

Session: G.14 on Mar 13, 2009 from 9:30 AM to 10:45 AM

*Conference on College Composition and Communication,
San Francisco, CA*

*In Memoriam:
A Performance Piece
on Haunted Pasts,
in Four Acts*

Keith Dorwick, The University of Louisiana at Lafayette

*Bob Mayberry, California State University, Channel
Islands*

Paul Puccio, Bloomfield College

Joonna Smitherman Trapp, Northwestern College

In Memoriam: A Performance Piece on Haunted Pasts, in Four Acts

PAUL: In Memoriam...

ALL: A Performance Piece on Haunted Pasts, in Four Acts

JOONNA: This panel will be an interwoven performance piece, one which will look at the ways in which we both inhabit and are inhabited by the memories of those who have come before us and those who have come after us.

KEITH: While for institutional reasons, such as workload documents and travel money, we submitted four presentation titles with four authors . . .

JOONNA: The way you see them in the program...

KEITH: ... In fact we will not present our work as separate "papers," but, in the spirit of the best theatre, more collaboratively. All four of us, and you, will participate simultaneously in an exploration of ways we are haunted by memories in the classroom and in the larger community beyond our walls.

ALL: For the record, here are our titles:

JOONNA: Act One: "Ghostly Women of Chicago: Memoria as Female Empowerment"

PAUL: Act Two: "Ghosts in the Classroom: Memory and Pedagogy"

BOB: Act Three: "Unremembered Memory: A Dialog With Forgotten Teachers"

KEITH: Act Four: "Remembered as Ghosts: Making Our Memories Visible through Performativity"

JOONNA: We are interested in the ways in which memory, the lost canon of rhetoric, intersects with pedagogy, teaching, writing, activism, and theatre and drama. As Kathleen Ryan has noted, "To redefine memory as a strategic, contextualized process of interpretation requires a new version of classical rhetoric's fourth canon, memoria. A contemporary canon of memory that I call rememored knowing attends to the relationships among history, literacy, and invention to reconceive memory as a way to make knowledge"

BOB [*speaking in such a way we can all hear the quotes*] *Composition Studies*, Spring 2004.

PAUL: This play of voices and memories will be one way in which we and you will "rememory"

ourselves both in our teaching and in the larger communities in which we live. We will perform our own memories of our classrooms, our teachers, our dead and invite you, the audience, to do the same.

KEITH: At the same time, though, as we live in a sea of memories of our own, we also are the source for the memories of our students and our colleagues and community members, a pedagogy of memory that is powerful if often unremarked.

BOB: How do we inhabit memory? And how do we learn to live with our own ghosts? As compositionists we do so by writing them, reinscribing them in texts, as we will in the play of voices that is the heart of this session.

PAUL: Joonna will relate how using a discipline in which memoria is still alive (theatre studies), students are able to create counter-cultural memories at a small rural college. Working against the inherited gendered repressions of their culture, her students were able to "haunt back" against negative views about women by taking on the personas of empowered Chicago female artists.

JOONNA: By writing and performing monologues, becoming these women for a time in the invitational darkness of the theatre, they formed new memories, appropriating the ghosts of the past and important earlier struggles as their own. These performances and writings created a memory storehouse on campus, igniting a fervor for gender awareness and new self-fashioning.

KEITH: Paul will "raise" some of the ghosts that haunt his teaching, especially his own teachers who have shaped his pedagogy.

PAUL: The classroom, like the theatre, is always an already haunted space, where the past returns without necessarily being summoned. Theatres are haunted by past performances and past productions, which accumulate in the collective experience of audiences; in our classrooms, our own memories rewind and replay the dramas of past classes and interactions with people who are no longer in the present tense of our lives. What happens when past and present collide in our pedagogical consciousness? And how might our students be haunted? What anxieties, confusions, fears, and delights rumble across the emotional terrain of their learning? Which of their past teachers lurk in the shadows of our classrooms? How much of their resistance, engagement, withdrawal, or paralysis has more to do with their ghosts?

BOB: We might even think of them as poltergeists, clattering about our student's education, causing interference in ways that we (and often they) cannot recognize or understand.

JOONNA: Bob will dialog with other panelists, with you, and with his multiple selves to explore the ways in which the ghost of past teachers haunt all learners, but especially writing students, actors, playwrights, and professors. How we learned what we learned, and who we learned it from—though long since lost to conscious memory—creeps into our current learning like some guiding hand on the Ouija board of life.

BOB: Without such memorialized ghosts, playwrights would have nothing to write and actors no Method by which to perform. Is memory, and specifically the unconscious memory of pedagogy,

equally crucial to teachers and writers? And Keith will tell us how in many small towns across America, it is possible to forget that queers exist and live among their straight counterparts. A recent Day of Silence in Lafayette, Louisiana allowed students, teachers and community activists alike to haunt his town for 24 hours.

KEITH: Walking around silent rather than silenced, the Day of Silence embodied our memories and symbolized the ways in which queer people are often not allowed to speak our own truths. We became theatrical ghosts in our own community.

BOB: Act One

PAUL: Ghostly Women of Chicago: Memoria as Female Empowerment

JOONNA: Chicago is for most people, that...

KEITH: “Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation’s Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders”

JOONNA: In Sandberg's famous poem, Chicago women appear only as...

BOB: “...painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys...”

PAUL: Good grief!

JOONNA: Good grief, indeed! When I think of Chicago, I think of women. Brave women--artists, actors, reformers, actors...

