

LSU WRITING PROJECT

Summer Institute Anthology 2016



Table of Contents

Introduction to the Anthology	3
Poetic Expressions	
<i>Name Poem #2</i> by Margaret-Mary Sulentic Dowell.....	5
<i>Antoni Gaudi</i> by Erin M. Casey	6
<i>"I was raised"</i> Poem Commentary by Margaret Piccoli	9
<i>"I was raised"</i> by Margaret Piccoli	10
<i>Two-voice Poem Commentary</i> by Margaret Piccoli.....	13
<i>What's Good on TV?</i> by Margaret Piccoli	14
<i>Goldilocks: An Alternate Ending</i> by Brittany Rainbolt	16
<i>Grilled Cheese</i> by Kasey Waller	17
<i>Quercus Virginiana</i> by S. Elston, 2016.....	18
<i>Name Sake</i> By Bethany Davis.....	19
<i>Diamante Poem</i> by Shannon Loupe	20
<i>Where I'm From</i> by Monica Speligne	21
<i>I Forgive You</i> by Courtney Brown	22

Introduction to the Anthology

Dr. Margaret-Mary Sulentic Dowell, LSUWP Director

Building a community in two short weeks requires mindfulness and intentionality. A cornerstone of the National Writing Project, the Invitational Summer Institute is intense professional work. As a starting point, Erin and Margaret-Mary selected a common text, Linda Christensen & Dyan Watson's 2015 *Rhythm and Resistance: Teaching Poetry for Social Justice* published by Rethinking Schools out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Creating an Invitational Summer Institute around poetry was a bit of a gamble. But inspired by Rebecca Kaminski, the founding director of the Upstate Writing Project in the Eugene T. Moore School of Education at Clemson in South Carolina (yes, the other Tigers), who used poetry as the focus of Upstate's 2015 Invitational Summer Institute, they began planning for the 2016 Louisiana State University Writing Project's in January of 2016. As a team of two, Erin and Margaret-Mary forged a bond as they searched for common ground, pulled up their sleeves, and crafted an intense, rigorous Institute.

Around the *Rhythm and Resistance* text they sequenced a set of activities and opportunities designed to foster collaboration, nurture risk-taking, and promote writing as shared effective practice. Using *Poetry as a Demonstration Genre for Deeper Writing* as the Institute's theme, Erin and Margaret-Mary sought to emulate the National Writing Project's vision that educators play a vital role in leading sustained efforts to improve learning in schools and communities, encouraging the teacher-participants to study writing and learning, and work collaboratively with other educators. Erin and Margaret-Mary pushed participants to stretch themselves as learners, reinvent themselves as educators, and embrace a writerly life, drilling down to how that translates to students.

Erin and Margaret-Mary offer this poem to the 2016 Invitational Summer Institute participants.

Often on Our Minds and Forever in Our Hearts

Bethany – Bold, Unflinching, Daring, and Feisty. You offered yourself freely, a sister in spirit.

Brittany – Inquisitive, Candid, Forthright, and Honest. Sharing your soul, a glimpse of glory.

Kasey – Open, Frank, Direct, and Forthright. Not a writer, you claimed, showing us otherwise.

Margaret – Sincere, Curious, Quiet, Cosmopolitan. Experiencing dissonance, teacher to scholar.

Monica – Calm, Observant, Authentic, and True. An honorable classmate, decent and kind.

Shannon – Truthful, Genuine, Wondering, Steadfast. A trustworthy teacher, a child's advocate.

Stacey – Dependable, Unexpected, Serious, Effervescent. Your passion overflowed, inspiring all.

As a site of the National Writing Project <http://www.nwp.org/>, the LSU Writing Project's 2016

Invitational Summer Institute was a triumph. In these pages you will find writing from Institute attendees. Enjoy these pieces and the individuals they represent.

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LSU Writing Project 2016 Cohort
Shannon Loupe *Margaret Piccoli *Brittany Rainbolt
Kasey Waller *Stacey Elston *Bethany Davis *Monica Speligne

Poetic Expressions

Name Poem #2

Margaret-Mary Sulentic Dowell

From a family of double names,
Tradition.
Strong names, heavy with meaning and significance.
Nicholas Joseph, both grandfathers.
Robert Nicholas, Dad and Grand Dad.
David Raymond, Biblical, oldest Uncle.

