

# San Antonio Writing Project

## Inaugural Summer Institute 2006 Anthology



I would hurl words into this darkness and wait for an echo, and if an echo sounded, no matter how faintly, I would send other words to tell, to march, to fight, to create a sense of hunger for life that gnaws in us all.

~Richard Wright, *American Hunger*, 1977

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## **Preface**

Welcome to the inaugural anthology of writing from The San Antonio Writing Project. The writing reflects the precious five weeks that we have spent together. We've laughed and we've cried, we dreamed and we've seen our dreams become realities. We've met with so many authors who generously shared their wisdom and expertise with us. We were a diverse group who shared ideas and experiences willingly. Our project became defined by our dedication to the teaching of writing for all children, but especially for children of poverty and for English Language Learners. Conducting, valuing and sharing oral histories became another major theme for our project. As our cover suggests, we have burst into life as a new project with infinite possibilities. This anthology captures our hopes, our dreams and our time together in the inaugural invited summer institute of the San Antonio Writing Project.

Roxanne Henkin

Director, San Antonio Writing Project

## Writing on the Stoves—Cuentame

Aurelia Davila de Silva

Les quiero platicar mis aventuras. We lived in what seemed to me a vast rancho away from the buzz of the city. Flat land that would not make you dizzy, just allow you to enjoy the multicolored wild flowers. The piles and piles of dirt seemed like small mountains to me. I had so much room that when I stood and rolled my tree log, I could move it adroitly for miles with out falling off.

The trees were tall enough that I could climb and see for miles including the trains that had a regular schedule on Interstate Highway 35. I heard the trains whistle every day when I was not at school. When I was close to the trains, I would wave at the engineers riding at the front and the back. The engineers would wave back. Once in a long while they would not wave. I wondered why they were not friendly. Did they not see me?

As you looked around, one could see remnants of oil drilling equipment. Old pipes that could be used for different purposes, yet discarded to be dissolved by the environment. My father had taken these loose pieces of pipes and constructed a swing set that was too high to hang from and another part was too short to do maromas or somersaults. Nevertheless, I proceeded to think I was the queen of gymnastics. The pipe welded together to make a swing set also had an area that I could use to do my somersaults. I used the short area para mariomar, to tumble, in all sitting positions imaginable. This meant I had to learn to use my hands and feet to propel around and yet not touch the ground.

One day, I thought my career as a gymnast was over. I had positioned myself by sitting on the pole. Next, I placed legs, arms and hands just so that I could moved my body forward. I would always hang upside down from the pole. Somehow I miscalculated and I landed on my face. I had blood all over my face. I thought I was never getting on that pole again. Especially since I did not know the damage I had done. I might have broken some teeth and my nose at least. However,

the next day, I healed and was on the pole doing self-learned gymnastics again.

As I roamed through the never ending country, learning and discovering, I also found out that the owner's son was a doctor. His medical papers had been thrown in an old shed that had no wall and half a roof. I gathered the papers and moved them so as to protect them from the rain. I perused those papers at every opportunity. I would stare at the diagrams of the human body and I learned from them. I wondered why anyone would throw away a part of their medical history.

Also dumped next to those papers were stoves which I would write on. The stoves were tall and made of white aluminum. Time had created a red rust on the back of the stoves. I would take a piece of sheet rock and write stories and other messages on those stoves. The contrast between the rust and the sheet rock would create a contrast so my stories could be read. It would rain or the wind would blow and the messages would be gone. Later, I would be shocked when my father told me that Japanese were held in Crystal City and the stoves had been taken from the Internment Camps after its dismantlement. They were dismantled shortly after World War II.

I searched for this information in history books during my high school years, then during my college years. But it was not until 1995, when I was in my 50s, that I found reference to the internment camps. When I was in Hawaii, I saw Crystal City in print when I went to a museum. The word internment Camp was next to Crystal City. They described the difference between an internment camp and a relocation camp. Internment camps held the dangerous people, the ones that were the biggest threat to the United States security.

I would find out that the people at the internment camp in Crystal City had a reunion. Had I been there, I would have wanted to ask many questions. Cuentame.

Why were people placed in internment camps? What difference caused people to be sent to an internment or relocation camps? Cuentame.

How was it to live in those interment camps during and after the internment? Cuentame. My father said that they had a school for the children. What kind of a school was it? Who taught? What was taught? Did everyone receive medical care. Cuentame.

How did those camps change everyone's lives during and after the internment? How did it feel to receive a note that the family had to leave their homes in 24 hours? What about the little boy who was told he could not take the dog? That was his family. After leaving the dog with the neighbor, it died after a few weeks because it would not eat.

What happened to the Japanese people's possessions, businesses and homes? When they came out of the camps did they have a place to go? Cuentame.

When I was still young, I heard about litigation regarding the loss of possessions. How could people's lives be restored if they had lost their business and homes? Cuentame.

How was it that in the mist of my abundant childhood discoveries, my life touched such an important and tragic chapter in the history of the United States? Like the print I wrote on those stoves, disappearing overnight due to mist, rain or wind, would this chapter in history also disappear? More importantly, would we learn from this chapter in history?

## Immaterial Girl – A Baseball Story

By Therese Fleming



**M**y dad didn't believe in me. Even though, once upon a time, I had been his Pretty Princess, "a rose among thorns" (he had five sons and just me – P.P.). He didn't believe in me anymore though, and there was nothing I could say to change his mind. He just wasn't buying it. No matter - determined to stay in the game, I didn't stop pitching. What's a kid gonna do?

Understandably, my new greatest ambition was to restore my place in the kingdom of dad. Early Catholic thoughts of sainthood fell by the wayside; and any hope of becoming St. Therese on the Cover of the Rolling Stone was batted away by a stroke of misfortune. This Pretty Princess *was* gonna come back.

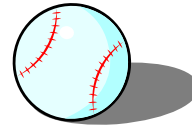
See, my dad lost his third eye when he stroked out one day on the steps of St. Mary's University. Already a relic of forty-eight, he'd gone back to college on the GI Bill to get a degree in theology. He wasn't going to be a priest or anything. He was just doing it, you know, for the fun of it. Anyway, his brain had other ideas and he nearly bled to death when an aneurysm ruptured there on the steps of St. MU's. He should have been an easy pop out, but death fumbled the ball. My dad survived. Sort of. He was like a ball that had been played too many innings. The threads were coming loose and it was only a matter of time before he was just that little rubber bit you find on the inside of a ball. You know the bit I'm talking about? We should have put him in one of those plastic trophy ball boxes and kept him on a shelf. Instead he went for the World Series of aftercare, washing down his daily regimen of anti-seizure pills with a Tall Pony. beer. It isn't easy for me to say this, but I wish death didn't have such butterfingers that day. In the end, my entire family was caught in this permanent blind spot. He just couldn't pick us up on his screen, and we became like ghosts, fighting for a spot amidst the other phantoms in his altered state. Even radar love proved useless. But even before he lost his third eye, his personality had begun to change. He'd fly into a rage over almost anything. Most of the time, we preferred to be out of his sight. So, when it finally happened, being banished was mostly a laughing matter for my family.

Being quasi-Irish as we were, we had the gift of finding humor in even the most dire situations. Did you hear the one about the dad who lost his mind and no one cared? It's hysterical. But it ate away at me, day and night. More than anything, I wanted to be a material girl again. So I went with what I knew. I prayed. Everyday and every night – I prayed. But no arrangement of the psalms brought me any closer to materializing. Poor little lamb, that's when I lost my way. No more prayers for me, but I fell back on what I knew best - ritualistic behavior. I became a student of the black arts and got fairly good at it. One day, I was sure I came up with what had to be a foolproof spell breaker, one sure to uncover his blind spot and lift the love-defying spell forever. With all the confidence of a Pendragon, I went before him, spewing my most powerful incantation, I said, "I love you, Dad. I'm proud you're my father." Sadly, I just didn't know what a master wizard he'd become. He countered with a spell more potent than anything I could have imagined and vexed me with, "I've never been married. I don't have any children." His magic took my breath away and I lost my voice. So there we were him as blind as ever and me as dumb. Only, there's no precedence here for quitting. I still had faith in my spell, and decided that all I needed was to work on my delivery. Again and again, I would try to

slip the words in, those sacred words; sure it was just a case of finding the right path to the core of the death star his mind had become. But like I said before, he just wasn't buying it. Whatever we had been, whatever we were going to be, we were gone.

I ended up going to college about two blocks from the nursing home that held my dad. His name, by the way, was Joe. Nothing ordinary about him though. On occasion, between classes, I'd go over to the nursing home to take him out for a few hours. He had a roommate named Mr. Metzger. As far as I could tell, Mr. M. didn't have any family and never had any visitors. I remember one time I asked my dad if he'd like to take Mr. Metzger along with us. I was really taken aback when he hissed that he didn't want to be "saddled with that old man!" At the time, if you saw my dad, you would easily have mistaken him for George Burns. So much for loving thy roomy. Anyway, I decided to take my dad to the park across from my college. I was driving around looking for a good spot, when I passed the baseball field. My dad loved baseball. He watched all the games on TV – big Astros fan. All aboard the Ryan Express and all that. I used to play softball on a team, lamely named the Ballbaggers. I don't know what got into our coach the day she let us saddle ourselves with that name. I played a pretty fierce catcher. My dad came to the games when he could. I remembered that for him. Seeing that baseball field, I don't know what I was thinking? Blurred by hope or stirred vision, I parked at that field of dreams, thinking, maybe it could be like old times. We sat watching in the bleachers for a while and sure enough, something happened. Happy days were here again. I don't know, I just felt ... restored. It was like nothing bad had ever happened. I was so moved; I figured my dad must have been feeling it too. A bit wary of breaking the spell, but too high on hope not to confirm our shared moment, I ventured, "Are you having a good time?" "No, I'm bored," he whined. "What are we doing here? There's no game!" But something on that vacant field helped me hold on to the moment. I smiled at him and nodded. He *was* right. This wasn't a game.

