



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Blatchford, Christie: “Mother’s Milk,” from *The First Man in My Life: Daughters Write About their Fathers*, ed. Sandra Martin, 2007, Penguin Group (Canada). Reprinted with permission of the author.

Callwood, June: “Forgiveness,” first published in *The Walrus*, June 2007. June Callwood, Canadian author, journalist, social activist died in April 2007.

Crummey, Michael: “The Fish, the Fish,” from *Writing Life*, ed. Constance Rooke, 2006, McClelland and Stewart. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Evans, Jon: “Apocalypse Soon,” from *The Walrus*, September 2007. Jon Evans is a Canadian author, journalist and scriptwriter. Visit www.jonevans.ca. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Fiorito, Joe: Excerpted from *Union Station* by Joe Fiorito © 2006. Published by McClelland & Stewart. Used with permission of the publisher.

Ford, Catherine: “Yahoo, It’s Calgary,” excerpted from *Against the Grain* by Catherine Ford © 2005. Published by McClelland & Stewart. Used with permission of the publisher.

Garneau, Marc: “Canada Must Put the Planet’s Interests First,” from the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, December 14, 2007, p. A25. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Lam, Dr. Vincent, and Dr. Colin Lee: “Dr. Lam’s Perspective: Go on a Canoe Trip,” from *The Flu Pandemic and You: A Canadian Guide* by Vincent

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Lane, Patrick: Excerpted from *There Is a Season: A Memoir in a Garden* by Patrick Lane © 2004. Published by McClelland & Stewart. Used with permission of the publisher.

Mackintosh, C. B.: “Moss Campion” from *Dropped Threads 3: Beyond the Small Circle*, ed. Marjorie Anderson, 2006, Vintage Canada. Reprinted with permission of the author.

MacLennan, Hugh: “A Sound Beyond Hearing” from *Barometer Rising*. Permission granted by McGill-Queens University Press for Hugh MacLennan. First published in 1941.

Nolen, Stephanie: “Regine Mamba,” excerpted from *28 Stories of AIDS in Africa* by Stephanie Nolen © 2007 Stephanie Nolen. Reprinted by permission of Knopf Canada.

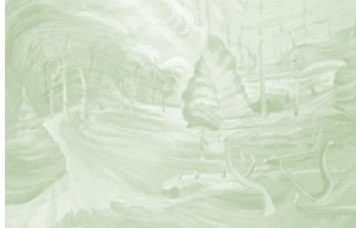
Rosenthal, Jeffrey: “Poker Power,” excerpted from *Struck by Lightning: The Curious World of Probabilities* © 2005 Jeffrey S. Rosenthal. Published by HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. All rights reserved.

Sampang, Crisanta: “Trading Motherhood for Dollars,” from *Between Interruptions: Thirty Women Tell the Truth About Motherhood*, published 2007 by Key Porter. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Savage, Candace: “Stuck on the Prairies: Where Is Here?” from *Curious by Nature* by Candace Savage, published 2005 by Greystone Books, a division of Douglas & McIntyre Ltd. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Von Hahn, Karen: “Self-Serving Propaganda,” from the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, August 11, 2007. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Wiebe, Rudy: “The Bull,” excerpted from *Of This Earth: A Mennonite Boyhood in the Boreal Forest* by Rudy Wiebe © 2006 Jackpine House Ltd. Reprinted by permission of Knopf Canada.



TO THE STUDENT

We hope you like *The Act of Writing*. In our eight editions so far, we've put real effort into collecting material that is fun to read, that provides issues to debate in class, that inspires you to write about significant things, and that suggests good books to keep you reading after the course is done.

The 50 selections between these covers provide some good reading right now. Notice, though, how the introduction to each author also lists more works by that person. And the "Explorations" feature after each selection suggests which of those books are probably most worth reading. Circle the most likely ones to try over the holidays, or next summer, or whenever else you have time. (Then keep this book, so you have a record of those choices!)

If our selection by Jeffrey Rosenthal or Linda McQuaig or Stephanie Nolen or Margaret Atwood or Naomi Klein especially appeals to you, then treat it like a movie trailer: go on to a full-length feature as soon as you can. Remember that in addition to the fun you may have and the insights you may get, the act of opening a book is probably the most direct path to improving your own writing. Every time you read good writing, your mind is forming patterns that will help you produce your own.

"Explorations," the feature following each essay, also suggests several websites about this author and this subject. Check them out. You can read a poem by Goran Simic or Michael Crummey, or view Emily Carr's best paintings, or see a video interview with June Callwood on her social views, Stephanie Nolen on her reporting about AIDS in Africa, or Christie Blatchford about what she saw with Canadian troops on the battlefields of Afghanistan. Or after reading astronaut Marc Garneau on global warming, you can view a site that calculates your own carbon footprint.

