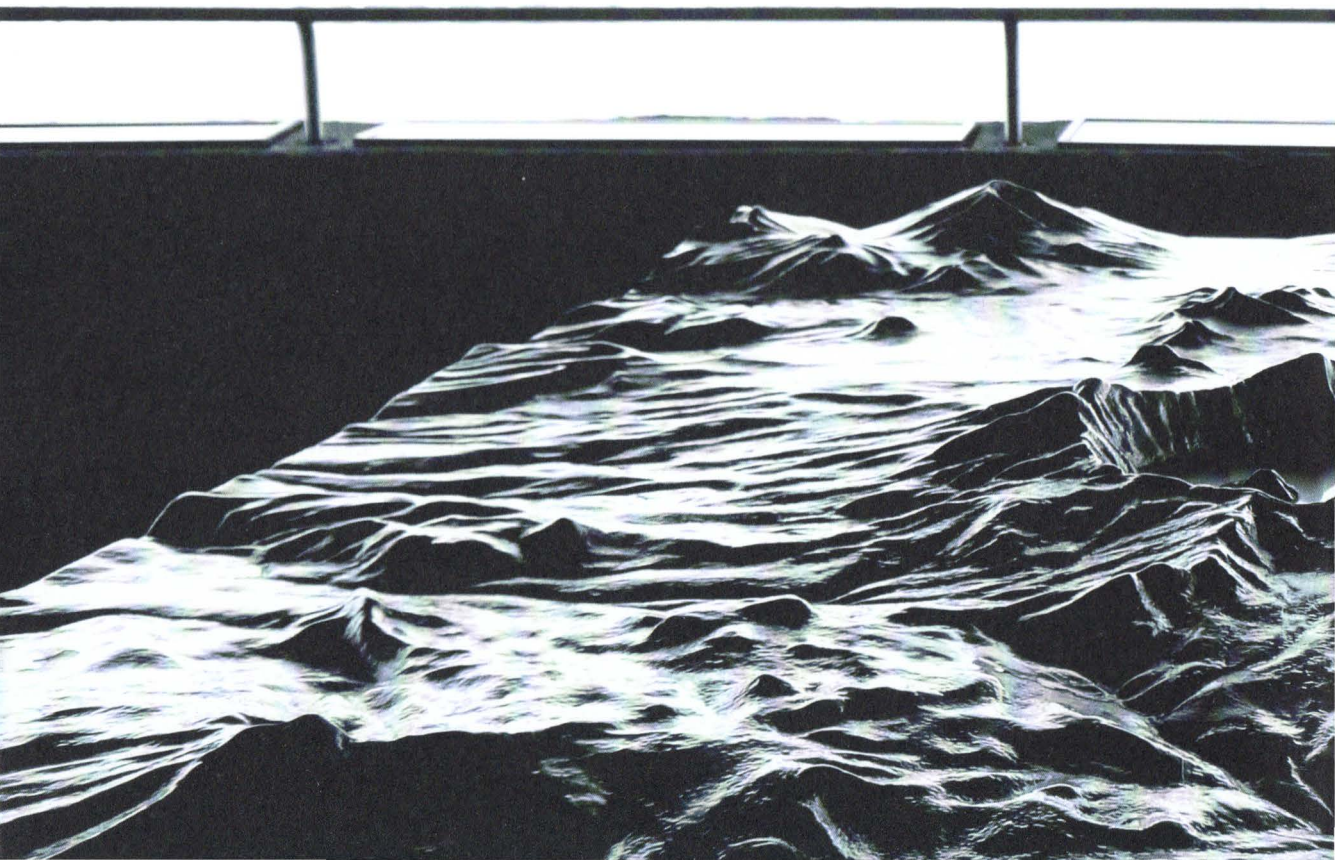
In the drafts that follow I progressively and intuitively cut-up and re-distribute my own language originally composed from class notes. I end up making more sense than when trying to be intellectually aware. Being open to accident and chance allows something other than the brain to influence one's writing process. This can be extremely liberating; our thinking habits get revealed, giving us the opportunity to change them. Chance allows for infinite possibilities of expression; it taps into the creativity we all have. The story I'm going to tell is one of my voice's desire to escape the fate of the page it is bound to, and how this depends on activating you, the reader, so that our relationship does not succumb to the indifference of its distance. Who I am gets lost and re-made, complicating identity. These drafts chart this exploration; they are a kind of map that I hope you cannot only follow but alter. Use this map to chart your own territory, so long as you're willing to share.

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EMILY KINNEY

Narration Sickness: 1

Typical knowledge manages
productions of worlds,
tense worlds.

Minimized interests reveal
humanitarianism.

Easily led concepts individualize
society.

Humans implicitly spectate,
surround objects with disaster.

Education is a process of
information adapting purposes for
(verbal) action.

Use relationships as a kind
of thinking.

Use dialog as a kind of revolution.

Instinctive relationships oppress.

What do you most want people to
know about you?

What do you least want people to
know about you?

Is this a kind of thinking?

Is thinking a kind of action?

Has this been a positive,
decentering, worthwhile
pedagogical experience so far?

Experiences can be marginalized, or
staged as marginal.

That's the point.

To objectify how.

That is very nearly the way in which
I intended it to be done.

Open but not festering.

To objectify one must open.

Once open, prone to infection.

The mind acts like a disease upon
the body.

How does the body point to what it
wants without lines emerging?

Because it won't fit moving on nor
will it disappear.

What serves as preservatives in the
meaning of a word?

Labor is all night long.

ANDREW OLMSTED

Freedom, Choice, and Power

Self-Evaluations as Empowerment Tools and a Handy Writing Guide

Self-evaluations are empowerment tools. Becoming empowered to control your own education and life supports writing evaluations, and writing self-evaluations contributes to your empowerment. The self-evaluation triangle (described in this article) sets up entry points into how your experiences and ideas are and were powerful so you can: write better self-evaluations, develop more agency over the way that you learn, and choose the direction of your own life path.

