

Call for Proposals

Shaped by our Own Words: Love & Hate Letters to Writing

Editors: J. Kuntzman & C. Bazerman

Proposals of 300-500 words due November 30, 2024
Full Chapters of 4000-5000 words due June 30, 2025

How has writing changed a life you're close to—your own life, lives you have observed, lives you've studied? In the modern world, writing is intertwined with many transitions (intellectual, emotional, political, economic, and civic) and developments: in our relationships, interests and affiliations, skills, knowledge, careers, cultures. And many of us who have been affected personally by writing feel passionate about the role that writing has taken in our lives.

This volume seeks personal stories about writing from people in many life circumstances, from within different institutions or forging their own independent paths: whether in schools or prisons, business or public service, a practiced profession or an unfolding transition. We are NOT looking for academic research studies. The stories can be presented in various formats, from traditional narratives to reflective essays, from letters to specific people or to writing itself, from mixed media or graphics to poems or journal entries—whatever you think represents your story best.

We are looking for stories that reveal how particular lives are different because writing came into them and how writing accomplished that change—what writing has done for the person. The stories may focus on how writing has shaped someone's private mind or their community relationships, saved or re-framed important memories, helped in creating styles of self-presentation or offering a pathway for participating in activities/groups, exciting and realizing new life possibilities. But we also welcome stories about how writing can lead us down paths that we later perceive as mistakes, or how people and situations have kept us separate from the power of writing. Writing is not one thing, one simple good or evil, but can be powerful at what it does.

We seek stories from young people and older people. We seek stories from different communities. We seek stories of people with different struggles, priorities, and values. We seek stories from people of all regions, who write in all languages (though the contributed chapters themselves should be in English). We seek stories to unpack why some of us love writing and some feel it is a necessary but unpleasant imposition—how writing conceives, deceives, perceives, makes possible, flourishes, and withers within our lives.

We seek proposals of 300-500 words (with an anticipated full manuscript of around 4000-5000 words) indicating the kind of narrative, significant elements, and origin of materials (personal experience, observations, or research). Please submit proposals and queries to the editors bazerman@education.ucsb.edu and kuntzman@ucsb.edu

This project is contracted to be published by the WAC Clearinghouse in the Lifespan Writing Research Series.

Possible Themes for proposals:

Early discoveries through writing

- Discovering imagination as a child
- Learning about the world
- Exploring meaning and commitments
- Dealing with childhood and youth trauma
- Becoming enamored with writing
- Early friendships built through writing, writing letters, building and losing friendships

Discovering identities, meanings, commitments, oneself

- Writing as an identity
- Working through personal difficulties
- Being lost and being found
- Connecting with others with similar interests, experiences, struggles, circumstances
- Working through social identities
- Troublesome or mistaken identities, commitments, engagement

Relationships

- The progress of a long relationship with writing
- Changing relationships with parents, loved ones, friends
- Remembering and reconnecting through writing
- Discovering new people and making new connections
- Memorializing moments and people

Life Changes

- Discovering different kinds of writing
 - Writing tasks that changed one's life
 - Finding a way into employment
 - Writing into a profession
 - Changing responsibilities and roles
 - Becoming published
 - Discovering new readers and their responses
 - Immigrating and documents
 - Contributions through writing
 - Writing as a way of understanding
 - Making knowledge
 - Making art
 - Making money
 - Discovering the power of writing and power through writing
 - Changing communities, changing lives, changing work
 - Finding a meaningful retirement project
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