

# The Pull of Words

## Reliving a Poetry Symposium through Found Poetry

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### Article abstract

Poetic inquirers immerse themselves in the flow of life, listening for art in the ordinary world, offering a response through voice and written word. The biennial International Symposium on Poetic Inquiry, which draws poet-scholars from across disciplines and the world, showcases the artful use of poetry in research as a method of inquiry. In this article, the Fifth Symposium on Poetic Inquiry is relived by two attendees who interrogate found poems they each created from presentations and performances. The poems are brought together as a means of researching each author's respective approaches to creating found poetry. In this article, the authors converse about their methodological frameworks: phenomenology and metaphor/ narrative. Central to this dialogue is how the found poem is listened for, and how artful responses are made to the pull of words. The authors conclude by considering the ethics of rehousing others' words and the challenge this inquiry presents to our own private sense-making in academic conferences.

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## THE PULL OF WORDS: RELIVING A POETRY SYMPOSIUM THROUGH FOUND POETRY

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**Abstract:** Poetic inquirers immerse themselves in the flow of life, listening for art in the ordinary world, offering a response through voice and written word. The biennial International Symposium on Poetic Inquiry, which draws poet-scholars from across disciplines and the world, showcases the artful use of poetry in research as a method of inquiry. In this article, the Fifth Symposium on Poetic Inquiry is relived by two attendees who interrogate found poems they each created from presentations and performances.

The poems are brought together as a means of researching each author's respective approaches to creating found poetry. In this article, the authors converse about their methodological frameworks: phenomenology and metaphor/ narrative. Central to this dialogue is how the found poem is listened for, and how artful responses are made to the pull of words. The authors conclude by considering the ethics of rehousing others' words and the challenge this inquiry presents to our own private sense-making in academic conferences.

**Keywords:** poetic inquiry; found poetry; phenomenology; narrative; metaphor; conference

What is the pull of words

(like a siren call)

that cannot be denied?

(Leggo, 1995, p. 10)

We are both poetic inquirers who commit ourselves to developing the craft of poetry, seeking ways to inquire into the world poetically. In the words of Leggo (2008), “As a poet I grow more and more enamored with the echoes of wonder, mystery, and silence that I hear when I attend to the words and world all around me” (p. 168). In this article, “the world all around me” extends to an academic research conference, the Fifth International Symposium on Poetic Inquiry held in Vancouver, in 2015, where we each wrote found poetry from the presentations we heard. In this article, we interrogate those poems through a dialogue that focuses on our methodological choices and the ethical considerations of representation. Challenging an instrumental approach to academic conference attendance, we demonstrate that “the conference” can be a space for collaborative and creative sense-making, and critical inquiry.

### **People, Place, and Poetry**

Adrian Schoone is a senior lecturer in Education, based in Auckland, Aotearoa-New Zealand. Adrian’s arts-based research focuses on the lived experiences and pedagogies of educators working with disenfranchised youth. Adrian has authored two books demonstrating the use of poetic inquiry in research (Schoone, 2016, 2020). He regularly presents at the International Symposium on Poetic Inquiry. Sarah Penwarden comes to this project as a counsellor educator, therapist and poet also based in Auckland, Aotearoa-New Zealand. In her doctoral study, Sarah created found poems from the speech of bereaved people as a form of therapy (Penwarden, 2018). She also condensed participants’ recounted experiences of the poetry-therapy into poetry on the page as way of forming data. She finds herself listening for the poetic in speech in education, research, supervision, and therapy. Despite the authors living in the same city and country, it was not until they attended the 2013 poetic inquiry symposium in Montreal that they met and became aware of each other’s work.