You can use your Evergreen transcript to show that you care about learning not only official academic concepts and processes, but also your own learning and your own life. This article goes through why writing and having your own evaluations of your personal achievements make your college education personally meaningful. This article also introduces a big how with regard to constructing your self-evaluation: the self-evaluation triangle (or "tryangle," because, give it a try!). I want you to know that *how to write evaluations* and *the reason for writing them* are closely connected, having to do with coming to own your learning and your life. The triangle

emphasizes this connection. But before I unpack the triangle, which is a useful how-to model, I must address a central, overarching question: Why self-evaluations?

I care about the self-evaluations of Evergreen students because I am interested in your development as a scholar and a learner. I love learning Evergreen-style, and I want to share my love with you. From my experiences as an Evergreen undergraduate, an Evergreen Writing Tutor, and a candidate in Evergreen's Master in Teaching program, I have learned that written self-assessments are essential for developing awareness of what one knows and what one's next learning steps are. Part of the Evergreen educational philosophy is that students take ownership over their learning processes. The configuration of our self-evaluation system reflects a political stance on the format and use for evaluation and assessment *for* student learning, rather than

judging and ranking students based on assessments *of* student learning. Writing self-evaluations informs a student's learning process. We write self-evaluations to set ourselves up to further our learning. Self-evaluations are not grades, and they are not summative until the final one you write after graduation. The fact that your voice gets into your transcript means that the self-evaluation process facilitates your creating an identity as a political act.

Writing any self-evaluation should be conceived of as a crucial port of call along your life-learning journey. The practice of reflecting on how new understandings, new skills, and new experiences contribute to your development is an essential component of being able to set and meet learning goals. The self-evaluation triangle is a model to assist you in setting and checking in with your own goals. At many schools, education becomes synonymous with

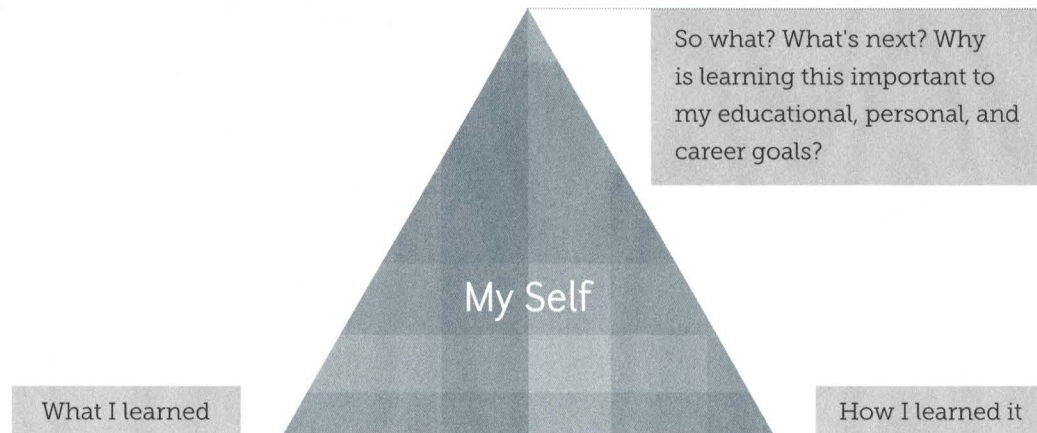
degree attained. Evergreen's self-evaluation process is designed so you can conceive of education as a coherent series of learning experiences that make up your life. You develop a framework, a process, a set of questions or goals to pursue based on new and emerging awareness about yourself and the world. Following your experiences with complex and thoughtful reflection about what you learned from the experiences will ensure that your time in college will be a continuity of educative experiences.

In constructing a narrative college transcript full of self-evaluations:

- You name how your experiences are and have been continuous, considering your own goals.
- You decide the degree to which your experiences have been educative.
- You see the connections between experiences over time.
- You decide how to continue from where you are.

I learned this conceptual diagram, the self-evaluation triangle, during a presentation by Evergreen alumnus and Writing Tutor Grant Miller. The diagram is a tool for connecting the idea behind the self-evaluation process—reflecting on, taking ownership over, and articulating your learning—with the practice of writing self-evaluations.

THE SELF-EVALUATION TRYANGLE



The lines of the self-evaluation triangle represent the words of your self-evaluation. The three points on the self-evaluation tryangle

represent different pieces of your learning process. The fundamental, foundational elements of your learning process relate to how you have

developed over the course or program. These elements can be labeled, "What I learned" and "How I learned it." The important distinction here is between what you *did* and what you *learned*. Notice that the entire tryangle is about *you*; the tryangle can facilitate your synthesizing your learning, your experiences, and your goals in your evaluation. A self-evaluation is about your learning achievements. A self-evaluation is not about what you did during a program or course.

The key to writing an excellent self-evaluation is to emphasize your learning whenever you discuss what you did or experienced. Connect, connect, connect. You only need to include in your self-evaluation the things you did that were central to your changing and learning. And if some of the things you learned from fell outside the activities listed in the program description, your self-evaluation is a perfect place to tie that learning into the story of your

Evergreen education. For example, let's say you learned important things through volunteer work. Spell out what you learned, and use the tryangle to contextualize your learning in your evaluation just as you would for things you learned through your in-program activities and projects.

The self-evaluation tryangle has many applications for brainstorming, drafting, and revising. First, you can use the tryangle to structure your evaluation around your overall learning and growth over the time you were enrolled in a particular program or course. Ask yourself the following questions and use the tryangle model to connect the answers in sentences.

Why did you take the program? What could you do when you enrolled in the program? What can you do now? What will you do now? How do your next steps relate to your educational, personal, and career goals? The answers to these questions usually fit nicely in the introduction or

conclusion of your self-evaluation.

You can also use the self-evaluation tryangle to construct the sentences and paragraphs of your self-evaluation. Ask yourself, **What did you do in the program? What did you learn through what you did?** List some of *the most important projects* you did or *texts* you read. Within the sentences and paragraphs of your evaluation, you can *describe how your participation in these projects led to your areas of new learning*—your changes, new skills, and new understandings.

