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HOWLING WITH HOPE

Sean Wiebe

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HOWLING WITH HOPE

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Abstract

My PhD supervisor and lifetime mentor, Carl Leggo, was diagnosed with cancer in 2018 and died March 7, 2019. The prospect of a shortened life brings a sense of urgency to the central existential questions of love, fear, joy, and loss—four prominent themes in Leggo’s work. In this essay, I reflect on how his mentorship has transformed my ontological, epistemological, political, ethical, and axiological understandings of living as a creative scholar in the academy.

Résumé

Mon superviseur de thèse de doctorat et mon mentor depuis toujours, Carl Leggo, a reçu en 2018 un diagnostic de cancer et s’est éteint le 7 mars 2019. L’idée d’une vie raccourcie apporte un sentiment d’urgence aux grandes questions existentielles de l’amour, de la peur, de la joie et de la perte, quatre thèmes majeurs dans le travail de Leggo. Dans ce texte, je réfléchis à l’effet transformateur de son mentorat sur mes perspectives ontologiques, épistémologiques, politiques, éthiques et axiologiques de vie comme chercheur-créateur dans l’académie.

Part I: The Heart’s Call

A few months after I had moved from family housing on UBC campus to Charlottetown to take up my new academic position at the University of Prince Edward Island, I opened a box of teaching files looking for a black binder with all of my notes and handouts from when I took Carl Leggo’s Secondary English Methods class. Given the profound influence that he has had in my life, when I found the binder I was anticipating gems and gold nuggets of greatness that would transform my Secondary English Methods class into the class of my dreams, but there was nothing there that I could use. There was not a reading or handout or activity that I felt would legitimately belong in my own version of an English methods class. Carl’s transformative impact on my life was not about content or strategies, outcomes or activities.

I am writing this personal essay in the midst of grief. Carl has been my longtime friend,

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mentor, and father figure¹. During my Bachelor of Education, I took three courses with Carl, the first being Secondary English Methods, and it required a transfer to his section. My friend had taken her first class with Carl, and she said to me that I would love this guy. Looking back, these were prophetic words. My friend and I spent a lot of time together in my undergraduate years. She knew me as a poet and her encouragement to switch into Carl's section has made a tremendous difference in my life. This was in 1991. For one of the performative assignments in Carl's Language Across the Curriculum class, I was nominated to impersonate Carl. I was carried in on the shoulders of my group members while reading Carl's poetry in a voice that sounded uncannily like his. The pleasure of performance and camaraderie is a happy memory for me. The film, *The Dead Poets Society*, was released in 1989 (Haft et al., 1989). At the end of that Language Across the Curriculum course, we stood on our chairs.

I went on to take two more classes with Carl in my B.Ed, and two years later Carl became my supervisor for my master's degree, then my PhD, and he has been informally speaking into my life to the present day. From Carl I learn teaching is a calling. There are evangelical overtones in the idea of curriculum being the challenging work of hearing the voice that calls you into a life purpose, imbuing the details with meaning and the setbacks with hope. Many teachers know this surety of purpose, saying that teaching was not a second choice, a back up plan to med school, or the default because there were no other options or plans. To hear your call readies you to hear the heart-calls of others who are also seeking to know their voice and way in life. I have turned 50 this year, I have been a teacher for 26 years, and Carl's voice has been a prime molder and mover of my own.

I currently teach English Methods at the University of Prince Edward Island, and while I eventually found my voice for a while I tried on Carl's voice: I read my poetry like Carl, emulating his assonances, dramatic pauses, and hand gestures. And I offered Carl's words to the world like they had come from a deep wellness inside me, and in a way they did. I was siphoning water from Carl's well (Yallop et al., 2014). As I think on the theme of transformation in education, I believe that my friend, mentor, and father figure offered words that lived inside me, stories that centered me, and these provided an inspiring in equal measure to my heart's call.