The inaugural poetic inquiry symposium in 2007, hosted by Monica Prendergast and Carl Leggo, created a space for an emerging community of poet-scholars to position, define and refine the field through the “questions that continue to haunt and provoke,” such as, “What is poetic inquiry and what can it do in the research context?” and “How do disciplines of research and poetry intersect, connect, and inform one another?” (Sameshima et al., 2017, p. 17). The Fifth International Symposium on Poetic Inquiry, in Vancouver in October 2015, themed “enchantment of place,” was aptly held in the facilities at the botanical gardens at the University of British Columbia. We share Fidyk’s (2017) recollection of being present at the symposium:

Gathered to the lush verdant growth of the coastal rainforest of southwestern British Colombia; participant to performance in the germane underbelly of the deciduous hardwood forest; ...we fell into deep time, where a sense of separateness dissolved, at least fleetingly, amidst the soft rain. Set apart from urban pulse and campus buzz, the Garden offered a rare sojourn into slowness and pause, a tangible texture of the lure of poetry and poetic play. (p. 32)

The symposium within the garden provided a clearing for poetic dwelling. Presenters from all over the world cultivated a garden *within* by performing poetic inquiries that covered a range of research areas, including education, relationships, therapy, health, migrant experience, experience of place, environment and sustainability, culture, history and philosophy.

As authors attending the same poetic inquiry conference, we had the opportunity to immerse ourselves in poetry over the course of three days of presentations. We were able to listen and generate responses based on each other's approach to writing found poetry. The conference gifted us with the chance to see the conference refracted through another's ears and hands. During the conference, we separately took notes of presenters' talks, and decided afterwards to both write a found poem from the presenters' utterances as a poetic inquiry in how we each hear and what we attune ourselves to in creating poems.

A poet writing found poetry looks for beauty or wisdom in the ordinary world (Padgett, 1987), "rehousing" it in another form (Green & Ricketts, 2010, p. 113). In composing found poetry, one listens for evocative expressions, perhaps in words from newspapers, graffiti, emails, or even overheard snatches of conversation (Riccio & Siegel, 2009). The poet then rehous the expressions on the page, shaped into lines and stanzas, removed from one context and re-presented in another. Charles Reznikoff (1979), for example, found poems from court records, while British poet Andrew Motion composed poems from conversations with British soldiers (Motion, 2014). In found poetry, the ordinary world is revealed as artful.

At the conference, we both listened for evocative expressions that we later rehoused onto the page as distinct poems. This listening for poetry in speech involves taking up an intentional position with regard to the world. This listening for the poetic – listening to the world "as if at a performance or recital" (Speedy, 2015, p. 13) – can be an aspect of living life as an aesthetic project; the intentional living of "a beautiful life" (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984, p. 351). Our method of writing found poetry from speech in tandem with the other, allowed us to enter into a dialogue with each other on how we hear the poetic/aesthetic. Thus, "pulling the curtains back" on our private sense, gave

us an opportunity to relive the conference, interrogating how the presentations intersected with self.

In this article, we build upon earlier examples of poetic responses to conference presentations (Beymer, 2018; Prendergast, 2009). Beymer (2018) listened at the Sixth International Symposium on Poetic Inquiry and wrote a poem “composed of lines from each of the presentation abstracts, and infused with some of my own lines” (p. 274). Like Beymer, we sought to respond poetically by composing poetry from presenters’ words. We chose words heard in the moment, rather than gathered from the speakers’ abstracts. We also sought to draw a clear distinction between the words of others and our own words, by referencing each line of poetry to a conference speaker. In this sense, our work offers a focused consideration of how to enact a creative, ethical response in found poetry to another’s words.

We display our poems below and offer reflections on our own and each other’s work. In re-presenting the words from speakers at the conference, our approach is to acknowledge all the speakers whose words we have taken up. We discuss how Adrian’s poem reflects a felt-sense of being in the world (phenomenology) and Sarah’s poem reflects an overarching metaphor which ordered and made narrative meaning of the participants’ utterances. We thus interrogate what both kinds of poetic response offer as a way to catch and represent the richness of life through poetic inquiry and how this also raises questions regarding the ethics of re/presentation.