PAUL: You said actors twice...

BOB: They won't mind that.

JOONNA: ... activists, filmmakers--public women. We are...

KEITH: Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House

BOB: Mary Harris Jones, labor agitator, who came to be called “Mother Jones.”

PAUL: Viola Spolin, creator of improvisational games as a way to empower immigrants.

JOONNA: Anna Morgan, speech teacher who set the standards for the teaching of speech and theater as respected intellectual study, preparing the way for the “little theater movement” in Chicago.

KEITH: Winifred Louise Ward, pioneer in creative dramatics and children's theater.

BOB: Maria del Jesus Saucedo, community activist, poet, actor, teacher, revolutionary.

PAUL: Hannah Solomon, activist, chair of the committee on Motion Pictures.

JOONNA: Chaucina White Horse, actress, hawker of medicinal goods, active in Native American organizations.....and the list could go on. At times when women's voices have not been so easily heard above the city's din, these women and others like them found agency and voice, making a difference in the city's history and especially in the arts. Jane Addams, herself, wrote...

PAUL: "I am not one of those who believe --broadly speaking--that women are better than men. We have not wrecked railroads, nor corrupted legislatures, nor done many unholy things that men have done; but then we must remember that we have not had the chance."

JOONNA: I co-teach with Karen, my theater colleague, in a class which we call Women in Public: Chicago Theater and Film. I'm the film person and do the research on the history of women in the city.

KEITH: Karen is a specialist in dramatic literature, an actress, and has lived and worked in the city. Many of her former theatre students live and work in Chicago. She has Chicago connections.

JOONNA: In this course, we set the stage, literally, for the reappearance of those female Chicago ghosts through our students. We have theater majors in the class. These men and women are well-trained in improvisation and acting. They already have an understanding of public voice and even agency. They understand how imagining themselves in another skin can change and motivate their lives. Also in the class are women usually from all over campus. They are not actors, fear improvisation, are thoughtful, timid, and certainly not too sure of their own roles as women on campus or the world. Their co-mingling is refreshing. Even better, going to Chicago as a class after reading plays by Chicago women, meeting some of these women face to face, meeting alums working in the Chicago arts scene, and interacting with female film directors struggling to make their visions appear on the silver screen is life altering for our young, inexperienced students. Karen and I have been shocked by some of the comments from our students.

PAUL: "I had never even been on a plane in my life."

KEITH: "I am just not used to big cities. They make me claustrophobic and completely intimidated."

BOB: "I was constantly amazed at my own ignorance."

JOONNA: After all the plays, films, the trip to Chicago, and discussions, the students' primary project is to allow the ghost of a Chicago female artist or activist to materialize on stage as they take on that persona. When they invite the memories of their particularly chosen Chicago

woman, the real transformation happens. Gradually as each student researches someone from the city's past, he or she develops a sense of voice for that woman.

PAUL: A sense of presence...

KEITH: A sense of history...

BOB: A sense of self and purpose...

JOONNA: It's not easy. The ghosts are coaxed reluctantly. With the help of our playwrighting professor, the students develop monologues. Gradually as the pieces emerge and improve and they begin speaking them, committing them to memory, it is not just the students I see—it is the Chicago woman reborn. In the final presentation—a partially staged delivery with some lights, blocking, costuming, and props—the transformation is complete.

PAUL: Sounds like Hull House all over again.

JOONNA: All the rhetorical strategies, the whole canon, appear in this project--invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery. In ways that just don't often happen in traditional classes, rhetorical composition is unified. Just as Viola Spolin's improv exercises taught the disempowered of Chicago to imagine themselves as powerful people in the city, as she helped them place words and actions in their mouths and hearts, ready to call forth at the right moment, as she helped them to imagine themselves as speakers and actors in society...

KEITH: Just so, these memorized monologues allow the students to relive moments of active lives...

JOONNA: to rehearse action,

BOB: to valorize public agency,

JOONNA: to put such things in the storehouse of memory, ready for recall when needed. Jerome S. Bruner says that "A growing body of data points to the conclusion that people act themselves into a way of believing as readily as they believe themselves into a way of acting" (132).

PAUL: Watching a quiet, reserved Midwestern young woman write, memorize, and perform a speech which...

KEITH: might have been spoken by a Native American rights activist...

BOB: whose husband had just been killed suddenly...

JOONNA: ... is breathtaking. And watching that character decide that the tragedy would not stop her work on behalf of her people [*beat*] That determination to make a difference, follow her heart, is now engrained in the memory of the student writer/performer. Spoken in a classroom environment where taking such risks are welcome, future opportunities to take risks in public seem more likely and less frightening. For one student in particular, the monologue wasn't only about her selected female artist's coming to grips with the horrors of abuse, it was

also the student's own story of realization of past abuse and her own self-healing.

BOB: Many of the plays the students read were about women's issues, and some included examinations of sexual abuse.

JOONNA: Jackie was shaken by the plays. We, as her professors, worked with her and managed to get her to see our school counselor. Some weeks later, she told us that formerly repressed memories of sexual abuse in her childhood were ghostly images rising up to haunt her waking hours. In her research on Chicago women, Jackie found a painter whose art was used by awareness groups in the city as a way to foster discussion and sharing of stories of sexual abuse. This artist took Jackie under her wing; they even met together while we were on our class trip to Chicago. Their conversations became the meat of Jackie's monologue. She enacted the artist coming to grips with her own abuse and explaining to an imagined gallery audience the purpose of her paintings.

