

Chapter 4. Collaborative Poetry: Rewriting Research Relationships

The Stories

I didn't say the stories made it this way,
I'm saying that they teach us something

– Julie¹⁸

Collaborative poetry is a playful, relational approach to poetic inquiry. Perhaps more than any other approach, it has thrown into relief my role, the role of the researcher as composer, as well as the force of my own lived experience and emotional connection with participants in forming research relationships, interpretations, and poetic representations of the stories they share. Collaborative poetry can take many forms. For example, social work scholar Stanley L. Witkin (2007) describes “relational poetry” as a process informed by social constructionism in which a poet responds to a freestanding poem with a poem of their own and then weaves together lines from each poem to create an entirely new piece. Relational poetry is dialogic, illustrating how “new realities are created in interaction” (Witkin, 2007, p. 478). Like interlocutors deep in conversation, each individual poem is preserved even as they intermingle “constitut[ing] a new context for each other, changing what they ‘are’” (Witkin, 2007, p. 479). As with the symmetry drawings of Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher, Witkin (2007) explains, each read of a relational poem renders visible different components, invoking an “endlessness” (p. 478), as meanings extend infinitely, images and insights morphing and manifesting through time.

Faulkner (2020) describes another form of poetic collaboration, exquisite corpse, wherein researchers seek to “upturn our usual habits of thought” by “us[ing] images and words collectively but hid[ing] half of the writing they do until the end to see what can occur” (p. 176). The playful process can “help uncover group angst and reveal collective unconsciousness” (Faulkner, 2020, p. 176) by conjuring what poet Denise Duhamel calls a “third voice” or “poetic hybrid” (Duhamel, 2006, as cited in Faulkner, 2020, p. 176). Exquisite corpse, Faulkner (2020) suggests, can be good for “re-story[ing] a research project,” for safely engaging sensitive research topics such as stigmatized identities or lived experience of violence, and for having just plain fun (p. 177).

No matter the form it takes, collaborative poetry is a promising practice for academic researchers and study participants interested in coming “back to the

18. Julie, a participant in my study who chose not to use a pseudonym, wrote this found poem based on her 2018 interview transcript.

body” in ways that make “the academy less frigid and hierarchal” (Faulkner, 2020, p. 90). In fact, collaborators have found poetic inquiry ideal for exploring and critiquing academic structures and relationships. To illustrate, Faulkner (2020) describes how Esther Fitzpatrick and Mohamed Alansari (2018) embraced collaborative poetic inquiry as “an embodied methodology of reflection” (Faulkner, 2020, p. 90) in order to interrogate their experience completing doctoral work. Faulkner also mentions Esther Fitzpatrick and Katie Fitzpatrick’s (2015) use of collaborative poetry to examine and reflexively deepen relationships among research supervisors and students. As these examples suggest, collaborative poetry among academics can be a means of recovery and restoration in the face of dehumanizing academic systems and structures. Driving home the value of playfulness in the process, Faulkner (2020) describes the work of Pamela P. Richardson and Susan Walsh (2018), wherein the collaborators combined *renga*, a Japanese poetic form, with *Miksang*, a form of contemplative photography, “to co-create a space of healing from their academic lives” (Faulkner, 2020, p. 91). Because I am a faculty writer interviewing faculty writers, these qualities of collaborative poetic inquiry appeal to me.

In this chapter, I focus on tandem found poetry (TFP), a process of collaborative poetry which, according to compositionist and education scholar Melanie Burdick (2011), happens when “two found poems are created separately but at roughly the same time, from the same text, by the interviewer and the participant.” Drawing on her interview-based study of teachers’ experiences, Burdick (2011) advocates for TFP in research situations where “layered relationships of meaning and interpretation”—such as interpreting interview transcripts, interpreting experiences described in the interviews, interpreting interpretations of the experiences and the stories about them—“demand a more hermeneutic inquiry.” The longitudinal nature of my study invited layered meaning and interpretation; it fostered long-term relationships with participants and created opportunities for us to revisit writers’ past experiences recursively over time. I was drawn to poetic inquiry, broadly speaking, because the artistic orientation to research lets go the “façade of objectivity” and “exploits the potential of selectivity and emphasis to say what needs saying” (Eisner, 1981, as cited in Burdick, 2011). Tandem found poetry appeals to me in particular because it intentionally rejects positivist assumptions and traditional power dynamics of researcher/researched (Burdick, 2011), inviting study participants to collaborate in the determination of what needs saying and how it might best be said.

In February 2022, I invited Julie, a faculty writer from my study, to join me in the process of TFP. For a year, we independently composed found poems, including the poem opening this chapter, from Julie’s interview transcripts. Inspired by poet-researcher-therapist Sarah Penwarden’s (2017) “rescued speech poems” (p. 225), found poems created from a person’s words shared during a therapy session, we created our poems by listening “with an aesthetically tuned ear for poetry” within our transcripts (p. 226). We agreed on a basic approach that involved

listening for the overall narrative of our conversations, identifying evocative phrases, metaphors, imagery, symbols, and resonant “occasions” (Sullivan, 2009). Loosely following Burdick’s (2011) process, Julie and I met regularly to exchange poems and consider how they spoke to each other. We noted similarities and differences in content, word choice, point of view, and literary devices, listening for insights about our development as writers, women, creatives, and humans.

Julie and I knew immediately that we were engaging in a uniquely valuable and deeply moving process. In order to understand what made it so meaningful, I treated the documentation of various steps of our recursive process as self-generated data. I considered our original interviews; re-read the poems we composed, including an anthology Julie compiled from our corpus; and poured over transcripts capturing our conversations when we met monthly to share and discuss our poems. Finally, in her ultimate interview as a member of my longitudinal study, Julie and I reflected on the TFP process, so our thoughts and insights became part of that transcript.

In what follows, I draw on this material to consider the process and products of our TFP experience and to explore the promise of this collaborative inquiry method for writing researchers. Of the questions poetic inquiry can help researchers pursue, collaborative poetry is well suited to engage the following:

- How do I make visible the “human” in human subjects research?
- How can I more fully honor the nuance of participants’ lived experience?
- How might I orient to my work not as an objective analyst, but as a “vulnerable observer” (Behar, 1996) immersed in the process?
- How can I center relationships (with scholars/scholarship, research participants, self and readers) as both the foundation and goal for my research and writing?

Using my experience with Julie as a touchstone, I show how TFP offers a means for creatively and collaboratively grappling with these questions by profoundly and playfully shifting traditional research relationships and outcomes that privilege the researcher’s plans, interpretations, and insights.