### Adrian’s Poem

#### I am... not yet

I am... not yet<sup>1</sup>

A dream living through intense images<sup>2</sup>

When I come home I am very quiet<sup>3</sup>

Apricots sit on my tongue<sup>4</sup>

*I want to be lost in the music or your (re)turning, your revealing<sup>5</sup>*

*Learning to be our musical selves<sup>6</sup>*

*Let your life lightly dance on the edge of time (Tagore)<sup>7</sup>*

*A hummingbird<sup>8</sup>*

My contingent life arises through slowness

Poetic time<sup>9</sup>

I wait for silences between notes<sup>10</sup>

A poetic journey through the stepping stones<sup>11</sup>

I heard the wind speak sonnets  
 I yearn for nothing between me and the sky<sup>12</sup>  
 just  
 words

## Adrian's Reflection on Method: Writing as Phenomenology

From a pragmatic perspective, this poem was crafted from notes I had taken while listening to various presenters at the symposium. At one level, you could say that these rough notes from each presentation were a type of provisional found poem created in the moment, an attempt to represent an aesthetic and affective perception through a selection of words and phrases that “called out to me.” From a phenomenological perspective, the calling out was a bringing into appearance, *poiesis* (Heidegger, 1977). Antin (cited in Rothenberg, 1977) defines *poiesis* as “those linguistic acts of invention & discovery through which the mind explores the transformational power of language & discovers & invents the world & itself” (back cover). Thus, *poiesis* acknowledges the generative impetus of language to create and re/create. In the next step, I worked my way through the notes I had taken from each presentation and highlighted words and phrases that called out to me from across each of the presentations. In essence, I was highlighting that which was calling out from within that which had called. At this point, *physis* was at play. *Physis* is the highest sense of *poiesis*, a “bursting open belonging to bringing-forth, e.g., the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 10). Thus, the found poem is a representation of what blossomed from the living branches at the symposium.

The found poem from the symposium was an artful way to record the felt-sense of sharing in the presenters' scholarship. It was not my intention to create a found poem about self. However, when I looked back at the poem, I was confronted with a mirror that reflected the scholarship of poets, but also a mirror I *saw through* to reveal my journey of becoming a poet-scholar. At the time, I was a fledgling arts-based education researcher, having just completed a PhD, and seeking to find my voice in the academy. The poem's autobiographical theme is revealed in those first words: “*I am... not yet.*” The PhD study had become a way to return to poetry. The poems I had written prior were mainly for personal meditation and enjoyment. However, reflecting Guiney Yallop's (Guiney Yallop et al., 2014) experience, “I had to reawaken the poet to become a researcher” (p. 3).

Those words, “...not yet” beckoned further exploration, where I was, “*Learning to be [my] musical [self].*” I was learning the craft of poetry and experimented with various forms that would work in a research context. The poem represented the solitary journey of rediscovering poetry and “*living through intense images,*” “groping for a way of

articulating something that is currently tantalizingly beyond our linguistic grasp” (Claxton, 2006, p. 352). Those were the apricots that sat upon my tongue. In signalling an alternative approach to the time-bound demands of higher education research, this poem was an invitation to consider “*poetic time*,” where “*I wait for silences*” to hear the poem’s call. Furthermore, the poem represented my desire to dwell more poetically (Heidegger, 1971). The symposium created a clearing space to abide in words, as “to live poetically is to live in language” (Leggo, 2005, p. 178). The poem is imbued with a longing to abandon myself to the calling of poetry in which, “*I yearn for nothing between me and the sky / just / words.*” Yet I recognised this was not a straightforward path, but one that unfolds as I gingerly navigate over the “*stepping-stones.*”

That the poem evoked ruminations of self was a revelation to me. The poem created the existential conditions in which I inadvertently searched for myself in strange, yet familiar voices. Yeats’s (1912/2012) introduction to Tagore’s *Gitanjali* is instructive here: “...and yet we are not moved because of its strangeness, but because we have met our own image... [hearing], perhaps for the first time in literature, our voice as in a dream” (p. vii). Therefore, the poem is a happening (Rosenblatt, 1980), an invitation to inquire about self – or an inadvertent disclosure.