Others were prettier, more glamorous,
Like older sisters Suzanne Marie and Jeanne Louise.

One day I asked, where did I get it?
From Mary Margaret, my mother's reply
But who is she, I asked?
A distant grandmother,
Never mentioned before my young question brought her to my life.

One I never knew.
An immigrant,
Slovenian,
Gypsy,
The first wife,
Dead before her life began.

She called to me,
I reached back,
Becoming what she never could be.
I turned it around,
Margaret-Mary

Antoni Gaudi
By Erin M. Casey

Antoni, Oh Antoni!
How you make my head spin!
You've been dead for 90 years,
but I feel your presence alive and thriving
in your beloved España.
Your art is candy for my brain.



It is sad to read of your sickness as a child,
but that pain in your joints
slowed you down
so that you could notice
and remember
and then re-create
the nature and beauty around you.
You captured the colors, curves, angles, and light
in your buildings,
and you made them grow like plants do.



When you arrived at architecture school,
Barcelona then received a son
who would draw the world to its center for generations to come.
At your graduation the director pondered,
“Who knows if we have given the title to a lunatic or a genius...
only time will tell us.”



Flowers, windows, crosses, chimneys, furniture, mosaics...
Lampposts, tiles, arcs, doors, walls, handles, suns and dragons....
All fashioned after corncobs, honeycombs, snake spines, leaves, octopi,
lizards...
Who would have thought? Who would have believed?
You thought,
and you believed.
Even when the elite gawked at your different style,
you still won award after award
and commission after commission.

In 1883,
at age 31,
in the midst of all the other projects
you started your biggest endeavor.

You used your deep love for Our Lord and your passion for design to create
La Sagrada Familia or the Sacred Family cathedral
(now the second-most visited landmark in Europe).
You dedicated 43 years of life to this construction
even living in a small room within and then finally resting in its crypt.
I saw your tomb down below,
but I know you are above.
Have you been watching as the building still progresses?
Will you see its completion still 20 years more to come?

I truly hope so
because I know that all your works,
which create excitement and joy in my life,
consumed yours.
No wife, no children, your parents and brother died young.
You neglected yourself so much that when a tram hit you at age 74,
you were not rushed to the doctor
because they thought you were a
beggar.

Days later,
thousands lined the street to say a final goodbye,
but they could never forget you.
Never.
Not as long as eyes can see,
and hearts can love,
and minds can ponder
the beauty you have left behind.



Antoni, Thank you.
Moltes gràcies, Erin



“I was raised” Poem Commentary

Margaret Piccoli

The “I was raised” poem is an extension to the “I am” poem. I like the “I am” poem because it is a wonderful springboard to deeper and more thoughtful poetry. In fact, the “I was raised” poems oblige children to think about specific events in their life that made them who they are today. They reflect on both the good and bad times, traditions, and routines that may not seem important, but have meaning and give them a sense of peace or unease. All of these moments are formative, which have led them to the person have become.

I enjoyed writing the “I was raised” poem because it is a small celebration of a routine event in my family. It’s a part of the day that holds all the people and things that are most important to me. The “I was raised” poem also provides children with time to reflect, so they are able to discover these moments that may have otherwise.



“I was raised”

By Margaret Piccoli

Dinnertime

Onions frying

Garlic

Celery

Carrots

Are the dishes done?

No, Erik

come here please

What was I doing?

Yes, I need to put the water on to boil.

Pasta

Spaghetti, penne, shells?

Is the table set yet?

Laura, you too!

You're needed!

Erik comes down like a herd of wild horses.

“Mom, what's for dinner?”

While looking in every pot

clanking tops and spoons

“Spaghetti. What sort of past would you like?”

“Shells, of course!”

Water's boiling

Erik's stirring, waiting, and tasting the pasta.

Laura eases in the kitchen,
the conversation, and the cooking preparation.

She sets the table
plates, glasses, napkins.

Now the conversation.

Never the same
Always passionate and relevant.

"I read this..."

"Do you know who..."

