

CHAPTER 4

REMAKING SELF-IN-WORLD

Education, learning and change entail opening new doors, but they also mean leaving behind naïve notions, challenging misconceptions, confronting injustices and re-shaping one's own identity. The chapter is informed by developmental theorists such as Perry (1968), Sharon Daloz Parks (2000) and Marcia Baxter Magolda (1992, 2001). Through higher education, students come to view knowledge differently, accept uncertainties and, ultimately, become equipped to make their own decisions in the face of complexity. This developmental journey can be emotional for students, accompanied at first by feelings of pain or loss, confusion or excitement and, perhaps, resolving themselves in triumph and pride.

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CHAPTER 4

PAULETTE MAE

the whole fruit

is truth
firm...

or can it be
 soft, peach-like
 spread with downy fur, altered
once bitten, tasted,
 stewed into something
 else... if truth
 is forever changing
 am I too, its softness, burst

from the pit
of what I think
I am...

JENNIFER L. FREED

Philosophy 183a: Existence
in memory of Professor Maurice Natanson

We climbed up the narrow stairs
to the shaded room with the ancient
desks, and tried to follow
as you paced and spoke, and paced and paused, and
slashed emphatic lines across the board.

You wore a long white beard, like a Chassid, or
a wizard. You urged us
toward uncertainty. You asked, ‘What does it *mean*
to be busy, or bored? What does it mean to *be*
at all?’
You asked, ‘If I am walking, is there an *I*, or is there only
consciousness of walking? And if
only consciousness, then what
shall we say of the absent
minded?’

We pushed through Heidegger and Sartre. We read
in darkness. We furrowed our brows, and still
crawled on, alert to any sign of light. You lead us
toward an open sky, then left us
at the threshold.
You said, ‘Some things you have to do
yourself.
Others can point to the clearing
where the path begins, but they cannot walk
for you.’

Previously published in *Boston Literary Magazine*

Commentary. This poem, with its hints of Plato’s cave, speaks to the themes of questioning the taken-for-granted, of learning that sometimes education begins with un-learning, that doubt brings openness to deeper knowledge. It also speaks to the experience of college students, some for the first time away from their parents’ home and their familiar neighborhood, having to give up unquestioned reliance on family and community attitudes – of having, that is, to think through old and new ideas for themselves.

First Writing Workshop
For Rose

A rose by any other name,
you uncurl poems toward the light,
but when sheers snip a twig—it stings!

Green stems bend back.
You want to shoot
thorns into the gardener's palm.

Instead, like rain, you drop and hide
dismayed sap bleeds,
as if you are the only one.

Rose, by many other names,
I've watched you burst
to spread your petals red and wide.

Like mauve, pink, white, already flared,
you want to share
the garden's tint and scent,

match daisies' ease, sophisticated iris,
the subtle violets whose practised growing
turns shadows into light.

'What is a metaphor?'
Where rain grows sun,
and past and future root within one moment.

Rose, keep reaching higher.
What briar beauty
awaits your breaking through.

I know. We all dig the same
who garden our passions,
among weeds, in words.

Previously published in *Tower*

Commentary. When I led poetry workshops for the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies, Rose was a student new to poetry who had difficulty hearing constructive criticism by the more advanced writing students in the group. Like many starting out, she had yet to develop the ability to view her creations at arm's length, as separate from herself, and not feel that comments intended to help improve her work were a personal attack. The poem uses her name as the basis for an extended metaphor about literary artistry.

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SHINELLE L. ESPAILLAT

Comp and Circumstance

how to rescue one wallowing in homophonic abyss?
how to smuggle Saussure into rap analysis?
how to reach the one who quietly outed himself
while discussing Wilde and quietly cried
when the honorably discharged hero took two steps back?

how to read, one more time,
every paper Silent Girl submitted,

knowing it is time to pick up a pen
and press its point through the thin skin
of dreams this girl barely dares to hold,
that the subsequent hiss and sigh
will blow into your own lungs and expand
until the dark hour
when, children tucked,
you sit before a fresh stack of clean white work,
and the girl's impending sorrow slides down your face
ruining good pinot noir.

Commentary: This poem grew out of my experiences teaching college writing at various four-year universities and community colleges in the US. As an advocate of student-empowered learning, I find that the need to evolve and adapt pedagogical strategies can conflict with agendas held by administration, parents – with whom I am always surprised to interact – and often the students themselves. I constantly learn to re-balance the real needs within the classroom and within the administrative system, in addition to my own needs as an educator and a person.