## Sarah’s Response

I know myself across time; who I am emerges between me and others to create a (semi)coherent sense of identity. I am both fluid and contingent, shifting in identity subtly across contexts (Combs & Freedman, 2016), and continuing to grow; always unfinalized but yet becoming *someone* (Frank, 2005). Adrian’s poem reminds me of such identity journeys where I know and then not-know “*I am... not yet.*” My *contingent* sense of self *arises through slowness*. It arises through others, through whom I come to know my “*musical self*,” my lyrical self as a poet-researcher. In this poem, he becomes his “*musical self*,” perhaps a preferred sense of identity (White, 2007), through hearing others at the conference speak. As he takes up their words, they become “*stepping stones*” for his own journey of becoming as a poet-researcher.

Adrian’s poem reminds me of the phenomenological moment of being present; being drawn towards particular words, and then taking these up, using them again, to create something new. His poem reminds me of both lyric inquiry (Neilsen, 2008), and Wolff’s phenomenological surrender and catch (Prendergast, 2015; Wolff, 1972). Neilsen’s lyric inquiry involves a listening to one another, whereby one experiences “sensory immersion and resonance” from which writing is created (Neilsen, 2008, p. 96). At the conference, Adrian immersed himself in the contexts and knew a resonance between others’ expressions/experiences and his life. The writing that emerged was a catching of “phrases, lines, and verses” (Prendergast, 2015, p. 1). The product which



emerged might be something that “cannot be anticipated, ... [a] new being-in-the-world” (Wolff, 1972, p. 454).

The new being is a new coat; a new garment woven from the patches of others' works. Adrian's taking up of others' utterances and making a new poem reminds me of a cento. Cento are poems where various sources are knitted together to create a “literary patchwork” (Harmon & Holman, 1996, p. 92). The recombining of patches together can create a new garment, as the utterances blend or jar with each other. For example, Simone Muench's (2014) “Wolf centos” stitch together fragments from 187 different authors to create a number of centos. Texts are reconfigured into new products, new garments. The meanings have changed. Words are imbued again with meaning. This creative generativity is the role of the poet as maker and re-maker.

## Sarah's Poem

### The Call

It was so unexpected  
 The poetry came uninvited for us<sup>13</sup>  
 You cannot hear a poem coming<sup>14</sup>  
 It didn't begin as a work of poetic inquiry –  
 it *became* a work of poetic inquiry as I sat under a tree<sup>15</sup>  
 Eventually I turned to my own poetry<sup>16</sup>  
 I didn't expect to do this work –  
 I didn't expect it to take this direction<sup>17</sup>  
 This time I had to trust my own words<sup>18</sup>  
 To practice the calls of life itself<sup>19</sup>  
 Because I heard in your voice a song<sup>20</sup>  
 And I started to *feel* the poetry<sup>21</sup>  
 For me it's being in research that has wings<sup>22</sup>  
 I read my poems; then no-one cared about the research<sup>23</sup>  
 Acknowledging that Maria, like a poem  
 is full of mystery and wonder<sup>24</sup>  
 Poetry has time for me and I have time for her<sup>25</sup>  
 Tripping over the transcendent in every morning stroll<sup>26</sup>  
 The poetic calls; I'm pulled deeper out to sea.

## Sarah's Reflection on Method: Writing as Narrative/Metaphor

Found poetry is an art form that calls attention to the aesthetic in the everyday. Here, poetry might be found in overheard snatches of conversation represented on the page in the "cage of form" (MacLeish, 1961, p. 44). This kind of writing requires one to "stay alert to those exceptional uses of language or sharply presented, telegraphic stories that create a poetic effect or an emotional response as strong as that made by a poem (Padgett, 1987, p. 82). In found poetry, the finder takes up and re-uses the words with an authorial intent, through which meaning endures and also changes.

