

From the Editor

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading the 2018 issue of *Kansas English*, which contains an invigorating and inspiring collection of teaching reflections, creative works, and scholarly arguments. Each piece offers insight and nourishment as we consider our teaching, our students, and our profession. Here's an overview of this issue to whet your appetite:

Brooke Johnson kicks things off with “Dear Tired Teacher” and the important reminder to take care of ourselves. In this honest and moving piece, Johnson encourages us to ask for help, to share our stories, and to resist the tyranny of perfectionism—all from the perspective of a “recovering tired teacher.”

In “Teaching MacGyver to Write,” **Victoria Opalewski** reflects on the many ways that her students—sometimes the most challenging ones—teach her about resilience, creativity, and, most importantly, making connections and nurturing those relationships.

Carolyn L. Carlson explores book banning in “Jazz, Drama, and a Librarian: Advocating Against Book Censorship in Public Schools.” In this article, Carlson argues in support of access to diverse books that can serve as windows and mirrors for young readers—and provides resources and advice to help us do so.

In “*Speak*, Trigger Warnings, and Listening to Student Needs,” **Andrea Marshbank** ponders the importance of considering student needs in relation to text selection and other sensitive course content. Marshbank’s honest sharing of her experience encourages us all to reflect on teachable moments—not just for our students, but for *ourselves*.

Abigail Crane reflects on her childhood reading of *Little Women* and subsequent writing experiences in “Becoming Jo March.” She reveals how she now uses her own writing process to encourage her students to be both fearless and empowered in their writing and story-telling.

In her practitioner piece “Utilizing Imitation to Jumpstart Creation in Writing,” **Aleisha Christner** describes how she uses mentor texts in her composition lessons to teach students how to imitate the structure and craft of a piece, thus enhancing their writing and their confidence.

Judy Sansom analyzes John Knowles’ 1959 classic young adult novel from a queer theory perspective in “The Tree of Panic in *A Separate Peace*.” In this article, Sansom argues that the tree from which Gene and Finny leap symbolizes the biblical tree of knowledge and functions as a phallic symbol that represents forbidden desire.

And finally, **Vicki Sherbert** offers a blessing to her students prior to the start of student teaching in “Beyond this Night.” In this poem, Sherbert, encourages these future teachers to remember that they are “more than enough” as they embrace this next opportunity for learning and growth.

So, dear reader, I hope that you savor and enjoy each of these pieces. Perhaps they will offer you some new ideas for approaching teaching and learning. Perhaps they will help you reflect on your own journey in this profession. Perhaps they will provide some encouragement and rejuvenation, as you consider this collegial community of English teachers. Perhaps they will inspire you to write and share your own ideas with readers of *Kansas English*. I hope so! We’d love to hear from you. Please check out the call for manuscripts, and contact me with any questions.

Until next time, happy teaching and learning!

Katherine Mason Cramer