In the film *Finding Forester* (Connery et al., 2000), the iconic but intensely private writer, William Forester (played by Sean Connery), takes on a protégé, Jamal Wallace (played by Rob Brown). In a short scene that could be called "The Writing Lesson," Forester pulls out a second typewriter for Jamal, and they sit opposite at a desk. Forester begins banging on the keys immediately, a wild mind of words spilling onto the page. Jamal's own words are stuck and he sits there thinking, at first for a few hours, then the rest of the night, and days later still nothing. Finally, to rescue him, Forester shows Jamal one of his stories, and encourages him to start typing it until Jamal's own words break out. As he writes, Jamal's words do emerge, and because it is a movie, he writes what becomes an award-winning story. I recognize this teaching strategy as part of my experience in the world. It is not an overstatement to say that our mentor's words, their voice, their demeanor, their outlook on life lives inside us as long as it needs to until our own transformation begins to emerge and our writing starts to take its own shape. The triggers for transformation can be born

1 Anna Reithmeier (Carl's daughter) and Lana Leggo (Carl's wife) gave permission to share these stories about Carl.

out of the relationships that we make with our teachers and supervisors, our friends and colleagues, our students, or anyone who draws near us for a time and influences how we think about the world. And yet, the process is still our own as we open ourselves up to being reshaped, being soft enough in the clay of our being to think differently than we did before.

Calling

Existence is fraught
with knowing
what name to call
so you can be

Who can call
if they don't know my name
how do I respond
if I don't hear it spoken

Who is being called
in the school yard
when all the children
shout, mom!
mom!!

Still, it is only
my children who will
call me, dad

Too big, too old,
too proud to soften
and admit the need
to be called

I am afraid
if I whisper your name
you won't hear me

Carl would often read his poetry to us, at that time still unpublished, as his first book of poetry, *Growing up Perpendicular on the Side of a Hill*, did not come out until 1994. We were an early public audience for poems that were just around the corner. Carl also invited us to join him in reading poetry. We read to hear the pleasure of sounds but we also read to hear our voices, to come to know their resonance within us. Carl pointed directly to this in our reading practice: In the sounds of words, he encouraged us to hear different voices within us and to celebrate them. In a post modern world, where truths are sometimes difficult, I think Carl was planting seeds of resonance so that we might hear our attachments to the world that hold us. One of Carl's great mentors, Ted Aoki, was writing about the auditory

then (1993), and it is interesting to speculate how mentorship moves from generation to generation.

As mementos, I still keep a handful of Carl's mimeographed pre-published poems, and probably because of that early influence, if I were editing a new collection of Carl's poems, I would start with one of these early poems, "O", a poem that is an interpretive key to how I remember Carl's influence on how and who I became as a secondary English teacher. In "O", I hear the passionate poet performing the world. The action of "O" begins in media res with Carl tobogganing, "like Frankie Avalon" down Lynch's Lane (Leggo, 1994, p. 30). As he gathers speed it looks like Carl is going to break the all-time distance record, and it is only the chance passing of an ESSO truck that prevents him from doing so. In the hospital the next day, when his brother says that he is glad Carl is not dead, Carl reveals the inner knowing of a boy's heart, "I knew darn sure he was just glad / I was stopped by the truck / and not still surfing all the way / through the O and a round the world" (p. 30). The paradox that the O is an opening to the world but also part of the truck that stops him is a clue to the transformative mentorship of Carl's pedagogy and poetry.

At the time, I was renting a home with a group of friends, and we would stay up late to listen to Don Taylor review the Canucks' highlights for Sports Page. On one of those nights a comedy show came on directly after Don Taylor's twinkling of the twine, and I wish I could remember for you the name of the show or the comedian, but all that remains is the part of his routine where he got down on his knees and howled. He said, "Sometimes you just have to get down on your knees and howl for the woman you love." And he did. He howled, and howled, and it was hilarious, and immediately inspirational. "O me! O life!" (Whitman, 1961, p. 215).

