

*Memories, Crossings, and Station Stops:  
Displaced Pasts Into Present  
Teaching of Language and Art*

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**Abstract:**

Whether photographed from the missing pages of a summer day, or surrounded by the light of spectral clouds passing through a whisper, stories that provoke connections between person and place can be both powerful and inspiring in the recurring creation of teaching narratives. What happens when we, a professor and a doctoral student, come together to critically inquire into the displaced pasts of our present selves for future teachers of language and art? Which locations will we select? Where will our dialogue take us? We respond in a composition of poetry, prose, and image.

**Keywords:** narrative, teaching, language, arts, memory, place

Whether photographed from the missing pages of a summer day, or surrounded by the light of spectral clouds passing through a whisper, stories that provoke connections between person and place can be both powerful and inspiring in the recurring creation of our teaching narratives. According to Ruth Vinz (1996), “for all there is to learn from others about theory and pedagogy, it is impossible to talk about teaching without questioning personal beliefs and knowledge” (p. 6). Such study of self must extend to teacher educators who engage in important decision making while creating pedagogical opportunities for their own students’ learning as future teachers. According to Peter Taubman (2014), “we should think about the journey of teaching in terms of deepening our own sense of who we are in relation to what we are doing and those we are teaching” (p. 15). What happens when we, a professor (Cynthia) and a doctoral student (Geneviève), come together to inquire critically into the displaced pasts of our present selves? Which locations will we select from which to tell our stories? Where will the back and forth movement of our dialogue take us? With these questions in mind, we turn to a composition of poetry, prose, and images to inquire into the recurring narratives of our displaced pasts to inform our teaching in present places for future teachers of language and art.

### Cynthia

Over eight decades ago, Alfred Adler (1930), emphasizing the creative potential that human beings possess to construct their own life stories, stated: “The individual is thus both the picture and the artist” (p. 5). More recently, Louise Rosenblatt (1994), also recognizing humans’ capacities to construct their selves, commented that from the linkage of our own store of memories, we must “...draw the appropriate elements symbolized by the score of text, to structure a new experience, the work of art” (p. 14). Whether sketched from the lens of an early Autumn day, or sculpted with the found branches of a ginkgo tree, our narratives emerge along a recurrent continuum of lived experiences, always moving into the future by way of our pasts and always into our current agendas for our teaching. On one day in the present...



Cynthia Morawski (n.d.). *Railroad Cars*.  
From elementary school portfolio.

An early morning walk brings me to the basement of an art store. Stocked shelves hold paper arranged by texture, colour, weight, surface, purpose, and price. Under the metal staircase, remnants fill corrugated boxes lining a cement wall. Folding a charcoal piece of paper into a notebook, I begin to write...

Stretched along a riverfront highway  
Eleven houses welcome the wash of an autumn rain,  
Metal chairs rest against the rust of front porch railings  
While lodgers sip tea under the cover of pull shades.

Standing in the middle of a fenced in shoreline  
Moorings separate themselves from the edges of a rotting dock,  
Houseboats drift among the cadence of red-winged blackbirds  
After the sun lays copper strips on the footbridge floor.

At a railway crossing near a toll booth gate  
Lanterns signal the approach of a distant commuter train,  
Cars wait in line as school buses bring children to their homes  
Where life begins at quarter past three.

I work within train stops, where you are told to watch the gap. A stopgap. Measured in miles passing by station platforms. Track changes in red. Cold Spring. Greystone. Marble Hill. Location C. Overlooking a palisades parking garage. I am rerouted to former places and then taken aback again. First as a resident in writing. Now as a tourist displaced.

At 6:42 on a muggy morning of a recent autumn term, I unlock the room of my methods class. Outside in the hallway, the night shift congregates, preparing to leave for another day. Inside, I move from cupboard to table, Smart Board to sink, crayons to ink. Teacher candidates start to arrive, first individually, then in groups. Conversations ebb and flow among clutter of food, knapsacks, and the anticipation of another class. By 8:15 we have already begun to glue, write, and read. In journals, constructed from found remnants of cereal boxes and string, we ask questions about former places. And begin to study the children's novel entitled *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (Konigsburg, 1967) in which the main characters, two siblings Claudia and Jamie, decide to run away from home and take up residence in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. For our first exercise, after listening to the Beatles' song, *She's Leaving Home* (Lennon & McCartney, 1967), we turn to our journals and write, in the top half of a journal page, about a time in our own lives when we ran away from home, figuratively or literally. After sharing our recollections in smaller groups, we then select a coloured sheet of paper that best represents our experience (Milgrom, 1992). Using only our hands, we tear the paper into the shape of this experience, which we then glue into the bottom half of the page. In smaller groups, and then in a whole class discussion, we exchange our responses, reconsidering connections to the text in colour, form, and sound. A speck of red represents one student's first journey running away at the age of three, through the screen of a red door, returning in time for his mid-morning snack. A blue-shingled house expresses another student's escape from her hometown to an adventure across the Atlantic as a young adult in a new land. A cascade of green paper ribbons trailing down her journal page, canoe and backpack in tow, gives meaning to still another student's decision to leave life for a month in July. As we resume reading about the exploits of Claudia and Jamie, our own times of leaving home, displaced for a few moments or a year, move with us.