Tip of the day: You're a ball player – play ball!



# Ita

A poem for my Grandchildren  
By Nora Gonzalez

A grandma is old, wrinkled and gray.  
She needs help walking across the street.  
A grandma has silver hair like the tinsel on a flocked tree.  
You have too many of those people called "Grandma" in your lives.

On your Mother's side you have a  
Great-Grandma that cared for your mother  
when she was a young girl.  
She makes you sopa, tortillas and chili-con-queso with pride.

There's the Grandma who doesn't deserve to be called "Grandma".  
She moves around all over the place and doesn't call  
or send you gifts on your birthday.  
Is her hair bleach blonde or flaming red this week?

On your Dad's side you have several more,  
there's the Great-Great Grandma, so old, so knowledgeable.  
The touch of her hands wrinkled with time, worked, and strong,  
she is like the old wise owl in the branch of an Oak Tree.

We're not done yet.  
There's the Great-Grandma who let's you play in the swing of her shady backyard, her hair is soft and her eyes are  
green.  
She reminisces about your Dad when you laugh and smile.

You both came into my life when your Dad was an adolescent.  
My brown hair did not know anything gray and  
wrinkles were merely tiny crows feet flirting with my eyes.

You came into my life when I wasn't prepared.

Life today without your love and affection  
Would be like an empty bottle floating down the river of life.  
You are my rafts, the currents that keep me going,  
A whirlpool of refreshing water on a summer's day.

Yes, muneco y muneca you have too many "Grandmas".  
Give me an original name. Give me a Spanish word,  
Like shorten Abuelita to "Ita",  
modern, fresh and easier to say.

"Ita" is unusual, loving and warm . . . I love that name.  
It lifts my spirit with optimism, faith and hope for your future.  
I'll let you call me Ita on any given day,  
And if you want something special, you can call me  
Ita Bonita!

La Chola  
by Michelle Castillo-West

The Aztec princess raises  
her arms grasping sunrays  
bronze supple breasts glisten  
while beads of sweat trace  
the naked curves of her body  
a midnight black mane drapes her spine  
lightly caressing the curvature of  
*La Virgen de Guadalupe*  
a crimson red and forest green *mantela*  
perched on her shoulders  
as a tattooed guardian against evil & death  
waiting, praying, and imploring *Dios mio*  
she will not lose yet another child *este noche*  
The words *La India Maria*  
are scrawled and scratched out on the cement wall  
circling and twisting in ancient scribbling  
beckoning her to other worlds  
while screams echo in Siren voices call  
their traveler home  
“Venga, Chola, es tiempo”  
turning and blinking the sun back into her memory  
the phoenix rises under the smoldering fire.  
She is reborn.

La Chola drapes her body in warrior clothing  
khaki Dickie pants slumped low on her waist  
a hidden white tank top that secretly hugs a girl’s figure  
buried under a synthetic Pendleton workman’s shirt  
Her fingers weave in and out of brown cloth  
tying a bandana to her forehead  
a badge of her honor  
cupping the sweat, her tears,  
and the blood her *hermanas* will share tonight.

Her armor is hidden but resonate battles and etched wars –  
bluish bruises pulsate hatred, unrequited love  
rejected promises from a father, boyfriends, and lovers  
red jagged scars sing boleros of loneliness and fears  
spurned lovers’ names stain her tattooed arms like  
burnt ashes collecting in the urn of her heart.

She draws on her warrior paint  
colors that mask the innocent child

she has banished and exiled from her ancient soul  
smoldering eye shadow cloak the dread in her eyes  
bloodshot from punches  
too many *cervezas* and *mota*  
late nights hanging with *la clicka*  
well-up tears refuse to escape dry and disappear  
in aged-wine lip liner outlining  
promises of obscenities and battle cries  
She frowns at the mirror before her  
unwilling to let her guard down even for herself  
Because if there is one person you can trust  
It's not even yourself

She claws digging away the caked layers of dirt  
dried blood  
and the stank cologne of the men who said they loved her  
only for her to sacrifice her sainthood  
Innocently and blindly  
she believed their myths they spun  
with their tongues spitting out misery, broken promises, abandonment  
and lies that sacrificed her trust to the gods  
Her hands wrap around her belly  
Caressing the baby that is molding and shaping  
Dreaming of the day when she will join her ancient sisters  
like the phoenix rising under the smoldering fire  
she awaits her birth.

An Insomniac's Last Wink  
by Rene De Los Santos

There was a time long ago in previous history when the television was only 4 channels. The Television would turn off with the national anthem at 12:00 am midnight stroke and the News had the most trusted man on TV. There was a time when Halloween was a celebration of costume innocence and not the satanic Maypole Bacchanalian festival of razor filled candy. There was a time when Children ran in the streets without parental snipers, puppy tempting kidnappers or Internet pedophile Porn pirates. There was a time when the only thing that was scary was under your bed.

This was my time. This was a time when I was a child

The Wind had brought in a torrent of dessert heat; the type of heat which your eyes needed to be shut so that the water would not dry out. It was an early Saturday morning in outer San Antonio. The hum of idle lawn mowers and television greeted the morning summer sun. Mike stumbled and fumbled through the kitchen cabinets in search for a cartoon animal approved sublimely sugary cereal. The only cereals like material found in his hunter gatherer foray were 2 variety packed sized boxes of shredded wheat. His 5 year old mind processed the possible ways he could synthesize a glucose laden concoction to make the bland twigs palatable. He looked for other semi sweet and less complicated consumables. The more he looked, the more he realized that his cartoons were quickly completing themselves. Finally, as desperation began to set in, Mike took the boxes of shredded wheat along with remaining milk and began to pour sugar. What resulted was an organic liquid paste to scare any candy land gingerbread man. However, Mike took his newly created confection to kneel in front of the neon boxed Mecca.

The Television hummed and glowed water colored stories of Scooby Doo, The Fantastic Four, Godzilla and Bugs Bunny. This was Mike's Hanna Barbera and Filmation Hideaway. Mike sat placidly as Toy and food advertisements bridged through the 30 minute story arc and Hollywood ending of early morning Kid fiefdoms.

The clock in the corner stated a resounding 9:30 am. and like clock work, Mike's Mother woke up with the baby in hand to start the morning nourishment.

"What are you watching?" she quizzed.

"Scooby, Mommy," he replied in half heart effort.

"Honey, what are you eating?" She asked in a somewhat low level alarming manner.

"Stuff."

"Sweetie, What stuff? I need to go buy groceries?" Her attentive response troubled him.

"Look." He replied while bringing over the bowl with the half eaten indescribable experiment.

"Oh Mikey. Here eat this. I am going to get groceries right now." She said while handing over a banana.

Mike went back to final scenes of Scooby Doo as his Mom attended to his 2 year old sister.

"Sweetie, do you want Chicken with Corn and Carrots for Lunch?"

"Can I have Chicken and Mash PaTaToes?"

"Sure, Honey, Just throw away whatever you have in the Bowl. Okay?"

"Kay." Mike's eyes and attention were firmly affixed to the glowing neon tube.

By the Time his mother had finished caring for his Sister. Another Adult had entered the Hanna Barbera Animated estate. Mike's Dad walked through the living room toward the kitchen

to see the Earth goddess off as she quietly prepared to forage for food. From the other room, Adult speak was being committed. Mike knew that the low level hum was a conversation about him.

“Mike, where’s the Bowl?” His Dad inquired in a somewhat sleep induced forceful manner.

“Here.” Mike innocently replied. “You want it?”

Mike’s dad looked inquisitively through his sleep encrusted lids.

“Okay, I’ll take it.” He said while averting his concentration to the playful baby.

The Cartoon morning block was slowly ending and soon the Saturday would be Dad’s Kingdom. The Advertisements would go from Hi-C to Budweiser, Nerf to Goodyear and Legos to Ace Hardware. Mike cringed as he thought of the bitter beer aftertaste and the boring grass battles of Golf.

“Sweetie, I have Andrea. We’re going to the Store. I’ll be back later to cook fried Chicken and I might make fries.”

“Can you make McDonalds fries?”

“I’ll make better than McDonalds.”

“So, you need a work shirt- Right?”

“Yep, please get me blue.” His Father Smiled.

“Okay,” She smiled back as they kissed in quick warm embrace solidifying their moral, spiritual and biological bonds.

Mikey got up and hugged his mother thigh in deep appreciation. He could not express his thoughts, he could not understand the Freudian explanation and he could not quantify the angst of abandonment. All that he knew was he was home. For the First time, He loved his home. He felt no fear or anxiety. He felt the subdued beauty of an understood pastoral world.

## **Exact Change Only**

by

Rosa Elia Garcia

There were very few people on the sidewalks that hot Saturday afternoon. Business had slowed down by 4:00 p.m. Linda looked out the front display window of her mom's dress shop, *Connie's Dress Shop*. The restaurant next door was the only other business on the block and they had closed at three o'clock. A few cars drove by on their way to the main downtown area of small, rural Citrus City.

Linda looked all around the dress shop. Along the east wall shelves, neat piles of ladies' and children's underwear were arranged according to size and style. Two large handmade rectangular display tables made with wooden paneling were centrally located in the store. One of the tables was filled with various children's shorts, t-shirts, and colorful outfits. The other table had some ladies shorts and tank tops, just in time for the summer's blazing heat.

"I'll count the money in the register and prepare to close the store," Linda said to herself at around 5:30. She doubted that anyone else would come in. Her mom had shown her how to complete all the required paperwork. It only took her about 10 minutes.

Linda looked at the clock once more and thought, "Only ten more minutes." She stood at the checkout counter which was about ten feet from the door. Suddenly the door opened and in walked two men dressed in faded jeans and casual dress shirts with the tails hanging out. "Boy, are they in the wrong place," she thought and quickly said, "Hello. May I help you?"