When I think about the transformation that is possible in education, Carl's long-time fascination with the letter O was part of shaping my heart's howling. When I began teaching poetry to my first class of grade nine students, we were using *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse* (Larkin, 1973), and one of the poetry units that I developed had these one-sentence lectures where each class our inquiry together began with a one-sentence definition of what poetry is. With the brash whimsy of a first-year teacher I did not define poetry as the textbooks did. Three of these one sentence lectures that I can remember without going back to my notebooks are: poetry is sunshine; poets have hooked feet (after a Ted Hughes poem); and poetry is O. Cue Walt Whitman, cue Alden Nowlan (Canadian readers will know his much anthologized poem, "The Bull Moose"), cue Allen Ginsberg, and cue Carl Leggo. I encouraged students to find the O's in poetry: the openings to new worlds; the howl of the heart's longing; or the portal to home. When those same students had me for grade 11 and when we read MacDuff's weeping for the murder of his wife and children, a sonorous howl of uncontainable grief, they remembered poetry is O.

Xs and Os

When a novelist
fast forwards
the hole in time
is what the poet
falls into.

Three hours later:
He cannot be found
in the study.

Meanwhile:
When he slows
his breath, he reaches
under the quiet,
underneath the empty
action and inaction
and all degrees
between.

Three days later:
When she looked
hard into his eyes,
all she saw
was vanilla

A few seconds later:
ice cream

A few years pass:
His life is
an ice cream truck
steering through
distorted reality,
absence of anything
sweet or solid.

Later that evening:
She'd prefer
a drunk driver
warbling a song
out of tune
out of time
landmarks swerving
in and out of focus.

Twenty-five years later:
When listening
to her breath
she hears the soul
of time, snowdrops
fragrant in the first

hot sun, lily of the valley
beginning to appear,
a tiny ache
of crocuses broke
through the grass

Less than a second later:
It seems love
of life has filled
her lungs
with the optimism
of a beach vacation
where her hopes
are the sand.

Thirty seconds later:
Her doubts
the same sand
falling back
when she flipped
the hourglass,
a bureaucracy of time.

Three days later:
It forced her to live
with integrity
interrogate
what was important
to live her life,
rather than

Fifteen years earlier:
Lying to herself,
simply by remaining
still, resorting
to convention.

After taking Secondary English Methods with Carl Leggo, one might think that I learned a strategy about journal writing, or maybe learned to more accurately correct students' essays, or maybe picked up some good tips on how to analyze a novel, but in the strange way that education can take hold of us and shake us up, and turn us around or into these new beings, I took one letter from that class.

I did my master's degree with Carl from 1994 to 1996, and in those years, I learned a different sense of the letter O. He took me out for dinner at a sushi restaurant on Granville street, and I remember him telling me the story of Rodney William Ansell, the Australian rancher on whom the movie *Crocodile Dundee* was based (Cornell, 1986). Australian

comedian, Paul Hogan, played Ansell and embodied the stereotype outback survivalist so well that Ansell came to believe his life was usurped. Ansell took Hogan to court but never did profit from the movie. Gary Rasberry was a PhD student with Carl at the time, and Carl gave me a copy of Gary's master's thesis, *The Good Kid*, where Gary narrates his school days being monopolized by pleasing his teachers (Rasberry, 1991). Carl wanted me to know my unique self as a teacher and to resist the lure of performing someone else's identity in my people-pleasing quest of being the good teacher.

For supervision meetings we would go out to eat at one of Carl's favourite restaurants and it was close to where I lived as well. To help me know more deeply who I was as a poet and a teacher, as a son and father, and to trust an inner voice working inside me, Carl recommended *The Tao of Pooh*. He also repeated a wisdom that I had heard him tell often: Looking for home Pooh kept finding a hole. So, Pooh reasoned that if he started looking for a hole, he might find home. There are so many questions in the interstice of home and hole. Can we find home through loss? Are homes whole collections of holes? Are the holes in ourselves held through home? Can we make home in a hole?

Freedom Making

for Annika

One winter evening
when the dog needs walking
and you are already so cold
that you wish the three blankets
piled over you could be heated
in the oven, or, that brief
thought of flying south,
leaving the dog to feed himself.