KEITH: As the student performer spoke, slides of the paintings were projected in the darkened theatre space like nearly forgotten ghosts--

JOONNA: Memories of past abuse that cannot and should not be forgotten. I realized that Jackie wasn't just speaking of the artist's experiences; she was indeed creating her own story of realization and coping as she spoke. The stories and lives of the two women had merged--the older and more experienced helping lift up the younger.

PAUL: Were all the monologues this powerful?

JOONNA: Not by a longshot. But they all worked together to create a kind of community building of women helping and understanding each other across space and time. Brad Peters describes a "companion text" as the "corpus of student writing that can accompany the reading of a literary work." But what interests me is his claim that the "parts of a companion text where cognitive shifts of some kind occur--moments of recognition, for example, or formation of new ideas, discovery of unexpected connections, or exploration." These shifts "emerge in a companion text as the student gets opportunities to locate and enlarge upon issues that cut across [. . .] her life."

PAUL: So, in the darkness of the theatre space, in the silence of quiet research, in the private conversations one has with an artist within a work of art, it happened--these companion texts...

JOONNA: Yes, these ineffable connections. What Karen and I discovered in this class was that becoming a voice with connections to others...a public voice...can happen in quiet places, even places as quiet as the human mind and spirit. Becoming a public person is largely learning to see and hear others--largely remembering and embodying the ones that came before, the ones before you now--in your own work. Memory is the storehouse of knowledge for a culture, for a community. And here, just as it was for the ancient rhetoricians, memory or re-membering is a site of invention and, as to later rhetoricians, a site of creativity. In the words of Viola Spolin...

BOB: "Everyone can act. Everyone can improvise."

KEITH: "We learn though experience and experiencing..."

PAUL: "and no one teaches anyone anything."

[*Beat*]

BOB: Our students don't like that idea.

PAUL: What?

BOB: That no one teaches them anything, that *they* have the responsibility of learning.

KEITH: Can you blame them?

BOB: No, but their resistance haunts me.

KEITH: They're just repeating what they've been told.

BOB: Yeah, that's what bothers me. It's like their teachers are ...

JOONNA: A ghostly presence in our classrooms?

BOB: Yeah!

PAUL: Haunting our students!

BOB: Yeah, and not in a good way, like Joonna described.

KEITH: Joonna's ghosts are very friendly. So are mine, mostly. I remember ...

[*Everyone sighs... at the interruption, probably, or maybe at memories of their own.*]

KEITH: [*A bit louder*] I remember how I got to be a English professor, how it all started. I was a voice major, and I'd come to singing very late. In fact, I didn't really learn to read music until I was 28 or so, and music is one of those things, like other languages, that come early or with great difficulty, if at all. I did ok, for all that. But sight reading came, then, with great difficulty, and it took me forever to remember my concert pieces, the arias, and lieder, and folksongs I loved.

[*KEITH sings a line or two from one of his early greatest hits, but stops half way through, stricken, the music and text forgotten.*]

KEITH: And then I went through one of the worst experiences of my life as a performer: my junior recital in the voice program, in which I managed, somehow, to forget every one of my numbers.

[*As KEITH tells the story of his voice recital, the other performers begin to whisper to ad lib as they whisper to each other, getting louder each moment as they start to laugh.*]

KEITH: The Neapolitan song, gone. The Strauss Lieder. Forgotten half way through.

JOONNA: Did you hear what happened at Keith's recital?

PAUL: I would have DIED.

KEITH: Even songs I knew so well because I sang them over and over again.

[*KEITH starts another song, "Der Vogelfänger," loudly and happily, but gets interrupted.*]

PAUL: KEITH, DAMMIT, it's six in the morning. I love Mozart as much as anyone, but not every damned morning!

KEITH: Sorry!

[*KEITH moves a step, steps forward and bows. He is back in the recital hall. He starts "Der Vogelfänger" again, but he is visibly nervous. And he loses his place. Again.*]

BOB: I don't know why he bothers really. I mean, if you start studying music as late as he does, you can't possibly catch up.

PAUL: And then when he tries to sing loud, sometimes he goes sharp.

JOONNA: That's because he's so worried about going flat.

[*They laugh.*]

[*KEITH bows, and moves quickly to another spot. He looks like he might throw up.*]

KEITH: Well, enough of that. Maybe they were right. Maybe I couldn't make it as a professional singer. But what I can do is write. I used to love my music history courses.

[*BOB plays several of KEITH's teachers in the following sequence.*]

BOB: I wanted to let you know. I'm using your paper on Bach's Cantata 80 in my graduate musicology course as a model for my students.

KEITH: Mr. Hebert¹, I'm only a sophomore!

BOB: They don't know that. And you put them to shame.

KEITH: And then the music history course I was taking the next semester got cancelled. I never found out why. But under my university's policies, I had to find another course, and soon, before registration ended. And so I found myself in non-fiction prose, the only class that had an opening in all the university, but it would allow me to write and it would keep my financial aid. The teacher was this old grouch who had, I seem to remember, had written the great American novel... on really busty cheerleaders. [*Beat*] But he was a great teacher. I don't even remember his name but I can still see him slumping at his desk, smoking away.

¹ Pronounced "hee-ber," no final t.

BOB: [*in a gravelly voice*] The essay is a playful form. I want you to play, to take chances. To write. And to write without fear.

KEITH: And so I did.

BOB: I wanted to let you know. If you ever get tired of that crowd over in Music, you could be a writer. You have real talent. Become an English major, you won't regret it.