In my clinical and academic work, I have written found poetry from people's speech in various contexts – therapy, supervision, education, and research, and given their words back as poems (Penwarden, 2009, 2018). The practice of writing and returning words-as-poems to the speaker was enacted with transformative intent in all these contexts. This writing practice involves first taking verbatim notes of people's speaking as they talk, and then later, forming the words into a poem: jagged lines, a title. It is my arrangement of their words, usually in chronological order of speaking, which is then offered back (Behan, 2003; Speedy, 2005).

At the symposium, over three days, I took notes of presentations. Afterwards, reading through the notes, I heard poetry itself spoken of as unexpected, uninvited, unforeseen. This theme resonated with my own life. I then pulled out from my notes the presenters' phrases which echoed this theme, corralling them into lines on the page. This is an approach like Glesne's (1997) who found a poem from her participant Dona Juana's speaking. Glesne's own rule was that she could "pull Dona Juana's phrases from anywhere in the transcript and juxtapose them; and I had to keep enough of her words together to re-present her speaking rhythm, her way of saying things" (p. 205). In her pulling threads and weaving them into a new text, Glesne searched for "the essences conveyed, the hues, the textures" (p. 206). She generated themes, then "coded and sorted the text by those themes" (p. 205). My writing of the poem was a form of reducing to essences what I had heard across three days. This poetic condensing involved reducing words "while illuminating the wholeness and interconnections of thoughts" (Glesne, 1997, p. 206). In this way I was taking up the words and making a greater story of small lines.

"The Call" ordered the diffuse, multiple speakings into a new woven form. The poem moves across the page like waves. Researchers are pulled, as by the tide, towards poetry – they feel it, it calls them. They hear songs, feel words. "The Call" is a chorus telling overlapping stories: of being drawn by poetry, responding to the "calls of life itself" (Shidmehr, 2015). In "The Call" people speak of their own journey with the poetic, sharing only snatches of more detailed journeys with poetry in research. This "cluster" poem shows different speakers' utterances gathered under one theme (Butler-

Kisber, 2005) – a “prism-like rendition of the subtle variations of a phenomenon” (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 95). In this chorus, there are individual voices, speaking diverse relationships with the poetic: being surprised by it, hearing it, welcoming it, making time for it, and practicing it.

When the presenters spoke about the encounter with poetry itself, my life resonated, “lighting up in response” (White, 2011, p. 194). For many years, poetry was for me a separate stream which did not connect with other areas of my life. At times in my clinical practice, I had felt the desire to write found poems from clients’ or supervisees’ speaking. It was as if I had been driving along a straight road and then felt pulled suddenly sideways – to stop and really listen, to capture and record. This was an invitation to flow in a “stream of consciousness’ or language of inner life” (White, 2011, p. 123). It was writing a poem inspired by one client’s story (Penwarden, 2009) that led me towards my doctoral topic of deliberately braiding together poetry, therapy and research (Penwarden, 2018). The narrative of “The Call” follows something of my own path with poetry: it appeared unexpectedly, I was surprised by it, I could feel the poetry, and began to practice it more intentionally, as described by Glesne:

Although I did not plan to experiment with poetic transcription when I interviewed Dona Juana, upon receiving the transcripts, I could not ignore the opportunity. I was so immersed in poetry at the time, that the poetic impulse took over. (1997, p. 205)

If one responds to the “poetic impulse” in research, what direction is one pulled in, towards what destination and to what effect? For one group of poetic researchers at the conference, the pull of the poetic was also a pull towards acknowledging the human person of the research participant. Poetry led in this direction: “Acknowledging that Maria, like a poem / is full of mystery and wonder” (Cox et al., 2015).