Through TFP, Julie and I revisited with openness and wonder the stories she shared about her writing life, eager to see if/how they might speak to us in each new moment, looking back and reaching forward. Using poetry to artistically engage co-created research material inspired collaborative negotiation of meaning; it generated opportunities for creative experimentation and imaginative extrapolation as we explored what our poems could mean. Our process (a) revealed the invigorating reality of multiple, simultaneous truths co-existing in the present moment and reaching forward and back across time; (b) cultivated affirming instances of surprise and delight; and (c) supported healing in the midst of struggle and significant life change—Julie’s decision to leave her tenured faculty position and academia. By centering relationality, TFP usefully troubled traditional researcher/participant roles in ways that nurtured us, the humans

at the heart of human subjects research, and conjured unique insight into the recursive evolution of faculty writing lives. It what follows I trace, reflect on, and analyze our process in hopes of revealing the challenges and affordances of this type of poetic inquiry and inspiring writing researchers to adapt it for their own needs and contexts.

Our Tandem Found Poetry Process

Our process for crafting found poems from interview transcripts changed over time as we grappled with our purpose—were we trying to capture something about the meaning expressed in each interview as we understood it in the present moment looking back, or something about the experiences being discussed as they were described then? Or were we simply playing with what was there, putting interesting/provocative images, words, phrases, together to see what they might mean? Julie explained that in the beginning she was trying to “capture and understand the moment,” enact “reflection with distance,” and also “make something interesting.” She wrote just one poem, to my six, from our first interview transcript (2016):

Parallel Universe

i'm trouble-writing
 rolling over and over
 it is not working

weakness i can show?
put up a very good front
squandering the time

you can't let that show
 giving myself permission:
 life is relevant,

it's not just an end,
 that version of me is done,
see i'm good enough

i'm always rushing
 -- so maybe in the summer --
 it's kind of lonely

// a parallel universe
 in the middle of the night

really slippery //
 it's so far away --
 that's the only urgency:
 the end of the world.

impossible to ignore
 the house in boxes

i just built myself that way

Julie described her early process this way: “I took it fairly cavalier[ly] ... I would just copy and paste the words that I thought were interesting, or the phrases that jumped out at me.” She would put them in a blank document in a column and then use different strategies, like alphabetizing, to mix them up so they would be out of order. “At first it was really hard for me,” Julie admitted, “I was adhering so close to what was in the transcripts. And I also felt like it wasn’t making a ... It wasn’t poetic. It wasn’t a standalone thing that a person would wanna read.” Like Julie, I also stuck close to the transcripts in the beginning, trying to capture a feeling, struggle, or insight I sensed there. We often found our poems circled around similar points, albeit from different perspectives. Here is one of my poems from our first transcript (2016), which clearly resonates with Julie’s poem “Parallel Universe,” above.

Letting Life Be

r ... u ... n the risk of writing
 in an b t a t world
 a s r c
 p u
 a n
 W r i t i n g is part of it.
 a v
 l e
 l r
 e s
 l e

When I was younger I could ~~do everything~~ somehow
 find the energy and make it happen.
 Not anymore.

Julie marveled at the connections among our poems. “Even though I wrote one poem and you wrote six,” she told me, “it’s so interesting to find those points that they each hit, regardless of how much is or isn’t in the space between those points The idea of the parallel universe does seem to be at the heart off this interview,” she continued, “and both of our poetry based on it—the idea of what writing is like when it’s done for others’ sake and when it’s done for joy.” In this case, we even drew on similar stylistic representations; Julie observed, “I thought it was interesting that we both tried to recreate the idea of parallelism visually—you with the vertical text and me with the // symbol.” Overlaps like these led to rich conversations around intersecting themes, ideas, or experiences from the transcripts.

As our process of creating TFP evolved, Julie and I inspired one another with our approaches to poetic play, each eager to experiment with strategies we saw employed in the other’s poems. In the beginning I used only Julie’s words, approaching the task like a researcher, while Julie used my words in her poems, especially when something I said in an interview captured what she was trying to say, or when I gave an image to something she was feeling. I often wrote concrete poems, poems written so the words form shapes on the page (see the foregoing poem “Letting Life Be”), and Julie ended up trying the tactic herself. Julie called this mutual inspiration “cross-pollinating,” a process that allowed us to get “more free with [our poetry] as we went on, and more playful and open to more radical departures from the original text.” We started hunting for funny words or phrases, juicy images rather than just emotion words. Julie wrote the following poem from our 2022 transcript.

[From jot ...]

none
 replaced
 toxic
 chicken
 and
 toxic
 egg
 if I take
 this job
 I am saying:
 You
 can throw staplers
 at me,
 I’ve been

warned and I am
 accepting
 this
 risk

As time went on, Julie said, she felt more like writing “a poem now and a lot less like writing a poem about then.” Eventually, we started to let our poems lead us, using forms (like sonnets or villanelles) to structure poems, relying on rhyme, sound, and other devices to create an effect. For example, when we struggled (independently of one another) to identify a clear narrative arc in the 2017 transcript, we both reached for form to build containers for the messy memories, experiences, and sentiments—Julie wrote the sonnet (“Growing”) and I wrote the Haiku (“Maybe the summer will stretch”).

Growing

I think I’m writing a new book from scratch.
 “You should focus only on Mexico.”
 The other said, “You should cut Mexico.”
 “Why don’t you write the book you want to
 write?”
 “Our job is to whip you.” “You’re a workhorse!”
 That kind of paralyzed me for a while.
 I wake up sweating! *you haven’t done it!*
gosh, what have I been doing with my time?
 “What if you took time out of it? What then?”
 Clear time. Short-circuit the automatic.
 Nothing else knocking at the door. Ideal?
 “You do your piece of this.” *Ignore the rest.*
 Struggling in place. *I am persistent.*
 Struggling forward. *Act like a writer.*

Maybe the summer will stretch

Sit with this sentence
 A while or a paragraph
 But what if I just ...
 Be present, writing
 Hard to imagine my days
 do that already
 June next month, I don’t
 Even count August. Useless.
 Rhythm of slow days.

The forms we chose have rich lineages that suggest why we turned to them in this process, adding layers of meaning to the found poems they helped us create. With beginnings traced to social gatherings, including Japanese party games, and travel, the haiku has become a flexible form with a long history in English as well (Runyan, 2021). Drawing on American haiku writer Christopher Patchel, poet Tania Runyan (2021) describes the spirit of the form as rooted in focused perception, immediacy of experience against the backdrop

of time, sensory images that capture a moment, and a piercing pivot or juxtaposition of contrasting parts. Honoring Shintoism roots that point toward aliveness and Buddhist roots that acknowledge impermanence, Joshua Gage, poet and editor of *The Ohio Haiku Anthology*, deems haiku “the moments in between,” the fleeting “bursts and pauses that catch your attention” if you are open and attuned to the present moment (qtd. in Runyan, 2021, p. 152). According to Runyan, haiku is ultimately about noticing. Perhaps that was what drew me to the form as a way to crystallize what I saw and felt as I read Julie’s transcripts.