DEBORAH COX

Lecture 2: Self

It's when a word clogs up a thought
or checks a feeling tide
that I most long for times before
my senses died and all
my neural nodes fell into lingual codes;
just one more minute
of such life would leave it rich
to die; fulfilled by silence,
an opal eye lapping up the colours
of the seams in the wood dye, I...

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KARL ELDER

Standing in the Way of Wind

I remember Lucien mentioning
(like he assumed I already knew)
there is no music as great as wind, how
when sensing it
his hand is cutting the volume,
how with even Wagner or Beethoven
it is no contest.

Here in Kansas
I yearn for that certainty
and sing, hum – yes – even whistle
while winter branches silhouetted outside
jerk antenna-like.

What is this stuff
that it conjures the intricacy of an insect?
What am I becoming
that it no longer goes without saying
wind is the void's own voice,
that earth and water
granted the grace
something men call God gave wind,
the body might sing forever.

Previously published in *Translation Review*

Commentary: A tribute to my mentor, Lucien Stryk.

MONICA PRENDERGAST

something broken (a pantoum)

there is something broken in me
i never go down to the sea
to the rocks and the driftwood asscatter
'gainst the curve of a mountain-backed bay

i never go down to the sea
too busy too busy too busy you see
the curve of a mountain-backed bay
lost to the hum drum thrum of humanity

too busy too busy too busy to be
with the silence, the seagulls, the sky
far from the hum drum thrum of humanity
there is something broken in me

the silence, the seagulls, the sky
i never go down to see
there is something broken in me
this lunacy: work making free

Matryoshka

At the end of their first college term my students are in mourning for themselves. One says it hurts to know she'll never be that girl again. Another says it scares her to know the girl she thought she left behind came with her, dragging the whole city of Saginaw behind her. What's worse, I wonder, loss or repetition, that everything changes or that nothing does?

I tell them, for what it's worth, that I think of us as matryoshka dolls: our old selves nest inside us, older selves inside them, an almost limitless regression. Some days I can barely feel them in this fully tenured menopausal body; some days they're live and crowded as puppies, needy and ridiculous as ever. And if life twisted me apart at the middle, there they'd be: thirty-eight, limber, striding up to forty, thinking maybe there's room yet for a kid, wondering if she will always be alone; inside her, twenty-eight, wild with sudden possibilities, doing her bad Italian lover in her office between classes; inside her, eighteen – eighteen, like them – desperate to know everything, to be known in every possible way and thought good; inside her, eight, a little sister, a girl with a father who helps her onto a new blue 36-inch bike. And inside her – a darkness, a space, a silence. Screw them all back together, rejoin those heads and hips. Tuck them all away inside each other, keep them safe.

I don't tell my students all this. At eighteen you think the core of you is diamond-hard and clear, obscured only by what you don't yet know. Watching them sometimes, I seem to see us all in retrospect, a future memory, dim and shredded. I wonder what we will remember of each other. Some of them, one or two, if they recall me at all, might remember the matryoshkas.

Previously published in *Passages North: the literary journal of Northern Michigan University*

Commentary. When you teach first-year college students regularly, you become very familiar with the issues of identity – of change and loss – that define their encounter with higher education. I have always been fascinated by matryoshka dolls, and at the time I wrote this, I was exploring notions of the female, if not the feminine, in education and pedagogy. I remember telling this particular first-year seminar about my theory of cumulative identity, and I remember that they listened and watched me very intently, as if it made sense to them and might even be reassuring. I hope so.

CATH DRAKE

It Didn't Happen Until University

I said I'd done everything else: just not that.
My room-mate, Sylvia, was astonished.
She lit a candle and said: *tonight it'll burn down.*

I could already smell his musty wood polish skin,
hear his late night arguments on existentialism,
his heavy feet shuffle while I'd try to sleep.

I turned up late and unannounced. He smiled
like he knew everything. I never said I wanted love,
just to know what the thing was, to be one of those

who could be fresh picked. He stroked the curve
of my lace vest, saying: very nice, very nice.
He said he was falling in love with me, but I knew

he fell in love often. I was in love with longing
and thought only of flesh, leaving the rest behind.
It was a strange thing to be doing with two bodies,

especially in the awkward moments, the urgency
paused, legs stuck together, everything exposed,
the birthmark on my thigh lit red. Wrapped in a sheet,

hair dishevelled, I was surprised when I saw
my dewy face in the still white of the sink.
That was the best part: I remembered I was blessed

with the enamel skin of Gods, perfect brown limbs.
Afterwards, we sat back to back as if we'd not yet
learnt to speak face to face. Sex is sex, he said,

as though I had simply joined the human race.
We argued. The tea was tepid. When I got home
Sylvia said: *I told you, I told you*, while I cried.