KEITH: And I never have. Not once. So that's my teacher, one of my half-remembered hauntings, one of my crowd of friendly memories.

BOB: It's lovely, Keith. Mine aren't so friendly. I'm haunted by the ghosts of other teachers.

KEITH: You mean our students' former teachers?

BOB: Yeah.

KEITH: Which ones haunt you?

BOB: Oh, the teachers who tell their students never to use the pronoun "I" in their papers, for example.

KEITH: Or the ones who say, "Never start a sentence with 'and' or 'but'"?

BOB: Ooh, yeah, them.

PAUL: Or who require a specific number of sentences in a paragraph.

JOONNA: Watch out, Jane Shaffer, Ghostbusters is looking for you!

KEITH: Or those who persist in the archaic notion that an English sentence can't end with a preposition.

BOB: That's something up with which I will not put.

PAUL: Or those who—

BOB: Okay, okay, I think they got the point.

PAUL: Yeah, but there's so many!

BOB: And their ghosts hang out in our classrooms, don't they?

JOONNA: Hovering over their former students, unwilling to relinquish control of their prose, trying with all their ghostly might to prevent students from committing such mortal sins!

BOB: I want to exorcize them from my classes.

KEITH: [*With a great flourish*] Avaunt, avaunt, ye phantasmagoria! Get thee away from me! Be gone!

BOB: Thanks.

KEITH: [*cheerily*] Glad to help!

BOB: But I was thinking more of taking such teachers out behind the proverbial shed and shooting them. [*ALL gasp.*] Metaphorically, of course.

KEITH: Of course.

BOB: Problem is ...

JOONNA: Yes?

BOB: A group of students once overheard me saying that.

KEITH: Spying in the hallways were they?

JOONNA: Snooping on office conversations?

BOB: No, I said it in class.

ALL: OOOH!

BOB: I worry they didn't know I was exaggerating for effect.

JOONNA: Of course they knew!

BOB: Hmm, not so sure. See, I once got feedback on how my students "misunderstood" (from my point of view) my rhetorical exaggeration and it cost me dearly.

KEITH: Do tell.

BOB: I was wondering if you'd ever ask. So, several teaching jobs ago, in one of my classroom rants about the common myths writing teachers perpetuate, like not beginning sentences with 'and' or 'but,' I told a class, quote, "Grammar doesn't matter," unquote. I assumed it was clear in the context that I was suggesting that grammar rules were less important to writers than communicating their intent, and that writers often ignored grammar problems or questions until very late in the process, as they revised and edited their work. Pretty reasonable stuff, right?

KEITH: Yeah, sure.

JOONNA: Whatever you say.

BOB: Apparently some students in the class weren't paying attention to the context of my remark and quoted me to a senior faculty member who then reported what my student said during the next department meeting: "Bob Mayberry tells his students that grammar doesn't matter."

KEITH [*standing up in protest*]: He does not!

BOB [*dryly*]: Apparently he does.

JOONNA: Pretty embarrassing.

BOB: All the more so because I was a lecturer on a one year contract...

ALL: OOOH!

BOB: ...and the acting composition director that semester.

JOONNA: Ouch. What happened?

BOB: I had to find another job.

KEITH: All because of some inappropriate remark?

BOB: Well, there were other factors, but that remark cost me a great deal of respect from the tenured faculty.

KEITH: Were you angry at the student who had misrepresented what you said?

BOB: Never occurred to me to be angry at the student. He or she was just doing what we all do, misremember what we hear, misquote what we've been told.

KEITH: It gives one pause.

BOB: A whole career of pauses.

KEITH: Maybe those teacherly ghosts we were banishing earlier—

BOB: *You* were banishing.

KEITH: Maybe they have been misrepresented by their students.

BOB: You mean there's *not* a whole army of English teachers out there telling students it's wrong to use "I" in their papers?

KEITH: Maybe not.

BOB: I don't believe it.

KEITH: Me neither.

BOB: Teachers say some unbelievable shit. [*Beat*]

JOONNA: Apparently you did.

PAUL: It gives one pause.

KEITH: A whole 4C's panel full of pause.

[Pause. The cast turns toward the audience and puts their fists on their chins, a la Rodin's *The Thinker*.]

JOONNA: Enough pausing, time for Act Two: Ghosts in the Classroom: Memory and Pedagogy.

PAUL: I often think of *Hamlet*.

KEITH: “What, has this thing appear’d again tonight?”

PAUL: Theatre historian Marvin Carlson reminds us that Marcellus’s question might just as well refer to the play itself—a performance that materializes nightly. Like the ghost that appears to Hamlet, the entire play appears to audiences. The actors are themselves ghostly figures appearing on stage—real and yet not real, seen before and seen for the first time, remembered and also tangibly new. Carlson explains, “There appears to be something in the very nature of the theatrical experience itself that encourages . . . a simultaneous awareness of something previously experienced and of something being offered in the present that is both the same and different, which can only be fully appreciated by a kind of doubleness of perception in the audience” (51).

But when I say . . .

BOB: “I often think of *Hamlet*”

PAUL: I mean that I often think of *Hamlet* when I am teaching, because what Carlson says about the theatre makes just as much sense of our experience of the classroom: when I am teaching, I often have “a simultaneous awareness of something previously experienced and of something being offered in the present that is both the same and different.”

KEITH: It makes me think of Ibsen.

JOONNA: “Ghosts. Those two from the greenhouse—have come back.”