In a similar vein, Julie embraced the sonnet, which conjures a very different historical tradition, bringing to mind Shakespeare or Petrarch. Julie’s poem is roughly a Shakesporean sonnet with three four-line stanzas and one two-line stanza, although her final stanza does not rhyme, as is traditional. Each line is comprised of ten syllables, and the last couplet signals a turn or change of heart. Perhaps Julie was drawn to the sonnet as a form that explores emotion, connects to movement and breath, and can lead to unexpected insights (Runyan, 2021). She seems to play with the idea of struggling in her final couplet (“Struggling in place.../Struggling forward...” (stanza 4, lines 1-2) and what it says about her as writer (“I am persistent”/“Act like a writer” (stanza 4, lines 1-2) doing the work of writing. Perhaps the rigorous rules of the sonnet provided a framework for Julie to think into. Recounting her own journey writing sonnets, Runyan (2021) reflects on how the limitation of form can be freeing; “Structure is my muse,” she writes (p. 38). Whatever the draw, Julie’s choice to write a sonnet and my use of haiku demonstrate the possibilities of poetic play for experimenting with different sense-making frameworks.

Interestingly, when working in structured poetic forms, Julie and I felt less bound to the source texts. Julie enjoyed crafting lines with words that weren’t adjacent in the transcript and creating affect that was very different from what the original transcript implied. Accordingly, as we relaxed into the process, our poems were more likely to go in different directions, offer different perspectives and pick up on different themes. Julie called this “freedom from experience”—freedom that comes from experience with the process and being exposed to one another’s ways of approaching it.

Shifts in our process led us to think differently about meaning making—how we interpreted meaning in the transcripts, how we crafted poems to mean something, how we listened for unexpected meanings to surface in our individual poems as well as in the juxtaposition of our poems with one another. Julie put it this way: “The meaning making was us reading it. It wasn’t like we have to get to the original meaning that it meant when we did the interview. It was like, right now with reflection and with context, what does this mean?” In the end, we surrendered to poetic praxis, as writers and readers of found poems, inhabiting a spirit of wonder, staying curious about what poems could show us that we hadn’t seen or known before. Julie’s poem “Building,” written from our 2020 interview transcript, illustrates that sense of wonder and play.

Building

Stones floating in the air
 over lava
 they fall
 as you step
 on
 each
 one
 You have to get to the next one
 as
 they're
 falling

And now ...

 Building
 a pyramid. It's not on
 the ground. Not on lava. See your future work
 Differently.

Once we'd crafted poems from each of the seven transcripts, we each curated a poetry collection, independently selecting and arranging poems from the corpus. Julie admitted to initially feeling trepidatious about building an anthology. She wondered if the poems could be something on their own to an audience outside our context. After all, she reflected, we are the people in the interviews and the one's writing the poems, so we know generally what we are talking about. Beyond that, Julie asked, "How will these things stand up? How will this work?" With this in mind, we considered the curating process as a kind of revision. Julie described "a relationship to revision that's not so much about evaluating the work, and more about like which poems fit together, which poems have a dialogue together, thinking about putting poems in order is a revision."

Julie began by printing all poems without distinguishing which were hers and which were mine and shuffling them out of chronological order. By then she didn't remember who wrote what. She imagined she'd received these submissions and was picking the ones she wanted to keep. She made several passes, whittling down the selections, since we'd given ourselves a 40-page limit. She worried she'd only choose her own, but it ended up to be about even. She wrestled with what to do with poems that were very similar, wondered if they'd be too repetitive, but kept them in the end. In terms of ordering the poems, Julie told me she "wanted to start off with a favorite and then end really strong and then kind of like go like

this in between as far as what [she] saw as the impact of [the poems].” Here are the poems she chose to open and end her anthology.

Bootstraps

i built all of this

resourceful, independent

leaning, reaching

frantic fragility

you're under anesthesia,

ignore the foggy people who care

for each other,

who trust, protect:

you're still alive

you run, walk, climb

because you're resting on a pedestal.

The Last Woman

Non-response to the onslaught, wing on like spinning wheels

step back and see myself, just one of many, this job, a job, *my*

job,

mine the word torn, make this more about where I happened

to be.

I've started to see the way it's built ... Continue this act:

gut the suit

hollow exodus

sinking ship.

Julie had recently taken a bookbinding class and decided to make her collection into a bound book for me (Figure 4.1). Imagining it as a gift, she said, helped her want to finish and write a foreword.

When I asked Julie to reflect on her final collection, she mused:

In some ways, to me it is a book about me entering academia, meeting the criteria for this big goal, and then leaving ... but it also feels like there's so much more there. It feels so personal and just about writing in general and about being a human being and a mortal person, there's so much more to it than just that. ... Maybe I would say that it's also about trying to figure out what we're supposed to be doing here.

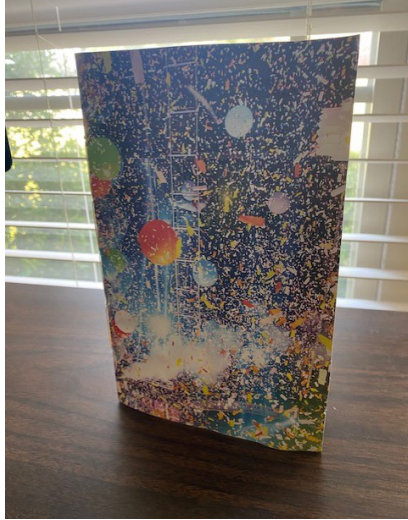


Figure 4.1. Julie's bound TFP anthology

As Julie's reflection illustrates, TFP is valuable in part because the process stimulates unique forms of meaning making. By disrupting the knower/known dynamic of a traditional research relationship, TFP unearths new meanings for those involved in the process and possibly for others as well.

Around the time Julie was choosing poems for her anthology, she was invited to read poetry at a local brewery and decided to perform one she'd written through our TFP process. She was thrilled to see our poems could work on their own, with an audience outside the project. Here is an excerpt from the poem Julie read.

jot
 down
 a
 line
 from
 Change:
 broad
 strokes
 back
 burnered
 enclosed
 academia
 no
 future

channel
 everything
 you
 have
 into
 this
 tiny,
 tiny,
 tiny
 self

In a similar vein, after I gave a presentation on TFP and shared poems from Julie's anthology at a conference, session attendees asked where they could purchase their copy, hungry for the evocative experience our poems offered. In response, Julie and I are in the process of creating copies of our anthologies to share with colleagues and interested readers. As our continued collaboration and the demand for our collections shows, TFP is not just about representing qualitative research data; it fosters long-term relationships rooted in mutual vulnerability and creative practice, and it generates evocative meaning relevant within and far beyond the original research context.

Friendship, Poetry, and Methodological Surrender

Relationships fostered through TFP diverge from typical research relationships. Unlike the researcher-participant dynamic that defined our interview exchanges, when Julie and I met to discuss our poems, our conversations were reciprocal, neither of us was the interviewer or interviewee and both of us were. We engaged in what Carolyn Ellis, Christine E. Kiesinger, and Lisa M. Tillmann-Healy (1997) call "interactive interviewing," wherein "the feelings, insight, and stories" we each brought to the encounter felt equally important (p. 121). Lisa M. Tillmann-Healy (2003) might call our "open, multivoiced, and emotionally rich" inquiry "friendship as method," which she explains "involves the practices, the pace, the contexts, and the ethics of friendship" (p. 734). And Julie and I *are* close friends. We've been teammates in a local volleyball league; I dressed as Jolene to Julie's Dolly Parton for our town's 5k monster dash; we've volunteered together for Poetic Justice, a non-profit that facilitates restorative writing workshops for incarcerated women; we co-developed and co-facilitated a workshop on creative practice for retirees through my university's lifelong learning office; and we recently spent a week together learning to surf! Our friendship and collaboration fuel one another. Julie created the following found poem from her 2021 interview transcript. For me, it captures the intimacy, adventure, and life that defines our friendship.