"Where is..."

"We should go there too!"

The back door closes
and we hear a loud,

"Ciao tutti!"

They respond with an even louder,

"Ciao Papá!"

We all sit down
Eating, arguing, discussing,
debating, laughing, crying.

The meal is over.

It's time to pick up
cleaning, washing, and a little more talking.

“Good dinner Mom,”

Erik says as he bounds

off to take a shower.

A kiss and a hug

with a sweet, “Good night.”

from my daughter.

It’s just me

and my husband now.

Peaceful

Slow

Sleepy

Two-voice Poem Commentary

Margaret Piccoli

The two-voice poem is a wonderful way to develop voice and perspective in writing across disciplines. The two-voice poem allows students to research multiple points of view on a topic. Often students only do an exhaustive research from one perspective, which usually is one they already hold some preconceived idea of belief. If they are forced to look from conflicting points of view or just find other stories, it is possible they will change their minds or at least have a better understanding of the other perspective.

I believe that the two-voice poem can assist in nurturing empathy and even in inter-group relations. Children, like adults, become entrenched in their point-of-view, and would rather argue than recognize conflicting information. Furthermore, through poetry, it can be done efficiently instead of writing long essays trying to defend each point. Also, children should perform these poems. Students generally throw themselves into their creations and become the characters in the poems. One thing is to read a poem another is to be in the presence of the characters that come alive through performance.

What's Good on TV?

By: Margaret Piccoli

When I watch TV, which isn't much,
I like to see some light entertainment.

Nothing heavy, not even gory,

But happy, and a good story.

My favorite show, I know is silly

Is "Just Say Yes to the Dress."

It's nice to see almost everyone

Leave so full of hope and joy

Laura Jean

Another show, which is lots of fun,

Is "What Not to Wear," with Stacey and Clinton

They would find lovely people

But their wardrobes were unbelievable

Many just needed a bit more confidence

And with their new clothes, they were provided resplendence.

Finally, I love to sit with friends and family

And watch a good movie

Movies can capture a moment in time

And allow you to unleash your mind

For days I play the movie over in my head

My imagination ignited, but INSTEAD

My brother wants to watch the news
It is his turn to choose.
So, I'll catch up on current events
No dresses or films, just a lot of malcontent

Erik

Every morning I wake
To NPR's Steve Inskeep
Of course, there are my dear friends
On the news channel, CNN
I don't stop there, or no! There's more
The many news sources, you must explore
I like the BBC's network of reporters
They enter into all sorts of dangers
When I watch the news from multiple sources
The noise from all the discourses
Makes my head spin
So then, I need to rest much to my chagrin.
A little mindless TV
May be just what I need
So, I'll just sit here quietly
While my sister watches her movie

Goldilocks: An Alternate Ending

By: Brittany Rainbolt

What if Goldilocks, snug in that bed
Had the police called on her instead?

What if they asked her, “Why are you here?”
“Why, officer,” she stammered, “my grandmother lives near.”

What if Goldi’s hair was brown
Just like her skin?
Then what kind of trouble might she be in?

What if the police officers pushed her out of bed?
What if no matter how loud she answered,
They couldn’t hear what was said?

What if “I’m sorry” and “my mistake,”
Were met with kicks to the head?

Then would it be a story
We read to kids before bed?



Grilled Cheese
By Kasey Waller

Skillet sizzling with butter,
Two slices of white,
And a thick slice of American cheese,
Is heaven in my sight.

Not long until the smell of home arrives,
Bringing back my childhood,
And the warm comfort after a long day,
To help me relax like nothing else could.

That ooey-gooey cheese,
Seeping out when grilled just right,
And the crunch of the bread as I take a bite,
Can make my day bright.

Always stay true,
No tomatoes, bacon, or fancy cheeses,
And don't forget the french fries,
My stomach this pleases.

Grilled cheese I am counting on you.



Quercus virginiana

S. Elston, 2016

Near 'bout 160 years ago
Young Doc Laycock's plantation slaves Planted
me and my brethren
For beauty.
Sugarcane was king back then,
And they knew I would be as majestic as Their
family ambitions.

But, Time, he always be achangin',
And he did what he does.