PAUL: There are so many ghosts in my classroom. Ghosts of my own teachers—ghostly not because they are “no longer with us” but because they are no longer with me. Of course, when I take the time to reflect on my teaching and its origins, I realize just how much I absorbed both the manner and methods of my best teachers. I may not recall the content of many of their courses—and maybe that is just a function of time—but I can re-collect the spirit of these teachers. What they did to make me care about learning. There’s so much pedagogical residue that has settled into my teaching.

KEITH: Like I tell my students, an example is always useful to help make an argument!

PAUL: When I teach, I strenuously aim to engage my students' imaginations, to help them understand and experience for themselves the ways in which the imagination opens windows onto all sorts of lives and worlds, to show them how the imagination is your very own "way-back" machine, your own Scotty to beam you up or down to wherever you may wish to go. This is an essential goal of all of my courses, even though it is not so easily expressed as a learning outcome that can be assessed at the end of a semester and reported to a General Education Committee.

But why is this invitation to the imagination so important to me? There are several answers to that question. To some extent, my appreciation

KEITH: my valuation

BOB: my enjoyment

PAUL: . . . inevitably grows out of a life of reading, and out of a career of teaching both literature and writing. So much of our work is grounded in cultivating the resource of the imagination. When I'm in the mood for memoir, I can also trace this to my lonely and precocious childhood, full of far too many Edgar Allen Poe stories and a daily devotion to the television series *Dark Shadows*.

JOONNA: Oooh, *Dark Shadows*!

KEITH: Barnabas Collins was so HOT!

PAUL: But I can also remember how much I was struck by my college advisor's imaginative engagement (and I mean that word to suggest a kind of rendezvous) with her own field of study—Victorian literature. Arlene Jackson spoke of Hardy's Wessex as a real place; I was convinced that she had roamed the streets of Dickens's London; and she surely knew several governesses toiling away at fusty castellated country houses owned by irritable Byronic men with sequestered wives. What I knew then and know now is that her own imagination helped her bring the Victorian past to life in her classes—and she enjoyed her own imagination in the most charming ways.

JOONNA: Well, you see, I have this windowless office, so that's why I hung this poster of a drawing of a window overlooking an Oxford college. If I can't have a real window looking out toward 54th Street, I can have a window looking out toward Exeter College.

PAUL: This was not mere whimsy on Arlene's part. She understood that the spark in her mind that allowed her to see Oxford from her office in west Philadelphia was the same spark that kindled her own scholarship and teaching—the spark that she hoped to see in the eyes of her students as well.

JOONNA: Another Paul—this one a raconteur of a different sort—celebrates the imagination in John Guare's play *Six Degrees of Separation*.

BOB: “Our imagination teaches us our limits and then how to grow beyond those limits. The imagination says Listen to me. I am your darkest voice. I am your 4 AM voice. I am the voice that wakes you up and says this is what I’m afraid of. Do not listen to me at your peril. The imagination is the noon voice that sees clearly and says yes, this is what I want for my life. It’s there to sort out your nightmare, to show you the exit from the maze of your nightmare, to transform the nightmare into dreams that become your bedrock. If we don’t listen to that voice, it dies. It shrivels. It vanishes.

The imagination is not our escape. On the contrary, the imagination is the place we are all trying to get to.”

PAUL: And there are so many other ghostly teachers loitering in my classrooms. Michael Wolff who would get tearful when reading George Eliot, and who taught me the value of allowing students to know that teachers respond emotionally to books. Virginia Hatlen, the first teacher I had who set up a circle of desks and sat in a student desk herself—showing how much she was one reader in a roomful of readers. And the many kind and soft-spoken teachers I have known who showed me that gentleness has its own authority: Roberts French, Tom McFadden, Peter Elbow. [*During this speech, the other actors quietly name their own teachers, whoever they may be, from their own real lives.*]

Despite the necessity for course enrollment caps, I welcome these auxiliary presences in my classes. I have come to rely on these ghosts. It's not that I channel them when I teach; they are "there" already in what I do, in what I say, in how I say it. I don't mean that I am a collage of pedagogies--at least, no more than any of us is a collage of those people and events and relationships and conversations that comprise our past. The past is always present.

BOB: I know what you mean, the past seems to people the present with ghosts. Some I even rely on when I teach, but they don’t reside in my classrooms. They’re a little more, how should I say ...?

DR. GRAMMARIUS (channeled by JOONNA) : Intimate?

BOB: Oh, you're here.

Dr. G: You didn't think I'd miss this, did you?

BOB: No, I guess not, but ... is you-know-who with you?

DR. DUBIOUS (as played by KEITH): Stop whispering about me.

BOB: You're here too.

DR. D: If you're here ...

DR. G: We're here.

BOB: Okay, but this isn't exactly the proper forum.

DR. G: Proper!

DR. D: Don't make me laugh! [*laughs*]

BOB: My job right now is to explore how the memories of past teachers affects my teaching today, so, I'd be eternally grateful—

DR. G: If we butt out.

BOB: To put it bluntly.

DR. D: No chance, Bobby boy.

DR. G: You might as well introduce us.

DR. D: C'mon! We won't bite.

BOB: [*Reluctantly*] Okay. Let me introduce you to my all-too-constant companions, Dr. Grammarius and Dr. Dubious. Usually they reside deep in the convoluted folds of my brain, down where memory is nothing more than chemicals and electrical impulses, but today, apparently, they have decided to join us. Okay?

[*DRS. D & G nod.*]

BOB: I was going to share a memory of a teacher with them, but ...