Previously published in *Sleeping with Rivers* (Seren Books, 2014)

Mary Alice

Thinking all week about justice, I was ambushed by this pure sadness, simple loneliness. I was driving from a long day off into the first spring evening that promised summer, letting my mind go violet and soft, and there you were, Mary Alice, striding along toward nothing in particular, tall and rawboned, plain brown hair pulled back in a rubber band, jaw like an axeblade, eyes knit up with pain. Someone doesn't love you back, or in the same way, or something. You don't want to tell me more, and why should you, why should I need more, who doesn't know this story? And as we sit in silence, white blossoms raining down on the car, I realize there's absolutely nothing to be said to you. Yes. Sometimes we are not loved back. It's the primal injustice. To love unloved is violation, outrage. Our hearts deserve their desire. And yet there is no fighting it, no noble resistance, no Take Back the Heart march. I can give you nothing but space in my passenger seat, a hand on your shoulder, some breathing room in the last moments of a day. You don't want your teacher's esteem tonight, you want the love you were born for. I would give you justice if I could, Mary Alice: I would give you one who hears you, as I do in class, and thinks, *My God, what a beautiful, swift mind!* I would give you one who watches you run across the campus, long and immaculately steady, and thinks, *She runs like a deer; what a heart!* One who glances into your angular, naked face and says, *Those eyes! She is incapable of lying!* I would give you a world where women like you stand under trees on evenings in late May, white blossoms snowing down, knowing it's all for them.

Previously published in *Passages North: the literary journal of Northern Michigan University*

Commentary: Mary Alice (not her real name) was a remarkable student of mine, my dream student for the four years I knew her and had the privilege to teach her. I wrote this almost immediately after the events it describes: I saw her on campus, looking miserable on one beautiful spring evening, and sat with her in my car for a while. I was fairly sure her unloving beloved was another woman, and fairly sure which one.

BAO HUYNH

Wings

I came here
a fledgling,
blind and helpless.

On these heights
I met an eagle
whose keen eyes saw in me
something I couldn't see,
who spread wide wings
and took me up.

As my eyes
opened,
I watched
his majestic flight.
And he watched
my first wing-beats,
there to catch me
when I fell.

And I felt
those gentle talons
pushing me from the nest
towards the precipice
to fly again
and fall again
until the wind
would lift me up.

Commentary: This is written for one of the most important people in my life, academically and otherwise. He was the first person I met upon coming to university, he watched over me throughout my student years, and he supervised me through my Honours year (in Australia). Meeting him was worth more, meant more, than the last fourteen years of formal education combined. I think that meeting people like this in and of itself makes going to university a worthwhile enterprise. I would not be who I am, had I not met this colossus.

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JEFF GUESS

Class Photo
undergraduate tutorial group PCC1-22315

See how the spaces between the pixels
now begin to widen
while the room loses focus
and the faces fall apart

dissolving into the busy
push and shove of the corridor
and the scattered campus
of grades and coffee

holding you for a season
neither as a lover, parent nor friend
in a tight embrace of words
but only on the tips of my fingers

with the lightest of touch
the careful balance
of how long to hold on
and the moment to let go

of you
and this now empty room
and all our Tuesdays
poems and that long Indian summer.

Previously published in *The Mozzie*

LINDA GOODMAN ROBINER

Words

I sit in Dr. Barrows' tatty, book-lined office.
He's wearing one of his shaggy sweaters,
frayed at the left wrist and elbow.
I study his penciled notes
on my composition, which I've typed carefully
on Corrasable Bond paper.
I watch him adjust his eyeglasses,
glance timidly at me before he clarifies
his comments with a slight lisp.
Making our way through the thick green
Quarto of English Literature in class,
he has unlocked the magic of language,
sent me fishing for metaphors, tasting them.

In Ann Arbor three decades later,
I slip a letter under his door.
In four years, you were my favorite.
Your love of prose and poetry changed my life.
I imagine Professor Barrows turning
the key in his door at Haven Hall, stooping
to pick up the scrap of paper on the floor.
He helps his glasses back
onto the bridge of his nose, clears his throat.
Then, rummaging around his desk for a book,
he blinks several times before he rereads
Rilke's 'Sonnets to Orpheus':
Want the change. Be inspired by the flame
where everything shines as it disappears.