## Geneviève

As I reflect on the journey of teaching, I look towards a/r/tography (Irwin, 2004; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Irwin & Springgay, 2008; Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005; Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008) along with life writing and literary métissage (Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, Oberg, & Leggo (2008); Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, & Leggo, (2009); Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Leggo, & Sinner (2012)) and am taken through the fabrics of my past. Through poetry and images, I think about the fragments of memories that remain as I move towards a teaching life. The ghosts, images, thoughts, and ideas of yesterday, live with me, in me, and around me. Indeed, “a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back” (Derrida, 1994, p. 193). The traces, the roars from the sides, come forth.

Where do these ghosts reside when I am teaching? How do they stir? What images manifest as I work through them? As I think about teaching, I am simultaneously aware of the past through an ephemeral sense afforded to me by the traces of spectres and experience: art, words, sounds, images, and movement. What is more, as I reflect on creating pedagogical opportunities, I acknowledge that student teachers, students...we all experience ghosts and traces from past selves: a métissage of ghostly experiences await. Therefore, for me, “becoming pedagogical” (Gouzouasis, Irwin, Miles, & Gordon, 2013) means having “curiosity and the courage to change” (p. 2) while being attuned to the many experiences from our pasts, the many voices that surround us.

Canadian multi-disciplinary artist Janet Cardiff’s installation *40 Part Motet*, for example, follows me, stays with me. I remember romping around New York City, stumbling upon Cardiff’s work at the MoMA PS1, an affiliate of The Museum of Modern Art in Long Island City. In the burrows of Queens, a graffiti wall shines across the street. Then, alone in the great big white room, I stood with a multiplicity of voices, different tonalities, and diverse volumes—surrounded by speakers presenting songs and chorals documented from another time and place. Memory skips as the same piece is experienced at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa one year later.



Geneviève Cloutier (2013). *MoMAPS1*. Digital photograph.

Towards the Motet: Art Museums on the Move

Walking up the corridor  
I turn right towards a fly  
circling underneath a projector  
in front of it, a sculpture stretches  
outwards, hands holding a web.  
Surrounded by light  
spectral clouds, fade, halt.  
A sea woman  
with a tail for legs  
basks with her young.  
Around the corner  
a similarly dynamic light:  
eyes on plaster caverns  
then, onwards

cut-outs  
"Look we're moving through time!"  
my son shouts  
as he walks  
across the long gallery floor.

The love empire still inspires us.  
A place to declare one's affinity,  
a stage made of pine.  
"You're allowed to touch the art,"  
I explain.

Moving metallic, swerving,  
lining up, stretching out  
as the groomed flowers,  
symmetrical, rhombus spread  
leading to the edge—  
the glass canopy  
towards the motet  
in the displaced chapel.

Transported to the art gallery,  
reassembled, piece by piece.  
The arched sentiments:  
resemblance of a dome—  
working hands,  
the working of stones.

Circles and canopies interchangeable  
chairless  
or chairs rearranged.  
Talking becoming sounds  
and words all at once: The Motet  
around the conversations, unfolding,  
whispers,  
materiality, warming up.

I circulate in the room in awe. As a teaching assistant in a how-to-teach language arts classroom, I look at what has been created. Words are folded and uncovered by the art of making. My own background in book arts resonates with the folding, cutting, ink, and pencil on paper: a place for the imprints of the day. Student teachers jot down their lived experiences of classroom happenings. In one particular instance, as Cynthia plays *She's Leaving Home* by the Beatles (Lennon & McCartney, 1967), I find that many of us are pulsating with a need to close our eyes. Once our eyes open, the writing commences.

### Cynthia

Mary Ann Reilly (2009), who encourages educators to open spaces of possibility by tinkering with what is at hand, aptly states, "At a time when teachers often are required to mold their teaching to external standards, the presence of these texts seems all the more important" (p. 376). Narratives emerge from what is at hand, found, and repurposed for our teaching. In the culling of life matter, material emerges one day in a past year.