Memento Mori

I'm awake, thinking about death.
 Everybody's death.
 It's a presence I'm getting used to.
 I've been thinking about it in a calm way,
 a little unsettling,
 being the only one awake
 in the world.

Thinking about death
 is thinking about life:
 How do you want to live
 every day life?
 How do you want to be
 In the world?

Relational qualities inspired by TFP—intimacy, trust, mutual vulnerability, empathic listening, the courage to be reflexively critical, willingness to compare experiences, and openness to new insights—emerged from and alongside our friendship. However, long-term friendship need not be a condition of TFP. Indeed, the process honors the relationships of participants, whatever they might be, and enriches those relationships in whatever ways participants might need or want. In this way relationships fostered by TFP are similar to “writing partnerships” Rosenberg (2020) says emerged during her longitudinal research with adult learners: “relational and organic, following the events and patterns of our lives as they intersect with the research” (p. 100). Qualities of friendship become a strength rather than an ethical hurdle or detriment to rigorous analysis, as is often the case with traditional qualitative research.

Julie and I found that the friendship methodology of TFP meaningfully complicated our roles as researcher and participant, knower and known, but we did not shed those roles altogether. Especially early on, our research-related perspectives informed our poetic approaches, as the following comment from Julie's reflection on poems written from her 2016 interview transcript observes:

I wonder about the explicitness of your poems and what I think of as more abstractness of mine—it struck me as I read details about leaving Mexico City, marriage ending, dissertation committees, etc. that maybe I avoided naming those negative experiences too directly in my poem, maybe to keep them from taking on a life of their own? Maybe since those are the kind of specific details that help you understand my experiences they

are more meaningful and necessary for your poems? (Just a guess.) That could be part of the difference between the roles of the self-reflective participant and the investigator—this could be a question to explore.

As Julie's reflection intimates, the TFP process surfaced differences in our perspectives and ways of understanding and enabled our differences to interact in untraditional ways. Our subjectivities became assets for meaning making.

As we chiseled words, ideas, experiences from our interview transcripts and formed them into poems, neither of us could hide behind the illusion of "objective" data analysis. Together, we forged new meaning, generated new discoveries and provocative ways of seeing that neither of us would have come to on our own. I wrote the following found poem, which appeared in Julie's final anthology, based on our 2020 interview transcript. It captures the spirit of experimentation and collaborative meaning making with which we embraced TFP.

Creative Activity: A Translation

A subtle thing, my proposal.

People say that blank slate can be overwhelming.

I see how it could feel that way.

Emptiness and uncertainty.

Expansive feels so long.

What gave me the audacity, the wherewithal to say

"See if it works ..."

And then it did.

Tandem found poetry cultivated what Jordan (2008) might call a "growth-fostering relationship"—one that involved "relational authenticity, mutual empathy, and mutual empowerment/encouragement" (p. 221). Julie marveled at how much "more empowering" it was "to write a poem from stories/transcript than to have someone write a paper about it." For my part, it felt good to be seen, to let go the effort it took to remain neutral, blend into the background of a research study, swallow feelings and reactions because they might be interpreted as signs of shoddy analysis. Julie beautifully captured the joy and promise of participating in such a partnership. There was "something about being poised on the edge of something ..." she mused when reflecting on the found poems we created from her 2017 interview transcript, "looking back at difficulties, but then also not quite over the precipice. That tension between struggle and growing. The moment that growth emerges from struggle."

The vulnerable relationships fostered by TFP and the rich forms of meaning making they enable offer promising opportunities for qualitative writing researchers. Tandem found poetry provides a means to, in Restaino's (2019) words "enact a

methodology for surrender and failure,” as researchers and participants “work from a place of our own fractured, multiple selves” in the midst of projects that “demand of us real intimacy and risk” (p. 72). Restaino (2019) invokes Halberstam’s (2011) “radical passivity” to describe the spirit of methodological surrender—a relinquishing of control in which researcher and participant-collaborator allow themselves to “crash” (p. 127) in to one another, to “come into such chaotic, destabilizing contact” that we create the kind of “‘bad data’ that can nourish a rhetorical undoing of self and other,” opening the radical possibility of new knowledge (p. 128).

Restaino (2019) illustrates the risk and promise of radical passivity in a way that crystallizes the value of TFP as vehicle for such work. She cites Halberstam’s (2011) analysis of Yoko Ono’s performance art *Cut Piece* in which Ono invites audience members to come to her on stage and cut away pieces of her clothing until she is naked and vulnerable. Halberstam describes these “cutting gestures” as dedicated “completely and ferociously to the destruction of self and other” (Halberstam, 2011, as cited in Restaino, 2019, p. 72). Humans cannot entirely separate ourselves, this act of “loving destruction” (Restaino, 2019, p. 72) suggests, nor can we fully know one another. Yet by “commit[ting] to the fragment over any fantasy of future wholeness” (Halberstam, 2011, as cited in Restaino, 2019, p. 128), by acknowledging the capacity of bodies, “any body . . . to literally fall to pieces,” we open ourselves up to new ways of knowing and being (Restaino, 2019, p.128). The process of TFP invites researcher and participant to lovingly destroy transcripts and the narratives captured there, honoring the fragments, the pieces which can mean differently in their new poetic context. In the case of qualitative research, cut pieces are the shards of glass we researchers carve and collect, each reflecting a necessarily partial view of the whole—whole person, whole self, whole picture, whole life—we are desperate to hold in view. In our eagerness to know (ourselves and others), we cut away bits and suture them into arguments about what we think we see, even though it is impossible to depict what does not exist—unfractured identity, certain meaning.

The process is not unlike what McGann and Samuels (2006) call “interpretive deformation,” a radical approach to reading literature and other cultural artifacts that involves “a disordering of one’s senses of the work” (p. 154), putting the reader in “a highly idiosyncratic relation to the work” (p. 161) so as to “imagine things about the text that we didn’t and perhaps couldn’t otherwise know” (p. 161). Scholars of literary criticism (McGann & Samuels, 2006), media studies (Mittell, 2021), and digital humanities (Sample, 2012) have demonstrated a range of deformative techniques for “breaking things” (Sample, 2012) to discover new meanings, including reading backwards, transposing, altering or reordering a text or image, and isolating words or elements. Although scholars disagree about the extent to which the deformed work is the end or the means to an end (Sample, 2012), they acknowledge the epistemological and pedagogical potential of the activity as it resists fixation on authorial intent and underscores the role of critics, or in my case researchers, as “makers of poetic meaning in the act” (McGann & Samuels,

2006, p. 180) of interpretation. Cutting in the context of TFP might be considered a generative act of deformation, “a legitimate mode of doing and knowing. Precisely because it relies on undoing and unknowing” (Sample, 2012). Critical awareness of the responsibility and relationality involved in interpretive deformation is central to the act of cutting. While traditional methods can obscure both the violence and the magic of destruction, TFP lays bare the viciousness and futility of cutting as well as its promise and possibility—we cut words from transcripts and boldly re-arrange, re-associating them to see what they say, releasing our hold on them, and owning our part in the meanings they capture.

