

Editor's Note

The artistic, healing, integrative, and evaluative functions of poetry writing are put forth in this issue of the *Journal* by poets, therapists, and educators. Aaron Kramer, poet and Professor of English, brings the creative and interactive aspects of poetry to a patients' group in a state mental hospital. His purpose is not therapy, however, therapeutic experiences certainly occur. Kramer writes: "I had managed to score key points on the nature of poetry and had introduced some of the beauties poetry offers. That I had used their very poems to illustrate this, must have boosted their self esteem and built their morale . . ." Richard L. Sartore, educator and consultant, identifies how metaphors, whether imported by the therapist through the selection of a poem (external poetry) or created by the client (internal poetic process), can be helpful in the assessment and treatment of childhood trauma. Caroline Scielzo, a psychoanalyst, examines two analysed poems as a measure of treatment process and outcome.

Our final feature piece is a theme-centered collection of poems on pain by Alan Shefsky. Lee Zahner-Roloff, Professor of Performance Studies and Jungian therapist provides a brief introduction, setting a context and purpose for the poems. This prompted me to create a new section for the *Journal* entitled "Thematic Poetry Report." It is on one level, a form of case study and qualitative research, however, the reader is given only minimal structure pertaining to theme and purpose. The analysis is left to the reader. I offer the following preliminary definition to help guide potential contributors: "Thematic Poetry Report (TPR) is a theme-centered presentation of poetry created by one person or unit (e.g. couple, family, group, or community). The poetry, having psychological and/or social implications, serves as the primary

unit for analysis. A brief narrative guideline is included in the report." I invite our readers to submit material and offer suggestions for refinement of the definition.

The articles and columns in this issue constitute an interdisciplinary base of knowledge and experience. This is enriching and contributes to scholarship. New perceptions, visions, ways of thinking, courses of action, and re-examinations are at the heart of scholarship. It is important, however, that our work and scholarly contributions be established within our respective professional boundaries. This is not a question of choice, but rather a matter of complying with legal and ethical standards. Aaron Kramer, for example defines his role as a poet, not a therapist. Caroline Scielzo defines her role as a therapist, not a poet. Both offer rich contributions to the field of poetry therapy. Each one of us has a similar opportunity. There are no shortcuts to being a therapist. There are no shortcuts to being a poet or literary scholar. Arthur Lerner (Poetry Therapy Corner) notes in his examination of *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rainer Maria Rilke: "The poet urges his young friend to learn the art of being patient . . . Working in solitude, going into the depths of things, and above all never forgetting the power of love are among the many matters Rilke discusses." It's a message worth carrying through our personal and professional journeys. The credibility and integrity of the field of poetry therapy is based, in part, upon each contributor identifying his or her purpose in a particular professional setting.

Milton F. Shore (1990), editor of the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, states that "the American Orthopsychiatric Association, over the course of 65 years, has developed a philosophy of interdisciplinary work that allows different disciplines to speak in different voices and thus to expand everyone's understanding of the issues being addressed. The conceptual cloth created by this interdisciplinary approach is an integrated piece but its disciplinary strands remain distinct—and define its strength" (p.4). This is a model for the *Journal of Poetry Therapy* to emulate, and offers much for the National Association for Poetry Therapy to consider.

Kenneth Gorelick, in "Consultation Corner" also deals with the matter of boundaries in his discussion about how to respond to a client who is a published poet. One major issue is respect for the client's definition and purpose of writing. Respect is indeed a core condition for the growth of an organization and a journal. On that note, I would like to thank the associate and contributing editors, editorial board, authors, and readers of the *Journal* for their support through our third

volume year. A special thanks to my children, Nicole and Christopher, as I put this issue and them to bed. Let's keep our dreams alive!

Nicholas Mazza

Reference

Shore, M.F. (1990). The new allegiance to interdisciplinary work: True or false? *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 60, 4.