

## Editorial

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## EDITORIAL

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**Darlene St. Georges** is an artist, poet, and creation-centred scholar. She is Assistant Professor of art education at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. Her research recognizes the creative, spiritual, and performative ways of knowing in the world. The emergent and relational visual elements that unfold in her work act as metaphors of intrinsic knowledge, perception, insight, intuition, and imagination. The intensity of colour represents the dynamic and powerful interplay that occurs between us and the natural world – we are of the world. Darlene’s creation-centred research embraces an unfolding metamorphosis of scholarship in provocative, creative, and intellectual ways. Darlene is co-editor of *Artizein: Arts and Teaching Journal*. See: [www.darlenestgeorges.com](http://www.darlenestgeorges.com)

## Poetic Inquiry for Synchrony & Love: A New Order of Gravity

Faced with the challenge of publishing poetic, artistic, storying research in discipline-based journals—educational research, curriculum studies, and arts education, for example—we have met the rub of ontological difference. That is, when writing with intuition, imagination, and feeling, and when working from the imaginal, ancestral, and relational field, we often encounter misunderstandings. These include a range of misses from publishers and editors not knowing where to position our work within a particular context; how we position ourselves as scholars; in what ways our research meets standard expectations or not; and, how to understand what research is and how it can be demonstrated. In addition, the imposition of scholarly structures and standards that reflect dominant standpoints, such as reviewer templates with one-size-fits-all assessment criteria, create additional obstacles. These templates continue to reflect, in general, values inherent to modernist paradigms—reflecting a knower and not-knower antagonism—and seek to steer research into the very binaries and criteria that some scholars/poets/artists have or are striving to abandon.

This growing and unresolved dilemma across the last two decades (at least) is becoming increasingly untenable and even non-negotiable for authors living in more animate worldviews, understood here as an evolving continuum of paradigms. Such non-negotiation is bidirectional where authors, whose research pushes traditional (modernist and post-modernist) boundaries, who cannot for their own integrity and for that of their work *distort* their research to *fit* into predetermined and opposing ontologies. On the other hand, for editors, submissions that challenge their currency (funding, reputation, analytics), or move too far from their established disciplinary bases, or exist within paradigms that they do not value, are dismissed or rejected. In response to these challenges, our love of poetics and Poetic Inquiry (PI), as well as our reverence for animated ethno-onto-epistemologies, we gift our growing international PI community a place wherein a new centre has emerged. This centre has ‘A New Order of Gravity.’

To honour this centre as animate (peripheral to dominant paradigms) and with the expansive and inclusive dimensions of poetics and poetry, we called for Poetic Inquiry research that aligns with the spirit of creative impulse—a generative force. That is, research that honours a world pulsating in-to and out-of existence; ancestors, reciprocity, unconscious, and imaginal realms; embodied, somatic, and intuitive ways of knowing; and sees all elements as alive and inspirited. We called for poetic words, poetic images, poetics forms, and poetic arrangements that honour the dynamic interdirectionality of the full-breath-of-life: birth, death, rebirth—of poplar, sky, grief, wind, and bone. We called for poetics that explore what is precious, bejeweled; what is refracted, light; what is of or for humility, savouring, and the sacred—with the intention to offer a curative for catastrophic times. We called for ‘Synchrony and Love.’