One of men looked around quickly. He shrugged his shoulders and said in an apologetic voice, "Oh, I guess we must be in the wrong store. We are looking for men's gloves." His short curly hair and impish smile seemed friendly as he turned around and faced his friend. His friend stood by the door and looked down. He began to shuffle around as his friend was talking to him.

"I'm sorry, but we don't have anything for men," Linda replied. She felt a little uncomfortable. She knew that the sign outside clearly said "dress shop" and she wondered what the two men really wanted.

"Oh, well" replied the first man. "I guess we'll just look around." He and his friend walked across the room to the shelves opposite to the counter. They were talking and laughing, but Linda could not tell what they were saying. That made her even more nervous.

After a few minutes, which seemed like an eternity to Linda, the more talkative man walked up to the counter with a pair of ladies pink bikini panties in his hands. Linda was

feeling very uneasy about the two of them being in the shop. She casually scanned the area making a mental note that there was a straight ten foot pathway to the front door in case she had to run out quickly.

"I don't know my girlfriend's size, but I'm sure these will fit her," he snickered as he held out the panties and then turned to his partner. Linda knew they meant trouble, but she wasn't sure what it would be.

"That's not a problem. Just keep the receipt and we will be glad to exchange them if they are not the correct size," Linda responded with a smile. So far they had not done anything wrong so she had to keep her composure and not reveal how nervous she was. "That will be \$3.29," she told him.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a roll of money. "Oh, I just got paid and all I have are one hundred dollar bills," he responded. Her suspicions of their intentions were beginning to become more concrete. She had to act quickly. If she told him she didn't have enough change, the situation might turn dangerous. She knew there was enough money in the register.

"I think I have enough change," Linda responded. She took his hundred dollar bill and then slowly counted out his change. "Here you are; twenty, forty, sixty, eighty, ninety, ninety-five, ninety-six dollars and twenty-five, fifty, sixty, seventy-

one cents." She tried to remain calm as she handed him the money. Then she placed the panties in the bag.

"Oh, could you please do me a favor?" he asked as he handed her a twenty dollar bill. "I need to pay my friend some money I owe him. Can you break this twenty and give me a ten and two fives?" Linda's suspicions were confirmed. They were quick change artists. She knew his purpose for being in a ladies dress shop was not to purchase anything, but safety was Linda's top priority.

"Sure, here you are; one ten and two fives" as she exchanged the money. He took the money and at the same time said, "You know, I really need more fives. Let me have the twenty back and just give me four fives instead." He spoke quickly and smoothly. It was obvious that he had done this many times. "I just want to be fair to my friend and make sure that I have the correct change to I pay him," he continued.

Linda decided to play dumb and go along with the game. She gave the quiet man an understanding smile, nodding as if to say, "You have a very good friend." He just kept shifting around with his head hung low. A thousand thoughts kept racing through Linda's head. She wanted to scream out and tell them that she knew exactly what they were doing. She felt so violated because she wasn't in control of this situation where they just wanted

to take her parents' hard earned money. Still, she knew she just had to stay calm and let them think they were in control.

"Thank you for coming," Linda smiled and handed him the bag. "I put the receipt in the bag. If they are not the correct size, just have your girlfriend bring them back along with the receipt. We'll be happy to exchange them," she added.

As soon as they left Linda rushed to the door and locked it. She waited a few minutes and then looked out the window. No one on the sidewalk; not a single car was in the parking area. It was as if they had disappeared into thin air. She went back to the register and recounted the money. Sure enough, she was sixty dollars short. She called the police department to report what had happened.

"Did they physically hurt you, or were they verbally abusive?" the dispatcher asked after listening to the whole story.

"No, but they have our money," Linda responded.

"Did you see what they were driving?" he asked.

"No," Linda replied. "I looked outside as soon as they walked out, but they were gone. I think they had the car parked around the corner. "

"Okay, we'll send someone over in a few minutes," the dispatcher said. The police department was located just around the block. Linda waited. Five minutes; she waited by the

door, anticipating their arrival. Ten minutes; Linda kept pacing back and forth from the telephone to the front door and back. Fifteen minutes! She couldn't believe it. She was fit to be tied. "I could have walked to the police station and back at least five times by now," she thought angrily. She picked up the telephone and dialed police department again.

"This is Linda from *Connie's Dress Shop*. I called earlier about two quick change artists that came to our store," she said impatiently.

"Yes, ma'am," came the slow response. "Someone will be over soon."

"I know. You said that earlier. But the longer you take, odds are they will leave town," Linda insisted.

"They probably already left town. We have no way of knowing who we are looking for since you were the only one who saw them. We don't even know what kind of vehicle they are driving," was the response on the other end.

"So what you are saying is that no one is coming right now. Is that correct?" Linda asked.

"We'll have someone there as soon as we can. Just wait for them."

"I can't wait!" Linda retorted and slammed down the phone. She couldn't believe it. She couldn't just sit there and wait. She locked up the shop, got into her car and started driving

around town. Most of the other clothing stores were already closed, so she figured that the two change artists would probably hit one of the convenience stores.

Linda drove around the main street in town. The dispatcher was right, she really didn't even know what kind of car she was looking for, but she knew she couldn't just let them get away. Linda didn't see any unfamiliar vehicles as she drove around. The streets were not busy at all; she only saw the familiar cars and trucks that belonged to local people.

"*Cash and Carry*, a convenience store, is at the next four way stop," Linda remembered as she drove down one of the main streets. She scanned the parking lot and noticed two men going into the store. It was them! What should she do? She didn't want them to see her.

Linda slowly maneuvered her car to the opposite side of the parking lot where the two men had parked their car. She tried to find a place where she would be able to see them when they came out, but they wouldn't see her. Linda grabbed a piece of paper and pen and peered through the other parked cars to write the letters and numbers of the Texas license plates.

It was extremely hot in the car as Linda waited anxiously. She wondered if she should go in the store and make sure it was them. Maybe it was someone else that looked like them. Just then, they came out of the store holding a small bag and

laughing. They headed straight to their car. As soon as they left, Linda made a bee line to the store. There were a few customers and two store clerks inside. She went to the cashier and asked her if she knew the two men that had just be there.

"No, they didn't look familiar, but they were real friendly," the clerk at the register responded.

"They're quick change artists." Linda informed her.

"Oh no, not them. There were just here buying some drinks," the clerk commented. She looked at Linda as if to say, "What's wrong with you? Are you crazy?"

"Did they pay with a hundred dollar bill?" Linda asked.

She seemed surprised and sheepishly replied, "Yes, they did."

"You'd better count the money in your register," Linda warned. "Can you please call the police department for me?" The other clerk came over to see what was going on when he saw Linda on the phone.

"Hello, this is Linda. I called earlier about the quick change artists that were in *Connie's Dress Shop* a few minutes ago. I'm at the *Cash and Carry* at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Grove Street. I'm calling to let you know that the two men just pulled the same scam at this store. They are driving an old green car with Texas license plates RTS B43. They were headed north on Lake Road, driving away from town"

"We'll be right there, ma'am. Please stay right there."

The officers came within five minutes. Linda talked to them and gave as many details as she could. They also talked to the clerks inside the store. Based on the recount of the money in the register it appeared that they had been swindled for about eighty dollars. The officers got into their police car and headed in the direction Linda had told them. "We'll take care of it now, ma'am. You can go home now," they advised her.

It all seemed so unbelievable. Linda wondered if they would find them. She was too stressed to go home. Her parents were on a buying trip to San Antonio. How was she going to explain this to them? She kept driving around the neighborhood, thinking how quickly everything had happened. Then a wild thought came into Linda's head - if it was that easy to scam two local shops, they might get greedy and try to hit other stores.

Linda decided to drive around the outskirts of town. There was no sign of them at the gas station or the *Value Mart* so she kept circling heading east. Traffic was slow allowing her to scan other business. "I guess they decided to leave," she thought. Just as she was about to return home she noticed a green car at a local fast food drive-in. Linda drove slowly past the drive-in. She couldn't believe her eyes! It was them!

The block ended a few yards away so she turned right. Another convenience store was located immediately to the left.

"I never realized how many small convenience stores there are in Citrus City," she remarked. She drove right up, parked, and literally ran into the store. She asked the clerk if she would please call the police. Linda turned back to look out the store's front door. The Oasis Drive-In was clearly visible and Linda noticed the green car leaving. The store clerk looked curiously at Linda and made the call.

"This is Linda from *Connie's Dress Shop*. I found them again. They were at the *Oasis Drive-In*, but they are now heading west on Hwy. 83." Linda could just imagine what the dispatcher was thinking as she returned the phone to the store clerk.

The clerk at the convenience store asked Linda what was going on. Linda began to describe the entire experience. Her voice began to tremble as she recalled the details. She was describing how she had seen the two men at the *Cash and Carry* when there was a loud pounding on the glass door. Linda and the store clerk jumped and quickly turned towards the door. There was a police officer pointing at Linda and motioning for her to go outside. Linda went to the door and slowly walked out.

"Are these the two men that came into your store?" he asked pointing at the back window of the police car. The car was only about eight feet away.

Linda looked at the two men. They were so close. The talkative man turned and looked at her. His partner was also in

the back seat. Linda froze. "Yes, that's them," she answered as she took a couple of steps back.

"We need you to come over to the police station and make a statement," the officer continued.

When Linda arrived at the police station, the officers were patting the two men down. Several one hundred dollar bills were found in their pant pockets. Linda gasped when she saw a ten inch knife the police had found hidden in one of the men's boot. They also found a small tote bag in the car with several thousands of dollars. The officer told Linda that the two men had scammed several stores as they traveled along the main highway without anyone detecting the scam.

The two quick change artists were being questioned and searched in the same room that Linda was giving her statement. The reality of the incident was beginning to sink in and fear was taking over. She gave the officer her statement as quickly as possible. As soon as she was finished, she got in her car and went straight home.