The War came.
The great house and lands were spared
As they housed the wounded soldiers
Don't ask me whose.
I was too young to take notice.
Just know that Abraham Lincoln was the Lawyer
for the family.

But, Time, he always be achangin',
And he did what he does.

What I thought was THE war
Was just one war
Now we didn't fight ourselves,
We fought away overseas.
Sorrowful goodbyes again under my growing
boughs.
My roots watered with the tears
of those left behind
My strong trunk the support of the women, at
their most private.

But, Time, he always be achangin',
And he did what he does.

The great house was sold, and me with it.
Now I belonged to the Babins.
And I sheltered the abandoned from yet another
war,
My roots watered afresh.
As war will do, the women burgeoned as strong
and thriving as me.

But, Time, he always be achangin',
And he did what he does.

And since then, I was parceled out, one of my
brethren for each new house.
How many families has it been?
At first, they were the lesser gentry
Then the poor
Now, the gentry again.

How dare you say you will name me?

I am *Quercus virginiana*,
A southern live oak
I am home to the woodpeckers, and blue jays,
and squirrels
I am mighty and majestic
And in 1500 years, whatever you have called me
will not matter.

Name Sake
By Bethany Davis

For Christ's name sake
We were created in His image

For His name sake
This first-born baby was called to be His church

This beautiful Black object of love personified
Forever burdened with the weight of The Word since creation

Running
Running
Running from the prophecy of my name sake because
Housing The Lord requires too much submission for my youth

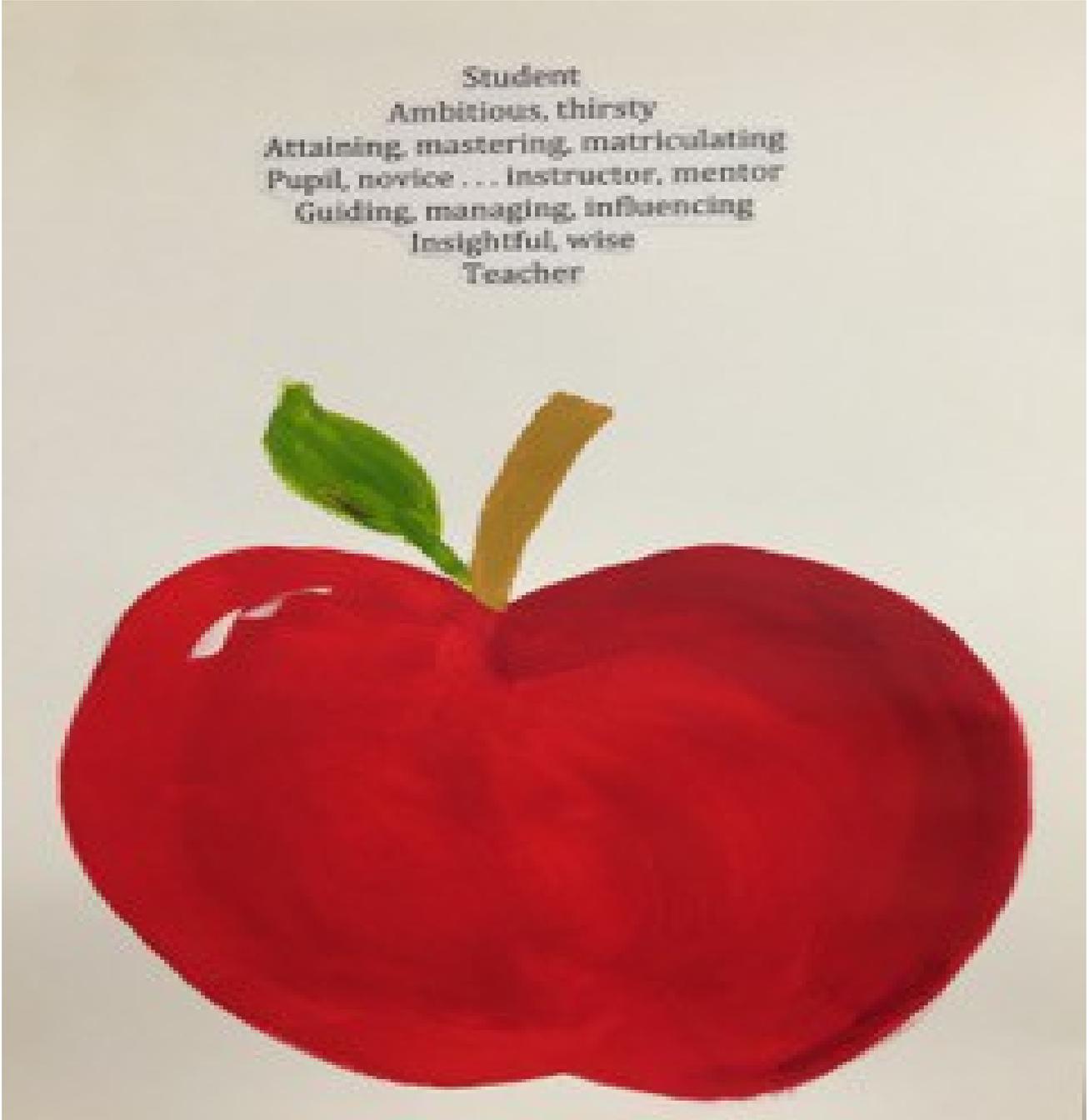
Calling
Tugging
Pulling me back in the days of old age in a strong and loving embrace
I am His beloved and have been set apart for
His namesake