Such December days are frequent
enough that entire philosophies
have grown to steady us
against them: Zeus cursed
the howling wind
Sartre howled with it,
letting his inner tempest loose.
Siddhartha contemplated fire
a meditation of cremation
keeps skin warm.

There is the capital possibility
of buying more blankets
thicker socks, over stuffed
fleece liners, silk underwear
times two. And the Zen philosophy
of letting the dog loose

to run free and wild,
 why not give him the gift
 he wants most?
 He'll come back, right?

I have faced such nights,
 and pray you will know
 that the divine outlasts.
 Cross country teaches
 that some races are not to the fast
 but to those who have the will
 to keep on. To every
 vampire or wolverine movie,
 the promise of morning
 is becoming yourself again,
 of knowing who you belong to,
 claws and fangs recede
 because you are never alone.

Carl wrote the back-cover blurb on my first book of poetry, *How Boys Grow Up* (Wiebe, 2010). He noticed my voice, saying, "Sean invites us to linger in a man's experience of the world in startling ways that resonate with humour, heart, hope, and humanity." From Carl's influence I continue to story, re-story, and restore through my writing. It has been a time of grief in my life and through this grief I am learning to celebrate renewal.

Not really. That last paragraph sounds like I am wise, or have reached some kind of acceptance, which I have not. Tears come easily and often. In "The faces of love: The curriculum of loss," Carl (Leggo, 2017) recounts his brother's battle with cancer and looks into his memories to address the grief of losing him. He says writing has been his way to understand loss, and "to begin each new day with hope, even joy in the midst of loss" (p. 65). As Carl has said, "I trust writing will lead me to the understanding I need" (p. 67).

Batter My Heart

for Mark

In this world
 there is something
 that can break my heart,
 I said, at your baptism
 when you were out
 of the woods,
 no longer two pounds
 twenty-six weeks.

When the bar is on your shoulders
 sometimes I drink you in

with my eyes, you know
those days when the answer
to why you are
on this planet is foggy,
you hold your love
fierce against the thought
I would ever have to
let you go on
alone in this world.

There is more to say
more repairs to make
on pains I made
days when the house
looked broken into
regrets, decisions
that I would never risk
again wishing
I had a stone
so true all else
could be known from it,
Love God
and do what you will.

We were hiking in Squamish
trying to find a vista,
the weight on your shoulders
is not just in the gym
sometimes things are so close
to being lifted, it is not strength
that matters, but faith,
not moving mountains
but solitudes
the tiny radio
in my mind playing
worship songs
someone is out there
waiting, everyone is waiting
for something.

I go to your room
and the guy in the next bed
says you've been moved,
now I am sitting here
drinking too much coffee
a goldfish kept in a dark room

will lose all its colour
you have a hole in your heart
for no apparent reason
for a reason.

Holding my palm
over yours, a motionless
emotionless father and son,
your skin is warm
slightly sweaty,
two little boys
sitting silent
waiting for an answer,
with my fingers I eat
my P's and Q's one by one
nurses hovering like angels.

All at once
your face opens up
grows soft, oh my son
I place an arm around you,
not as tentatively,
as I might have
a moment of weakness
of strength,
you ask me,
Why is a dog happy?

That is it, really
the most a man can understand,
how Evan races to the door
or lifts a tired head
to rest on your knee.

Part II: Hole in My Heart

This essay has a second beginning. It has been two and a half months since Carl's passing and memorial services.

Leggo's O's

(written in the style of Peter Van Toorn's Mountain Boogie)

- O the too loud tick-tock knick knock
- O perpendicular man growing hillside up
- O homemade balsamic vinaigrette
- O silver surfer slicing ice sing song