A powerful potential of the self-evaluation tryangle is applying it to contextualize your feelings and decisions. This is particularly useful if you feel overwhelmed or if you cannot easily name what you learned in a program or a course. One common reason students consider this framework is if their experiences in the program were not what they hoped for. **Ask yourself what you learned about yourself after processing your**

feelings. For example, if your group project upset you, then when did you learn about how you work best in groups? What did you learn about your learning needs? **Also ask yourself what led you to choose to spend your time how you did.** For every choice you made over the term, recognize that something instigated your decision and that you changed directions. Spell out your experience of decision and change, and contextualize it as active learning. For example, if you decide to leave the program after one quarter, you can say that you learned that you wanted to explore the particular ideas in the program you are transferring into. **Finally, ask yourself what choices you can or will make now that you have done particular things and learned particular concepts.** As you plan and draft your self-evaluation, explore the answers to these questions with an eye toward recognizing and explaining what you learned in your final draft.

I always find it complicated to name what I have learned, but by considering what you did and how it relates to your goals, you may find it easier. Easier does not mean simpler—you are still dealing with your complicated, dynamic, personal changes. By writing self-evaluations, you can scaffold more conceptual and practical points of entry into your experiences.

The intention of Evergreen's self-evaluation system is to support your learning and writing processes. By using the self-evaluation triangle to write self-evaluations, you can make and articulate vital connections between your collegiate learning activities, your new knowledge and skills, and the goals you have for your education, your career, and your personal life.

Give it a try! And, of course, the Writing Tutors at the Writing Center are available to assist you.



SAMANTHA SERMENO

ALEX CLARK-MCGLENN

Brain Stuff & Mouth Parts

Imagine I am an alien. I might not have a mouth part. I grew up on a small planet near the star named Betelgeuse. Imagine, if you will, that as an alien, I live forever, never aging, always watching since the dawn of human kind. I watched your ancestors grow and begin to communicate with your best friends' ancestors. Communication was the greatest discovery for humans. Suddenly a whole new world was open to these strange bipeds, and they were able to share their experiences. Just think! To be able to communicate their thoughts in sounds made by throat, tongue, and lips. Still these creatures had no basis on which sounds meant what, and many confrontations were brought about because of this.

Imagine thousands of years have passed. I might not have a mouth part. Many languages have been born into the world-earth, and some of them have died midway through childhood. Some cultures have begun to use markings, small arbitrary symbols to represent sounds or even ideas. People who understood these symbols wrote them down on large pieces of parchment and tucked them away in large archives for others

to read in the future. Then there was a fire, and many of the writings were burned. Despite this, writing has not died, and now, as an alien who lives forever, I spend time watching distressed students poring over unfinished papers.

Imagine your mind. It is connected to your brain with thin rivulets of consciousness. It has a metaphorical mouth part. There are many things about the mind that are confusing: the ways you think, feel, and express yourself through voice and body. Contradictory thoughts often swirl together within it, pooling at the tip of its metaphorical tongue. These thoughts are abstract, and there are few ways, if any, to express them. Take a breath. Untangle those threads of mind-matter that are cumbersome and focus on a single string, a single thought. Find that it is not so difficult to understand this thought now. It is part of you, so quickly press pen to paper.

Imagine I am an alien. I might not have a mouth part. From my small planet near the star of Betelgeuse, I witness extraordinary variety. I watch as each touches pen to paper or clicks upon their computer processors. I watch and see that everyone's paper does not only start and end differently but is created in a different fashion. The human's writing process is diverse, ever changing. Apparently writing is always difficult no matter who you are. The process from thought to language to paper is as varied in humans as the ice crystals that make up the rings of Saturn.

Imagine a thought. It is yours. It is the one thought that is your complete understanding of your self, your body, your room, house, school, family and friends, your whole reality (if there is such a thing). Now your professor has asked you to write an open-ended paper that encompasses all of these things. This thought that is so much you, more than anything else, is now

asked to become language. Suddenly this thought needs to be translated, as if this thought is sand and English is a sieve. You cannot speak written language onto the page. Slowly sieve your thought, *yourself* through a pen, sprinkling it onto paper. Find that your writing is not the same. There is substance lost in every word, and this frustrates you. Flip through your dictionary or thesaurus that is always nearby to find the perfect word. It is an arduous and difficult process, but your brain stuff is equal to it; slowly a semblance of your thought is laid down upon the page.

Imagine a paper and the perceived fear you or others often have about writing. Imagine that paper, that work of yourself you have put so much time into, as a form of communication. Realize the constraints the English language presses upon its people like a saturated ink stamp. Realize that a written work is nothing more than a thought that has been translated

into language, into English, into an arbitrary symbol you place upon the utter whiteness of the page. Please, do not lose hope. The need to communicate in new and exciting ways upon the page is more important than ever, and it is always a creative process—deciphering one's own thoughts.

Imagine you are finished. You are ready to use your mouth part to talk about your open-ended paper. You feel calm; the process of your written word has given you a deeper understanding of the thoughts which spawned it. The convoluted and contradictory thoughts that swirled around your mind are now in order, filed away as it were, within the grooves of your brain. Now realize that through writing and the written language there is new understanding. What once seemed so complex is now communicable. You see now that writing is not only a process of communication but also a process of internal reflection. You are

ready. Print out your paper; it is almost class time.

Imagine you are in class. Your peers all have mouth parts. They are preparing to look at your paper, that part of you that is so much your thoughts yet really none at all. Imagine another person climbing in and around your brain gears and commenting on your synapses as if they understand the intricate concepts revolving there. Just imagine what your brain stuff is doing when you decide to write a letter, a word, or a sentence. Imagine the mental gears turning, synapses firing, and any other number of brain functions striving to turn your thoughts inexplicably into language. You can change this, rephrase that, but in the end you realize it can never be finished, never be perfect. The best you can do is give thought and look within your process of word craft. Take some extra time to marvel at what a miraculous invention the written word is. Once you are content with a

piece, put it away, lay it aside; for you have found that a piece of writing is never finished; it's just put away and stored for later, much like the archives that were burned so long ago. As you think of it: the end is only a product of time; finished, a product of now. It is something you decide, not your classmates and certainly not your professor.