Below is an excerpt from my poem “On Inside Out” composed from the transcript of my very first interview with Julie in 2016 when she discussed the practical and psychological challenges of publishing a book based on her dissertation research. Julie’s reaction to my poem illustrates the risk and the promise of deformative interpretation or cutting as it happens through TFP.

...

I was married to a guy and it ended
 in a bad, violent way, living
 in Mexico City, had to leave overnight.
 Wrote the dissertation there.
 Emotions wrapped up there.
 Huge epiphany: if I finish this book ...
 that version of me is done.
 I am not a student anymore.
 I don’t live in Mexico anymore.
 Hardly anyone knows those things about me here,
 So it’s all gone.

...

In the margin of my poem, next to the line “I was married to a guy and it ended,” Julie wrote:

I’m writing this the day after our meeting. I’m reflecting this morning on what we discussed about how I felt sort of jarred or shocked when I saw these lines, but also felt that I trusted the poet and that this was created with care. It seems like, as you noted yesterday, my shock might come from seeing my “I” coming from someone else. Maybe this was the point in reading that I realized that you were not writing about me, as one of your many subjects, as a “she” or even a “you,” but rather

you were using my words to make sense out of the writing process. I'm trying to remember what it has felt like over the years to see my words reported in more traditional research articles you've written, and there was a sense of distance there, the anonymized name and the introduction that would accompany a quote. Here it is so direct. Not sure what to make of all this, but I wanted to note it.

Julie's vulnerability is palpable. She seems to feel exposed but also held, treated with care and intention. She was no longer "one of [my] many subjects ... a 'she' or even a 'you'"; rather, her words became part of our collaborative sense-making effort.

As Restaino (2019) points out, coming to terms with cutting is essential for human-subjects researchers. "The destabilization of identity," she writes, "the fracturing of identity, and our subsequent containment of multiple selves ... must function as indelible components of method in work that seeks to explore ... the topics ... that resist being fully 'knowable'" (p. 72)—unknowable topics like writing lives, writers in transition, humans living through radical change and paralyzing inertia, crisis and joy. Of researchers, Restaino (2019) observes, "whether acknowledged or not, we are always also cutters, taking apart not just our data and our research participants but also ourselves" (p. 129). Tandem found poetry holds researchers accountable for our role as cutters. At the same time, just as with Ono and her audience in *Cut Piece*, the mutual vulnerability of TFP, conjured through reciprocal acts of cutting, generates unexpected opportunities for beauty and connection. We lose track of who is writing whom, as the following poem, written by Julie from her 2019 interview transcripts, suggests.

Who Wrote This?

Who wrote this? It sounds like a real book.

Surprise! So many come across it.

Wait a minute, is it good?

Who wrote this?

Could it be more than just adequate?

Shining a light -- that felt very cool.

Authority stole the show a bit.

Who's going to be there? Friends from school.

Receiving positive messages.

I'm not gonna lose my livelihood.

Who wrote this?

Tandem found poetry offers one way to contend with the danger and promise of cutting because it ensures the “loving destruction” (Restaino, 2019, p. 72) is reciprocal. Julie and I both sliced and stitched our words. Together, we laid our poems next to one another and listened for their meaning, which was always both achingly concrete and provocatively abstract. Perhaps, in the words of Black woman scholar, educator, and leader, Cynthia Dillard (2003), ours was a “cutting to heal not to bleed.” Dillard (2003) is writing in response to Handel Wright’s response to her work on “an endarkened feminist epistemology,” with an eye toward celebrating scholarly “response/critique as a way to open spaces and make connections across our situated differences” (p. 228). For Dillard (2003), critique is a form of cutting that can be delivered with the goal of knocking down, drawing blood, or in a spirit of “reciprocity” and “critical affirmation” (p. 231). In a similar vein, the cutting and remixing of words and meanings in TFP is always in service of collaborative inquiry. As with Ono’s interactive performance art, my and Julie’s poetic acts of “meaningful damage” (Restaino, 2019, p. 129) consummated our interconnectedness; we surrendered to uncertainty, the awareness that just as we would never entirely separate ourselves, nor would we fully know one another. I wrote the following found poem that appears in Julie’s anthology using our 2021 interview transcript. It captures the spirit of loving, meaning, healing, and making at the heart of TFP.

Jotting Notes

Co-authoring relationships, co-translating
 my friend, we see each other, dear
 heart reflects whole story craving you,
 believing we are good enough

Julie and I cut lines from our transcripts into pieces and reassembled them with slivers of ourselves holding them poetically together, forging something new, a fragmented whole greater than the sum of its parts. Our mutual cutting was both destructive and generative. With Restaino (2019), I see in the generative act of cutting potential for subversive knowledge making:

In our cutting and even in our eventual, sometimes reassembling, we do meaningful damage and have an opportunity to feel something at once terrifying and inexplicable This is about exposing our handiwork, its ultimate futility, and ... such exposure is double-sided: we are simultaneously limited in our capacity to understand and render the other, and ourselves. The harder we try, in fact, the greater damage we do. How, as researcher-writers, might we contend with this danger? How might we do it justice and honor (recognize?) our capacity for

harm? To what extent might such danger—and the risk-taking it invites—invent new kinds of knowledge, texts, and ways of doing research? (p. 129)

Reflecting on the poem “Jotting Notes,” Julie suggests one response to Restaino’s (2019) questions. She wrote, “I love this: ‘co-translation’ working together to understand ourselves as we reflect each other back to one another, analyze ourselves and each other.” Julie considered the risk and invention involved in TFP in terms of translation, a practice she knew well in her scholarly life:

That’s what we’re doing, too. We have these words to start from. We’re not just like “write a poem about what it’s like to be a faculty writer.” And then editing in a translation is a similar problem. Here it’s like: “Well, do you kind of make it your own at this point? Or do you need to go back to the original and see?” At what point is it an inspiration, and not a translation? At what point is it no longer the original thing it’s really a new thing that you’ve made from that thing?

Here, tensions at the heart of translation theory and practice as well as questions about the role of the translator and the relationship between original and translated texts become a lens for grappling with the peril and promise of knowledge making in the TFP process. Of course, *translation* in the context of TFP is not a matter of translating a text from one language to another as it is in Julie’s scholarly translation work, but the connection she makes surfaces new ways of pondering meaning, accuracy, interpretation, and creative activity.