Since her parents were out of town, the house was dark when Linda arrived home. She locked all the doors and turned on all the lights in the house. What was she going to tell her parents? How would they react? What if the men escaped and come looking for her? A million questions were racing through her mind. She ran to the door when she heard the familiar hum of her parents'

car in the driveway. Feeling much safer now, she opened to door to welcome them home. She smiled, trying not to let them see how scared she was. Now came the hard part - explaining the day's events.

Sara Rossett

### **My Father: The Beautician, the Nurse, and the Counselor**

He was “metro sexual” before there was a term for men who took great pride in their appearance. I still remember the mornings when I would watch my father grooming himself in front of the mirror before going to work. I sat there listening to the hum of the blow dryer while he fantastically styled his hair like clay in his hands. Then the final touch to his creation, a perfect “Superman” curl in the middle of his forehead. In many ways he was like Superman, only he was “Super Beautician.” Later in his life he would transform into “Super Nurse,” “Super Counselor,” and ultimately fulfill his heroic role as “Super Father.”

Growing up I never realized how emotionally rich I was. I had a father who treated my mother as an equal, actually a queen. As a stay at home mom, he never expected her to be his live in maid who was required to cook, clean, and tend to the children on her own. When he arrived home from work, he would always wrap his arms around my mother’s waist, softly kiss her on the cheek, and tell her, “Darling, go rest. I’ll take it from here.”

During the week he was a nurse at a local nursing home. However, when the weekend came he traded in his stethoscope for scissors. Converted into a beauty salon, our garage did not house cars or bikes; but instead was filled with hair dyes, salon chairs, a rinsing sink, and hair chemicals. Women from all over town, including his mother-in-law would flock to have their poodle tight perms done, their hair colored, and styled. Ironically, while every woman in town was dying to have my father’s fingers weave through their hair; my mother did not enjoy being his hair muse. She jokes how my father’s sole intentions for marrying her was for her infamous hair. “Before I married your father I had long, thick, wavy, brown hair. My hair was my

trademark, but as soon as I married your father he couldn't wait to get his hands on it. He chopped it off, made me a blonde, a red head, and a brunette within the first year of our marriage. He changed my hair style so much people started to think I wore wigs."

As a little girl working in my father's garage/salon, I quickly learned to turn my ears into antennas that would secretly pick up signals of gossip buzzing through out the place. Juicy gossip filled with details as potent as the smell of peroxide in the air. At the end of the day my father would ask me to "share" what information my radar had picked up. A tradition he and I have continued during our weekly evening phone conversations.

Growing up with a father who was completely in touch and comfortable with his feminine side was like having my own personal hair and clothing stylist. Whether I went to church or school my hair was styled and adorned with bows and barrettes color coordinated with my outfits. I was oblivious to the unusual role he played; until I began to detect a pattern of perplexed expressions when teachers asked who did my hair, to which I would always reply, "My dad."

Having a father who was a beautician could also be cumbersome. By the age of six I began to dread Saturday nights. The preparation for church Sunday morning began Saturday night. He would roll my hair around sponge rollers that I was required to wear overnight, in order to obtain "perfect ribbon curls" in the morning. Being a restless sleeper caused my rollers to become misplaced. In the morning I didn't have "ribbon curls"; instead I had a tangled mess of hair that my father would painfully detangle with a metallic hair pick.

"Ouch, Dad that hurts!" I would exclaim feeling my scalp throbbing.

"Well, Sara the price of beauty is painfully high." He would respond.

(I now know what he means, waxing, dieting, exercising, ....cosmetic surgery.)

Reflecting back on my childhood and adolescent experiences I feel blessed to have a father who has been a positive role model in my life. I witnessed first hand how a man should respect a woman, care for their children, help others, and dissolve stereotypes of what a man or father should be. He read books to my brother and me.

He capitalized on his talent to do hair so he could finance his way through nursing school, and continue his education so he could become a counselor to service the emotional needs of people in his community. In my opinion, he was a father who broke the mold and in the process created a strong model for my brother and me to follow.

My brother displays the same attentiveness towards his daughter that my father showed me. The careful precision he has in making the part in the middle of her head when placing her hair into ponytails, then decorating her hair with hair ornaments that match her clothes, a trait passed by from father to son.

My father continues to play a vital role in my life. Aside from being my role model, he's also my shopping sidekick, my shoulder to cry on when I've experienced heartbreak or bitter disappointment in my life. He always knows how to lift my dismal demeanor by using his humor.

Over a recent phone conversation he says, "Remember, Sara you're a survivor. You're not gonna give up; you're gonna work harder." (Sung to the tune of Destiny's Child's song "Survivor.") The phone is drenched in salty tears, my facial muscles are constricted into an involuntary frown, and suddenly, magically - I smile. My mind is transported six years ago when we saw Destiny's Child perform live. A deeply needed laugh escapes from my throat. "Good night, Darling. (He says in between chuckles) Relax, have a drink. I'll talk to you later. Desperate Housewives is about to come on."

# Shattered Nation: Pontifications and Ramblings on the Immigration Debate

Pedro Trevino, Jr.

The war has been raging for decades, and now culture, diversity, and even individuality appear to be losing. In recent years, social conservatives have found a handy excuse to mash down on immigrants, and, consequently, minorities. Taking full advantage of post-9/11 paranoia, they rush legislation through that establishes English as the official language, and seeks to limit healthcare for illegal immigrants and end birthright citizenship. The hot debate that results from this turns American against American, even within the ranks of specific ethnic groups. Centuries of progress hang in the balance.

It is possibly the oldest battle tactic in existence: divide and conquer. Those in power have always used it well. Maybe they learned it accidentally when first conquering this land, as Native Americans, who could have easily driven the intruders out, chose to isolate themselves by tribe, rather than stand as one. At the same time, on the other side of the planet, Europeans capitalized on tribal conflicts in Africa to bring slave labor to the New World.

Similarly, ethnic groups in the United States have historically harbored a certain animosity toward each other. No two minority groups get along well. African Americans segregate themselves from Hispanics. Asians segregate themselves from Jews. African Americans segregate themselves from Asians. It goes on and on.

Now, however, even those individual ethnic groups are breaking down. In the Mexican culture, Mexican-Americans are turning against Mexican immigrants. “Legal” Mexican

immigrants are turning against “illegals.” Heavily accented voices condemn immigrants for not learning to “spick Eenglitch.”

There has never been a real opportunity to see what minority groups can accomplish by focusing on their commonalities and acting as a single unit, and there may never be: if this trend continues, the damage could be irreparable. By subdividing American society into ever-smaller compartments, conservatives have stolen their power, their voice. This is especially discouraging when one considers recent Census Bureau numbers. According to these estimates from last year, minorities now account for one-third of the total American population. The Bureau projected that minorities would comprise nearly half of the total population by the year 2050. If they banded together as a single group, they would create a powerful voting block.

But recent infighting within ethnic groups has them turning their anger on one another, on people far more like themselves than those pulling the strings. They turn on *themselves*. Self-loathing minority groups are the best-case scenario for the conservatives, who can then relax in their gated neighborhoods, sipping expensive wine, dipping delicate crackers in caviar, and watch.

They can watch the African American community destroy itself. They can watch the Asian community destroy itself. And for the finale, they can watch the new largest minority group in the United States destroy itself. As groups collide, the “melting pot” America will shatter, as bones and shells do to form miniscule particles of sand.

Once the population is sufficiently pulverized, three types of minority will remain. Those who submit to acculturation will increase the ranks of the conservatives, helping to fabricate more profitable wars in far off lands. Those who do not will fight these wars, and ultimately finance them.

Of course, illegal immigrants will still be here, because no policy, physical structure, or military action can ever stop the flow. The reason is clear, even in a sluggish American economy: a legal citizen in Mexico makes approximately one-tenth what an illegal immigrant in the United States makes.

Extremists have proposed the erection of a wall along the entire length of the U.S.-Mexico border. If the Great Wall of China, for centuries the only manmade structure large enough to be visible from outer space, failed to keep people out, then so will anything the United States can build, especially since the U.S.-Mexico border measures less than half the total length of the Great Wall. Finally, an armed Border Patrol has not stemmed the tide of immigrants; armed National Guard troops stand to affect little, aside from international relations. For illegal immigrants, the move to the United States is about survival, and people go to heroic lengths to survive, and ensure the survival of their children. Epics have been written about less.

The conservatives are intelligent enough to see this. The purpose of the fight against illegal immigration is not to stop illegal immigration. It never has been. Aside from garnering the xenophobe vote, the purpose is to further marginalize illegal immigrants.

The United States once boasted a large middle class, but it is documented that it has been decreasing in size for some time now. This is good news for the rich, as a life of luxury depends on cheap labor, an underclass. By taking a hard line on illegals, politicians can further limit their employment options. Without large-scale employers to offer even the most menial of jobs, immigrants will find themselves permanently locked into domestic work for low pay. Reducing funding for education means that only the rich will be able to afford a quality education. The final blow is the revocation of birthright citizenship, which will ensure a limitless supply of

cheap, uneducated labor. Such a scenario may sound far-fetched, but America has been there before.

To avert such a meltdown, minorities must capitalize on the awesome political potential of their sheer numbers by turning a broken system to their advantage. Although the electoral system has revealed its flaws over the last two Presidential elections, it affords a golden opportunity for minorities to forever impact American history.

Minorities now account for more than half the population in four states: California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Texas, plus the District of Columbia. California and Texas possess the two highest numbers of electoral votes at fifty-five and thirty-four, respectively. 270 is the magic number to get a President elected. This means that, if they vote, minorities can account for over one third of the necessary votes.