Commentary. I began my four year college stint in 1954, at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. This was a time in the United States when women studied education, 'to have something to fall back on,' because we were expected to marry and drop out of the working world. Professor Barrows' influence in the advanced English class in which I was placed my freshman year has pervaded my life. I consider him a mentor, a guiding light. I'm convinced I care about language and became a serious reader, an author, a writing teacher, and an editor, because of Dr. Barrows.

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PHILOMENE KOCHER

Thinking Woman

*now what I ask myself
is a woman to do?*

a woman can have
opinions of her own
passionate as lava
lukewarm as dish-water

however, are they opinions
if they're not expressed out loud
if they don't erupt
but instead are pondered
along with the grocery list
as a woman stands at the sink
washing dishes
washing dishes
washing dishes

PHILOMENE KOCHER

Listening

where did it go?
my voice
during those undergrad years

was it lost in the library?
hidden behind the references
needed to prop up my argument

or lost in the lab?
trying and trying
to get out the door
(or the window)
away from the experiments
and their exact calibrations
their predicted reactions
their expected results

where has it wandered?
this past quarter century

I sit with my ear tuned
for its phone call
its footstep
its whisper

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GWENDA ATKINSON

(Excerpts from) between the semesters: (and before my 40th birthday)

one by one I do
all those things I put off
while studying and working at the same
time (online. asynchronous. edge.)
today, the dentist;
last night,
the closet (winter's here);
before, those photos from Muido holiday weekend and
later, from the parties (book launch; B.'s),
(night of the day I submitted the final project) (of that term) –
also, I did the cleaning.
finally.

then – spring semester: tripping over all what I set aside:
analysis in the. piles. of the undone.

Onward, Spring – produce. produce. produce.
projects. papers.
citations.
all – words.
my revolution.

Commentary: This excerpt is from a poem that was inspired by the experience of being an online graduate student while working full time as a university TESOL teacher in Seoul, Korea (where I taught for nine years). I wrote the poem in the period of relief that always hit after all grading and final projects were finished and submitted.

KATY EWING

Philosophia

In childhood your name suggested age,
 superiority, beards, robes, wrinkles.
 Ancient Greeks nodding sagely,
 combat with words.

By secondary school, thinking was joy,
 recognition of truth like finding ripe wild fruit
 in unexpected places.
 When another girl in 'O' grade R.E.
 was rewarded for an insight with a sincere
 'You could be a philosopher',
 I panged as if a future had closed off for me;
 as if that meant I couldn't.

When finally I met you as an adult
 it was like a blind date with an infamous stranger.
 You were so well known, so unknown.
 You were all the things I'd ever thought about and more,
 concepts so familiar I'd never formulated them.
 Names of men through time
 whose ideas as I glimpsed them made so much sense,
 how could they be so difficult?
 Why did you seem too big for my mind?

To build structure into my wild ideas
 is like trying to dam the Amazon
 one brick at a time.
 But you don't give up, keep sneaking in
 and laying down another teasing possibility.

Sometimes I think I know you, get you, you get me,
 a spark ignites...
 but when I try to say the words, explain myself,
 you're gone, or changed – just not the same,
 and I'm left wondering what happened.
 The more we share, the less I want to stop.

Commentary. This poem was inspired by the almost paradoxical love/hate relationship I found myself in when I was finally able to fulfil an early ambition and study philosophy – which didn't happen until I was 35 years old.

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VIVIENNE BLAKE

Transformation

From reluctant schoolgirl
to graduate
a leap of nearly sixty years.
From study addict
to published poet
a tiny step.
Thank you, Open University.

Commentary. During four creative writing courses I morphed from would-be novelist to passionate poet, writing in English and French. Poor health and limited mobility are no impediment. I even wrote poetry in the recovery room of the operating theatre where they'd just given me a pacemaker.

MARCIA B. BAXTER MAGOLDA

Expert Commentary

Reading these poems brought to mind William G. Perry's (1978) essay 'Sharing in the Cost of Growth,' originally delivered at a 1976 conference on students' personality development. His point was to emphasize the loss that accompanies developmental growth, a dynamic he felt had been insufficiently addressed at the conference. Despite his powerful essay, the role of pain and loss – the realm of emotion – is often overshadowed by the cognitive realm that dominates academic theorizing. This volume in general and these poems in particular foreground the emotional dimensions of the developmental journey.