DR. G: Do it.

BOB: ... with you two here ...

DR. D: We won't interrupt.

DR. G: Much.

[*DRS. D & G chuckle.*]

PAUL: And so we begin Act Three. Unremembered Memory: A Dialog with Forgotten Teachers.

BOB: Okay. Uh ... my most vivid memory of a teacher is Paul Adamian, my freshman English prof. He was so nervous in front of a class, particularly the first day of the semester, that he'd pace back and forth puffing on his cigarettes. [*Imitates Adamian pacing and smoking*] Remember: this was the 1960s, when students and faculty still smoked in classes. Paul was

huffing and puffing his way through his favorite brand, Viceroy's—now why do I remember that?

DR. D: You don't. You couldn't possibly.

DR. G: Why not? He's got a good memory, and it was a striking image during a formative period of his life.

DR. D: He wrote a poem about Uncle Paul, remember?

DR. G: No.

DR. D: You wouldn't.

BOB: But I do.

DR. D: In the poem you mentioned Viceroy's and Camels and the Marlboro man, right?

BOB: That sounds right.

DR. D: You had no idea THEN which brand Paul smoked, so how can you know now? Art doesn't exactly imitate life, does it, Bobby?

DR. G: He remembers the poem, the poem preserves the memory of the brands Paul smoked. He's got a one in three chance of being right.

DR. D: It's much more likely that what he's remembering is the act of writing the poem, his own fictional reconstruction of the memory of Paul smoking.

DR. G: But—

BOB: Okay. At least we agree Paul smoked. [*Imitating again*] Pacing and smoking, smoking and pacing. Viceroy's, Camels, who cares? The man was so nervous he once had two cigarettes going at once! [*Mimes smoking two cigarettes while pacing.*]

DR. G: Now that makes no sense.

BOB: Yeah, his anxiety made him behave irrationally. [*Continues miming smoking two cigarettes*]

DR. G: How could he possibly be smoking from two lit cigarettes? Think about it. [*Demonstrates as he explains*] He has one lit, he wants to light another. Where does he put the first? In his mouth? He'll discover it the moment he lights the second, and he'll discard it. Meaning he only has one cigarette.

BOB: So he put it down somewhere.

DR. G: Then he only has one cigarette. And if he goes to pick it up with the hand he uses to smoke, [*mimes*] he will see the cigarette already in his hand. You can only smoke one cigarette at a time, unless you consciously choose to smoke two.

BOB: No, it was unconscious, I'm sure.

DR. D: Maybe he was so oblivious he kept the lit cigarette in his hand, like this [*mimes*], stuck between two fingers while he lit the second cigarette, without looking at it, automatically, like a well worn habit, and then stuck the new cigarette in his mouth BEFORE noticing the one burning in his hand.

[*DR. D mimes the entire business to determine if it is possible; DR. G joins in, imitating DR. D's mime actions; then BOB follows, until all three are miming this complicated business in syncopation.*]

[*Beat*]

BOB: But I remember it! I remember commenting on it to my classmates. We took bets the next class on whether Paul would get two lit at the same time again.

DR. D: You're lying now.

BOB: No, I remember. [*To DR. G*] Back me up here.

DR. G: Last time you told this story, the class took bets on how many times Paul said the word "um" during class.

BOB: Yeah, we used to do that.

DR. D: Makes this particular memory suspect.

BOB: What? We couldn't have bet on several things?

DR. G: You never mentioned it before.

BOB: So?

DR. D: So your brain is creating convenient memories or shifting memories to serve your rhetorical purposes. You need evidence that Paul actually smoke two cigarettes, so you conveniently "borrow" a memory about the class betting on one of his behaviors, adapt it to smoking, and Voilá!

BOB: But I do remember it.

DR. G: Ever remember dreams?

BOB: Sure.

DR. D: Ever remember telling somebody something you planned to tell them but never got around to?

BOB: Uh, yeah.

DR. G: Ever made up something to tell your parents and then told that story so often it began to “feel real”?

BOB: I guess so.

DR. G: All memory is constructed.

DR. D: Which means it’s all reconstructed.

DR. G: Which means ...

BOB: No, wait, Paul existed. He was real. He was my freshman composition teacher and later my advisor. He was fired for protesting against the Vietnam War, in spite of being tenured. That was real!

DR. G: Highly likely. But the images you’ve created around him, this mentor of yours, images that make him comic or eccentric—

DR. D: Or heroic—

DR. G: Especially the memories that make him a master teacher—

DR. D: Memories you constructed or exaggerated or “borrowed”—

DR. G: Memories that turned a professor victimized by an intolerant educational system—

DR. D: And political system—

DR. G: Into your teaching mentor—

DR. D: Those images are suspect.

DR. G: Questionable.

DR. D: Dubious.

[*Beat*]

BOB: [*To audience*] So, what can we learn from my schizophrenic dialog? That memories can’t

be trusted, sure. That the ghosts of teachers who haunt us may well be constructs of our own fetid brains, of course. Nothing new there. But if we're the authors of our own ghostly teachers, who or what is haunting us?

PAUL: Perhaps even memory is a process. Tennyson, who supplied the title for this session, knew that. I recall a Victorian Literature class in which Arlene explained that the Latin preposition "in" means both "in" and "into," and so the title *In Memoriam* might more rightly be translated as "*Into Memory*"—not a state of mind so much as an activity of mind. Less a place than a journey.

KEITH:

Be near me when my light is low
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of being slow.