Cynthia Morawski (n.d.). *Autumn Leaves*.  
From elementary school portfolio.

Approaching the Sound on an autumn day  
A storm marks time with the gesture of a seagull's wing,  
Kinetic sculptures move in place to a quartet's beat  
While the light tints the forest amber yellow.

It is the beginning of a late September day and school has been canceled. Outside, a weather pattern moves in a northeasterly direction, dimming the sky to an evening shadow. A tropical depression has churned into a hurricane. Storm surges move wetlands closer to home. Trees strain to keep their balance, while winds pelt rain into the clatter of

windowpanes. Inside, my nine-year-old self sits on the floor under the warmth of an overhead light. Next to me, a rusty handsaw, nails, pencils, and a wooden plank await my attention. After placing my right heel just before the end of the plank, I take the pencil and draw a line on the wood, an inch away from my big toe. At the opposite end, I do the same with my other foot. Placing metal teeth on the first penciled mark, I begin to saw.... The above scene captures the morning I built a pair of geta—traditional Japanese wooden platform sandals. From the time that I first spotted them in a reference book at school, I wanted a pair of my own. As the morning moves on and the storm intensifies, I nail two pieces of sawn wood under each of the two bases, which I then cover with yellow cushions, hand-made by me from the remnants of a dressing gown. After attaching the sandals to my stocking feet with two thick elastics, I walk across the concrete floor, clop, clop, clop, clop, clop, to the rhythm of the wind and rain.

In my classroom, I encourage my students to use what is found at hand—in their homes, their neighborhoods, their stores, their streets, their stories, their lives—all rich in working material for portraying a character’s life. Materials everyone can collect and bring to the making of a curriculum. The novel, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (Avi, 1990), had been the focus of our weekly English methods class for the past three sessions. Transformed from proper young lady to mutineer while sailing across the Atlantic, Charlotte emulates strength, power, and determination—a force that unites a crew once divided. It is nine o’clock in the morning and moving from hand to hand, we begin to define her as a living being in body, mind, and spirit. Spread across the classroom floor, groups of student unroll their large rolls of paper, select their materials, sketch their human form, arrange their quotes and glue. Cardboard, string, foil, old cassette tape ribbon, paper bags, calendars, shredded documents, fabric, and more characterize Charlotte Doyle. Colour, shape, space, texture, and outlines define the first part of her voyage and then the second. Her dismissed diary, her weathered skin, her attachment to the sea, her courage in the face of life all begin to appear, from one side of her outline to the other. Each image uniquely depicts a part, a sense, a thought, an emotion, a buttoned boot, canvas pants, a derk, a comment to Captain Jaggery. After putting the finishing touches on their character compositions, students post them on the wall, gallery style, with each group detailing their decisions to express and represent Charlotte, a complexity of personas caught in the conflicts of social norms—first with herself and then in relation to others.

## Geneviève

Teaching is not an easy profession. How can we attend to all of the soulful moments that are often left unheard? There are so many people to attend to; so many moments and potentialities. Erika Hasebe-Ludt et al. (2009) write that “in performing our subjectivities, we assert the relevance, the legitimacy, indeed the necessity of including the full range of our humanness in our work of remembering ourselves in/to the world, embracing the world, with all of our relations” (p. 68). I think about the many crossings that I face, hear, and experience—the relationality that sticks to my skin, my breath. People become traces and imprints within spaces before and after they become imprinted on myself. Like in a classroom, within the antique store, the textures and histories exude from inside.

In another work by Janet Cardiff, she simulates the inside of a collector’s room—a sort of antique store that reads, to me, as a dreamscape depicting a range of stories and narratives. The insights gathered from the evocative objects (Turkle, 2011) in the room provoke anamnesis—the ability to maintain recollections. I recall having written a wish for my future on stained old paper and putting it in an allocated *dream box*. As I was leaving, I thought about the many wishes that had been put into that large wooden box. The typewriter clacking around it. The ghosts of that room loomed.



Geneviève Cloutier (2011). *By a River*. Digital photograph.

#### Day Dreams From the Classroom

Locked out with memory  
pulled in by preservation(s)  
delivering bits  
alleyways, doors—dancing

Shoes with inserts  
under leather and rubber  
pushed down by the impression's weight—waiting  
the trail moves onwards.

The doors in passing;  
traces of bicycle—tires,  
marks, lines, paths—passing.

The books, crowded at times,  
marked—alongside the sign posts  
that read  
“no loitering,” do not stay—go,  
“going.”

We leave together.  
I bring water through the mark-making;  
shelters,  
unfolding waves of baseboards.  
We pass along the terrain  
as the layering of our daze folds  
outward.