- E, O H, O English method man
- happy hair hoping lemon sunshine
- the poetic license of Freudian cloud penises
- baleful howl of a coyote's cello
- moan of moon, mother's house, the view of Lynch's Lane
- the peer review of Jacques Cousteau
- Skipper muscle squat deadlift
- turbine churning tangerine sunsets
- cherry tomatoes cucumbers and peas
- Heloise's fist full of Abelard
- Antonio's big mouth apple bite
- double pike somersault with a twist
- Tigger tip toeing T-T-F-N
- bicep flex dapper black red seas
- golden sip of hand crafted beer
- fathers and sons sailing National Geographic
- the way home
- Augustine's heart hole in a concrete boat
- Cec Frazer Macky my brother and me
- ping pong balls gnip gnap the nog frog leaps
- Jesus calls
- Gros Morne Polaroid snap
- the cosmos in a spider's web
- ding dong, ding a ling, leg loose diaper sliding
- Pooh wisdom babbling in morse code
- doodle, poodle, puddle, cuddle
- spice of stippled salamander palimpsest
- man of letters, long-vowels, tangled lines
- S-O-S, O E-S-S-O, O Leggo love calls
- highways, ferryways, His ways, always
- pink pink hibiscus rose hips fluttering butterfly fear
- yogun fruz chairlift holler
- sock removed at the toll booth window
- jiggly jello sploosh refracting summer's light
- top down under Newfoundland sky
- Chilliwack manure tandem truck trailer
- coin flip call in a windstorm
- friggin cold February sucking icicles
- Saint at the threshold calls Leggo home
- gulps of water echoing down your throat in stereo
- father's arms open whiskered cheeks
- dog dazzle at the doorway of life
- tao of Glad Tidings Tabernacle
- vocāre vision velvet valentines
- too few the mornings be
- Seuss sass says sing faithfulness

O brook breeze lazy days reading round corners
 O salsa beats deep well heart whole
 O Father untangling Caleb's line twisted in knots
 O wormwork wormwood library shush
 O Oscars spark red carpet tango
 O pots and pans and grandchildren bands
 O Lana, Anna, and movies Tuesdays
 O Fred Astaire at the Papermaker's Ball
 O loon call lingers lakeside cafe
 O cotton dress hugging wet skin
 O lost boy loves father in found poem
 O found brother in lost pen in coat
 O grandmother I love you
 O the ways to build a boat, plank by plank, rib by rib

In *Taking the Leap*, Chodron (2009) says that "Our devotion to a teacher has nothing to do with his or her lifestyle or worldly accomplishments. It's their state of mind, the quality of their heart that we resonate with" (p. 26). She goes on to explain how a teacher's words can resonate within us, even parting the clouds of grief: "It's a matter of wisdom resonating with wisdom, of our wisdom resonating with the teacher's" (p. 26). In "The faces of love: The curriculum of loss," Carl (Leggo, 2017) tells a story about his brother and him doing acrobatic leaps on his mother's bed and then breaking it in two. Skipper repaired it with electrical tape and life moved on. Carl tells this story almost like a parable of wisdom, like Jesus might when teaching his disciples. Perhaps like me you can picture his long hair, soft chin and warm embrace. In the parable of the broken bed, I think about those moments in our lives when something cannot be fixed, that in the background of our actions there may be some strange social code lingering that asks for restitution, or that the players, the bed jumpers, are lost for a way to repair what they could not anticipate would go wrong right in the midst of their play. Carl writes: "As my brother quickly grew weaker with cancer, I remembered the catastrophe of the broken bed. Just as I did not know what to do then, I still did not know what to do" (Leggo, 2017, p. 67).

Make it Poetry

A blur of sunshine
 slices through the blinds

you lie awake
 staked by the truth,

here's what happens
 you make choices

and then your choices
 make choices,

there will be consequences
but which ones

will you want as your future?
So much to think about

all at once
out your window

crocus shoots nose up
through a pocket of leaves

as if winter never were
and time stopped here

for a watercolour.
Character is fate, said Heraclitus,

you are your future
look in the mirror,

it is possible to be more
than you started out being,

you are not a card
that appears out of nowhere

the denouement of a palm reading,
character defies itself

insists on transformation
if you can transform,

time opens out to you,
you cannot die.