JOONNA: Actually, I never made such an observation in any of the courses that Paul had with me as an undergraduate. In fact, he didn't read *In Memoriam* until he went to graduate school.

PAUL: (*beat*) Ah. (*beat*) Perhaps even memory is a process of the imagination. And this is no mere séance, but the draft of a yet-to-be-written paper.

BOB: You never know, it could be a *Ding an Sich*. Sometimes a play is just a play.

[*KEITH steps forward. While the following dialogue takes place, during which KEITH does not speak after introducing the fourth act, PAUL binds him in long strips of rainbow colored cloth. Finally, he gags him with material that glitters and sparkles. The material of the gag must tear easily.*]

KEITH: Act Four: "Remembered as Ghosts: Making Our Memories Visible through Performativity"

[*KEITH watches the binding, but as it proceeds, and he is more and more visibly different from the others, he withdraws deeper into his own self.*]

ALL BUT KEITH [*shouting*]: Time Until the Silence, The Day of Silence is here!

JOONNA: As the national website for this event notes, the Day of Silence, a project of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), is "a student-led day of action when concerned students, from middle school to college, take some form of a vow of silence to bring attention to the name-calling, bullying and harassment--in effect, the silencing--experienced by LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) students and their allies."

BOB: As part of their local Day of Silence, members of UL Lafayette student groups, the Women Organizing Women and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance as well as participants in the FM Project at Acadiana CARES, the support group for young gay and bisexual men run by the local AIDS agency, together carried out a vow of silence for a 24 hour period.

JOONNA: No talking, students.

BOB: No whispering.

PAUL: SHHH! [whispered] Don't TALK! Dr. D. will kill you!

JOONNA: Supportive faculty excused students from talking during class discussions.

BOB: Keith was silent during a staff and faculty pot luck.

JOONNA: And if you know Keith, you know he likes to talk. A lot.

[*KEITH glares at JOONNA. Slowly, JOONNA holds up a picture of Lawrence King.*]

JOONNA: That year's Day of Silence was held in memory of Lawrence King, a fifteen year old shot and killed by a classmate over his sexual orientation and gender expression.

[*All cast members bow their head for a full fifteen seconds of silence.*]

BOB: Keith would like you to know how walking around silent rather than silenced, the Day of Silence embodied the memories of his community and symbolized the ways in which queer people are often not allowed to speak our own truths.

JOONNA: The participants that day became theatrical ghosts in his community, not only silent, but also, for many in the community, invisible. They did not know how to deal with the silence (which became palpable) and so they talked around the silent rather than with them. The queers in that southern town represented and "rememoried" the ghosts of the dead. . .

PAUL: . . . particularly Lawrence King, for the moment, alive once again through memory.

[*The binding continues.*]

BOB and PAUL: The silence went on.

JOONNA: For twenty four hours.

BOB: It went on...

JOONNA and PAUL [*slowly*]: ... twenty four hours.

ALL BUT KEITH: And then at last...

KEITH: *[ripping away the gag]* At last, it ended!

PAUL: This symbolic silence...

JOONNA: This self-opposed oppression....

KEITH: It ended!

[He mouths the numbers, the other cast members joining in as they catch on. They all mouth 12, 11, 10, 9 and so forth...and when they mouth "one," they yell, just like New Year's!]

KEITH: *[as the others ad lib the stories of their day about who made them talk and what it felt like to be silenced]* It felt good to be among my LGBTQ friends (and occasional straight boy who wasn't really all THAT straight)....

PAUL: HEY! No outing!

JOONNA. Oh, like we didn't know.

KEITH: The stories poured out, of who couldn't talk and who could and who had made it....

JOONNA: ALL THE WAY! WHOO HOO!

KEITH: And who would have made it...

PAUL *[whining a bit]*: Can I help it I had to work? Can you imagine miming "Do you want fries with that?" for eight hours solid?

KEITH: and who would NEVER EVER do a Day of Silence again!

BOB: You could not PAY me, gurl!

KEITH: and everyone agreeing *[all nod]* that that was probably a good idea.

[All laugh.]

KEITH: *[sweetly and slowing, basking in it.]* And everyone laughing. It was the first partnership between FM, a community group for young men, the university's Gay and Lesbian Alliance and Women Organizing Women. At midnight of the new day, 41 people in one small room in the Honors Lounge felt liberated. And 41 ghosts had walked all over my town and showed how silence took away our voices.

And our voices were loud that night, as we went our separate ways.

[ALL FOUR ACTORS sit in the audience]

BOB: When we first envisioned this ghostly panel, Joonna thought immediately of her Women in Chicago class—

PAUL: With good reason, it was an extraordinary class, “haunting” her in the best sense of that word.

BOB: Exactly. But my imagination evoked scarier ghosts, like students who remember me as their teacher. And not the ones, like Joonna’s, who will remember her class fondly, but those who might have a grudge. They’re the ones who haunt my sleepless nights. Not the ghosts of the successful, but ghosts of the failures.

STUDENT [JOONNA]: Heh! I’m no failure, no thanks to you.

BOB: Not *their* failures, but *my* failures. The students I never reached. Or the ones I did reach, but who I screwed up with. The lives I made more difficult, like—

STUDENT: You’re talking about me again! You’ve got no right to tell my story. I’m not a failure, I’m a school administrator. How you like them apples, Dr. Know-it-all? I made it, in the same system you did, without any help from you.

BOB: I have never told you how sorry I am—

STUDENT: I don’t give a flying fuck for your apologies, Professor. You screwed up, get over it.