So remember: when you feel unsure of where to start or when to end, there is no right way to begin expression. There is merely your way, which you will find is the only way, the best way that works for you. For just as each person is different so is every writing process, and as the rings of Saturn are always changing so it is with humans. Now take a breath and cap the pen or fold down your laptop. I see from my small planet near the star of Betelgeuse that it is a beautiful day, one that will not last forever.

is Education the exerted surface of emotion's wish to escape?

A Voice That will sway. cannot be named.

without becoming incrementally wronged?

what are the trajectories responsible for directing The voice

Might right angles lost in grey, uneven things lead you to a mood.

The mechanism of flesh, compressed

What's circular should feel misplaced.

We are made of a false totality, an evacuated interior of the intact, ossified.

How's that for humanitarianism?

Always answer with

Don't let

instinctive relationships oppress.

what it means to be natural?

A series is closed when

There are only as many questions as there are answers.

Experiences can be

irrefutable.

It's hard to remove

A voice

from known knowledge.

without it becoming prone to

point to what it wants

If it won't fit moving on nor will it disappear can it do what it wants more than once

What

without lines emerging?

material is property.

Without becoming what serves as preservatives

How does the body

in the meaning of a word?

reject symmetry

this involve asking about

What do you most want people to know about you?

Can you

do

What

one

must

to open what acts like a disease upon the body

without recapitulating

infection?

Has this been a positive, decentering, worthwhile pedagogical experience so far?

What do you least want people to know about you?

Is that a tense, surrounded object?

Its form

Easily led

by

what it means to be natural.

Typical knowledge manages

what sways?

with a name

is

Its name.

yourself

Is this a kind of thinking?

Is thinking a kind of action?

When does how we are made of to be named become for a moment silence?

Is the point

marginalized

, or staged as marginal.

world.

circulates unequally outside

How is what

will name other voices

productions of

society.

govern

them.

that is very nearly the way in which I intended it to be done

Open, but not festering

Labor is all night long.

MARISSA LUCK

“But I write the way I talk”

Inclusion and Exclusion in American Academic Writing

Not many people can say they were sent home on the first day of first grade. But this is what happened to my father who was punished for speaking Hawaiian Pidgin to his peers in a classroom where only “Queen’s English” was tolerated:

I thought that, since I was with my peers that were my age, that I could speak Pidgin English (since that’s what I did with the kids in my neighborhood); and I was sent home and given a spanking by my mother because she said, “We’re paying for private school” (Luck).

His mother did not want their family to have “any traces of the dialect” in order for them to “navigate successfully in society”. My father explained that in that generation, succeeding in society meant “screening out the ethnic identity of my mother’s past” (Luck). While this drastic measure may not happen today, the implications of my father’s story linger. A certain type of English is accepted in American academia that is culturally and socioeconomically specific. This standard of English privileges

and excludes certain groups of people.

Towards an Understanding of American Academic Rhetoric

Writing is a personal and social act that happens in the context of our cultures. Each culture has acceptable styles or rhetorics of writing. Multiple styles of writing may exist within a culture, but it is likely that one rhetoric is privileged over others as reflecting cultural values and norms.

American academic rhetoric is particular about writing. Cut to the point in the beginning with the thesis, then spend the rest of the paper convincing your reader. The responsibility for clarity and meaning rests on the writer who must hold the reader's hand through the process or risk being called confusing or off-topic. This is known as a *writer-responsible* approach to writing versus a *reader-responsible* approach

to writing that exists in some other cultures (Habib).

My early experience writing academic essays illustrates the nature of American academic rhetoric. In the sixth grade, I learned the art of "CHUNKing." CHUNKing was a new approach to teaching writing that was intended to train students to write academically. I remember sitting in Language Arts class staring at my teacher writing the formula in green marker on an overhead projector:

Introduction Paragraph.

Thesis: This is the last sentence in your Introduction Paragraph.

Body paragraph—"CHUNK":
Topic Sentence, Commentary,
Fact, Commentary, Concluding
Body Paragraph Sentence .
Repeat body paragraph
"CHUNK" twice.

Concluding paragraph:
Restate thesis

This method demonstrates core values of American academic rhetoric: individualism, focus, and rationality. Students are to indicate their individual opinion through a thesis and prove it without divergence. Individualism exists within accepted conventions.

I followed the rules. I learned to "CHUNK," using fifty-cent words along the way.¹ Eventually, I spent the latter part of high school learning to break away from this formula. Yet the confines of this approach had sunk into my writing. I saw my sense of confinement reflected in the experiences of another writer named Ella whom I worked with at the Writing Center. She told me, "When I'm doing academic writing, I feel like I'm writing to some external standard or bar that's being set. I don't know what it is."

Although this narrow external standard can limit all academic writers, Ella and I have a distinct advantage over some of our peers: we are both native English speakers from middle-class backgrounds who grew up immersed in standard English.²

The Role of Privilege in American Academic Rhetoric

I started to understand my advantage while working with writers who had different experiences with the English language. For instance, Jerry is a middle-aged African-American man, veteran, and father who is soft spoken and determined. He wrote sentences like, "The professor go to his office" or "She don't do that" or "I seen how a community can be divided." I crossed through the words and wrote "goes,"

¹ "Fifty-cent words" is a phrase used in some American classrooms to describe advanced vocabulary words.² The phrases "standard English" and "nonstandard English" distinguishes the style, dialect, and rhetoric of English accepted in classrooms. The term "standard" also reveals what American society considers normal and acceptable.

"doesn't," and "saw," moving on to what I thought were more important things.

Jerry is clearly an intelligent, native English speaker who grew up with a specific cultural and regional accent. He laughed nervously as he told me, "I write the way I speak," like many other students have told me before. But what if the way he speaks is not accepted in American academia?

