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Creative Responses Explore Concept of Home and Issues of Loss

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The Canadian Creative Arts in Health Training and Education Journal (CCAhte), established in March, 2006, is an international and interdisciplinary peer reviewed open access journal. Our mission is to publish, disseminate and make accessible worldwide, quality information, research and knowledge about the creative arts in health and interdisciplinary practice.

In this issue we present new inquiries and *creative responses* from researchers, artists and educators who share with our readers innovative arts informed approaches applied in staff training and nursing home care and articles exploring themes around death, and loss. These provocative articles ask important questions and open the way for dialogue and discussion.

What makes a place a home? What role might reader's theatre play in research, staff training and in practice?

Dr. Maura McIntyre, Centre for Arts Informed Research, Department of Adult Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, explains how she has used Reader's Theatre (part of the growing genre of performance ethnography) to present a dramatic rendering of research results. Maura discusses how the approach can be helpful in raising awareness about staff working in nursing homes, and what staff can teach us about the place and people of nursing homes. She writes, "As audience members speak the words as staff they experience the narrative and the complexities of nursing home life. By joining in and celebrating the work of caregiving and honouring the capacity to care, we broaden and extend the community supporting people living lives with dementia. The process of deconstructing practices of homemaking through alternative forms allows my work to inform and educate diverse audiences, including the general public, family caregivers and academics alike, about the people who work in nursing homes and the complexity of making home in the institution."

How can art physically communicate death related themes within the public sphere?

Dance and Movement Psychotherapist, Dr. Eila Goldhahn (Dartington College of Arts, University of Plymouth, Devon) a visual artist and lecturer in the UK and in Germany, has led a number of publicly funded arts and research projects and has collaborated across disciplines with

architects, artists, biologists and dancers. In her research paper “Sculptural Installations on the Theme of Obliteration: A Response to Themes Embodied in the MoverWitness Exchange”, she explains how she embodies, through sculptural art, new ways for individuals and groups to experience and communicate death related themes within safe and ritualistically constructed public spaces.

In her writings she reflects on her process. “The installation process required considerable strength and skill of my moving body. I physically moved and laboured whilst setting out and installing these works. The actions of carrying the empty crates on my back, of stemming my own weight against the weight of the wood, of straightening and balancing them, of hammering long iron rods into the earth in order to ground and anchor them, all this left memories and imprints within my own body....The image of doorways became a metaphor for the questions that I posed with my work. ... in moving and witnessing I experienced questions, intuitions, and clear knowledge in vivid images and these always occurred in relationship to the rhythms of my dancing and witnessing body.”

How do we deal with the loss of a parent? How might writing autoethnographical stories help offer a place for self expression and healing?

Dr. John J. Guiney Yallop is a parent, a partner, and a poet and an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at Acadia University. His research includes poetic inquiry, narrative inquiry, autoethnography, and performative social science. He uses these arts informed methodologies to explore identities, communities, and emotional landscapes.

In his profound, poetic and deeply moving account, "My Mother's Body: A Story of Grieving, Remembering and Touch" John J. Guiney Yallop courageously shares his writings and the emotions he and his family experienced around the loss of his mother. In the following account he articulates his healing connections to the landscape and his beloved Atlantic Ocean;

"My writing led me to understanding, to acceptance, and to healing. In writing about my mother I would compare her body to the landscape that had surrounded me in my childhood, the landscape of the island of my birth, the island that held me like my mother held me, the island whose shores were entered, formed and transformed by the Atlantic Ocean, an ocean that moves in me, that forms and transforms me every time I write."

Each contribution, each story, offers within it a message of transformation and hope for understanding and change. I invite you to read these articles and to share the work with colleagues and friends. It has been an honour and a privilege to meet and work with our writers on this special issue. I wish to thank our contributors and the many reviewers who worked with us on the CCAHTE Editorial Committee as well as our CCAHTE Advisory Board. I am indebted to you all for your expert advice and ongoing support. The journey continues.