Most translation theorists admit that discrepancy between the original and translated text will always exist (Bassnett, 2014). French linguist and translator Georges Mounin went so far as to indicate that “personal experience in its uniqueness is untranslatable” (Bassnett, 2014, p. 45). If “equivalence in translation” is an impossible feat, elaborates translation theorists Susan Bassnett (2014), then the goal of translation should never be a “search for sameness” (p. 39). Every translation, like every research poem, is to some extent an invention, unique in its own right (Bassnett, 2014). It follows that, as Julie suggests, the TFP process is much like translation in that it has the potential to “enrich or clarify” (Bassnett, 2014, p. 39) the original sentiment or even say something completely new.

I’ve found this to be true with poetic inquiry more generally. When I share found poems based on interview transcripts with the faculty writers in my study, they discover new “truths,” new meanings that have various connections to the original words spoken during our interviews. They appreciate seeing their words offered back to them and seem less concerned with “accuracy” or “correctness” per se. In my research poems, participants see their words and experiences in a new light. They are consistently intrigued and usually delighted by the resonant feelings and sense of surprise the poems incite.

The lens of translation underscores the possibility of new knowledge making as well as the danger of overwriting meanings and experiences embedded in original texts with the translator's intentions and sense making. Sharing poems with my research participants and engaging in processes like reverse interviewing (Chapter 3) are some ways I mitigate such dangers as a poetic inquirer. Perhaps more than any other approach to poetic inquiry, the TFP process directly reckons with the precarity and promise of poetically translating lived experience. It resists the "illusion of transparency" (Bassnett, 2014, p. 46) which can plague translation as well as qualitative data analysis, by making visible the translator-cutter-poet and privileging collaborative meaning making. As Julie's term *co-translation* suggests, TFP invites researcher and participant to actively make meaning together with and from one another's words. In doing so, we come to understand ourselves, each other, and the realities of faculty writing lives differently.

Julie's reflection on translation beautifully captures the potential violence, magic, and promise of generating knowledge through TFP. Her inclination, as a scholarly translator, to play with translation as a metaphor for our collaborative work illustrates another valuable dimension of the method—not only does TFP invite participants to draw on our unique subjectivities to make meaning together, but it also inspires us to apply our individual lenses (rooted in our unique experiences and expertise) to determine how the process works. Each instance of TFP, then, will unfold differently based on the humans involved and thus uncover new ways of understanding and embracing the process itself. Because the practice of TFP varies according to the people who engage it, the possibilities unearthed through the practice vary widely as well.

I like to think of the poems we composed and the feelings and insights that emerged for me and Julie through our experience with TFP as gifts. In their contribution to the collection *Weaving an Otherwise: In-Relations Methodological Practice*, Christine A. Nelson and Heather J. Shotton (2022) conceptualize gifting "as a collective and decolonial process that can begin to extend what answerability means in research" (p. 94). Grounded in the significance of gifting in Indigenous communities, their version of the practice resists performative, transactional, capitalistic views of gift-giving. Instead, inspired by Anishinaabe scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013), they frame gifting in the research context as "relational, rooted in responsibility and reciprocity" (Nelson & Shotton, 2022, p. 96). Collaborative research poetry offers a uniquely fitting form for gifting that "bring[s] life to what answerability in the academy is" (Nelson & Shotton, 2022, p. 96) in part because it resists "compartmentalization and categorization" (p. 97), exuding instead a wholeness and mutual accountability that "allows us to be innately connected to the research process" (p. 94). When Nelson and Shotton (2022) personify "Gift" as a third author of their chapter, they animate that voice through poetry. Indeed, participants in my study including Julie (and Mandy, see Chapter 3) received as gifts found poems I created from their transcripts. The process of tandem found poetry illuminates this quality.

Benefits of Tandem Found Poetry: Some Possibilities

Tandem found poetry highlights the potential of research poems to become gifts that cultivate “shared knowledge through time and story” (Nelson & Shotton, 2022, p. 96) and “creat[e] a collective and healing space within the research process” (p. 94). Nelson and Shotton’s (2022) notion of healing is part of a cultural frame rooted in Indigenous communities and Indigenous storytelling. While the TFP experience Julie and I shared does not necessarily share that frame, healing was a significant feature of our collaboration. In what follows, I highlight some of the gifts TFP offered us in order to suggest a range of possible benefits and outcomes. In doing so, I hope to inspire writing studies researchers and participants to imagine when, why, and how TFP might be a promising approach for shared inquiry in their unique contexts.

Healing Through Multiple Truths

As I’ve shown, the goal of TFP is not to accurately capture an elusive truth, to objectively portray what a research participant “means” by a comment, story, or reflection, or to present a researcher’s final conclusions supported by data-based evidence. Rather, the “found-ness” of research poems, the innovativeness of cross-pollination, the generative destruction of cutting constitute new ways of thinking, feeling, and being that spawn multiple truths, myriad ways to remember, to understand ourselves and our experiences past, present, and future.

Runyan (2021) explains how found poetry generates new knowledge in the form of surprising, uncertain truths; found poets, she explains, like muralists “doubl[e] the context’ of their inspiration” (p. 142), recombining images and symbols to draw readers into new perspectives and create a feeling that is both tethered to and unique from the experience and context from which it was torn. Julie describes the thrill of discovering new feelings and perspectives in past experiences re-rendered through TFP:

It’s when I’m seeing it [my words and experiences] in a new light, like I didn’t hear it that way right? But it seems true, it does ring true ... I think it’s often when it’s something surprises me, or when it really captures a feeling, and I’ll think, wow, I said that but I didn’t realize how that can sound or what it meant, or what was the beneath it.

Indeed, Julie was less interested in poems we wrote that seemed to accurately represent her memory of an original feeling or thought. She continued,

Not the ones that are like “Oh, that captured what I was feeling back then, exactly.” ... So it’s less for me, I mean probably for another reader, it would be interesting. But for me, it’s kind of like, “oh, yeah.” But then, when it’s like, “Oh! I add that word, I use that word a bunch of times. Or oh, like those two things go

together, you know, and I didn't realize that—that's more what gets me ... my brain likes.

Embracing the new, the unexpected, the insights that felt true in ways that had little to do with the original interview or experience required us to admit the futility of knowing once and for all, to relinquish deluded hope of deciphering the truth. It meant surrendering to the art of poetic practice and “the elusive intensity by which it knows” (Hirshfield, 1997, p. 5). For example, Julie was enchanted to find her “interview” self to be a provocatively unreliable source:

I was really not trustworthy to me in that transcript and yet that's what this whole thing is based on, me telling you things I remembered, and, but, and it's meaningful. So this very shifty source is producing a meaningful experience that helps me to move forward and helps me reflect.

Grappling with “shifty” variations of the truth prompted meaningful reflection for Julie as she reveled in the multitude of meanings conjured by uncertain memories.