While Poetic Inquiry has historically been positioned under the umbrella of Arts-Based Research (ABR) and Arts-Based Educational Research (ABER), we *reposition* Poetic Inquiry in its emergent past as a way of knowing-being-becoming-valuing that arises from “poetic consciousness” (Fidyk, 2006, p. iii). In this way, we posit Poetic Inquiry as predating arts-based, even qualitative, forms of research. Such reconstitution through remembrance reflects human consciousness co-arising with the natural world, where it (for many human collectives) slowly transitioned away from a sense of oneness. A oneness that can be re-experienced through the poetic. Poetic consciousness, a “relational consciousness” (p. iii), enfolds myth, symbol, oratory, allegory, story, metaphor, prophecy, analogy, metonym, theatre, music, and ritual while it unfolds in a particular place-time-body. In the earliest notes of human languages, poetics was expressed through oratorical traditions: song, chant, prayer, creation story, myth—and myriad forms of visual and then written expression: cuneiform script on wet clay using reed markings, then papyrus, and oracle bone. Within this “animate paradigm” (Fidyk 2006, 2013, 2017), we *retrieve* the ancient practice of leading forth from poetic consciousness and poetics—that is, being-and-becoming through song, image, and metaphor in *relation* to one’s immediacy. These forms of human *be-ing*, creativity manifesting, bring spirit-and-all-relations in through body-and-place to consciousness. From this taproot, Poetic Inquiry reveals itself as an enlivened-and-enlivening approach to coming to know (i.e., research) wherein it remains true unto itself. Poetic inquiring as such cannot be severed from its kin and ground; Poetic inquiring keeps poet, place, phenomenon, and the knowing field that holds them interdependent. Poetic inquiring extends from the arrival of a question or through the midst of a problem into wondering, noticing, imaging, and breaks forth in one or more intentional and/or spontaneous forms of expression. To inquire is ontological. To poeticize is ontological. Neither can be severed from ways-of-knowing-and-valuing (Fidyk, 2017). In this way, Poetic Inquiry cannot be a methodology, or the formalized and standardized use of methods to systematically address and investigate pre-defined issues or problems. “Methodology works through decontextualization where methods separate or distance subject and object, the researcher and the researched” (Usher, 1996, p. 40). While Poetic Inquiry enacts rigor, it does not seek to eliminate reflexivity. Poetic Inquiry calls forth the embodied and embedded of the personal and what is beyond it (yet connected) in the social, cultural, political, ethical, and ecological. As an organic, iterative, gestalt, Poetic Inquiry, then, cannot be compartmentalized as method—a means to analyze data or represent data. Thus, Poetic Inquiry cannot be (used as) a tool to play with data. When it is attempted, Poetic Inquiry collapses—away from its relations and into a dualistic paradigm (most often qualitative and humanistic). This usage works to maintain the assumption of an independently existing yet independently knowable reality. When methods claim and tell, perhaps through poetic words and forms, but as a data chapter or section within a methodology, they lead to generalizations and conclusions that aim to sever the particularities of studies. Poetic Inquiry as animate does not claim to know what to do in the tangle of an issue, but it does trust that something will happen and the next movement will unfold. Poetic Inquiry as animate asks us to attend, to tarry, to linger. Poetic Inquiry as animate asks poets, artists, researchers, and scholars to consider: On what ground do I/we

and this research stand? From what ground-place have I/we and this research emerged? From this emergence, what shape can poetic inquiring take? And, to whom or what does it serve?

Poetic Inquiry scholars who have been researching from within animate paradigms have found few receptive publishing places that respect this position. Additionally, the challenges faced during the global COVID-19 pandemic pointed to a need to gather as caring communities. Inspired, we created a space held by collective rhythms and an ethic of care to serve as a communal curative. Understanding that the world as we knew it had been destabilized anew, individually, familiarly, and organizationally, demanded that we attune to fresh patterns arising. These factors, the ones we can name in this moment, birthed the image for this *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal* special issue, “Poetic Inquiry for Synchrony and Love: A New Order of Gravity.” We express our gratitude to Dr. Ardra Cole, Editor-in-Chief, and Christina Flemming, Managing Editor, for their support of our unique call. As well, we thank the Associate Editors, reviewers, and authors who submitted, making this special issue possible.

This special issue opens with a photo-digital collage artwork called “Unfettered Being” created by Darlene St. Georges. In its essence, this art piece is a visual-poetic-story inspired with creative pulse to honour the dynamic dimensions of the full-breath-of-life. The central image is a collection of summer paintings called “Splash” that intends to activate the imagination with its full spectrum of colour, movement, and form. This image is juxtaposed with a print called “Deer Celestial Body” that centralizes a newborn summer Fawn who, filled with wonderment, rests for a while on green grasses. The Monarch butterfly, having travelled across lands and through time, has entered the scene as a messenger of new life and to remind us of how integral our creative manifestations are in connecting us on deeper levels of understanding with each other, with all living beings, and the multiverse.