BOB: I should never have made you so paranoid about commas.

STUDENT: Commas!? Who the hell’s talking about commas?

BOB: I noticed a problem with your use of commas, remember? And I gave you a handbook to read and some exercises to complete. You don’t remember that?

STUDENT: I have no idea what you’re talking about.

BOB: When you’d finished the exercises, I suggested you revise your latest paper by applying the comma conventions you’d just studied. This doesn’t ring a bell?

STUDENT: [*Listens for it. Beat*] Nothing but silence, doc.

BOB: When you resubmitted your paper, every sentence had 4, 5, 6 commas in it! I thought you’d gone crazy. But when I asked you about it, you pointed to a rule in the handbook which you’d applied. For every one! You’d done what I asked you to do, and your writing had gotten worse. I assumed I’d destroyed any intuitive sense you’d had about when to use commas. I figured you would have comma problems for the rest of your life. You didn’t?

STUDENT: Commas? Get serious. I have secretaries to put in the commas. I have no memory of what you’re talking about, but I do recall a friend of mine in college, another student, who told me to leave all the commas out and make the sentences short. Fewer chances to make a mistake

that way, she said. That helped.

BOB: Wow. If you aren't mad at me about the commas, what are you doing here?

STUDENT: Grammar.

BOB: Grammar?

STUDENT: Grammar. You don't remember?

BOB: I don't teach grammar.

STUDENT: Exactly. You told us grammar didn't matter.

BOB: That's not exactly what—

STUDENT: You wrote it on the board one day: "There are no rules in writing." You wrote it.

BOB: You're forgetting the second part, "only conventions."

STUDENT: You're making it up.

BOB: No, that's what I was trying to teach you, that—

STUDENT: You're covering your ass. You don't wanna be embarrassed in front of all these people. Well, these few people.

BOB: No, I'm just—

STUDENT: Admit it! You taught us grammar didn't matter, you wrote on the board that there were no rules, and then I try to get into the Education program and find out I gotta take a grammar test. It mattered!

BOB: I was teaching writing, not preparing you for some antiquated test.

STUDENT: You coulda helped me out! At least you shouldn't of lied. That messed me up bad. I had to take that fucking test three times because of you. I even hired a tutor. Just to get past a grammar test! Why didn't you tell us about that?

BOB: I had no idea.

STUDENT: I'm s'posed to believe a professor has no idea about entrance exams to teaching certificate programs? C'mon, "professor," I'm an administrator now, 'member? I know all the cons, all the denials, all the ways you PhD's prevaricate. Like that? Prevaricater.

BOB: I was trying to help you focus on the content of your writing, to liberate you from the inhibition of conventions, to help—

STUDENT: Oh, you liberated me alright. Liberated me from graduating on time. Liberated me from a couple hundred bucks I didn't have. Liberated me right into hell. You know how hard it is

to become a school administrator when you've failed the certificate qualifying test twice? Twice! You coulda prepared me, doc. You coulda told me how it really is. You woulda saved me a lot of pain. And saved yourself a lot of nightmares. [*Cutting BOB off*] Don't say a word! I'm outa here. But I'll be back. This nightmare repeats, over and over and over ...

PAUL: Amanda Wingfield, in *The Glass Menagerie*, has something to say about that--but then Amanda Wingfield has something to say about everything.

JOONNA [*in a cheesy southern accent*]: "You are the only young man I know of who ignores the fact that the future becomes the present, the present the past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it."

BOB: [*flat*] "I will think that over and see what I can make of it."

PAUL: If I am haunted by my Victorian college advisor Arlene, might not one of my students one day be haunted by me?

KEITH: Wil

JOONNA: Or Marcella

BOB: Or Regina

KEITH: Or Jason

PAUL: Might absorb how I teach, and the trace of my pedagogy . . .

JOONNA: Arlene's pedagogy

PAUL: Would live again in some classroom in . . . Lodi, New Jersey.

KEITH: There are times today when I feel as if I have staggered into a play by Pirandello.

BOB: Which is, in itself, something that someone might say in a play by Pirandello.

JOONNA: All of us might indeed be in search of an author: someone to inscribe us in a memory; to "re-memory" us, as Kathleen Ryan proposes; to compose us in language.

KEITH: "We want to live, sir."

BOB: "Through all eternity?"

KEITH: "No, sir, But for a moment at least. In you."

JOONNA: "They want to live in us."

PAUL: And so perhaps we defy death with memory. To remember is to redeem those we have lost, and to be remembered is to be rescued from oblivion. Anyone who has written even the shortest memoir understands that. And anyone who has ever felt the presence of a ghost in the classroom understands that.

For once, Shakespeare isn't quite right:

JOONNA: The rest is *not* silence.

[*Fini*]

BOB: [*with huge energy*] And now it's time for you, our audience members, to play the newest, hottest game show at the Conference on College Composition and Communication!

PAUL: That's right, folks, it's time for *Let's Ask a Question!*

[The cast applauds wildly, just like on *Let's Make a Deal.*]

JOONNA: You can ask a question...

KEITH: or tell a story....

BOB: This week's question: [*The pace slows; these questions are delivered elegantly, and with great beauty, each slower than the last...*] How have you been haunted?

KEITH: Who tries to silence you?

JOONNA: What have you forgotten to tell?

[*Two Long Beats, everyone keeping very still...*]

PAUL: [*Like the knelling of a bell*] Who are your ghosts?

[*The cast bows and breaks the mood. Questions ensue.*]