Places are plentiful. They are abundant wherever I go. A métissage of thoughts, images, and feelings ensue. As I pursue my PhD in education, as I work as a teacher educator, I am also present in K-12 classrooms as an occasional teacher. I reflect on this multiplicity as I teach student teachers how to teach. Fragments of selves are captured between the pages; fragments become dislodged. This is a life that will continue onwards, a life that will encompass many roles, many memories. How can we allow for this assemblage to be nurtured? How can the gleaners feel free? Recollections on paper—we continue to utter the words....

## Cynthia

As she walked through her memories of churches, homes, and the Atlantic Ocean, Margaret Mackey (2010) re-imagined her childhood in St. John's, Newfoundland. Taking note of her footsteps, I return to scenes placed along a continuum of New England shores: "I am a fugitive and a vagabond, a sojourner seeking signs" (Dillard, 1974). To where do we return when we leave our former places? A Sunday afternoon narrates a recollected time from once before:

At the back by the perennials planted last spring  
A barn reclaims relics of tin, wire, and salvaged wood,  
Porch posts stand in line among corrugated rooftops  
Where an assembly of dragonflies installs hinged doors.

Out in the north field just beyond the tractor shed, we walk across the long-forgotten field of strawberries picked last June. Streamers shoot through the undergrowth glazed khaki brown by the cool autumn air. A pheasant rustles in the underbrush nearby. Two black birds circle in the late afternoon light, squawking disapproval of strangers entering their realm. A scarecrow, dressed in a yellow raincoat with matching rubber boots, welcomes our presence with a tip of her woolen hat. Reaching the top of the hill, a tangle of orange fabric appears on the far left. Coming closer, we spot what appears to be a transistor radio, a metal contraption with wires spread along a silver ridge. A balloon-like lifeless form draped around it. Could this be an act of espionage? A tracking device used to follow our every move? Should I run home and notify the authorities? Or take fingerprints with my detective kit? "What would Nancy Drew do?" asks my ten-year-old self. Confide in her best friend George, or start sleuthing all alone? Later that same day, the police identify the strange instrument as a weather balloon launched from a local station. Does this explain my desire to track weather patterns from an airport control tower? Did my experience influence my choice of books found in the following classroom scene?

It is the middle of the term and time to introduce my language arts methods class to Kenneth Oppel's (2004) *Airborn*, a book filled with airships, intrigue, romance, piracy, and islands with skeletal remains. Before my students begin to arrive, I begin to prepare for our initial activity—a story completion exercise centring on the sudden descent of an airship piloted by ruthless pirates who will take no prisoners to locate their loot. At each table I place an assortment of materials, including crayons, markers, pens, pencils, and sheets of manila paper. After the students have settled in for the morning, I read the initial passage as George Gershwin's (1936) *Hurricane* plays in the background. With the tolling of five bells, the music ends, signaling students to put the finishing touches on their work. They then begin to share their completed stories, first in pairs, and then with the whole class.

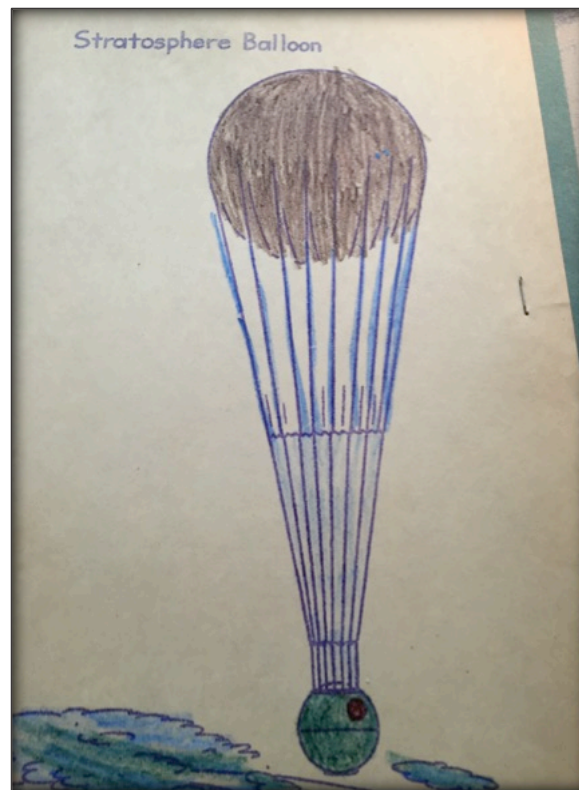
## *Memories, Crossings and Station Stops*

A written paragraph details the kidnapping of Matt and his companion Kate. Crayons depict the pirates' scheme to take control of a pilot's fate.