Even more promising, five more states have minority populations of at least forty percent: Arizona, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, and New York. New York owns thirty-one electoral votes, Georgia has fifteen, and Arizona and Maryland add ten apiece. If minorities in all nine of these states and D.C. mobilize and vote as one unit, the result is a staggering 172 electoral votes! Those who wish to restore equality to the United States can rid it of those who prioritize rates of taxation above human compassion.

To satisfy everyone, systemic changes would have to be made. A streamlined citizenship program would allow for better tracking of immigration, and a reduction in the number of immigrants who would otherwise bypass the exhaustive citizenship process to begin earning a living sooner. Immigrants would benefit from the expanded employment opportunity that citizenship creates, and the United States would benefit from their tax revenue, as well as a more

educated population. Both sides would win. The melting pot would be cooking again. *America* would be cooking again.

But first, two sad realities must be dealt with. The first is that in the past minorities' voting percentages have not been what they should have been. The second is that, after two questionable Presidential elections, many are calling for the abolition of the electoral system. Minorities may only have a small window of opportunity in which to save themselves, but in order to do so they must turn out at the polls as they never have before.

If they fail, the outcome could be devastating. Someone will still need to build the gates that keep "undesirables" out of upscale neighborhoods, and the houses that go within those gates. Someone will still need to clean those homes, and landscape them. Someone will still need to repair those homes when things go wrong, and remodel them when the owners have grown weary of them.

And the rich hate to pay full price.

## The Rental Car and Other Strangers

By  
Carla J. Suffern

### Part I

The Christmas holiday of 1998 began with the usual perplexing problems Mom routinely encountered whenever she traveled. On the morning of December 20<sup>th</sup> at about eleven o'clock, the loud shrill ring of the telephone startled me out of a relaxing daydream.

"Oh no," I said to myself. "This is the day Mom is supposed to come in, and I bet something has gone terribly wrong."

Sure enough when I answered the beckoning phone, Mon's harried voice responded, "Carla, I'm not going to make my flight."

"How come," I hesitantly inquired.

"All the roads here in Lawton have a clear sheet of ice on them, and the police are closing them down. My flight leaves at twelve o'clock, and my friends won't give me a ride to the airport."

"Have you tried calling a cab?"

"Yes, and the dispatcher informed me that all of their cabs are busy and can't pick me up."

"Mom, we have friends who will help you out. Here, let me give you their phone numbers," I promptly offered.

"No, I don't want to do that. They're closing the slick roads, and they can't get through either. I've also heard that all the flights out of here have been cancelled."

"Mom, call the airline and explain the situation and see if they can offer some assistance. If they can't help you, then call another cab company and keep bothering them until they help you. Before you hang up, give me the numbers of your flights."

I wasn't going to take a chance on her this time. When I had to call about her flights, I was determined to have at least some basic information.

I hung up the phone and immediately knew that Mom would have a difficult time. Consequently, I called the airline myself and explained the dubious situation, and was informed that she could travel on later flights if she missed her scheduled ones. They also related that they were not aware of any icy conditions in Lawton that would cause the flights to be cancelled.

"Okay," I said to myself. "This is another one of the fantastic stories Mom tells to get attention."

I called Mom back and began to relate the newly obtained information.

"Can't talk now," she briskly cut me off. "I've got a cab coming to pick me up any minute," she breathlessly exclaimed. "The dispatcher told me that the driver can take me to the vet's to drop off my cat and then take me to the airport. I hope I can still make my twelve o'clock flight and don't have to take a later one." Then "click" the line went dead.

As usual, Mom left me with the perplexing question of which flights she would take. I decided to call the airline back and find out the number of the next flight out of Lawton. Mom was not going to catch me totally unprepared this time.

My sons, Larry and Kenny, went with me to the airport at San Antonio early in case Mom made her original flights. As usual, I casually strolled up to the crowded reservation desk and began to inquire about Mom. "Is there any way you can give me some information on my mother who is supposed to arrive on the next flight," I asked.

And as always, I received the usual ambiguous monotone reply, “Sorry, but due to security reasons, we can not give out any information until the plane has landed.”

I coyly looked at him and slyly replied, “I understand that, but my mother always gives me vague information about her flights, and I always have to play a guessing game about which flight she’ll arrive on. I think if the FBI knew my mother, EVEN THEY would take pity on me.”

He gave me a hearty laugh along with several other amused male travelers who were waiting in what seemed like an endless line behind me.

Immediately after this, a shimmering silver plane pulled up to the gate, and an announcement related, “Flight 330 from Dallas has just landed. Passengers can be met at Gate 35.”

“This is one of the various numbers your grandmother gave me.” I said to my children. “Let’s see if she is on it.”

Holding my youngest son by the arm as he strained to run down the jet way, I caught a glimpse of my mother who was the last passenger to get off the plane.

My youngest son, finally slipped out of my grasp and ran toward her and yelled, “Grandmom!!!!”

Even though I felt relieved to see her, I could only think of all the zealous energy I wasted earlier that hectic day.

## Part II

The sparkling holiday went well. On January 1, 1999, Mom as she prepared to leave, casually informed everyone that she didn’t feel well and didn’t want to fly that peaceful day. Knowing Mom’s past history of getting lost on some occasions, and passing out on others, I began to worry. She then promptly kissed everyone good-bye, dutifully boarded the plane, and left me with this awesome ill at ease burden.

According to her flight itinerary, she should have reached home around three o’clock in the afternoon. I deliberately waited until five o’clock to call allowing for the fact that she and her friends would probably eat an early dinner at a local restaurant. I optimistically place the first call which rang endlessly.

After repeated attempts to reach her for the next three hours, I began to panic and finally called the airline reservation help line. A cooperative operator informed me that her flight on the small commuter plane could not land in Lawton due to the vicious thunderstorms that pounded the area. The plane had returned to Dallas around 4 o’clock. All the other flights to Lawton were cancelled for the remainder of the night.

I pleadingly probed, “Do you have any idea where my mother is now?”

“No, we only have information on the flights.”

Stunned and totally consumed with worry, I reluctantly hung up. I earnestly needed to locate Mom and find out if she was okay.

Having no other option, I called the Dallas/Fort Worth airport directly and was informed that I could leave a message with the pager service, but I couldn’t talk to her personally.

Devastated, I slowly hung up and visualized Mom sitting in the airport feeling tired and miserable.

My last frantic attempt to contact her around ten o’clock finally produced a short lived happy result. Mom answered the phone almost immediately.

“Hello?”

“Mom, how did you get home? Where have you been? The airline told me that your plane

returned to Dallas because of the weather problems. Did they supply you with alternate transportation?”

Her enthusiastic and proud, but weary reply stunned me. All I could do for the next twenty minutes was to listen in unbelieving awe.

“We did turn back to Dallas after the frightful and turbulent flight. The plane circled the small field for a long time. Everyone on board seemed sure we were about to crash. Finally, the captain announced that we would have to return to Dallas. He also related that the airline would provide a chartered bus service if anyone had to reach Lawton that night. Hearing that, one overly sensitive woman cried, and a few of the men groaned loudly. I simply rolled my weary eyes because I was agonizingly tired of this mess. As we returned, I impulsively asked the downcast passengers around me if they wanted to split the cost of a rental car and ride up together.”

“You mean you drove four hours with people you’d never met before in your life and will never see again?” I hesitantly inquired.

“Oh yes, as we flew back, I quickly remembered how your father would always rent a car if there was a long delay in Dallas, and I thought I could do the same thing.” she said proudly.

“But he never drove up with a group of people he’d just met,” I admonished.

“You don’t understand. These were NICE people. One of them was a young man who said he knew your brother. And then there was an extremely polite and friendly older man. There was also a nicely dressed woman, who I think I know from the hospital where I volunteer. She turned out to be a squeamish type, though. At one point, the nice young man who was driving almost lost control of the car at a sharp fork in the slick dark road. She began to scream, and I had to swiftly kick her in the ankle to get her to stop. A young woman about your age also came up, but she stayed quiet during the entire trip.”

I simply couldn’t believe what I just heard. “You’re damned lucky you got home alive. Mom, don’t you realize that mass murderers and serial killers just wait for opportunities like this.” I scolded.

“Oh, I was okay. Even though I had just met them, I KNEW that these were NICE people.

*So Much Depends . . .*

By Honor Moorman

“The Red Wheelbarrow” by William Carlos Williams reminds me to treasure each moment with my students and to pay careful attention to the details of their lives. The first time I encountered this poem, it took me by surprise. After reading the opening line, I expected a profound universal truth to follow. So when I saw the red wheelbarrow, the rain water, and the white chickens, I assumed they were symbols for something else. Then I learned that the poem was simply a description of a scene Williams had observed outside his window. The wheelbarrow was just a wheelbarrow.

This poem teaches my students important things about poems and about themselves. It demonstrates that they can be both simple and complex, both ordinary and sublime. It demonstrates the power of imagery and the power of imagination. It illustrates how words can be used to capture a scene or a passing moment. And when I share the origin of the poem with students, it shows them that their experiences are worthy of poetry, too. When I invite students to write their own “So much depends . . .” poems, they are often surprised by what they discover.

In *The Three Questions*, by Jon Muth (a picture book based on the story by Leo Tolstoy), a young boy named Nikolai goes in search of the answers to three questions: What is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? and What is the right thing to do? As Nikolai learns, “there is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is always the one you are with. And the most important thing to do is to do good for the one who is standing at your side.”

Like *The Three Questions*, Williams’s poem and my students’ response poems remind me to be fully present in the classroom and to be attuned to each individual student. They remind me that more than *what* I teach, it is *how* I teach that really matters. So much depends on how I connect with my students. Each interaction, each word or smile, becomes part of a student’s life story and adds to his or her sense of self. Ultimately, that red wheelbarrow does stand for something. It stands for what matters most at a particular moment in time. It stands for the student at my side.

–Honor Moorman

**The Red Wheelbarrow**

so much depends  
upon

a red wheel  
barrow

glazed with rain  
water

beside the white  
chickens

–William Carlos Williams

This poem was originally published in *Spring and All*, 1923.