Finally, *The Act of Writing* teaches a philosophy of composition. We hope you consider carefully this book's advice about how good writing

is produced in the real world: not just through blueprinting an essay before you write the first word, but through a process of discovery, of “thinking by writing.” Do read our overview of the writing process, on pages 1 through 19, with close attention. Free yourself up to try the techniques it suggests, and free yourself from some of the inefficient or even harmful practices of the past. The methods we suggest are based on today’s research, but they are also the same ones that most good writers have always used.

R.C.



TO THE TEACHER

The essay as a form of writing has never been more important than now. It is true that our nation has long focussed on facts: the early Jesuit martyrs issued detailed reports of their work; the factors of the Hudson's Bay Company penned exact records of their trade with trappers; and explorers such as Captain Thomas James and Samuel Hearne wrote clear and even polished accounts of their discoveries and adventures. Today, if anything, we see a resurgence of that factual impulse. Never have so many film documentaries been seen in so many theatres by so many people. Never have events such as Toronto's Hot Docs been so popular.

And what about the nonfiction essay today? Anthologies such as *The Act of Writing* abound, competing for the honour of educating students. Also, recently in Canada a flood of essay anthologies for the general reader has appeared, with titles such as *Between Interruptions: Thirty Women Tell the Truth About Motherhood*; *Writing Life*; *Dropped Threads 1, 2 and 3*; *Utopia: Towards a New Toronto*; *Canada's Young Activists: A Generation Stands Up for Change*; *What I Meant to Say: The Private Lives of Men*; *The First Man in My Life: Daughters Write About Their Fathers*; and *What Is a Canadian?: Forty-Three Thought-Provoking Responses*.

Fine new periodicals such as *The Walrus*, with significant and arresting essays, are also being founded. Even newspapers devote space to essays, on every conceivable topic, by their readers.

What does all this mean? It certainly does not mean that Canadians lack imagination, for a flood of good fiction is also coming out. No, what I take this to mean is that the essay and its cousins satisfy a great need in the public. After the stasis of the Cold War and more recently the paralysis of 9/11, Canadians are ready to explore and learn. They want to know how others live. They want to understand how everything works. And in pursuing these desires, they are becoming better citizens of Canada and of the world.

It is with real hope, then, that an anthologist launches a new edition. Welcome to our eighth!

CONTINUITY

One aspect of designing a new edition is to conserve what readers have liked so far. Many reviewers have helped us in this task. We have stayed very close to their wishes, and we trust this means we have stayed close to your wishes too. In this eighth edition a core of proven and familiar pieces stays in place, which we hope will provide many of your own favourites as you design your course.

In the core structure of the book, as well, we are not pursuing change for the sake of change. In earlier editions we have dropped and added chapters, in response to readers' wishes. This time we are maintaining the overall outlines of the book, because of the good degree of user satisfaction shown in the reviews. Note that our most-used chapters (determined by review results) contain the largest numbers of essays, so that students and teachers will have the greatest de facto choice of readings. (Also see that at the end of each chapter introduction appears a list of essays in *other* chapters that also make use of the present means of organization—to give a still larger choice.)

EXPLORATION

Of the 50 selections in *The Act of Writing*, eighth edition, about a third are new. But the newness lies even more in the selection of writers than in their number. We have many fresh voices this time—such as Jeffrey Rosenthal, Marc Garneau, Crisanta Sampang, Stephanie Nolen, Michael Crummey, Jon Evans, Drs. Vincent Lam and Colin Lee, C. B. Mackintosh, Catherine Ford, Christie Blatchford and Candace Savage—as a new generation of writers continues to take its place in Canada. Many of our new contributors are from Western Canada, to better balance our contents geographically. There is representation from Quebec and from the First Nations population, and an ever-larger number of our contributors are new Canadians. As for gender, we offer a balanced proportion of 25 selections by women and 25 by men.

In addition, we resolutely maintain *The Act of Writing* as an anthology of all-Canadian essays, to provide an alternative for teachers and students who want more than a token selection of our own materials in the classroom. Yet at the same time you will find a strong international focus through Canadian eyes: astronaut Marc Garneau tells how his world changed when he saw it from space; Crisanta Sampang describes the experience of so many mothers working in Canada to support their children elsewhere; Stephanie Nolen shows us an African grandmother who, amid the AIDS epidemic, fights to save her grandchildren;

Catherine Pigott learns new body image in Gambia; Margaret Atwood sees new directions in America; Naomi Klein investigates the sweatshop origins of clothes worn by Canadians; and Lt.-Gen. Roméo Dallaire takes us to Rwanda, a paradise made hell by politics both local and international.

As times change, controversy keeps on emerging. A great many *Act of Writing* selections explore issues: globalization, war, racism, homelessness, sexism, SUVs and their effects; technology changing the ways we read and write; protecting ourselves against pandemics; prejudice against the disabled; and the challenges of being an immigrant. To reflect our strong emphasis on issues, the feature “Ideas for Discussion and Writing,” which appears after each selection, is on the average fairly extensive, while “Structure” and “Style” are on the average more compact.