Working with students like Jerry, as well as with English Language Learners (ELL), I was struck by how hard it was to explain things that seemed so natural to me. I realized there was something more to my writing than work or skill.

Growing up in a middle class household, as a mixed race person who could pass as white, my childhood was riddled with privilege. I used to spend my summer afternoons in the living room with the sun dancing through our cathedral style windows as I escaped in the stories

of *American Girls* and *Ella Enchanted*. My parents, who both had masters' degrees and worked in administrative positions, would discuss their social work, politics, and religion at the dinner table. I came to college knowing how to write a thesis, arrange a five-paragraph essay, and make a MLA bibliography.

My fluency in standard English acts as a base for me to strengthen my academic writing. On the other hand, writers like Jerry or ELL writers have a different base language or dialect. Unfortunately, their different experiences with the English language are treated as a deficiency in academia. Students are expected to overcome this deficiency by changing the way they communicate to fit into academic standards.

In one Writing Center workshop, I heard a man reflect on his experience learning to adjust to college academic writing. He explained how it was challenging to write in academia

because he did not grow up exposed to affluent university culture. For him, academic writing felt like “a different language” than the way he spoke at home or with his peers.

Not only are students with nonstandard language experiences grappling with college coursework, they are faced with learning a new way to speak, write, and express themselves within American academic rhetoric.

Learning to Adapt to American Academic Rhetoric

While working with an ELL writer, Rachelle, I realized some of the difficulties students learning English may face while writing in a new cultural context. Rachelle is an advanced English speaker but feels less confident with her writing. She was writing an essay comparing two texts.

“I don’t get it,” she shook her head, staring down at an intricately annotated article. “I spent so long

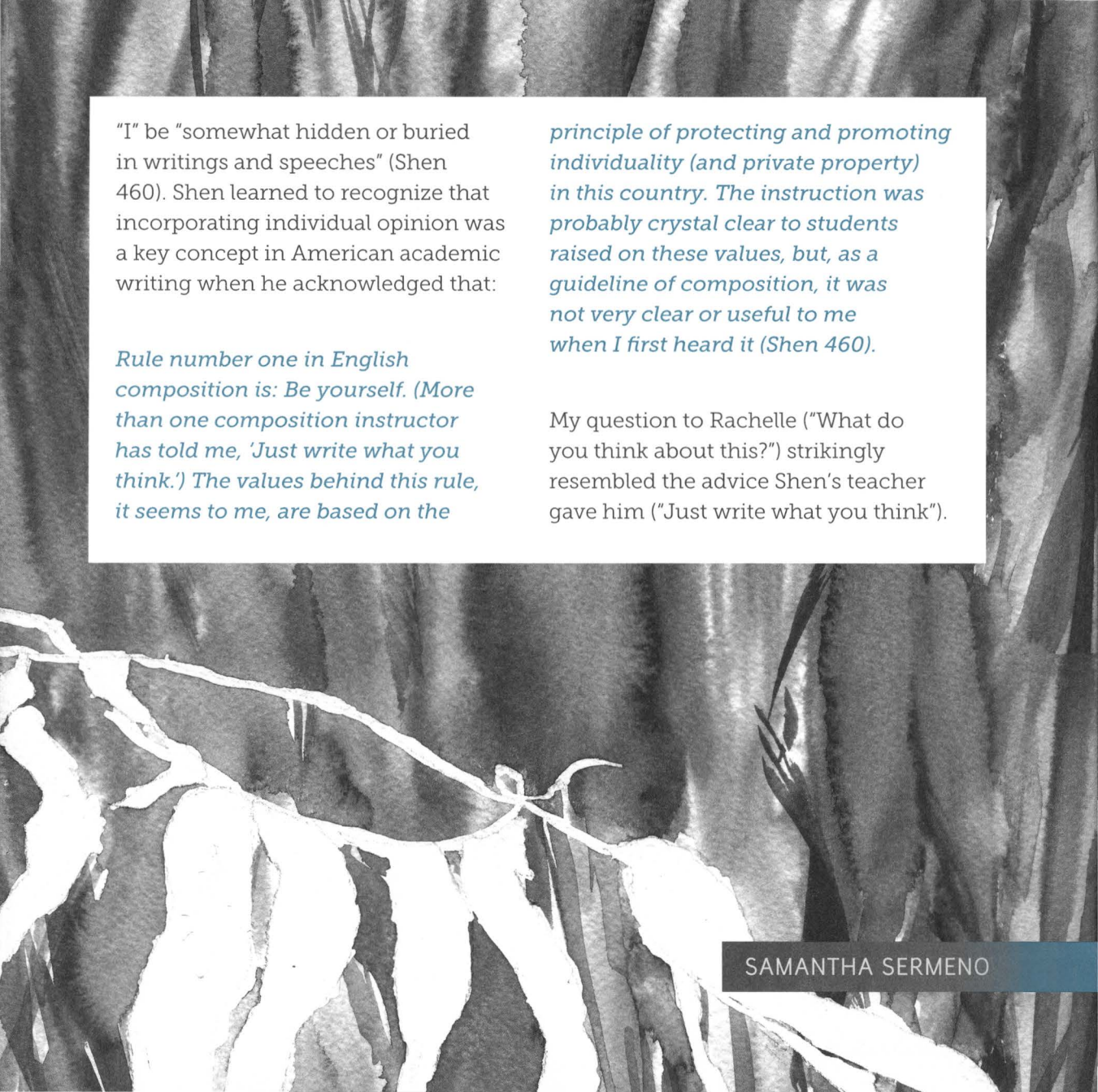
looking up words I forgot what it’s about. How am I supposed to write about it?” She continued, “I have too many quotations. I need to add opinion. How do I add opinion?”

“Well, what do you think about this?” I asked.

“Well...this is...uh...this is not good...and...” She looked at me, waiting for my approval.

I realized her anxiety may have come from a variety of sources: her difficulty understanding the theoretically complex text, her worries about writing a college-level English essay, and her recognition of needing to add opinion but not knowing how to go about it.