I believe I belong to you  
 like hues of light and fragile moments  
 sharing the limits of one another in birch forests  
 [unfettered beings]  
 we are related

entwined  
 interwoven

[in motion] sensations

a kaleidoscope of bone songs  
shifting realities with unlimited sky

(St. Georges, 2020, p. 252)

The **Theoretical Musings** section contributes to both deepening and expanding our understanding of Poetic Inquiry in academic and community settings. Opening this section, **Lauren Michelle Levesque** thoughtfully explores ways in which listening to and caring for “Small Sounds in Familiar Places” can act as a generative theoretical space to reconsider the meaning of love and its implications for academic work. She offers us several questions that beg our attention, specifically: “How can immersing oneself in this time provide insight into perhaps worn-out conceptualizations of what is considered precious?” (p. 327). **Megan Davis** craftfully analyzes the writings of Louise Glück and Mahmoud Darwish to advance the place and potential of a transnational, Edenic imagination as a hybrid site of belonging. Edenic imagination embraces a consciousness that holds holy memory and a longing for transcendence, while giving language and location sacred inhabitation. With heart-memory, **Pralini Naidoo**, writes of and from her South African ancestry, inspired by the way subjugated beings—weed and servant—together retain a wild place that resists domestication. Using found poems created from conversations, journals, dreams, and her father’s memoirs, she ponders the aliveness and wildness of the entanglement of Indian Indenture and colonialism. **Ruth Vinz**, through (re)memberings and (in)habitations, meaningfully challenges the binary of presence and absence. She composes poetic performative text, with photographs, objects, letters, embodied affect, and place-textures to reorient time, space, and proximities in relation to love and longing. Her poignant offering leaves us to consider lyrical and pedagogical purposes. This international group of poet-scholars pushes the boundaries of the relationship among poetics, photography, and slowed time; poetics, Edenic imagination and exile; poetics, subjugation, and the joy in dirt; and, poetics of longing.

The **Arts/Research In Action** section showcases the practice of six authors who bring poetic art and research processes together in an animate world. **Sarah MacKenzie-Dawson** opens the section with her tender regard for the relationships that reflect the complex dynamic that exists as we navigate between the living layers of nature, desire, loss, connection and disconnection, certainty, and uncertainty. “Without Words: Breathing Within the Echoes of Circular (Un)Certainty” explores breath, through poetry, prose, and image, as a way to find rhythm and connect to land and spirit. By necessity, every relationship includes grief. **Jodi Latremouille** in the arduous task of grief-writing, embodies the love central to relational pedagogy. Suffering-through is no easy task. Her heartfelt poetic stories of small town sufferings in “Grief-Writing: Navigating Ecological Suffering Through a Relational

Pedagogy,” show us how, through dialogues with heart-memories, loved ones and scholarly ancestors offer restorative hopefulness and pedagogical possibilities for healing. Extending this challenge, **Kate McCabe** in “Gasp. Struggle. Let go.” further personalizes suffering as she learns through cancer the necessary steps to unforget and to embrace Earth’s inescapable ecological interdependence. She wisely reminds us of the importance of listening and learning with the world and other-than-human kinships. Shifting the ground from personal to existential suffering, **Addyson Frattura’s** “Where Does it Hurt? A Poetic Holding of Existential Hurt,” analyzes three literary texts: to heal, to teach, to show. She offers a timely consideration of the ways PI illuminates deep hurt and asks us to bear witness. **Maya Borhani’s** mythopoetic weaving artfully honours the sacred through her attendance to love. Love of children and friends, love of the natural world, and love for inspiring teachers reminds us of the profound importance of relationships. **Lee Beavington’s** lyrical writing offers us a valuable rudder to navigate loss and grief in the Anthropocene. Leaning into the legacy of Carl Leggo, Beavington poses four critical questions, which he addresses through provocative poetic images and intimate life writing and stories. This collection of author-poets frames Poetic Inquiry to redress not only research practice but also, more importantly, ethical quandaries.

In **Art/Research Reviews**, we are excited to spotlight four notable creative works that extend and complement the dimensions of Poetic Inquiry. We are grateful to the poetic-reviewers: **Sarah MacKenzie-Dawson, Kedrick James, Kathy Mantas, and Anne McCrary Sullivan**, who showcase recently published books in this interdisciplinary field. These are poetic research: *Doing Poetic Inquiry* by Helen Owton; an exchange of verse dialogue: *The Spaces in Between: A Poetic Duo-ethnographical Exploration* by Kimberley Holmes and Carl Leggo; poetry with visual poetics: *The Marrow of Longing* by Celeste Nazeli Snowber; and a collection of place-centred poetry and poetic inquiring: *Poetry, Poetic Inquiry and Rwanda* by Laura Apol. These author-poets, among others, challenge taken-for-granted understandings about Poetic Inquiry and press us to continue to imagine the field anew. Poetic Inquiry, a fluxing, enfolding, generative way to research continues to cross ontological, epistemological, ethical, geographical, cultural, and axiological boundaries, while weaving fecund configurations. Poetic Inquiry is timely, revolutionary research.

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