Poetry is a natural vehicle for exploding familiar ways of knowing, for as poet Jane Hirshfield (1997) explains “if ‘truth’ is a chosen narrative, then new stories, new aesthetics, are also new truths” (p. 5). Sometimes, exposure to new truths had a healing effect for Julie, who was in the midst of a major life transition—leaving her tenured position in academia. Consider the following poem Julie wrote from our 2021 interview transcript:

Second Act

Is an earthquake a shift or a settling?

Life and death fear

An opening up

Gotta get out of here

Committed

Traumatic Break

Integrity, connection

Invite attacks

Write something true

Anxiety troll

A little more courage

A limitless situation.

Things can fall apart,
you'll still be there.

During our conversations, Julie explained that “an earthquake” (stanza 1, line 1) had long been an important symbol for her usually tied to anxiety. However, the poem had her thinking differently about what the earthquake feeling could mean in her life:

The earthquake ... for me is such an important symbol, ... I moved to California, and the very first day of orientation, there was an earthquake Then I moved to Mexico City, and ... I got so anxious ... that I regularly didn't know if it was an earthquake, or if it was from inside of me, and I would always look at the lamp to see if the pull string was shaking or not. And then, when I moved to Oklahoma ... it was the same thing. Pre tenure I had that earthquake anxiety, and I would ... look outside of me to see is this me or is this the earth? So [the] idea that it could be something settling into place is very comforting.

Writing the found poem and discussing it with me was a source of healing for Julie during a tumultuous time of transition as she began to reimagine the symbolism of the earthquake, a metaphor that had shaped ways of living and perceiving her life. Many qualitative researchers are committed to honoring multiple truths by de-centering researcher perspectives, and TFP offers an intentional, methodological process for activating those commitments, one with the potential to cultivate healing by honoring layered and evolving truths.

(Re) Tracing Hope and Joy

Just as Julie and I appreciated new angles and ways of seeing prompted by the TFP process, Julie was particularly delighted when traces of dear memories from our original interviews re-emerged in our poems, when certain remembrances were honored and re-enforced. She was struck by the reemergence of things she “remembered just for [her]self.” Take for example the heart-shaped sunglasses that appear in the diamante poem I wrote from Julie's 2019 interview transcript.

Confidence

Braver clothing

Wear one weird thing a day.

Please my imagination heart sunglasses they'll laugh
even strangers. I like that. Hint: don't be serious.

Ok? Closer to

Affectionate

Reflecting on the poem, Julie considered how the words from the transcript, reiterated in the poem, reflected aspects of her past, newly tenured self and still resonated with her in the present moment:

I think I was like a person going through: What does it mean when you can be yourself differently, and the playfulness? That conversation was what I remembered even before I went back and read the transcript. So it was really fun when I came upon it again. Well, this needs a like a doubling. Needs a space.

Julie describes the effect of encountering the concrete, playful image of her heart-shaped sunglasses as a “doubling,” for which TFP created space. Her description invokes the resonance of TFP with rescue poetry rooted in counselling practice. Penwarden (2017) explains how rescue poetry, writing poems from speech during therapy sessions, emerged from narrative therapy in which the therapist “double listen[s] to a person’s narrative to hear both the dominant story of the problem they face and an alternative story that carries thin traces of their values and hopes for their life” (p. 226). The image of the sunglasses in my diamante poem manifested for Julie an underlying story that bore traces of who she was and wanted to be—a playful, lively person unafraid to be seen, who delights in others’ delight. The poem took Julie back to a moment of self-invention when she was reaching for ways to be herself, to reclaim aspects of herself that she’d felt compelled to bury during her journey to earning tenure.

In this case, the TFP process magnified joyful memories of Julie’s experience of feeling at home in her skin, of being seen. It invited her to sink back into a moment and a story that was originally important to her, to experience it anew, and linger there. Hirshfield (1997) explains how poetry facilitates such an experience that is at once transcendent and material: “Through poetry’s concentration great sweeps of thought, emotion, and perception are compressed to forms the mind is able to hold—into images, sentences, and stories that serve as entrance tokens to large and often slippery realms of being” (pp. 6-7). The image of the heart-shaped sunglasses was a lively reminder of Julie’s commitment to aligning *who* she was with *how* she was in life.

Throughout Julie’s journey in and eventually beyond academia she doggedly fought for a path, a life, in which she could be the fullest version of herself, where she could live with integrity. Looking back to see that feisty, confident version of herself emerging before she’d even decided to resign from her tenured faculty position stoked her spirit when she read the poem after leaving academia. Precious affirmations of self can be rare when we are in the midst of struggle and change. The surprise and delight of discovering them can bolster persistence in challenging situations by keeping alive self-trust, the hope needed to continue to imagine how things might be other than they are.

Tracking Transformation: Honoring Multiple Versions of Life

The recursive nature of the TFP process unraveling over time created a unique opportunity for self-reflection, for re-seeing and re-narrating stories of self. Poetry is an ideal process and medium for cultivating deep, transformative reflection because of how it moves within and across time. Prendergast (2006) celebrates “the unique ability” (p. 369) of poetry “to capture and present aspects of the past (in memory), present (in experience), and future (in hope/fear)” (pp. 369-370). Hirshfield (1997) observes the “startling intimacy” of reading poetry that captivates the attention of mind and body across moments in time: “We breathe as the author breathed, we move our own tongue and teeth and throat in the ways they moved in the poem’s first making” (p. 8). According to Hirshfield (1997), in those intimate moments an “echo” of the poet comes to us through the poem, and “if the poem is our own, it is our own past that reinhabits our bodies, at least in part” (p. 8). As Julie and I wrote poems with one another’s words and then read the poems we crafted—alone and together—we inhabited past and future versions of ourselves and each other. Poetry is transcendent, Hirshfield (1997) explains, for “shaped language is strangely immortal, living in a meadowy freshness outside of time” (p. 8). And yet ...

Poetry also “lives in the moment, in us. Emotion, intellect, and physiology are inseparably connected in the links of a poem’s sound” (Hirshfield, 1997, p. 8). That is, poetry brings us into our full being, a palimpsest of selves bearing traces of the past, landing in the present, gazing toward the future. “The repetition and changes of a poem’s prosody are the outward face of inner transformation,” Hirshfield (1997) expounds; “unfolding their tensions and resolutions, a poem’s sounds make of experience a shapeliness, with beginning, middle, and end” always in motion across the page (pp. 8-9). It is this movement within and across time through which poetry honors multiple selves and celebrates transformation even as it preserves essential elements of who we (think we) are.