One of the activities that we did in Carl's English methods class was to compose a poem using only the letters comprised in the words ping pong. Working in groups we wrote poems together, experimenting with all the sounds and then performed them. I learned the pleasure of sounds, the joy of experimentation, the fun of being silly. Really? Yes. Playfulness and experimentation were almost knocked out of me in an all too serious undergraduate degree focused on English literature. Carl helped me find a love of words again: he invited popular culture references, religious sacrilege, heartache spilled on the page. Today, play is alive and well in my work (Wiebe et al., 2016). Carl's early influences live on.

Bed Head

The dreams she had when she was sleeping
were different than the ones
when she was awake

They were more atavistic, full of verbs
where meaning might emerge
in hindsight, a Klimt kiss

She wished dreams could help her choose
which olive oil, it was prophetic
how food labeling

and fate mongering left out what mattered
whether god or government
it was all branding, she felt,

and a bit deceptive making her buy both
find truth by trial and error
revelation after the fact

The most powerful thing you can say to your beloved
is, according to Heidegger,
< . . . >

so she peppered her everyday with the phrase
and found it most useful in replies
to intestinal questions,

such as, how would you like your eggs?
according to Heidegger, she'd say,
and finally learned

how to read silences historically
a generation of thoughts
unspoken, not exactly

dishonest, as she'd tell herself, the library
only has commentaries
the original fell

out of circulation, she stopped caring
when she no longer believed
in an original translation

it was as if in quoting him a wry experiment
unearthed a long-ago riding injury
an echo in her childhood

like her memories were a brontosaurus
and a new fossil shifted
the overall shape

Other dreams she had after she was awake
and went back to bed,
these were pell-mell

the mother who carried her over a bridge
was not anyone she knew
like Picasso

had rearranged the scene and she was caught
dreaming someone else's dream
give up, and play dead

is what her mother said, not her actual one
but Picasso's mother
breathing the scent

of the olive blossoms from the original tree
a memory of a memory
thin as a wisp of smoke

I kept a journal as part of my English methods course requirements, and it did not take long before I was writing in it compulsively. Carl's encouraging words assuaged my fears about spelling and grammar and punctuation. He recommended I read Natalie Goldberg's (1986) *Writing Down the Bones*, and I eventually used her book as a way to frame a journal writing experience for my own students, giving them a writing tip each day for the first seven days as a way to describe how they might take personal ownership of journal writing: keep your hand moving; be specific; do not worry about spelling, grammar and punctuation; do not cross out; don't think; lose control; go for the jugular. I wonder if these might also be good tips for living, not just with words but with worries or hopes, with anxieties and dreams. I would not be able to wonder about the connection between words and worlds without Carl. He lived out a love of reading and writing. He told stories of the smell of books in the library, a nostalgic must of old pages. He told us he loved writing in the same way he looked forward to a glass of water after going for a run on a hot day. I do not think I was learning English methods per se, but was enraptured by the spirit of a poet sharing a love of words.

Getting Dressed

One worry for a day
 only one
 one hole in my pocket leads to another
 leads to empty pockets, emptiness
 one day for worry
 worry makes holes
 a holy day lets worry fall
 empty myself through the holes in my pocket
 only one is holy
 my worry is how I pocket my days with worry
 I worry my days with holiness
 Sadly, I pocket my holiness with loneliness
 my pockets full of holes
 one hole in my pocket leads to another lonely day
 this is what I worry about when I put on my pants

Lynn Fels writes to me, a gentle nudge to one of my hopeless forays into hope. I had sent an email to friends saying Carl lives on in our dreams. She heard the struggle with loss even as I tried to find words that sounded otherwise.

dearest Sean,
 gentle soldier of poetic words, you have lost the general....I wonder how
 he would laugh or frown at such a description....it is a gift and solace to
 know that you will be writing poems in the light of our beloved Carl....
 he gifted us each with compassion for ourselves, imagination to imagine
 ourselves beyond our own limitations....
 with love, always,
 Lynn²