Willing
Yielding
Surrendering completely so that He who was, and is, and is to come
Can peacefully abide within

For His namesake.

Diamante Poem
By Shannon Loupe

Student
Ambitious, thirsty
Attaining, mastering, matriculating
Pupil, novice . . . Instructor, mentor
Guiding, managing, influencing
Insightful, wise
Teacher



Student
Ambitious, thirsty
Attaining, mastering, matriculating
Pupil, novice...Instructor, mentor
Guiding, managing, influencing
Insightful, wise
Teacher.

Where I'm From
By Monica Speligne

I am from Sunday dinners at Grandma's
Cousins playing Cowboys and Indians
Aunts cooking, stuffing crawfish heads
Crawfish etouffee
Cochon de lait
Washing dishes at midnight.

I am from "yes ma'am" and "yes sir"
"I'll get that for you"
"Please" and "Thank You"
Give a firm handshake
Chivalry's not dead
"You know better than that."

I am from church on Sundays
Prayers at night
Rosaries together
"Can I be an altar server, too?"
"But that's not fair, girls can do whatever boys can do!"
"Jesus would say it's ok."

I am from neighborhood ball games
Swimming in the bayou
Swinging on vines
Picnicking under the old oak trees
Picking blueberries for dessert
And running home for supper when the sun goes down.

I am from Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn
Charlie Pride's "Kiss an Angel Good Morning"
Elvis Presley's "Blue Suede Shoes"
John Denver's "Rocky Mountain High"
And singing amidst the laughter "Lord It's hard to be humble"
With Daddy at night.

I am from all these moments
Fading in the blistering sun
Brought back again
To bloom and grow
In life's most treasured gifts.

I Forgive You
By Courtney Brown

Brokenness now mended
Scattered and shattered now healed and whole
I forgive you
For not having the capacity to give me what I needed
Although my expectation was perpetually childlike
Through every time you disappointed me
Even when I modeled the behavior for you
I showed, not told you how I wanted to be loved
Yet you still chose to love me from your perspective
Yours which was tainted with pretense and superficiality
I forgive you for not choosing me, for toying with me, for betting that you could steal my heart
and then manipulating circumstances to create a false love
I forgive you
For choosing others over me, for always thinking the grass was greener because I was too stable
for your urgent needs for constant change
I forgive you for using my love against me and for using me to supply you with wisdom in your
new conquests because you struggled to manage your own changes without me
I forgive you for trying to use my love to obligate me to be in situations which were
uncomfortable to me with no regard for me, with no consideration for my broken heart
With no compassion for my despair with no support to comfort my weeping eyes
I forgive you
For I know that you had not the capacity to give me what I deserved
Brokenness now mended
Scattered and shattered no more
I forgive to be healed
I forgive to be whole