A comic strip tells the battle between pirates and an airship crew. Pencils sketch an image of Matt dueling with a swashbuckler in navy blue.

A landscape sets the scene of a jolly roger atop a flying boat. Words convey the movements of a balloon powered by a wireless remote.

With the sharing of each composition, including students' explanations for their choice of materials, a rich array of unique expressions of completed stories emerge among the class. What would have happened if the tables had been bare? Would any of the students' stories have appeared?



Cynthia Morawski (n.d.). *Weather Balloon*.  
From elementary school portfolio.

## *Geneviève*

I work through the traces of my past by interweaving autobiography and art-making (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). In this case, through poetry and photography, I consider how spaces are plentiful, dynamic and filled with the spectres of the past. I think about how "artists, researchers, and teachers can linger in the liminal spaces of unknowing/knowing" through their art practices (Leggo, et al, 2011, pp. 239–240). As I think about the liminal space of being dislocated while "maintaining a spectral presence" (Palulis, 2003, p. 269), I am moved towards an ever-changing potentiality.



Geneviève Cloutier (2012). *Cut-Outs*. Digital photograph.

Somewhere, Elsewhere, "Where"? They Ask.

Here  
"We're here."  
From the table, the chair—  
factory layers  
via the movement.

All of us traversing, passing through.  
through the paper  
clips, staples, erasers—  
the erasure.

from the collections.  
like taking a walk—passed  
past.

They pass, too,  
like the images  
and floods of photography  
cuts, edits, scraps  
and traces—  
tracing across the table tops.

With all of the voices  
new and old  
pitch, tone, the variations in resonance  
all the while  
sitting back.

Eyes alert—  
lines of flight, aging,  
slowly—the light that moves behind one's eyes.

From a park,  
a mountaintop  
castles made of stones  
a call from your home(s).

On a cold winter day, in the middle of a busy semester at the university, I delight in the experience of finding myself in a messy (Low & Palulis, 2000) elementary school classroom. I get there winded, with unmatched socks and a heavy bag. I got the call to teach just moments earlier, but managed to fill my bag with children's books. One of my favourites, *The Day the Crayons Quit*, a gift from Cynthia, is placed beside boxes of crayons. I think about hand-written letters, the power of words, streaked with gesture, memories, and colour. We look up and remember where we are.

### Cynthia

Candida Gillis (2002) points out that there are many ways to recall a story. For example, someone may mull over the minutiae of the setting, while another may dwell on a character's role in twisting the plot. Is a story real if we remember only the facts? What would happen if we rolled the film back? Would Dorothy appear down the yellow brick road? Or would the farmer and her husband tell what is to be told?



Cynthia Morawski (n.d.). *Backyard Skating*.  
From elementary school portfolio.

On a late Sunday afternoon in the middle of February, the horizon dims in the west. Precipitation saturates the air. The weather forecaster warns of an approaching New England snowstorm. The possibility of a blizzard stirs the anticipation of a day away from school. Could conditions be more ideal for watching the annual airing of *The Wizard of Oz* (LeRoy, 1939) on television that evening?

Beyond the back yard, where the dropping temperature has turned a flooded field into a skating rink, I lace up my second-hand skates and push off. Snowflakes begin to whorl, forming eddies around the streetlight, while the wicked witch cycles by on her bike. In the nearby woods, a tin man peeks from behind a thicket of broken branches. Next to him a lion quivers with fright. Just as the snowflakes begin to intensify, blocking out the abandoned barn in left field, a scarecrow and a girl in red slippers skip together down an unpaved path. On the other side of the feral apple tree at the rear of the house, the kitchen light comes on, signaling the end of day and the beginning of night. With my skates still fastened to my feet, I clomp, clomp, clomp home, making blade marks across the now snow coated yard and up the cement steps, to a back porch door already ajar.

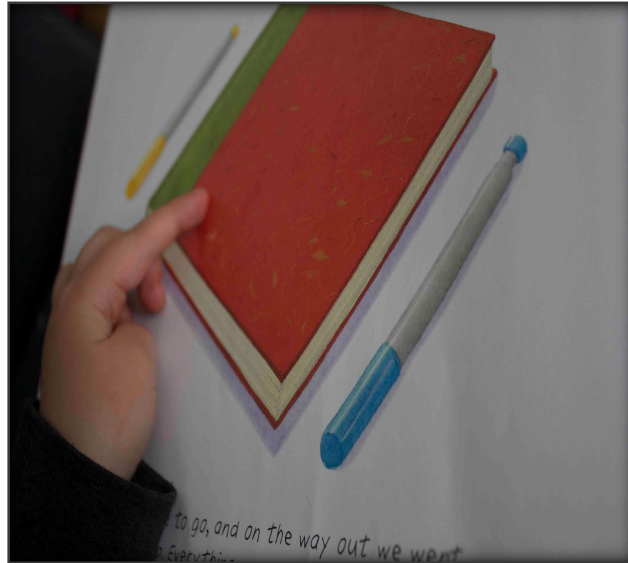
That night as I looked out my bedroom window above the pitched roof  
I saw silhouettes of four figures trudging through the snow all caked in white.  
In the morning, once the winds began to subside  
I built a friendly snowman in case they needed a guide.