Fan Shen, an author and college English professor originally from China, had trouble learning to express his individuality in American academic writing. He was accustomed to writing in the Chinese rhetoric that required that the use of the word



"I" be "somewhat hidden or buried in writings and speeches" (Shen 460). Shen learned to recognize that incorporating individual opinion was a key concept in American academic writing when he acknowledged that:

Rule number one in English composition is: Be yourself. (More than one composition instructor has told me, 'Just write what you think.') The values behind this rule, it seems to me, are based on the

principle of protecting and promoting individuality (and private property) in this country. The instruction was probably crystal clear to students raised on these values, but, as a guideline of composition, it was not very clear or useful to me when I first heard it (Shen 460).

My question to Rachelle ("What do you think about this?") strikingly resembled the advice Shen's teacher gave him ("Just write what you think").

SAMANTHA SERMENO

Yet this may not be a simple question for students accustomed to writing in different cultural rhetorics. In order to learn how to write in American academia, Shen needed to learn “the values of Anglo-American society,” and learning to write in American academia involves a degree of cultural adaptation (460).

Anna Habib, a writing tutor fluent in multiple languages including English, pointed to the challenges ELL students face in the process of cultural transition:

My clients were finding themselves trapped in a discourse that was misunderstood in their new cultural context. I could see their frustration and understood that they were focusing all of their energy on grammar and syntax.... What they don't know, and rightfully so because I don't think tutors mention this enough, is that organization and argument is different in English

than it is in Arabic or Korean or French or Mandarin (Habib 10).

These students were learning to balance cultivating individuality within the accepted conventions as well as learning to adapt to the writer-responsible expectations of American academic writing. Since American academic rhetoric is narrow, it does not open space for the integration of other cultural rhetorics or methods of writing. Instead of allowing students to determine how to balance different cultural rhetorics, academia requires students to unquestionably adopt American academic rhetoric in order for their writing to be considered seriously.

Although each student's experience with academic English is unique, everyone from these stories (except Ella and I) is facing a similar challenge: they are learning a new way to express themselves within American academic rhetoric. Because they are pressured to

alter their voices to fit the standard of Academic English, they may experience exclusion and marginalization.

Conclusions: Marginalization and Voice

This year, I was reminded of the unconscious marginalization that takes place in the classroom as a result of language differences. “I’m usually quiet in seminar because the conversation is very fast,” an old classmate of mine from Korea who is an ELL student studying social sciences told me. When he did speak in seminar, I noticed my classmates’ eyes glazing over and my own mind drifting into space. Unconsciously, we stopped attentively listening when we heard him. Expertly trained by society, we had learned whose voices were to be taken seriously and whose were not.

American academic rhetoric operates within a linguistic hierarchy that

values standard academic English while devaluing variations of English or other cultural rhetorics. The presumably neutral standard is actually culturally and socioeconomically specific. While not discussed fully in this article, I have noticed intersections of class, culture, and race within this linguistic hierarchy. Students who are expected to alter their voice are frequently not students who grew up in American middle- or upper-class (often, but not always, white) cultures. In effect, the linguistic hierarchy in academia reinforces the power of dominant middle- and upper-class (mostly white) groups. By excluding or devaluing nonstandard rhetorics or English variations, American academia marginalizes students who don’t fit into the narrow standard. In doing so, academia denies these students the validity of their voices.

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DIMITRI ANTONELIS-LAPP

Eyes, Pens, and You

A D-I-Y Guide For Taking your Paper to the Chop Shop

I ride buses to the Boys and Girls Club twice a week in Tumwater, WA-h, overseeing waist-high hellions tackle spelling packets and fractions. They use their notebooks. They use their hands. They use their fingers. They use their pencils. Utensils? No, pencils! What is worthwhile if it doesn't have a screen or a hard drive and can't write sixty words every minute? As slow as it sounds, the power of watching words emerge from a pencil that have been born by neurons firing and thoughts traveling is like Catwoman transforming into academic writing. Badass, dangerous, and dressed in super tight leather.

Having the power to cross out words makes me feel like God, ultimately choosing the verbal outcome of a paper's Rapture. Crossing out words does not mean something is WRONG, but redirects the path of thoughts as ideas and arguments collide, frantically looking for an escape inside the brain. Witnessing the shift of a paper, a paragraph, and a phrase is graphic when I make changes in front of my face. I can taste the paper. Starchy. I can smell the pens. Grapefruit. The act of handwriting is a scene that unfolds; it is mental improv that is visceral in its

sense of violently cutting away words, but in a very blood-stays-inside-the-writer kind of way. Creak goes the Formica. Scratch goes the pencil.

When I stare at a computer screen I am a Zombie period I can't process thoughts period The screen dominates period The Internet beckons games girls news farms period Wait.

What paper was I writing?

I fly when I type. Eyes CLOSED. Music LOUD. I soar over thoughts and hone in on mountain-sized topics, only to be carried off by a crescendo or pulled away by the gusts of a quote like, "This isn't an opinion, this is math!" The power chords wail and send my thoughts into the outer realms of comprehension, as knuckleheads sing about anarchy and drum sixteen-count linkages within my skull. It is a comforting feeling, looking at dark eyelids as neurons slam dance and endorphins pogo. From the depths of mental turbulence, I realize my fingers are moving. I pay closer attention

to them and realize they aren't counting cymbal crashes or playing my air guitar. They are moving at an inconsistent but meaningful pace. *Oh crikies!* I think with a start. *I'm typing now? I'm writing a paper NOW?*

Get away from the computer and own your paper. Claim words and claim your thoughts as you break the monotonous bonds of the tap-tap-tap and become familiar again with the scratch-scratch-scratch. The goal is to liberate yourself from the shackles of autonomous writing, separate your mind from another filter to interact with a paper product. Trees, Gromit. I'm writing on trees.