Karma  
Melissa Boley

Karma, according to Miriam Webster, is "the force generated by a person's actions held in Hinduism and Buddhism to perpetuate transmigration and in its ethical consequences to determine the nature of the person's next existence." Whatever. All I know is that the "consequences" part doesn't sound all that great and it's the only part I truly comprehend. It must be because I am a part-time Catholic; I have bad Karma, and only get the guilt part out of Catholicism.

I remember the time I gave the bum on the street corner a dollar, hoping for some instant Karma. I guess I expected it to be like a Karma drive thru - "I'd like an order of Karma please...super-sized." Anyways, I see the bum walk past my car and the guy was talking on a nicer cell phone than mine. So much for instant Karma.

I needed that instant Karma. I could feel the relationship with my boyfriend spiraling away. It was spiraling the way water in an unclogged drain spirals. At first things are great (full of water) and then that big hair ball is removed by a plumber named Karma. The water just sits there for a moment, trying to decide what to do. Karma was the plumber who "fixed" things and allowed everything to go down the drain.

I digress, the boyfriend sits in the passenger seat (he has no license because of the DWI he got in my brand new car) acting as if he wasn't just bailed out of jail and lost his job because he was on a probationary period and didn't call in.

"Please Help Me. I have a family to feed." That was what his sign read. I felt sorry for the poor man in his dirty, stained jeans and tattered blue jean shirt. Didn't he know that you shouldn't wear a blue jean shirt when you're wearing blue jeans?

"We need some good Karma, give me a dollar." I waved my hand out the window with my generous one dollar contribution. "God bless you!" he gushed with sincerity. "Good luck," I said in that holier-than-thou manner.

"Why did you do that?" the no-driver's license, just-got-out-of -jail, no-job-having, soon-to-be ex-boyfriend asked.

"We need some good Karma, maybe we might get some - duh," I sneered back at him. Apparently, there is no instant good Karma because we broke up.

Karma. I think it is haunting me, stalking me, in my love life. I feel pathetic even wondering about my love life, but I feel I gotta blame someone or rather something. Besides, it is easier to blame something abstract than to actually think it must be something about me that is wrong. Funny how Karma can be so selective.

Family is fine, work is fine, but when it comes to dating and love - Karma is out to get me.

I like to imagine Karma not as a plumber, but rather as a bitter and scorned woman. It makes it easier to explain why she is only affecting my love life. I imagine her as a successful, independent woman who wants to love and be loved, but she intimidates men. Karma's ultimate revenge is to ruin love lives.

I guess Karma is more like a sit down dinner instead of a drive thru; it takes a while to get served to you. I know that I wasn't so morally or ethical wrong with the things I did for love.. What happened to forgive and forget? Didn't I pay for it with the jailbird ex-boyfriend? Lord knows (or is it Buddha?) Karma caught up with me with that one.

Karma snuck up on me. Just when everything seemed to level out in my love life - I get the phone call.

"Who is this and why are you calling my boyfriend?" She sounded angry and who could blame her. I guess he forgot to ask his girlfriend if would be okay to date.

I think Boy George had it right. Karma changes like a chameleon. Bad Karma comes and goes, but it just seems to keep on comin' for me. I have decided

that Karma isn't a woman scorned, it is a man (an probably an overweight plumber at that!).



## The Prince and “It”

Kathleen Hurst

Once upon a time there was a perfectly happy family. There was a dad. He was the King and very handsome. There was a mom, the Queen who was lovely to behold. And there was a very cool boy, who was Prince, of course. Life at the castle was great.

Everything was fine. They were living out the “happily ever after” part of another fairy tale from long ago!

Then it happened! The King and Queen went away to the far corner of the kingdom for a few days. When they returned, they brought “it” with them.

“It” was not really very big but “it” was nasty. “It” changed everything. The Queen stayed up all day and night with “it” because “it” screamed and screamed and screamed. In the morning everyone was really mad, because no one could sleep! Also “it” was gross. “It” was stinky, sloppy, barfy, and disgusting.

So the Prince decided to leave home. It was no longer the great place it had always been. He packed his clothes and some food into a small bundle and hid it behind the grandfather clock in the front entryway.

When the clock struck midnight, he crept silently down the broad stairway... but he didn't get away.

The lights were on in the castle! Everyone was up and taking turns throwing "it" back and forth to get "it" to go to sleep.

The Queen saw the Prince and asked, "Where are you going?"

"To find a quiet place to live!" muttered the Prince.

"Oh?" she paused. "Can I go with you?"

"What?" said the Prince? "What did you say?" The Prince was sure he hadn't heard his mother correctly.

"Can I go? I need a break from this awful noise, too!" answered the Queen. Suddenly the Prince realized that she was not quite as lovely to behold as usual. She looked tired around the edges.

"I thought you liked "it". The prince tried to puzzle it out.

"I do. But I like him because I know he will outgrow this nastiness and will start to sleep. It will happen soon – just like it did with you!" explained the Queen.

"Me? ME???" the Prince yelled. "I was never one of those!" he yelled some more and pointed right at "it".

"Oh yes, you were," the King told him wearily, "Only you were much louder. But we kept you and look how well things turned out for us!"

So the Prince took a step toward "it". Then he took another step. He finally got close enough to see "it" and wouldn't you know it, "it" was a baby. "It" stopped yelling and stared up at his big brother with an identical round face. And for a whole minute there was no noise.

The prince picked it up holding it at arm's length and said, "Maybe I could stay around and see how "it" turns out. So he did.

After word:

In time the King's prophecy came true. The small Prince started to walk, talk, and play. Both Princes loved to spend their time racing through the castle. Life went back to being happily ever after. Until.....The King and Queen again went to visit the far corner of the kingdom. And it started all over again!

Note: Thank you Sara, for the great Fairy Tale lesson, and for showing us how children can use writing to project what is going on in their own lives – like a new baby!

## It's Time to Write

By Cristina Ortiz Esquivel

The teacher said,  
"It's time to write."  
WHAT!?  
You mean I gotta write a story!?  
I really don't know where to start,  
Goodness! I'm beginning to worry!

The teacher said,  
"It's time to write."  
WAIT!  
I don't have to worry.  
If I could just look in my heart,  
Yes! I know I would find a story!

The teacher said,  
"It's time to write."  
WELL!  
I was going to make this a rhyming piece  
But my ideas can't be put on a leash.

It's not about writing firmly,  
Harshly, sternly, or rigorously!

Writing is about creating,  
Motivating, sharing, inspiring!

Writing can be therapeutic, and neurotic!

Writing can be soothing and comforting.

The teacher said,  
"It's time to write."  
WELL!  
Let's give it a try!  
At least  
when I see my students cry,  
I'll know exactly why!

Mary Ellen Galloway  
SAWP Summer Institute  
June 12, 2006

## *Hypocrisy*

I may as well come clean from the beginning. I am a hypocrite. A phony. Full of bull, or something that comes from a bull. I am a whitewashed sepulcher. I can talk the talk, but not walk the walk, etcetera. “Wow!” You may think to yourself. “That sounds harsh. She must suffer from a poor self-concept. She beats herself mercilessly like Silas of Da Vinci Code fame.” Or you really couldn’t care less and are just wondering what all of this is leading up to.

I am a Montessori teacher. I am very *proud* of being a Montessori teacher. One of the aspects that I love is that the philosophy and methodology that I subscribe to teaches independence from an early age. Preschoolers in our environment learn to pour from child sized *glass* pitchers and serve snack to their class. They lace, button, snap, sew, and help to “restore the environment,” or clean up the classroom. In the elementary school, students are expected to take ownership of their education by making choices about all of the work that they do and being responsible for those choices. I have counseled countless parents over the years in the “art of letting go,” so that their children can function as autonomous human beings. I have looked with bewilderment and something akin to horror at the mother of a second grader as she confessed that her son had never been on a field trip without her. But as I mentioned earlier, I am a hypocrite.

My own children are products of Montessori education. You might think that this fact, added to the reality of my being a teacher in that system, would make it easier for me to cut the proverbial “apron strings.” You are much too logical, my friend. You underestimate the folly of human nature, especially my human nature. The fact is, when it comes to my own children I can be consumed with trepidation for their well-being. Here is one example: My oldest son, Gabe has just recently been allowed by yours truly to ride around our neighborhood on his bike. He is TWELVE years old. ....Please stop laughing...I mean it....Thank you. Anyway, the reasons that I gave to him for not letting him loose on his bike were fairly vague, but in my mind they went something like this. He could: get hit by a Hummer, snatched by the sex crazed predator the elderly lady on the corner is SURE she saw, end up on Loop 410 near the Airport Boulevard exit during 5:00 traffic, or be attacked by the ferocious Yorkie Terrier across the street. You know the one I mean. The one that sounds like a wild duck when it breathes. Anyway, I realized that to continue to limit his freedom I would actually have to verbalize the reasons *outside* of my body. Which would make me sound...I don’t know...crazy? So I let him go.

We started out small. I told him that he could ride unfettered for thirty minutes. About twenty-five minutes into his ride, I found things that had to be

done in the front yard. I needed to water the plants that had already been watered, sweep the driveway of nonexistent debris, and look down the street every two seconds for the red bicycle. We (I) overcame that parenting obstacle and now, Gabe is free to ride his bike anywhere in the neighborhood as long as he's home on time. I am sure you are relieved. I know Gabriel was.

My youngest son, Sam, has been at YMCA camp this week. When I dropped him off yesterday, I literally had to force myself to stop my internal dialogue about the ineptitude of the counselors, the strong probability that he could drown during swim time, the fact that he might make no friends and sit by himself all week, or that he would forget to drink enough water and pass out during dodge ball. I started breathing again when I picked him up and saw none of these events had come to pass. Thank you for not laughing this time.