The Cost of Growth

A rich theoretical literature describes the holistic development of self, voice and mind during adulthood (e.g., Braxton, 2009; Hoare, 2006; Smith & DeFrates-Densch, 2009). Kegan (1982, 1994) integrated theoretical strands to emphasize the intersection of cognition and emotion in the core activity of meaning making. Longitudinal studies of college and young adult development (Baxter Magolda, 2009; Baxter Magolda & King, 2012; Torres & Hernandez, 2007) confirm the intersections of cognitive, intrapersonal (identity) and interpersonal (relationships) dimensions in the developmental journey. Perry's speech at the 1976 conference distilled the major milestones of this journey; his synopsis is still relevant to contemporary theorizing. Perry noted that early in life we discover authorities, who we trust know what they are doing. Our second discovery is that authorities, in fact, do not know the truth, leaving us free to think as we please. Our third discovery is that not all opinions are equally valid, which requires us to think through multiple perspectives. Our fourth discovery is that we must choose what to believe within this complexity and live with the consequences. This is, in a nutshell, the story of continually discovering the limits of a way of constructing the world with which one has become comfortable, and needing to reconstruct a new way of viewing the world that accounts for these limits.

Perry's key point, however, was the importance of the fear and loss associated with giving up old ways of knowing the world, one's self, and one's relationships. Perry asked:

When we leave the way we saw the world, in which everything was just so and just as we thought, and we see it all differently, we move into a world where all of what was solid and known is crumbling. And the new is untried. ... What do we do about the old simple world? (1978, p. 270)

Here Perry is describing the terror and angst of uncertainty in the space between deconstructing the old and constructing the new. Despite historical and contemporary

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theorists' recognition of this loss, in practice it is often overlooked in the zeal to promote the complex meaning making so necessary to navigate the complexities of adult life.

The poems in this chapter capture the fear and terror of encountering the limits of one's ways of seeing the world – of making meaning – and the angst and sometimes terror that accompanies the reconstruction of a new way of making meaning. Freed's description of the 'threshold,' or Huynh's more dangerous 'precipice,' conveys teetering at the edge of one's world. Students 'mourning for their lost selves' (Griffin) or in pain over lost innocence (Drake) or relationships (Griffin) reveals the angst of letting go of the old with nothing new yet to replace it. Yearning for the new – hearing one's voice and having others hear it (Kocher) – but not yet seeing how this might materialize reflects another form of angst. Participants in my longitudinal study of young adult development experienced these same emotions. They reported three experiences that helped them re-make themselves in the world: pain, perspective, and partners (Baxter Magolda, 2009). Having made Perry's second and third discoveries during college or in their twenties, they struggled in their thirties (and some into their forties) to work out the fourth – listening hard to hear their own voices. The latter required learning to internally define their beliefs, identities and relationships, or to self-author their lives (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994). Mark, a study participant, explained:

You learn it from just being at a point of great pain and trying to solve the pain. I think that is where most people learn their greatest lessons – through some kind of pain. The lesson is made much more real and brought home, and it's one you don't forget. I think you can learn through quieter pain, and that would be an example of attaining a goal you thought would be an end-all and be-all. And then when you get there, it doesn't bring you the kind of satisfaction you thought it would. Or the satisfaction it does bring you is ultimately pretty empty. (Baxter Magolda, 2009, p. 216)

Regardless of the source of the pain, participants found that its resolution required letting go of how they had constructed the world and themselves in it to reconstruct it in a new way. As many of the poems illustrate (e.g., Mae, Freed, Elder, Huynh), this often meant reconstructing one's view of truth, self, and place in the world. And although student development theorists describe development as cumulative in a way that resonates with Griffin's 'matryoshka dolls,' they suggest that one never views the earlier self in quite the same way, necessitating some grieving of its loss.

Good Company and Its Emotional Toll

The poems collected here extend beyond painful emotions to those of the joy of reconstruction and appreciation for those who lit the way. They reveal how learners gain perspective on their pain and how crucial good company, or learning partners, are in that process. Educators remembered decades later as a 'guiding light' whose

influence ‘pervaded one’s life’ (Robiner), or a ‘colossus’ (Huynh) surely were those who not only led learners to the threshold but stayed with them to catch them if they fell (Huynh) trying to reach a new ledge. These partners sensed ‘how long to hold on/and the moment to let go’ (Guess), the intricate balance among Kegan’s (1982) notions of confirmation, contradiction, and continuity. Extending Kegan’s notions through my longitudinal participants’ experiences, I described learning partnerships that promote self-authorship as a combination of support that affirmed learners’ voices, feelings, and experiences and challenge that invited learners’ personal authority into interdependent relationships (Baxter Magolda, 2009). I read Robiner’s poem that conveyed how learners cherished educators’ constructive criticism as depicting these kinds of partnerships. Perry noted the importance of educators legitimizing the pain and acknowledging the loss in learning. Perhaps educators who were able to articulate that to their students eased the pain sufficiently to enable learners to stand outside of the criticism.