Finally, the feature “Explorations,” at the end of each selection, has grown, to offer students a larger choice of books, websites and other sources that relate to the author and/or subject of that selection. We like to think of *The Act of Writing* as an index to independent readings students may wish to do: when they have been stimulated by a selection, they are given paths to continue on their own.

The book’s website at www.mcgrawhill.ca/olc/conrad contains the “Topics for Writing” that formerly appeared at the end of each chapter.

IF YOU ARE NEW TO THIS BOOK

The Act of Writing, eighth edition, encourages flexibility and individualization. The combination of three to nine essays per chapter, with several more identified in cross-references, will yield more selections per unit than you are likely to use. Thus you can individualize, choosing readings that best suit the needs and interests of your particular class. This book also offers a range of difficulty, from essays that are very accessible to others that are challenging.

Note: The “Table of Contents and Difficulty Ranking” of your **Instructor’s Manual** rates all selections at one of three levels of difficulty, so if you are new to this book you can more quickly tailor a syllabus to your class.

The discussion topics after each selection offer themes for analysis and debate. “Explorations,” as described earlier, suggests books and websites for independent investigation. And finally, the “Process in Writing” topic after each essay and the process “Guidelines” tailored for each chapter offer some latitude of choice for the individual teacher, the individual class, the individual student.

See the two tables of contents. The first lists all selections in their chapters arranged by *form of organization* (you can choose from eight essays, for example, that all demonstrate organization through comparison and contrast). The second table of contents lists all essays by general *subject*, to help you choose selections of interest to your particular students, especially in a theme-based course.

An introductory essay, “The Act of Writing,” starts the book off by putting to rest several common misconceptions about writing that plague students, then describes what it is that an essayist actually does. It emphasizes the individuality of the writer, the importance of motivation, the role of intuition as well as logic, and a balance of spontaneity and revision of the process of writing.

As we have seen, the essays are arranged in chapters that each demonstrate a fundamental pattern of thought—and therefore of organization. “Narration” starts the book off, because no approach is easier or more motivating for a first assignment than writing a story, in chronological order, about oneself. “Example” and “Description” follow, because these tools of development are used to some degree in almost all writing. “Cause and Effect” and its following chapter, “Comparison and Contrast,” are at the centre of the essayist’s organizational repertoire. “Analogy and Related Devices” and “Classification” follow “Comparison and Contrast,” for they are both varieties of comparison. “Process Analysis,” an approach used widely across the curriculum, follows. After all these *forms*, our largest chapter, “Argumentation and Persuasion,” explores more fully the writer’s most basic *purpose*: to make a point. It examines the dualities of deduction and induction, and of argumentation and persuasion, then illustrates their application with nine model essays.

Throughout the book each selection is prefaced by an introduction to the author, designed to interest the student, often to present the author as a role model, and to encourage further reading of his or her works. Then each selection is followed by pedagogical material entitled “Explorations,” “Structure,” “Style,” “Ideas for Discussion and Writing,” and in Chapter 9 “Argumentation and Persuasion.” Note that in this material different questions serve different purposes. Some are directive, calling attention to major features of the essay. Some are technical, for example focussing on a specific point of language that illustrates a technique. Still others are exploratory, encouraging open-ended response.

The Instructor’s Manual answers those questions that are not open-ended and suggests responses to some that are. (Be sure to go to the text’s Online Learning Centre at www.mcgrawhill.ca/olc/conrad to download.) Read the Manual’s introduction: it gives more suggestions for using *The Act of Writing*. For each essay, the Manual also lists vocabulary that may need attention.

Each of the nine chapters begins with a discussion of how and why to use the form at hand. Then each chapter ends with a generous number of essay topics (now to be downloaded from the Online Learning Centre, mentioned just above). These topics have been chosen with care, to tap some of the students’ deepest concerns and channel them into motivation for writing. The reason for this attention to topics is that no one problem is more destructive to the performance of both student and teacher than dull or superficial subject matter. How can writing be important if its content is not? And how can a teacher enjoy or even tolerate marking without an interest in what the students are saying?

A further “Process in Writing” topic is given after each essay. If class members have had a good discussion about the selection, their motivation and writing performance may be greatest if they explore these topics, which draw upon both the subject and the underlying form of the essay preceding them. Then at the end of each chapter are the process guidelines mentioned earlier, individualized for the specific pattern of development in that unit.

Finally, a glossary at the book’s end defines literary terms often used in the discussion questions; when one of these words is a key part of a passage in the chapter itself, it appears in SMALL CAPITALS.

IN APPRECIATION

Here I would like to recognize two of our long-time authors whose words are still with us in *The Act of Writing* but who in the past months have left this world: Doris Anderson, whose “The 51-Per-Cent Minority” first appeared in *Maclean’s* and then in all eight of our editions since 1983; and June Callwood, who now appears in the third of her essays that over time we have republished: the wise and benevolent “Forgiveness,” which she wrote in the last weeks of her life and first published in *The Walrus*.

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R. C.