In the excerpt above, a participant *is* a poem; breathing on the page with line endings, containing mystery, inciting wonder. The poetic and human being are intertwined. I suggest that poetry and poetic inquiry can carry something of the mystery of a human being, which writing research in prose cannot. Through poetic research, I might “enter lived experiences with a creative openness to people and their stories” (Walmsley, et al., 2015, p. 18), choosing to re-present a person speaking, in “all their ambivalence and unfinalizability” (Frank, 2005, p. 972). Catching someone in the act of being: flickering into life across the page.

## Adrian’s Response

Sarah’s poem highlights the surprise of poetry. Akin to an uninvited guest “*you cannot hear coming,*” their unexpected presence in your life eventually changes the way

you see the world. I am reminded of Isak Dinesen's character Babette from her novella *Babette's Feast* (Dinesen, 1958) a Parisian chef who turned up at the doorstep of two Norwegian Puritan spinster sisters to become their house maid. The story centres on Babette's enchanting presence in the sisters' lives: "Her quiet countenance and her steady, deep glance had magnetic qualities; under her eyes things moved, noiselessly, into their proper places" (p. 15). The novella is "*full of mystery and wonder*" that sees the sisters "*tripping over the transcendent ...*" With the bemused sisters looking on, Babette prepared an extravagant feast for the sisters and their friends: "*I didn't expect it to take this direction.*" The sisters "*started to feel the poetry,*" and were ultimately bewitched by Babette's culinary artistry.

Babette (Dinesen, 1958) implored, "I told you I am a great artist. A great artist, Mesdames, is never poor. We have something, Mesdames, of which other people know nothing" (p. 52). Sarah's poem evokes a richness of words. Dinesen's story closes, revealing how one of the sisters was profoundly impacted, "*because [she] heard in your voice a song*": "Ah how you will enchant the angels!" (p. 54). Sarah's poem reflects the response to the poem's unexpected call in research, and the result of being "*... pulled deeper out to sea,*" by letting go of preconceived ideas of what research looks like and tuning into the sound of the waves.

The form of Sarah's poem likened to waves of words, perform an ebb and flow of the sea, mentioned in the poem's final line. Perhaps the waves represent being pulled in and pushed out from the shores of methodological certainty; perhaps the form represents the fluidity of process; perhaps the waves connect us with wisdom from phenomena found in the natural world; or perhaps the waves call us to listen attentively to the deeper rhythms of the logos. Perhaps the form represents all of these possibilities, and more, or none at all. Sarah's concrete poem, nonetheless, is an invitation to play: "The poet's job is not to master or control language (and force it into linear progression), but to participate in this performance where spatial configurations are born" (Bollobás, 1986, p. 285).

## Discussion: On Listening and the Ethics of Representation

Writing found poetry requires an attuned listening, because, "poetry is a heartfelt as much as mindful way of knowing. It requires exquisite attention to detail and a very delicate ear" (Walmsley et al., 2015, p. 17). We were both present to the flow of life at the poetic inquiry symposium, though we both heard the world and represented it differently in found poetry. In inquiring about both our approaches, we focus here on Sarah's listening and writing by using a unifying metaphor and Adrian's phenomenological listening – a listening for a felt sense. We then consider the ethics of rendering in new forms, the words and phrases of others.

## Listening for a Unifying Thread

In my poem, I (Sarah) listened and heard a thread that pulled the conference together. This was the image of being called by poetry (the unexpected). Metaphors are often single images that organize the chaos of life into an overarching picture (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphors transfer meaning from one place to another, redescribing reality (Hanne, 1999). The metaphor in this case was of poetry calling and inviting the researcher to move with it into unexpected places. What metaphor, or a narrative (an extension of a metaphor into a plot over time) offers is the arranging and ordering of events into meaning. Listening for a unifying thread can arrange the flow of speaking into one stream. This condensing can make the meaning more coherent.

