

Editor's Note

The launching of the *Journal of Poetry Therapy: The interdisciplinary journal of theory, practice, research and education* marks a significant opportunity for all those concerned with the art of therapy. The pluralistic base of poetry therapy has evolved through the exploration and evaluation of the differential effects of the use of the poetic in various therapeutic capacities by both practitioners and researchers. Literary scholars have provided perspectives on the human condition that have been all too often neglected in the clinical literature. The *Journal* is arriving in a time when practice reports are becoming clearer, research more rigorous and philosophical questions more penetrating than ever before in the history of poetry therapy. The *Journal* is also arriving amidst high tech times with a concomitant search for scientific validation of therapeutic approaches. The *Journal of Poetry Therapy* has the potential to make a contribution toward the restoration of the balance between the art and science of clinical practice, bearing in mind that we will need to demonstrate both qualitatively and quantitatively the value of poetry therapy. This is a most exciting challenge!

The *Journal* pages will be open to a wide range of theories, techniques, philosophies, and research methods. Emerging from the tradition of the arts in psychotherapy (i.e. music, art, dance and drama) poetry therapy is subject to the same critical questions regarding its role and function. Some scholars view poetry therapy as a therapeutic entity, others as an ancillary technique, and still others as a philosophy of practice. There is space for all of the aforementioned positions and more. For the purposes of this *Journal* the poetic is broadly conceptualized to include the use of published poems, song lyrics, creative writing, literary arts, audio-visual aids and other bibliotherapeutic materials. The strategic use of language, images and metaphors are

within the range of a poetic approach to practice.

Our editorial board represents a variety of disciplines including psychiatry, social work, psychology, literature, family therapy, counseling, and other arts therapies. The special columns in this *Journal* have been designed with the purpose of fostering research, practice and networking in the literary arts therapies. The *Journal File* column by Alice Gullens Smith, will update readers on the professional literature. The *Poetic Resources* column by Geri Giebel Chavis will be useful as a source of materials (i.e. listing of poetry collections, short stories, etc.) for research and practice. Ken Gorelick will edit *Consultation*, a column that will address questions from our readership on the use of the poetic in clinical practice. Arthur Lerner, the "Dean of Poetry Therapy" will write a regular column entitled *Poetry Therapy Corner* wherein he will raise and discuss many of the key issues (i.e. credentialing, research, education) relating to the field of poetry therapy. The *Journal* will of course contain full-length and brief articles as well as poetry. To help ensure the integrity and scholarship of the *Journal*, all manuscripts will be sent out to our editorial board members for blind review.

In short, I will strive toward a balance of material in each *Journal* issue. Comments and suggestions are most welcome. Please pay particular attention to the instructions for authors and consider submitting a manuscript.

I'll close now with a reflection. While at my desk at home jotting down some notes for this column on a yellow legal pad, my daughter Nicole (age 5) came in my office and asked to "work" with me on her rainbow book. After helping Nicole spell a few words and looking at her drawing, it occurred to me that colors and an honesty of language (often simple words) were really central to what I was trying to convey about the *Journal*. My son, Christopher (age 2) later came in to "work" with me. He proceeded to set up shop by bringing in his crayons, paper and trucks. Somehow I heard Harry Chapin's song "Cat's in the Cradle" and we were all on the floor drawing. Funny how children learn to speak our language.

I hope you enjoy the first issue. May the poem remain unfinished. . .

Nicholas Mazza, Ph.D.