

Coda: Community Writing and Creative Work

A Word from Coda's Editors

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Just as musical codas persist beyond the end of musical work, Coda—a new section of the *Community Literacy Journal* devoted to creative writing—offers space for the representation of the lingering effects of community engagement, public engagement, and activism. Beginning with this, our inaugural effort, Coda will publish creative writing in a range of genres and voices in a move to expand conversations about writing studies, to document and preserve the work of community writing, and to encourage more creative writing. We invite readers and writers who are eager to create knowledge in new ways to join us in enacting writing as a form of communion.

We develop this section as a collective of editors with interests and experience in transnational literacy, peace building, creative writing with children and youth, collaborative exhibitions, poetry and archives, harm reduction, community building, arts administration, archiving and archives as spaces of community literacy, writing groups as forms of community building, language justice, garden-based writing, environmental writing, and anti-racism. We hope that our commitment to the foundational work of process building is reflected in a creative section that is inclusive, challenging, and nourishing. We believe that scholarly and creative work in writing studies should be in conversation, and that such conversations deepen our understanding of, appreciation of, and use of writing to meet the pressing social and moral issues of our time.

Following the tradition of rigorous generosity enacted by Veronica House and Paul Feigenbaum, the Coda Editorial Collective aims to ensure that the writers with whom we work are heard. We commit to community listening by striving to apprehend various, divergent aesthetics and ways of knowing. We recognize our responsibility toward authors, readers of Coda, and the larger community writing project. As a collective, we are engaged in evolving discussions about mission, vision, and of course submissions, and we invite you to join these discussions.

We welcome submissions of poetry, creative nonfiction, short stories, and multigenre work on any topics that have ensued from community writing projects. This may be work about community writing projects, and this may be expressed in ways we have yet to imagine. We ask authors to include a personal reflection about the submission itself—information about your community writing group (if you belong to one); your personal journey as a writer; what inspired you to write your piece; and anything else you'd care to share about your life—as an invitation for the author and Coda's readers to consider writing and activism as intertwined.

In our inaugural issue, we are honored to present four pieces: a short collaboratively-authored anthology from a university-based community partnership; a series of poems from a collective peace project in Columbia; a solo-authored narrative; and a solo-authored poem. We are grateful to the writers who have trusted us with their work, work that illustrates the possibilities Coda holds and that illustrates the power of the word. In the poems published through the Colombian EncantaPalabras collective, the youth voices present a clear call for justice, peace, and integration with the earth. That these poems are also being used as testimonios in Colombia's Commission for Truth, as part of the peace process, speaks to the power of expressive writing for social change. Mary Kovaleski Byrnes's and Livia Meneghin's piece, which introduces an anthology of poems and nonfiction by students in Boston's EmersonWRITES program, pairs reflection on program vision, methodology, and growth with the centering and celebration of students' formal and linguistic innovation, as well as students' contributions to topics ranging from the poetry of Kendrick Lamar to the ways racial injustice forces Black teenagers out of childhood. In "Moments," Jessica Pisano shares her experiences teaching writing to people who are incarcerated as part of her university's prison education program. Pisano's narrative brings readers into the ongoing tensions that occur when writers and instructors are located in multiple systems (in this case, prison systems and academia), and when systems set limitations to the relationships that writing can make possible. Eli Goldblatt's poem, "Side Streets," conjures the loneliness of the pandemic and evokes the hope of community in a changed world.

Coda will be published each spring. We encourage readers to look for future calls for submissions and share them widely with writers you know. In the meantime, happy reading.