Metaphors may emerge as the result of resonance. I heard a participant speak about the call of poetry (“I didn’t expect to do this work – I didn’t expect it to take this direction”). This sense of being called into poetry resonated for me with my own journey of feeling drawn/called by poetry when I was young, and responding by attempting to write poetry as an adult. The poem, “The Call,” reflects the stitching together of this particular thread as it appeared in others’ talk. Yet, one limitation of a metaphor or unifying thread is that although it condenses, it also reduces. Things are lost, left out. While metaphors illuminate, they can also conceal (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). By linking the conference presenters’ words together in one thread, other threads were hidden. The danger is that a unifying metaphor might promote a single story (Adichie, 2009). Alternatives to a single story might be an acceptance of fragmentation – to hold the diversity and complexity of mixed metaphors, for example, rather than seeking homogeneity (Cohen et al., 2017). Such holding of complexity can allow for messiness or excess.

## Listening as a Felt Sense

From our reflections on each other’s poems and methods, it is obvious that listening for found poetry is more than highlighting a series of words and phrases on the page in the hope that lyrical magic will occur. Listening for found poetry is listening with our whole body and attending to the deep resonances we feel to and from our bones. In listening to our body, we step away, once again, from Cartesian duality. It is noticing how the images evoked from certain words and phrases, move us. The images impress on us, in felt ways. From the symposium, I (Adrian) noticed my sighs, my laughter, how I held my breath, how my body stirred on the chair, the closing of eyes and leaning into the warmth of words. Some presentations were more explicit in implicating our bodies, such needing us to walk in the woods nearby to find the presenters performing poetry among the trees. In all these instances, we were engrossed in the aesthetic transaction, “a reciprocal, mutually defining relationship in which the element or parts are aspects or phases of a total situation or event” (Rosenblatt 1986, pp. 122–123). Finding poetry is

giving voice to the “qualitative impact [of the] ... lived through evocation” (Rosenblatt, 1986, p. 127).

When we coalesce with words, something new comes into the world. Merleau-Ponty (1973) has observed, “When I speak or understand, I experience that presence of others in myself – to the extent that ... I no longer know who is speaking and who is listening” (p. xxxiv). Perhaps the measure of our listening can be determined by how much we give ourselves over to the voices of others, only to find that we do not know whose words are whose. Therefore, found poetry complicates the author’s voice, and ushers in a new voice that is not wholly the presenter’s nor the found poet’s. Reading back upon my (Adrian) found poem from the symposium, I heard that new voice.

## **The Ethics of Re-presenting Another’s Spoken Words as Poetry**

As poetic inquirers, we must reflect on the authorship of our texts (Richardson, 1990), paying “a vigilant and ethical attention to power and appropriation” (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 21). Writing found poetry from another’s overheard talk to re-house it in an article raises questions of appropriation and accuracy of re-presentation. Appropriation is the acquiring of an object, taking it as one’s own. In the rehousing of one person’s speaking into another form, attention needs to be paid to the initial moment of speaking, to honour the speaker. As authors, we have done this through referencing the authors we heard speak. With regard to accuracy of re-presentation, one additional step would have been to check with conference participants that we had accurately re-presented their words in the way they intended. This is a step we would consider in future found poetry projects and would offer to other poetic inquirers interested in re-presenting presenters’ words.

While we sought to respect the initial speaker’s words and to do so through clearly referencing them, we also maintain that as authors we can play with these words in forming a new text. While to some extent, meaning does inhere to language across contexts, language is also indeterminate, being “persistently slippery, unstable, and ambiguous from person to person, from situation to situation, from time to time” (Scheurich, 1995, p. 240). In the move across contexts from speaking to writing, words are already in play (Penwarden, 2018). As authors we played *again* with the words in our new presentation, our “recombining of patches together [to] create a new garment” (Harmon & Holman, 1996, p. 92).