“You’re living multiple versions of a life in your transcripts” Julie told me, as we reflected on poems crafted from her 2020 interview. She captured that very sentiment in the only poem she wrote from our 2022 interview transcript. Her concrete poem looks like a rope or thread slinking down the margin, one-word lines interrupted at various intervals by a circling back, words forming loops on the page. In her anthology, Julie created an accordion of pages that unfolds to reveal the full poem, which takes up several pages. Here is an excerpt:

Reviving
 your
 older
 old
 self
 barking

in
the
background
wound
tight
struggling
with
spinning
wheels
explain
to
myself

*Did you do
this right?
Did you
do that? Are you
taking
your medicine?
Should you
have done
this? Are you
doing therapy?*

a
disengaging
act
exodus
sinking
ship
the
last
woman
there
none
replaced
toxic
chicken

and
toxic
egg

The poem tracks Julie's transformation over time, looping forward and back across versions of herself and her sensemaking as she moved toward a momentous life change. Reflecting on her poem, Julie explained:

I felt like this one [2022 interview transcript] was really looking back far, and was like tracing through the whole history in a way. It was also very weird to read it, because it was very recent. And yet an enormous change has taken place in in the meantime ... this thread idea was important to me. I'm just gonna make one long—the words are the thread. And then I tried to make loops in it with these questions.

Through her concrete poem, Julie visually and viscerally recreated the recursive experience of living through a major life transition and then revisiting her evolving perceptions of moments big and small making up that trajectory. Each memory, each story re-framed the original experience and blazed a path to future experiences shaped by the living and storying happening in the present. Julie's poem crystalizes an idea she articulated much earlier, when we met to reflect on poems written from her 2019 interview transcript— "the idea that reflection is part of development, that the way we understand our past changes with time and affects the trajectory/plan we are constantly constructing." Her poem demonstrates how the act of writing TFP focused our telescoping attention, soaking us in the sensation of multitudes, and simultaneously rooted us in images and insights we could hold, even if fleetingly.

The invaluable gifts that emerged from my and Julie's experience of TFP—healing through multiple truths, (re)tracing hope, and tracking transformation—demonstrate how this approach is about more than representing data or lived experience. Rather, as in Penwarden's (2017) work, TFP is "both generative and transformative"; by "capturing and returning the [liminal moments] back to participants," found research poems, like poetic listening during therapy sessions, can help "them see their lives in a different light" (p. 230). Recursively re-narrating stories of the past in collaboration with a fellow poetic listener crystalizes lived experience as light refracting through the planes of a diamond prism, engendering new insights about past struggles and successes, and envisioning astonishing new possibilities for the future.

Conclusion

At its core, TFP is an intimate process of relationship-building that invites mutual vulnerability and collaborative meaning making, challenges hierarchical

dynamics that characterize traditional qualitative research, and richly complicates the creation, analysis, and representation of data (Burdick, 2011). Growth-fostering relationships established through TFP cultivate “the courage to bring [one] self more fully into relationship and into creative action,” which is a vital experience according to feminist psychologist Jordan (2008), in a world where so many are plagued by chronic disconnection (p. 221). As I’ve shown, reciprocally vulnerable relationships like these also make possible new knowledge “as we come to know ourselves and the world differently through poetry” (Penwarden, 2017, p. 227). In this chapter I’ve shared several forms the gift of new knowledge can take, and I look forward to discovering new possibilities with each iteration of the practice. Although TFP is an inherently responsive, adaptable process, Julie and I agree the following actions seemed essential:

- reflecting on experiences in communication/relationship with another person
- investing in learning with/from/about one another
- collaboratively creating something new from existing material
- committing to an iterative process that takes place over time
- letting time pass between creating source texts, writing poems, and analyzing results
- having experience or seeking guidance around writing poetry
- considering poems within and beyond their original context

Embracing these tentative guidelines would be a good place to start for writing researchers committed to, in Restaino’s (2019) words, “work that undoes us” (p. 74), who long for methodological surrender, and crave methods that lead somewhere other than where we’ve always been, methods that invite us to know, be, and do differently.

At the same time, TFP has potential for contexts beyond qualitative research. Julie suggested the process could work for “high performance people [i.e. athletes, musicians] who are able to perform even when it’s hurting them or costing them a lot ... similar to academics.” Given the healing potential of TFP, we also see promise for people processing different types of trauma or significant life change, for the work of poetic concentration is a labor of love that “brings replenishment even to the writer dealing with painful subjects or working out problems, and there are times when suffering’s only open path is through an immersion in what is” (Hirshfield, 1997, p. 5). For people in prison, for example, or new parents, Julie imagines “that poems would help make some things more approachable or more possible to talk about.” She proposed that TFP could be “a way to simultaneously acknowledge and honor traumatic experiences and also make something out of them that is not requiring the person to use it for good. But it’s just making something new that helps you understand it.”

Tandem found poetry could work across a range of contexts in part because poetry is such an accessible art. Participants need not have rigorous training

or experience writing poetry to benefit from the practice. Julie described how similar her process of creating found poems was to a format we learned while teaching for Poetic Justice, a non-profit organization that sponsors restorative writing workshops for incarcerated women. Julie described the process this way:

Do a brainstorm or a free write ... making a game for yourself. Okay, now pick out 10 words and you have to use them in this song. Or you have to use those 10 words in a sonnet or something. And so there's these ... game rules, are what I use in regular poetry composition too.

Facilitators could easily offer a range of playful constraints or “game rules” to support poetic play. The following is a partial list of contexts beyond qualitative research where TFP may be valuable:

- teaching/teacher development
- activist groups building community and persisting through exhaustion
- faculty development
- life coaching
- burnout support groups for employees
- leadership training
- community writing groups

Source texts for creating found poems could vary according to the context and needs of participants. Possibilities include letters, emails, teaching materials, journals, diaries, academic writing, testimonies, and transcripts. Participants could also interview one another and create poems from loose notes or transcriptions.

Finally, in considering future uses and adaptations for TFP, it is important to acknowledge that Julie and I have a lot in common—we are white, early middle aged, middle class, married women with bodies usually enabled by the systems and structures within which we move. We live and work on the traditional homeland of the “Hasinai” Caddo Nation and “Kirikir?i:s” Wichita & Affiliated Tribes.¹⁹ I am an uninvited settler on this land. Julie is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; both of her parents are members of tribes, neither of which were invited to Oklahoma, both of which were forced here; she acknowledges settler ancestors. Julie and I both have PhDs. Our situatedness matters, for as Max Haiven and Alex Khasnabish’s (2010) work on “radical imagination” reminds us, “Our imaginations might look very different depending on where we stand in relation to social power relations” (p. xviii), that is, depending on our differences. “Our sense of what is possible and what is imaginable,” they continue invoking feminist theorists Marcel Stoetzler and Nira Yuval-Davis, “is shaped by our privilege, our experience of exploitation and how we are intersected by vectors of

19. Open <http://www.wichitatribe.com/media/18910/wichita.mp3> to hear the pronunciation of this word.

oppression like racism, sexism, class, ableism, or citizenship status” (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2010, p. xviii). Engaging in TFP intensifies my awareness that human “imagination is constrained by our circumstances and experiences” (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014, p. 23), and reminds me that “the labour of imagining beyond one’s own situatedness is difficult and never finished” (p. 24). I am hopeful, therefore, that TFP might be one mechanism for investing in such vital labor, might become a way of surfacing, honoring, and dreaming across difference so as to expand what is imaginable. I hope the process unfolded and mined in this chapter inspires researchers and others hungry for relational meaning making and reflexive praxis to feel their way into unique iterations of this fruitful poetic practice.