You see, all of this self-revelation has been spurred by my thinking about the "Big Event" that is happening in our household day after tomorrow. My husband, Andy, and Gabe are flying to New York City for my brother in law's graduation from medical school. Due to D.T.S.S, or Dual Teacher Salary Syndrome, Sam and I are staying home. The list of AWFUL, EVIL possibilities on this trip is copious. Here are a few for your reading pleasure. Gabriel could get separated from Andy at the airport and forget his name, phone number, and where we live, and have no way to get home. He could be abducted by a predator dressed as a policeman while asking for directions or fall off the Empire State building. Lady Liberty's torch could fall on him and crush him. He might get caught up in an art thievery gang while at the Metropolitan Museum, choke on a Sabrett's hot dog, *or* (brace yourself), get picked up by The Learning Channel's "Cash Cab" and not know the answer to even one single question. Do you see all of the ramifications of releasing your children? Of course I wouldn't dare tell the parents of my students any of this.

I am reminded the movie "What About Bob?" as I am writing this. Have you seen it? In case you haven't, here is a short synopsis. In the film, Bill Murray plays a completely neurotic character (unlike myself, naturally) who in addition to being afraid of EVERYTHING, fakes conditions like Turret's Syndrome and Heart attacks, because "If I fake it, then I don't have it." As a parent, this is part of my M.O. In other words, I think of the most heinous, atrocious things that I can, and name them. By doing so, psychologically I am warding off the demons of things that could actually happen, but probably won't.

But back to the issue of my being a phony, fear filled, neurotic, micro-managing hypocrite, I am issuing an apology. I request forgiveness from: the parents of students I have judged silently over the years for not sufficiently releasing their offspring, my husband for making him suffer by living with such a maniac for the past thirteen years, and to my children, Gabe and Sam, for not allowing them to learn to take risks sooner. I am just learning how to myself. Thank you for reading this confession. I am thinking it may be okay to let myself off the hook a bit. Perhaps I am not a complete hypocrite, after all, but a mother learning to let go. What do you think?

Naomi Comes to Visit the San Antonio Writing Project  
by Lennie Irvin

Naomi Shihab Nye came as the guest speaker to the Summer Institute of the San Antonio Writing Project last Thursday. My initial feeling as she began was that I was enveloped in a big hug. She was one of us, and she made us feel like we were like her too. The glue that binds us is writing. Within moments of starting to speak she said, "We are all bound by the belief in the writing process." Oh my!

When she says "belief in the writing process," I don't think she is talking about some formula for writing, but the experience of the writing act itself. Writing happens as a process, and we believe in that mysterious process of inquiry and creation. It is different and unique each time we write. She talked about her experience of the writing process as a "think as you go" process--it unfolds and leads us as we continue. We don't arrive at the page knowing exactly what we will say or where our writing will go. The writing process encourages us to be open to possibilities and unforeseen outcomes.

She mentioned what a large influence William Stafford had upon her. As a young girl, she came across two poems by Stafford, and she recalls vividly the incredible impact these poems had upon her. She was drawn to explore more work by Stafford, and to this day she says that the internal voice she hears as she experiences and writes poetry is the voice of William Stafford. She shared poetry from other people (including students) she admired--selected almost at random--and then read some of her own. Her pony tail swished over her left shoulder, her eyes intent and active, her movements constant and expressive. She even played the guitar sharing a song written in 45 minutes with students she had worked with once at a junior high. It was great. She has a good voice! I thought she could be another Joan Baez!

I wrote a couple jewels in my journal as she spoke. They fall randomly here upon this page:

Stafford's advice for responding to writing:

"No praise; no blame--just response." When responding to writing, you don't need to offer praise ("I love this piece. You did so well...") or blame ("You are completely missing the required part about X.)--just response (speak as a fellow writer and an interested reader).

I can't recall who she mentioned said this, but she said to never avoid the hard subjects. Take things that are hardest to you to write about.

Ah journals!--there you are free to write recklessly, abandonly.

The importance of showing and not telling.

As I think about Naomi Nye and her perspective on the "writing process," and I think about the entire group of teachers in this summer's Summer Institute, I feel an implicit consensus in what the "writing process" is. It has become a common assumption for all of us (a

commonplace). It is not a strict formula, but a blueprint, a guide for a complex and ever-shifting activity. As teachers, we are challenged to teach students how to write with this consciousness of the writing process in mind.

"We are all bound by the belief in the writing process."

## Visiting Moscow

By Roxanne Henkin  
June 2006

My cousin Richie, the diplomat, has been assigned to Moscow. When he first found out, he told us that although it wasn't his first, second, third or even last choice, that he and his family were going to try and make the most of it.

Two weeks ago his family was in L.A. making their annual trek across the country, saying hello and goodbye to relatives in Seattle, San Francisco, L.A., Las Vegas, Houston, San Antonio and Chicago. Then to Washington, D.C. for seven weeks of Russian school and they are off to Moscow.

My sister Sue reports that many of my nine first cousins have said that they plan to go to Moscow while he's there. Which makes me wonder, will I?

Since Richie's been a U.S. Diplomat, Richie's been assigned to Recife, Brazil, the Philippines, Washington, D.C., Halifax, Nova Scotia, Mexico City and Ottawa, Canada. We've visited him in Nova Scotia and had the royal treatment laid out to us.

A U.S. nuclear submarine was in port and we were given diplomatic passes to visit the submarine. Richie thought we'd have about 10 minutes, but instead we stayed an hour and a half. We were given a detailed tour of a submarine that most Americans never get to see. The subs are told to disappear into the ocean and return only at 3 month intervals. This was the submarine's first time back and the sailors were desperate for company.

We also went to a diplomatic picnic which was the fanciest and most formal picnic that we've ever attended. We decided not to wear jeans which was a good idea because "picnic"

meant eating inside in the smaller dining room. We had assigned seats and the dinner was structured and ran by protocol.

But Moscow...? Do I want to go? Moscow is on my list of my least desirable places to visit. Even though most of my family was situated in the Ukraine and not Moscow itself, my family fled Russia and never looked back. I grew up hearing stories of first born sons being conscripted into the army at a young age and never seen again. I grew up hearing stories of the Programs, where the Russian soldiers rode on their horses, entered villages and slaughtered all the Jews they could find. I was told that my Great-Grandparents (and 1 Grandparent) left in the night, running to escape before the authorities caught them. I absorbed into my bones that Russia was a place of hatred and anti-Semitism, of killing and lives disrupted and torn apart. So why would I ever choose to visit Russia?

The cold war was a bit confusing. The U.S. distrusted Russia which as I understood it was good. And yet, wasn't I Russian, so didn't that mean that I was hating myself?

“You're not Russian,” my Mom said. “They were just living there then. The Jews spoke Yiddish not Russian, and weren't allowed to be full citizens in their country. They couldn't own land, and were taxed heavily. Very few Jews were allowed to go to Russian schools.”

We weren't Russian, but why did I grow up with Samovars in my Grandmothers' homes, and why was borsht served at holiday meals? We weren't Russian, but why did everyone have the Russian stacking dolls in their living rooms? We weren't Russian, but why did we go to see the Russian ballet whenever it was in town, and why did I take 18 years of ballet with the strict Russian Prima Ballerina and teacher, Miss Sybil, who was forever hitting us with her tambourine and shouting, “Stick in your stomach and hold your head high!”

Okay, so maybe we were a little Russian. Maybe even a little politically Russian. My Dad's parents are buried in the Socialist Bund section of the Jewish Waldheim cemetery in Chicago. I always wondered about it and have learned that bunds were groups of young people trying to make Russia into a more fair and equitable country for all people. But why were they still affiliated with the Bund when they died? That remains a mystery.

And now Richie, my first cousin, descended from the first Orthodox Rabbi in Minneapolis, our Great-Great Grandfather, is returning to Russia, as a U.S. diplomat, to Moscow, the capital. It's a homecoming of sorts and a triumph for our family. We, who were persecuted and oppressed under the Czar, return generations later representing America.

So why don't I want to be part of this homecoming? My Mother wants to go and visit the Ukraine to do genealogy research. Who will she find though, when so many of our relatives were lost to the Programs and the concentration camps?

"Moscow is the most expensive city in the world," I'm told. "Moscow is the most difficult city in the world to live," I read. "But why is Moscow still such a difficult city for me?"

I pride myself on being a world-wide traveler. I imagine seeing as much of the world as I can while I'm still alive. I've always felt like I'm open to everything, so why now the resistance to Moscow?

My father has always said everything depends on the luck of where you're born. When I was little I thought he meant how lucky we were not to be born in Africa or China where children were starving. But now I wonder if he wasn't really thinking of himself and our family and how lucky we were to be in America and not Russia, and just how close he came to being born there. Though his Great-Grandfather brought his Mother's family to Minneapolis, my

Dad's father arrived in Chicago at age 18, brought over by his sister. If not for luck, we too might have perished in the Programs or the Holocaust.

Okay, so Russia was oppressive to the Jews. Don't we share that with many other immigrant groups who came to the U.S. to escape tyranny? Other groups are allowed to love their homeland. Even if I can't love Russia, do I have to hate it? Wouldn't I love to see the Russian ballet in Russia? Wouldn't I love to see the cultural sights in this most cultural of cities? Aren't there art museums and opera halls calling my name?

Richie and his family stopped in San Antonio last week as part of their annual hello and goodbye trek across the United States. I read this to them, and Richie offered an insight of his own. "You might want to add that although Putin is not a democratic president, he has put on a Yarmulka (skull cap) and entered a Jewish synagogue in solidarity with the Jewish people." So maybe I should give Russia a chance. Maybe it is time for me to put away my fear and apprehension and recrimination of Russia. Maybe it is time for me to visit Moscow and put the past to rest.