Carl wrote truthfully. He sought to write more of the truth more often. In "Living Love: Confessions of a Fearful Teacher," we get a glimpse of Carl's way with truth (Leggo, 2011). In this essay, Carl opens the academic exterior and invites us to the inner places of fear. How much to reveal? How does living love prompt confession within the profession? Those who have heard Carl read at conferences know his critique of the scholarly life. The scholar's wanting: of fame, of acceptance, of quotations. The boundless desire for more. In the confession of his own desire there is a living love. Hear the overtones of Aoki's (1993) living curriculum, where what matters is the improvisation of the moment. Love includes its pre-commitments—virtues such as compassion and courage; and, says Carl, love is how we are with one another, openness and understanding, the warm honesty of our confession with one another. Truth yoked with transparency. There is a truth that is discovered from careful methods and systematic questioning, and there is a truth that is revealed from the parts of our innermost being. Such revelations are not easy. Hamlet's famous words to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in act three, scene two (Shakespeare, 1992), "Do you think I am easier to be played upon than a pipe" show an inner

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spirit that is contained and that human beings need thoughtful and moving confessions of who we are in the world to invite a music of our souls that can be played.

Post Truth³

Nothing is true. The papers print untruths.
even The Washington Post is post truth
even CIA briefings to the President
even the Christmas Card holiday greeting
your Grandmother sent through the post
arrived with an empty stamp
without a seal or guarantee
that I love you is more than pat,
her name is Pat, after all,
and the 25 enclosed barely buys
a head of cauliflower. Post Pat
everything and nothing is pat
Presidents play patty-cake on twitter
Red-Riding doesn't visit
she has swiped right, or is it left,
Does it matter? She is making out
on the couch to House of Cards.
Never write in a diary
your feelings are not true
just a million little pieces
that even Oprah can't vouch for.
Football isn't true, not the salary
nor the glory, nor the forever,
Amen, brother, don't say deflategate
some have concussions and some don't
no one knows who is telling it
not the doctors or the MRI scans.
At night, when are you sleeping
your FB bot automates a status update
steps, calories, winks, stars
instaeverything—all true,
beauty is truth, perception beauty
it is all we know, all pinned
packaged, turned, coined
little bits of body fuzz turned buzz
7 ways to convince your self/boss
that the work you do actually matters
the only mantra you will even need
click

3 Originally published in *Scrivener Creative Review*, 42, p. 47. Used with permission.

There was a time when the truth
 was an honorable pursuit
 there were methods and processes
 to determine it, there were those
 who climbed mountains
 to have it revealed, those who
 hid in the shadows to expose
 the lack of it. The truth,
 when it was discovered
 could set a person free
 could cause another to resign
 could start and stop a tank
 in the middle of the street.

At a 2008 CSSE conference in Vancouver, with a former graduate student, Carl presented a paper on love and shared something that a few members of the audience found uncomfortable. Carl said that he loved all his students and talked about how afraid people are of love, especially in academic environments. He recommended that we hold fast to what love can offer as a transformative experience in education. A year earlier Carl was promoted to full professor and could finally speak more openly about his beliefs that really mattered. One of my colleagues, an expert in knowledge translation, once shared with me Steven Covey's clever saying: "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing" (Covey, 1989). As I reflect on what might have been going on in that conference session in a small room in the UBC SCARF building, I believe Carl was finding his main thing. In the years that marked Carl as a full professor, in the years when he began so many book chapters and articles with an announcement of how old he was growing, in the years of his grandchildren, I believe Carl had learned the art and scholarship of speaking love. I believe it was the main thing that coloured everything else. The robustness of his ideas became robust because he searched for ways to understand them through the lens of love. The integrity of his poetry was an integer of fullness because it was filled out with the language of love.

In *The Faces of Love: The Curriculum of Loss*, Carl (Leggo, 2017) writes: "The loss was grievous, but the loss reminded me I am alive and I must keep on telling stories. So, I will" (p. 67). In *Written on the Body*, Jeanette Winterson (1992) says, "This hole in my heart is in the shape of you. No one else can fit it. Why would I want them to?" (p. 155). I imagine Carl saying to me that I can use the hole in my heart to make things whole. Perhaps it is what he has been saying to me all along.

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