Educators, whether faculty or student affairs professionals, receive minimal guidance or support for attending to the emotional dynamics of learning. I wondered as I read Freed’s poem about the learner feeling alone at the threshold whether the educator in question was sensitive to the challenge s/he had offered (or whether the feeling of being alone was so overwhelming that available support went unnoticed). Yet many of the poems – Iannou, Espailat, Griffin’s *Matryoshka* and Mary Alice – make clear that educators feel the emotions deeply. Educators felt the pain of learners’ fragility as thinkers, their struggles with identity, the heartache of relationships, and shed tears, felt helpless to assist, or tried to offer support by sharing their own stories. The poems not only highlight educators’ empathy with learners’ pain, but the emotional cost of the limits of what they can offer to ease the pain. The tension between offering the criticism and knowing it will sting as it pierces the ‘thin skin’ (Espailat) reflects the constant balancing of confirmation and contradiction. Growth necessitates contradiction, yet causing too much pain stifles growth. The last few poems (Kocher, Atkinson, Ewing, Blake) convey that the journey extends well into adult life as the struggle to hear one’s voice, find and enact one’s passion continues. Thus educators are still developing too, working out Perry’s fourth discovery.

New Partnerships

In addition to revealing the felt experience of higher education, these poems collectively reveal how treacherous the developmental journey can be. They reveal how fragile young adults are in the early portions of this journey as well as how difficult it is for educators to balance challenge and support at just the right times to avoid pushing learners (and themselves) over the precipice. The poems further reveal the energy required to continually remake oneself in the world.

Considering the felt experience of higher education and the developmental journey that gives rise to these emotions suggests that teaching and learning extend beyond informational learning, or acquiring new knowledge and skills, to transformative

learning. Mezirow (2000) describes transformative learning as ‘how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others’ (p. 8). Thus transformative learning requires letting go of ways of viewing the world that no longer work and reconstructing more complex ways of viewing the world that are ‘more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action’ (Mezirow, pp. 7–8). This is the kind of learning reflected in the poems that begets the challenges of teaching reflected in the poems.

Transformative learning requires reconceptualising teaching and learning as a mutual relationship among educators and learners. As Wildman (2007) recounts, the learning literature details the shift from learning as cognition to learning as social participation. Similarly, the teaching literature conveys a shift from teacher-centered to learning-centered pedagogy. Yet these shifts are sometimes viewed as new techniques (e.g., collaborative learning, flipped classrooms) rather than fundamental changes in teaching and learning. We have not paid sufficient attention to what Wildman calls the ‘learning problem’ for educators – reconstructing frames of reference about teaching and learning to embrace the holistic developmental journey of both learners and educators that underlies learning and teaching as social participation. The Learning Partnerships Model (Baxter Magolda, 2009) reconstructs the nature of the teaching/learning relationship in ways that invite learners to grow toward self-authorship. Use of this model in practice (see Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Taylor, Haynes, & Baxter Magolda, 2010 for detailed examples) reveals the kind of transformation educators must undergo to be good learning partners to support learners’ developmental journeys.

As was the case when Perry reminded his conference colleagues about the cost of growth, my reminding readers about transformational teaching and learning does not offer new information. It simply reminds us that, like the felt experience of higher education, we continue to pay insufficient attention to the complexity of teaching and learning. Paying more attention would require focusing research on how learner development undergirds informational and transformational learning; policy that supports evaluating teaching through learner development rather than satisfaction; and time, space and support for teaching as a relational practice. As Wildman (2007) noted:

Unless we envision more effective change processes for faculty and administrators – that is, support their own learning and development – the best prediction we can make about students becoming cognitively more mature and secure in their identities and relationships is that they will have to continue working it out largely on their own. (p. 16)

Collectively the poems illustrate the distinction between those who experienced good company to deal with the costs of growth and those who are still working it out largely on their own.

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Marcia B. Baxter Magolda
Miami University