EMILY KINNEY

The pencil: a powerhouse. The thought: up for review. The pencil is the boss; the word is the intern; and you are the management. Make the decision. Make those interns cry as you realize their superfluous uselessness in the bigger picture of your paper. You, as the paper manager, have the physical power to cross, add, chop, lengthen, cut, rearrange, and rewrite. I dare you to:

Double space paper

Print it out before it's due

Handwrite your edit.

(P.S. That's a haiku.)

Arguments focus. Length fluctuates. Ideas prosper. The power of writing

begins to be harnessed by the writer. Each word is chosen for reasons unbeknownst to the reader, but obvious cake-over-broccoli decisions for the writer. Having a hard time swallowing? Ask my friend, your nemesis, the Red Pen.

Hi! I'm Red Pen, and I'm gonna fuck your world up! Ooo boy, I'm gonna paralyze your brain so hard your medulla will think you died. I'm gonna cross out every single word and make you start over. I'm gonna make you cry so hard you're gonna think your face was raining. I'm gonna STOP!

This is the kind of power accessible for you to harness. This is the sort of decision making at your disposal, and you get to physically watch a paper evolve and grow as you write it. You'll become intimate with each word, as you create e-a-c-h-l-e-t-t-e-r. Every single sentence will scream, "I chose that!" and your content will say,

"Here's why, Booger!"

Writing is a conscious act. I used to write when I was loaded; now I write when I'm focused. I used to mentally blindfold myself and write papers; now my Letter Security is on red alert. The efficiency and production of my writing maximizes when I watch it closely. A friend of mine cringes when I mingle with the thought of relating my writing to a product, but when due dates and expectations are apparent, so is the mentality of write-type-read, write-type-read-think, write-type-read-think-talk-type.

So what's all this talk about empowerment, violence, acts, consciousness, and processes? It's just a seminar paper. It's just a response to an online post. It's just an email to a faculty member to get off the waitlist. Writing has been ingrained in me since I first scrawled those big D I M I T R I letters on a worksheet twenty years ago. Combine that automatic ability to write when asked with a technological

device that sends your writing process into ANOTHER BRAIN, ANOTHER MEDIUM, ANOTHER FILTER. The reason I write papers by hand is to use conscious decision making throughout a paper's creation to break that all too easy cycle of generating speedily typed fluff.

Typers, unplug and listen! I dominate the 'scape of letters, words, and paper rewriting. I am the spider. I am in your path. Which direction will you turn? Eight legs in your way, menacing, threatening the space between you and your next draft. You scurry back and forth, as all legs threaten you with a pen. Wait. Every leg is a pen.

Creak goes the Formica. Scratch goes the pencil.

Fill a blank piece of paper entirely with the stream of voices which keep you from writing. Find some scissors. Cut a door through your wall of words in the middle of the page. Put your doorway-page up where you write. As an experiment, leave it there for awhile.




SANDRA YANNONE

In Case of Fire

For four days and four nights last September I lived outdoors at a camp in a valley outside of Sedona, AZ. I kept looking up into the mountains for any signs of life. We'd tucked twelve people, each alone, inside the boundary of a seven-foot square of land chosen specifically for the challenges it might pose to its inhabitant. All twelve had prepared diligently for a vision quest, each filling 144 squares of red cloth with a pinch of tobacco then looping those squares into a long thread of prayers, an offering to the spirits. A wispy rope staked into four corners of the earth were the only walls protecting the one inside from whatever obstacles the Sedona land and sky might offer.

My role was supporter, having little knowledge about what that might entail. All I knew was that I had traveled to Sedona to eat for those who would be inside their rope houses without food and water for four days. Once at camp, I learned an equally sacred task: those of us at the camp had to tend to the fire. It could never go out.



For four days and four nights I sat at that fire at base camp watching it fiercely and letting it be my inspiration to write.

On the first day our guide Asher encouraged us to make offerings to the fire: tobacco, sage, juniper, handfuls of flavored earth we could feed the fire and send to our beloveds up on the mountain. I sat by the fire for hours writing in my rice paper book to keep company with the fire, to make sure it did not go out.

On the second morning, I woke to the howl of wolves. Opening my tent flap to the first sky of day, the sky and I became one. I walked to the fire, sat down in the dirt, and wrote whatever blazed from inside me. I filled pages with my own words.

When I looked up from my book from the other side of the fire, Asher said, "Why don't you offer a poem?" I stood up and gave the fire Li-Young Lee's "One Heart":

Look at the birds. Even flying
is born

out of nothing. The first sky
is inside you, open

at either end of day.
The work of wings

was always freedom, fastening
one heart to every falling thing.



For the rest of the day, I kept looking up at the sky for any sign of birds. That afternoon rain broke free from the clouds. We filled our lungs with campfire songs remembered from childhood as we furiously unloaded wood from the back of the pickup. We had to keep the fire raging, raging in the face of rain.

On the third day, I danced my words around the fire. The red clay permeated every step I took as the blue sky hung above me.

On the fourth day, I whispered into the fire's ear all day, singing faint lullabies throughout the night.

On the final morning, I knelt in the clay waiting for the sound of the truck's grind in the dirt letting me know of the group's safe return. I had fed the fire with words for days while others used wood. Now it was my turn to listen.

We gathered inside the sweat lodge to witness our beloveds' rebirth. The

rocks heated from the fire breathed life back into their near deaths. Outside the lodge, the sun blazed over us. We crawled out like babies, then sat around the fire. Those changed from the mountain poured their medicine tea over the coals. The fire spoke its last words before it was gone. We, all of us, were all that was left.

In that instant, my memory of the fire became the fire inside me. How could I keep it from going out? For months now, the fire has continued to burn in the form of "One Heart." Unlike all other poems I know, Li-Young Lee's poem knows me. It has me memorized, and so I offer it to people whenever my mouth and heart want to open to the world.

But what if fire is not what burns creatively inside of you? What if fire doesn't motivate you, but terrifies you?

On July 6, 1944, a boy sat on the bleachers inside the canvas big top of the Barnum and Bailey Circus waiting

for the first act to begin. Above him on the high wire, the Great Wallendas warmed up the crowd with their spectacular motions in flight. The boy turned his head for an instant to look at the yellow tent towering behind him. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw something crawling up the seam of the tent.