To conclude the novel unit on *The Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankwiler* (Koningsburg, 1967) being studied in my language/arts methods class, I turned to the use of postmodern picture books, where the possibilities of multiple genres and voices challenge readers to reconsider the text over many shoulders and “to map the territory in a way no single traveller can” (Gillis, 2002, p. 52). After engaging the students in a brief session on the characteristics of such books and reading several selections to them, I assigned the main activity—the transformation of one of the scenes of their choice from the *Files* novel into a postmodern depiction. Having access to a variety of art materials (e.g., markers, crayons, construction paper) and attending to the characteristics of postmodern picture books, students, in groups, set out their scenes on large sheets of cardboard. In one, Claudia and Jamie, the brother and sister duo who run away and hide in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, text each other while hiding in the museum’s washrooms. Captions appear above their heads as messages go back and forth. Around the corner, a security guard scans a take-out menu as a figure in an impressionist painting assumes an alarmed look when Jamie suddenly peeks out from behind a door. In another scene, Claudia and Jamie wade in the museum’s fountain while children from an eighteenth century family portrait join them to have some fun. A newspaper, left behind by a patron, leans sideways against the base of a metal sculpture. Off to the side, a perplexed guard stares at the family portrait, which now has big gaps where the couple’s children no longer pose. With four more versions of postmodern scenes, the other groups continued using multiple voices and many different means. Do we stick to the facts when reporting what we read? Or do we create the lines that go in-between?

## Geneviève

As an artist working in the realm of literacy, I echo Peggy Albers, Teri Holbrook, and Jerome Harste (2010), who hope that readers will understand the arts “as significant practices in their own teaching and work with students” (p. 171). Through art, I take the many pieces of my past, the multiplicity of others, to position myself between each. Through a/r/tography, this is where I am forever moving. Indeed, in the words of Lisa La Jevic and Stephanie Springgay (2008), a/r/tography is a methodology “located in the

uncertain and often difficult spaces of the in-between” (p. 71). Through art, language, memory, and a (dis)placement of each, I think about Hélène Cixous (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997) who writes about “the passage from one to the other, de l’une à l’autre” (p. 10). As I move to and fro, each understanding, each experience, resonates with the spectral presences of the paths that I have traversed.



Geneviève Cloutier (2014). *The Shape Game*.  
Digital photograph.

### A Book. A River. A Room. Ghosts From Each.

A book understood by many:  
Looking across the water to the park  
To see movement, light, border crossings,  
An array of fragments, friends, images.

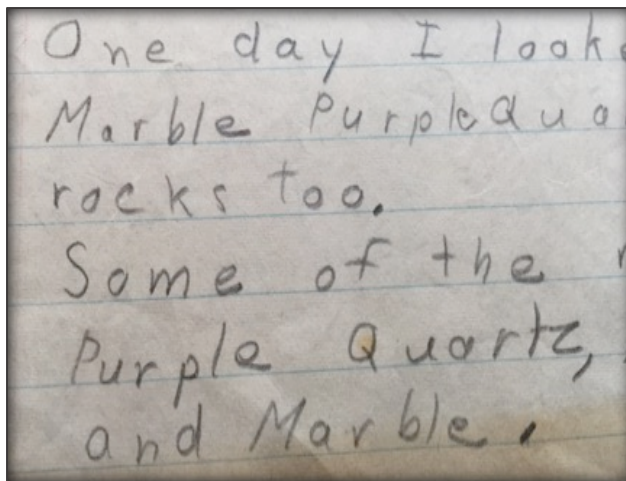
Teachers in nomadic spaces, singing  
And being sung to, stories that wail—  
The retelling, into a deep valley  
Of flora, fauna, animalia, and metropolis

Like a path that reaches into tomorrow and yesterday,  
Watered and thirsty on route:  
Reading as ritual, as thoughts drift by—  
The life that we all love, in some way.