Lily Reyes Rentería  
San Antonio Writing Project Summer 2006  
Assignment #3  
Introduction to possible book: *From Boy to Man*

Her cries could be heard all throughout the neighborhood. The eldest daughter sat alone in the back of the car with tears streaming down her cheeks. The mother hugged and kissed each of her five children ranging in ages from two and a half to ten years old. Each of the children's faces was stained, canyons of dirt and tears formed upon their faces as the new tears flowed freely. The sounds of the children snorting back their mucus echoed in rhythm as they each took turns. Neighbors began to trickle out from behind their cortinas and puertas until suddenly a flood of bodies emerged onto the street corner surrounding la familia. The young mother lets out a blood-curdling scream and in between sobs is able to muster these words to her children, "¡Te quiero mucho mis niños y juntos vamos estar!" She then falls to her knees and her body crumples onto the ground, her children quickly huddle around her making it impossible for her to attempt to move about. A teenage mother amongst the crowd clutches her newborn child tighter against her breast as she witnesses this horrendous sight. Other mothers who have seen this scenario occur too many times before began to yell towards the car, "¡Ella siempre cuida sus hijos!" The men begin to straighten their posture, puffing out their chests outwards como gallos, esperando un gran pelea. Throughout the sea of onlookers various shades of brown can be seen: mocha, chocolate, earth, and café con leche so many beautiful colors. Age does not seem to matter; the solemn look of heartache is worn by all. Tears flow from some of these beautiful brown faces while others have anger and disgust displayed. Algunas de las caras have turned into an earthen red from the constant yells towards the car. An elderly man approaches; he's dressed in his pressed khaki pants, guayabera and hat with cane in hand. The crowd begins to part like the Red Sea and allows the elderly man through. He has an anguished look upon his face as if he does not get to speak he will forever be silent. Everyone stares to hear him speak; he then raises his cane in protest. His raspy voice begins to yell, "¡Dejalos en paz, déjanos en paz, largasen de aquí!" The crowd begins to cheer and chant the prominent words of the elderly man. Juntos unidos como uno, willing to stand up for the injustice that reoccurs too frequently. The officers begin to make their presence known. The faces of the crowd begin to change from

anger to fear. “¿Que pasa si vienen por mí?” “¿Que van hacer mi familia sin mí?” These questions swirl around the minds of the people like a whirlpool. Their minds begin racing a mile a minute, as the whites of their eyes are even more visible with these thoughts. The officers have remained quiet and observant as if trying to memorize the faces of all those present. The crowd continues to chant, the yelling, screaming, and cursing gets louder. What was once a hum has now turned into a deafening roar. The uncertainty in the officers’ faces is apparent. As more officers begin to arrive, the looks of uncertainty have now been replaced by looks of cockiness. Their acts transform them from humans into the perros they are, barking out ferocious words, “Shut up all you wetbacks! Go home or we’ll deport your asses too!” The young girl still sitting alone in the back of the humid car, her legs begin to stick to the seat and she begins to cry even harder as true fright has set in. The crowd begins to slowly evaporate. When through the strange loud quietness an angelic voice speaks, “¿Que debo de hacer mamá?” Those still present stop and stare with anxious looks upon their faces, awaiting the answer. The mother knowing she must leave her son con palabras importantes, attempts to calmly answer, “Cuida tus hermanos y segué adelante en escuela. Recuerda con educación podemos hallar las respuestas de nuestros problemas”. She’s unable to answer without shedding any more tears. The little boy approaches his mother to give her an answer she will be proud of. He too wants to leave the impression upon his madre that he will continue with her request. Él tome la cara de su madre en sus manos sucios y con tanto amor contesta, “Si mamá, yo los voy a cuidar y le prometo que nada o nadie nos va separarnos, yo quiero que vas estar orgullosa de mí.” She kisses each of his hands and begins to stumble slowly to her feet, attempting to gain control of her own body. The babies cling to her legs with a fierce grip. The young boy gives his siblings a few moments and begins to pry his baby brothers from their mother’s legs. His younger brother with only a year’s difference between them and little sister stand motionless, unsure of what they are supposed to do in this moment. The officer comes to the mother’s side and takes hold of her hand. She escorts the mother to join her eldest child in the back of the car. The mother struggles to enter the car. Once she has taken her place along side her daughter, they hold onto one another and the silence breaks. The sobs begin from inside and outside the car. The weight of the door can be heard, as it slams shut. The tía who will assist in taking care of the children, takes her place behind the five children. The young boy who has now become a man clutches his baby brothers’ hands tightly. Their little bodies’ wiggle and faces wince in pain from their older brother’s

clutch. The babies are crying, not understanding what is happening to their mother. The young man bends onto one knee, face to face with the children and whispers, “yo les prometo, que les voy a cuidar y asegurar que nada o nadie nos van separar.” He repeats the same promesa told to his mother. Tía then steps forward and takes the young babies from the young man. The officers have now entered the car and are trying to get the mother and daughter to calm down. These “perros” have slowly retransformed into humans again. They are now showing signs of compassion, as they begin to question their own true feelings of what has occurred. The car’s engine starts and slowly inches forward, as if in slow motion. The little brother and sister begin chasing after the car. The young man watches, his mother and sister looking back towards him with eyes of red and consumed with tears. Once the car is out of view the young man is unable to control his emotion. He drops to the ground, the gravel from the street digs into his knees. His head falls forward into his hands; the blotches of dirt from his endless weeping cover his brown face.

*Tribute to my Writing Project family*  
*By Mary Ellen Galloway*

I don't want to be too sentimental, but I just have to say that I really love this group. I never want this summer institute to end. There are so many amazing and unique individuals with so much to offer the world. I feel as though I am in a think-tank for gifted and talented teachers every single day. So here is a small tribute to all of you for the many gifts you have given me this summer.

Lily: You are an amazing teacher with a beautiful smile and gentle spirit. Your students and family are blessed.

Nora: You have a graceful and soothing manner that comes across in your writing. I still remember the letter to your son.

Tracy: You are unflappable, sensitive, and open. You write with such depth.

Roxanne (Dr. Henkin): You are the Jewish patron saint of educators and writers. You have taught me so much about writing and life.

Carla: Your laugh rings out reminding us not to take ourselves so seriously. And man! What a poet! I enjoy our walks through the desert in the morning.

Aurelia: You are a deep thinker and peacemaker with a sense of humor. I have learned a lot from our conversations.

Pete: You have an uncanny ability to put difficult ideas into concise and powerful words. You write with passion and love your family very much.

Sara: You are a great writer. Your pieces never fail to put a smile on my face. You also have a great sense of style, inside and out.

Lennie: Master of rhetoric, and great asker of questions. Your gentle manner causes us to think critically during our discussion times.

Honor: Unassuming genius. You are intelligent, pretty, *and* kind. How is this possible?

Rosie: Puts everyone around her immediately at ease with her kind and conversational style. I love the writing about your family. You are a passionate educator.

Therese: Dry, killer wit that is so spontaneous and natural. You write with such depth and pathos.

Cristina: Gold-hearted cheerleader of both students and teachers. You are self-sacrificing and authentic.

Cathy: Teacher with wonderful creativity. You are both a fantastic conversationalist and a deep listener.

Michelle: Funky dresser with the personality to match and poet's soul. I feel *honored* to know you.

Melissa: You say you are ADD, but I love your energy! You are a gifted writer who has the versatility to be both funny and serious.

Rene: Philosopher who helps his students overcome obstacles. Your belief in your students helps them believe in themselves. I wouldn't want to debate you!

Kim: Industrious graduate assistant and student. You have a fantastic sense of humor and miraculously keep on top of the SAWP and Voices journal. Thank you!

Tanya: You are always in a good mood even though you have so much on your plate! Thank you for all of your help this summer and your infectious positive spirit.

Yours truly (Mary Ellen): It has been said by others that I am both Dr. Phil of the group and that I "rock the universe..."

Thanks again for a great summer on board the "love train!" that is the San Antonio Writing Project!

Mary Ellen Galloway

## Quotes

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead (Tracy)

“You cannot teach a man anything, you can only help him find it within himself.”

Galileo Galilei (Pete)

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”

Gandhi (Cristina)

“You think your pains and your heartbreaks are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who have ever been alive.”

James Baldwin (Kathy)

“No matter where you go, there you are.”

Buckaroo Bonzai (Rene)

“This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make a good place for all of us to live.”

Teddy Roosevelt (Roxanne, a.k.a. Dr. Henkin)

"We write to taste life twice, in the moment, and in retrospection."

Anais Nin (Melissa)

"The only tyrant I accept in this world is the still voice within."

Mahatma Gandhi (Therese)

"I write because I believe that Mexican Americans need to take their rightful place in U.S. Literature. We need to be published and to be studied in schools and colleges so that the stories and ideas of our people won't quietly disappear. Although I'm happy when I finish the draft of a poem or story, deep inside I always wish I wrote better, that I could bring more honor and attention to those like the abuelitas, or grandmothers that I write about."

Pat Mora (Aurelia)

"The Landscape for the writer is the mind."

Natalie Goldberg (Honor)

"Knowledge is power and enthusiasm pulls the switch."  
Steve Droke (Rosie)

"The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening  
the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of  
satisfying it afterwards."  
Anatole France (Lily)

"This is the beginning of sadness,  
I say to myself,  
As I walk through the universe in my sneakers.  
It is time to say goodbye  
to my imaginary friends,  
time to turn the first big number.

It seems only yesterday  
I used to believe  
There was nothing under my skin but light.  
If you cut me I could shine  
But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life,  
I skin my knees." Billy Collins (Michelle)

"How long till my soul gets it right?  
Did any human being ever reach that kind of light?  
I call on the resting soul of Galileo,

King of night vision, king of insight."  
Indigo Girls (Mary Ellen)

"What is inescapable is that underlying all our differences about what makes good communication there is one deep standard: agreement that whatever the dispute, whatever language standards, communication can be improved by *listening to the other side, and then listening even harder to one's own responses.*" --Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Rhetoric  
21 (Lennie)