"I think I see a fire," he said to his aunt, a grade school teacher who had been given tickets by the family of one of her students.

"Oh, don't worry, somebody will put it out," she said.

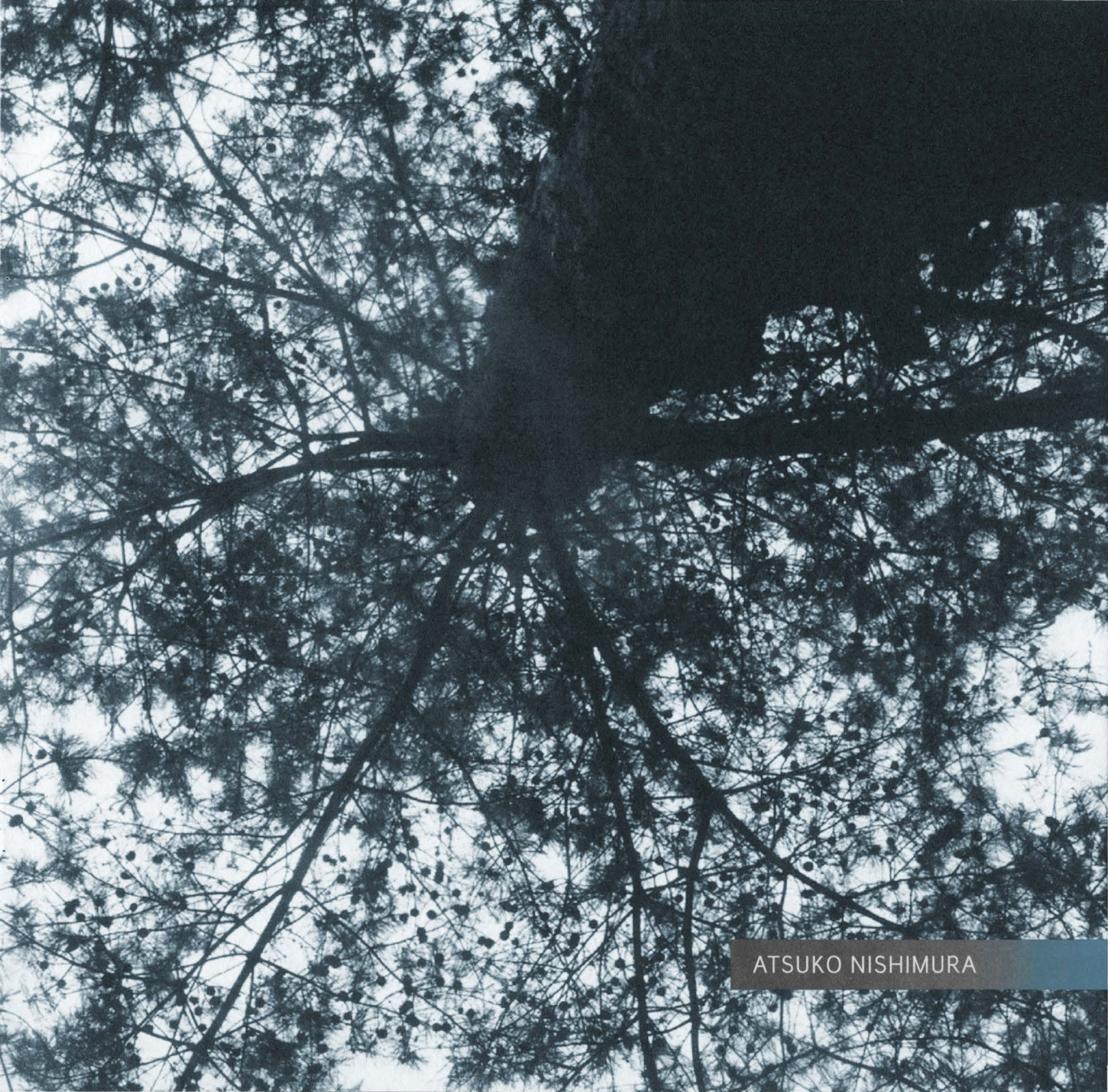
Nobody put it out.

In eight minutes the great tent from the Greatest Show on Earth burned to the ground in Hartford, Connecticut. While a world war raged an ocean away, the fire that summer day took the lives of 169 more people, mostly children.

The boy, now my father, was not one of them. From that July day forward, he always looked for the escape, the exit, in case of fire. He came to need wide-open spaces, would leave all the doors and windows he could find open. He became a volunteer fire fighter in our hometown, dashing out of the house at all hours of the night when the town's alarm would sound, signaling a potential disaster, hoping he could rescue someone from the fire.

From a young age, I knew what the red tank hanging on the kitchen wall was for and how to pull the pin and use it, even though I couldn't lift it. There's a photograph of me on my first Halloween dressed up in a red sweatshirt with a plastic pumpkin bucket in one hand and a tiny, plastic hatchet in the other. On top of my head: a red Junior Fire Marshal hat.

For years my father would not tell anyone these stories. He couldn't see how a story burning inside him was different from the fire he escaped.



ATSUKO NISHIMURA

Then one day in 1999, I saw a request for submissions to a popular New England magazine my parents had read for years. The magazine was looking for readers' stories, a sort of "Where were you when?" approach to storytelling. I knew this was the chance for my father to tell his story, to help him extinguish the fire he could not put out that day in July, 1944. Working on his article brought out his passion for writing. His article, "The Day the Circus Came to Town," was featured 55 years later in *Yankee's* July 2000 issue as one of the top 100 stories of the century.

Writing is an act as strange as the impulse to keep a fire ablaze. The stories that inspire us, ignite and terrify us, come from our beating hearts, come out of nowhere to circle inside our vast interior skies. Those birds in the Sedona sky flying over the fire? I wrote them down so you could see them. So, too, I give voice to the fire; the fire gives voice to me. If tended to, both can blaze for what seems like forever without destroying a single living thing.