Anthony Browne’s *The Shape Game*, another book in the pile, takes me back to the magic of the art gallery: looking back to one’s first encounter with pictures—moving a marker across the page to see what happens. The children will be encouraged to make pictures that are filled with light, sounds, stories, and textures. Indeed, the lived experiences that happen in a moment, trace back to the colours and shapes that emanate from mark-making, moving through, extending: traces and movements forward. In and out of images through time, I listen to the many voices in the classroom, I look at the many shapes. I ponder: in what ways can I stimulate teacher candidates to be aware of their own pasts in present time?

## Cynthia

At the beginning of *The Picture History of Astronomy*, Patrick Moore (1961) commented, "When we look out into space, we also look backward in time: we are seeing the Spiral not as it is now, but as it used to be" (p. 13). When our eyes are not enough, how do we see? According to Zheng-Hua Fang (2013/2014), trade books "take readers on vicarious journeys that sometimes cannot be readily provided in firsthand classroom exploration" (p. 274). Have you ever been on a rock hunt?



Cynthia Morawski (n.d.). *Rock Hunt*.  
From elementary school portfolio.

At the age of eight, I wanted to be a geologist. With a magnifying glass in one hand, and a field guide in the other, I would spend hours searching for that special specimen to add to my collection, stored in an empty Whitman's sampler box. Rather than buying a commercial rock set sold in the gift shop of a museum, I made my own. Quartz, mica, granite, slate, and more, carefully spaced, glued, and labeled to the bottom of a shallow maple candy box—an ideal container for my display. Of course, a rock hound needs a reference and my main one, *Rocks All Around Us* (White, 1959), captured my attention with its informative notes and detailed pictures. Even after I had poured through the book identifying new additions to my collection, I enjoyed just leafing through the pages, stopping at my favourites—garnet, amethyst, and pink quartz. Wanting to share my passion for rocks, I eventually packed up my collection and books and brought them to school to my fourth grade class. For a whole week, after they had finished their assignments, classmates would take turns looking through the magnifying glass at the different rocks and reading my books. Later that year I began to write a short adventure story about a geologist who must evade many dangers to find a precious rock.

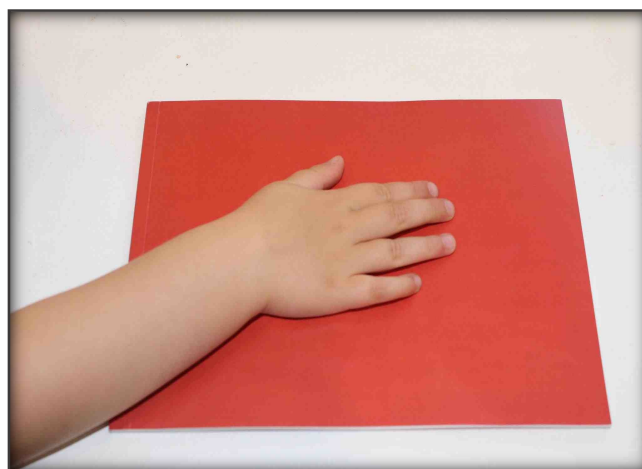
When I teach fiction in my English methods class, I always emphasize the important role that content area knowledge plays in the creation of a story. Whether using the qualities and current worth of a rock to establish the nexus of a story, or focusing on the harmful effects of food additives to advance a plot, knowledge of subject areas remains an integral ingredient in forming a cast of characters, selecting a setting, and identifying a theme. After being assigned the task of setting out the outline of a science fiction story, including incorporating a concept from a specific subject area, my students, in groups, share

their ideas. A trip to outer space to find a new planet to inhabit, the integration of robots into the human community, the implantation of a chip in every human to follow their every move. It is all of these and much more that become a compilation of story lines to showcase the potential of content literacy in the English classroom. Consider *Danny Dunn and the Homework Machine* (Williams & Abrashkin, 1958), especially the time Danny and his two friends, Irene and Joe, disobeyed Professor Bullfinch and used his computer, Miniac, to complete their homework. What knowledge of computers did the authors need to acquire before they could write their story? Did Anthony Browne make visits to a zoo and research the animals' lives there as part of the process of completing his picture book, *Zoo*? Or, what means did Paul Fleishman take to bring us the story entitled *Weslandia*, complete with the construction of a self-sufficient civilization in a suburban backyard? Let another book take you away...from a *Time of Wonder* by Robert McCloskey (1957):

It is time to reset the clock  
From the rise and fall of the tide,  
To the come and go of the school bus.  
Pack your bag and put in a few  
Treasures—some gull feathers  
A few shells, a book of pressed leaves,  
A piece of quartz that came from  
A crack in the old rock on the point. (p. 60)

## Geneviève

This arts-based living inquiry, between place, (dis)placement, and literacy, calls for the many images that linger in the mind, linger in thought with the memories that follow. Poetry, narrative, and images combine and merge into my practice. My artistic self is interwoven with my teaching self. Indeed, "through living inquiry, we begin to reawaken our excitement for, and our relationships with, our work" (Leggo, et al., 2011, p. 249). It is this artistic pedagogy that moves me. It is this creative process that draws me forth in my teaching life. Through artful métissage, these offerings present nuanced personal accounts of displacements of past time onto the present as imagination and memories carry us through.