In the very action of language itself, as words are passed down through history from mouth to mouth, we “populate” utterances with our own intentions, “appropriating” a word and “adapting it” whereby the utterance becomes “one’s own” (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 293-294). In this sense, as authors, we filled some of the presenters’ utterances with our intentions, shaping them to fit our poems, our creative visions. The result is that

presenters' utterances lost some of the initial meaning and *gained* other meaning through their being taken up into our patchwork. For example, in Adrian's poem, he selected three lines and juxtaposed them, creating a series of images which resonate for him beyond the initial meaning of each speaker: "*A dream living through intense images / When I came home I am very quiet / Apricots sit on my tongue.*"

While the redeployment of utterances for other purposes is an aesthetic action, in the play of language, we also acknowledge the ethical aspects of this endeavour, and seek to avoid the "exploitation or 'colonisation' of the [person's] story by the researcher" in our usage of another's utterances through referencing the speaker (Smythe & Murray, 2000, p. 325).

## Conclusions

In our writing of found poems, we both valued playful creativity, and the representation of others' meanings, yet we enacted this differently. Sarah's work, informed by counselling and the ethics of accurate re-presentation of the other, sought to carry forward the intent of the symposium speakers. Adrian's work, influenced by poesis and the generative power of words, took up speakers' words and re-fashioned a new garment with them; populating the speakers' words with his own intent. Other poetic inquirers may wrestle in similar spaces of ethics and aesthetics, to consider how they handle and tell the experiences of others, and how/when/where to bring forward the self.

Finally, we consider how this poetic inquiry provided us with an opportunity to re-imagine our participation at the symposium. Beyond the question time following the presentations and informal conversations held during the symposium, this inquiry enabled us to dwell in the symposium over an extended period. The inquiry challenged our private sense-making. In many instances, the global academy operates through a neoliberal economy that encourages competition and private ambition (Olssen & Peters, 2005). In bringing our own private journal notes into the light and sharing with each other how we made sense of conference provocations and knowledge, we participated in a deeper discourse enlivened by a generous sharing. Such was the spirit of the poetic inquiry symposium itself. To reach this threshold, we experienced degrees of vulnerability from being scrutinized, both in terms of what we heard as the essences of the presentations from the symposium, and in terms of our artful crafting of poems.

Poetry calls, uninvited; response is risky. A poet is one who feels the pull towards the creative and follows it – to go where the surprises are, being prepared for the unexpected and following it. It requires an openness to the poetic calls of life. Conferences are spaces that teem with words – narratives of self, of others, of the

conference as a whole, to which one can listen differently. Conferences can create a clearing for poetic dwelling.

slowness, silence, stepping stones

Poetry has time for me  
and  
I have time for her<sup>27</sup>



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## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> White, 2015
- <sup>2</sup> Shidmehr, 2015
- <sup>3</sup> Meyer, 2015
- <sup>4</sup> McLeod & Ruebsaat, 2015
- <sup>5</sup> Rajabali, 2015
- <sup>6</sup> Ryu, 2015
- <sup>7</sup> Martínez, 2015
- <sup>8</sup> James, 2015
- <sup>9</sup> Richardson, 2015
- <sup>10</sup> Ramsay, 2015
- <sup>11</sup> McKeon, 2015
- <sup>12</sup> Hegland, 2015
- <sup>13</sup> Saunders & Redman-Maclaren, 2015
- <sup>14</sup> Kay, 2011
- <sup>15</sup> see Endnote 13
- <sup>16</sup> Apol, 2015
- <sup>17</sup> see Endnote 16
- <sup>18</sup> Amy-Penner, 2015
- <sup>19</sup> see Endnote 2
- <sup>20</sup> Cox et al., 2015
- <sup>21</sup> see Endnote 5
- <sup>22</sup> see Endnote 5
- <sup>23</sup> see Endnote 7
- <sup>24</sup> see Endnote 20
- <sup>25</sup> see Endnote 9
- <sup>26</sup> see Endnote 12
- <sup>27</sup> see Endnote 9