Geneviève Cloutier (2013). *Red Book*. Digital photograph.



A landscape so large:  
Winding streets, hills, waterless, prickly.  
Colourful and sharp.  
Down the staircase—the grass  
we walk  
with old doors at street-level, earth ships that haunt  
And openings to secretive art galleries.

Then, cell-like,  
organic matter on armchairs  
hanging on the wall, onwards, inwards.  
Waves: a room waits  
with books rearranged  
to step on, up—in—dripping.  
Sounds ripple through:  
leaking onto, and from, outside.

### Postscript

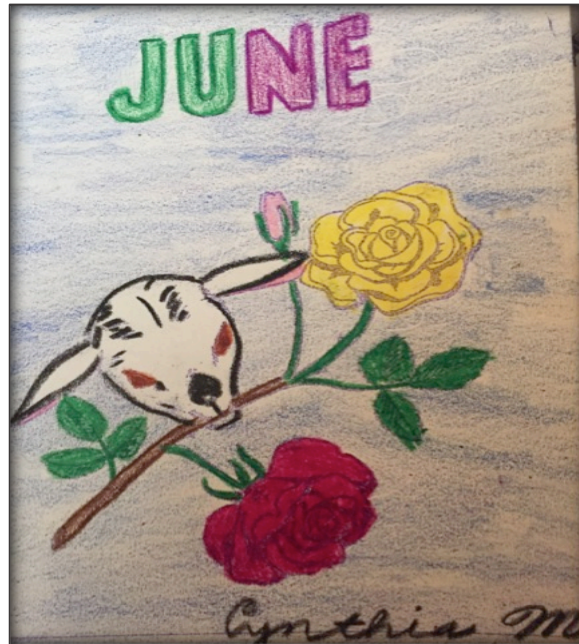
#### Cynthia

Near the west side by a school yard gate  
Ephemera emerge and begin to narrate,  
A hurricane after a mid morning rain  
The moving arms of a weather vane.

Dragonflies assembled along a wooden door  
The cool autumn air brings memories and more,  
Tracking the weather from an airport room  
Closing the door for the last time in June.

Clomp, clomp, clomp, up the back stairs  
Nancy Drew is always near,  
Snowflakes begin to cover the rink  
What else might appear after we blink?

A train schedule from a Monday morning  
The bus ticket for a Tuesday night,  
At each stop along the route of memory  
I recollect things used in my classroom life.



Cynthia Morawski (n.d.). *June Day*.  
From elementary school portfolio.

## Geneviève

Like Cynthia Chambers (1994), I feel like a “nomadic schizoid...a multiplicity of subjectivities that cannot be captured by any one single identity” (p. 25). As I think about my emerging teaching life, I am carried through a multiplicity of fragments in time. These pieces make my inner life sway as I welcome what is to come. Through my a/r/tographic practice I see how “everything is story—and story is rhizomatic collage...découpage...montage...bricolage...gouache” (Morawski & Palulis, 2009, p. 14). The lines of pages, paper, walls, the ground, marks, line on paths, an assemblage of time, dynamic (Grosz, 2001), contagious, and shared amongst the movement.

## Concluding Comments

Elliot Jacobs (2011) asserts that the stories that explore connections between place and personhood can be both powerful and inspiring in the creation of one’s own recurring narrative. As we moved from classroom to classroom, lesson to lesson, page to page, our relationship with the past materialized in our present:

The discovery of a weather balloon stirs an airship’s escape,  
A picture book moves students forward from texture to shape.  
A late afternoon skate under a wintry sky,  
Inspires the scene in a museum with guards passing by.  
A sculpture stretching outward surrounded by light,  
Reaches four spectral figures trudging through a spatial night.

Memories in near and distant places  
Stops made along the way  
Stations, books, and passing traces  
Some fade while others always stay.

Sometimes lingering around a corner,  
 Or just traveling through late at night,  
 Our selected places cannot help but affect,  
 The learning offered in our present classroom life.

In the back and forth of our dialogue,  
 Where our memories merge and then move apart,  
 We opened glimpses into recollected pasts,  
 For teaching the methods of language and art.

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