

National Association of Poetry Therapy Conference
Diane Kaufman, MD – Keynote Presentation
April 15, 2016

Trauma and the Work of Art

1. FIRST SLIDE (Trauma and the Work of Art)

2. SECOND SLIDE (Hope is the Thing with Feathers)

Emily Dickinson, the reclusive and amazing American poet wrote,

*Hope is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all*

*And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.*

*I've heard it in the chillest land
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.*

But what do we do when despair in our heart and hope seems far away and not within us? What do we do when terrible tragic things happen to us, our loved ones, within our community and to our world? How do we keep on going, having faith and courage? How do we *not* just give up and give in?

“I needed to retrieve from the shadows that which I had felt, and transform it into some spiritual equivalent. But the way to do it, the only one I could see, what else could it be but to create a work of art” So said Marcel Proust. (M. Proust, 1908-1912, 1991, pp 86-87)

The holocaust survivor, psychoanalyst and visual artist, Sophia Richman in *Mended by the Muse: Creative Transformations of Trauma*, says, “Creative self-expression provides an opportunity to mourn, to find meaning, and to regain some sense of continuity and connection... By expressing the internal pain, the artist externalizes it, fashions a container for it, and invites others to become witness to his suffering. Those witnesses allow the survivor to be known and to feel less alone.”

And Sogyal Rinpoche in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, declared: “A great work of art is like a moon shining in the night sky, it illuminates the world, yet its light is not its

own but borrowed from the hidden sun of the Absolute. Art has helped many towards glimpsing the nature of spirituality: art's unseen origin and its sacred purpose gives people vision of their true nature and their place in the universe, and to restore to them endlessly afresh, the value and meaning of life and its infinite possibilities... Is the real meaning of inspired artistic expression then, that it is akin to the ceaseless, luminous, blissful energy which Rilke calls "the winged energy of delight", that radiance which transmits, translates and communicates the purity and infinite meaning of the Absolute to the finite and relative..."

As a child I wrote in a grade school composition, that when I grew up, I wanted to be a "Medical Doctor" or a "Medical Drawer." I must not have known or realized back then that it was possible, even vital, to join together the forces of Medical Doctor and Medical Drawer/Artist to create a synthesis, a new way of being. To be the alchemist who helps transform seeming dross into gold, knowing well as the poet William Wordsworth said, in his *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, that "we come trailing clouds of glory..." to our life here on earth.

And I am here to declare that, "**Arts Medicine** can help transform trauma into the energy of creativity in its multitude of forms thereby releasing *powers* of hope, healing, and recovery." I am proud to name myself as Arts Medicine Practitioner. I welcome us all to the National Association for Poetry Therapy Annual Conference: Converging in the Heartland: Poetic Expressions for Healing Mind, Body and Soul, and to this keynote presentation, Trauma and the Work of Art.

3. THIRD SLIDE (dedication)

dedicated with "love and appreciation to all the poets that came before and all the poets yet to be." The origin of the word poetry is from the Greek *poiesis*, meaning to "make." That poetic making, that regeneration, is literally in the marrow of our bones as in *hematopoiesis*, a medical term meaning the creation of our blood cells, our life force.

Arts Medicine is the empathic and skillful use of poetry, story, music, dance, and visual art to healing. In trauma, we are overcome. One day we will **overcome**. Same word? Different emphasis? Different meaning? We **can** recover the choice to be passive or active. To be the victim or survivor. To live in the past or with vitality to be engaged in the present. There is a process, a journey towards healing, an integration, a synthesis, a new way of experiencing and being. It is a never ending journey to wholeness. In this presentation, I will speak on trauma and demonstrate how Arts Medicine can help heal: to take that inner subjective experience and through art create a space and place for it to be outside ourselves, for relief, to help us to know ourselves better, to witness and honor ourselves, to be witnessed by others, to be affirmed and validated, to be understood. To tell the truth. To regain control, to be the actor and not the acted upon. To find a form, a structure, and container that safely holds, affectively and cognitively balances our horror, our fear, our grief, so that we can step back and gain perspective without once more falling into the abyss. To repair dissociation by being able to integrate frightening

fragments of sensory memory into words, into coherence, into a story that can become a memory of what was, to create a new life affirming story of lessons learned (which may be terrible lessons of cruelty), but with hope regained, meaning restored, and for some, a dedication to change the world for the better. To achieve catharsis. But words alone cannot express the dire depth of experience. That is where the arts can speak and we can hear. Through the arts, we share experience, voice secrets, symbolically bring back what was lost, and can hold a mirror to society. Arts Medicine can facilitate mourning, a working through of the trauma, creating a path into transformation and for some, transcendence. In creative expression, there is a transitional space for “possibility” that is beyond space and time. It can contain all elements without contradiction and without judgment. Energy that was stifled through the trauma can be released. The creative spark can ignite the life force, encouraging us to re-engage in life, to reach out and find kindness not pain in our connections with people. The arts can be a memorial, a testimony, a legacy. It is an act of courage to be the poet, the artist who brings voice to suffering, to express what was once brutally silenced, to proclaim I am, this is the story I need to express, and to celebrate in the telling, however terrible that might be, and the knowing that my life story, our many stories, the world’s story is still being created. To know that who I am is of infinite value.

4. FOURTH SLIDE (Child Holding Dove)

Pablo Picasso was 20 years old when he painted *Child Holding a Dove*. To me the portrait is so tender. How closely the young girl holds the bird to her heart. What will become of them? My granddaughter Nori will be 2 years old next week. Once when looking at a photo of her innocent face, I suddenly was overcome with strong emotion and my eyes filled with tears. I wanted her look of love to always stay that way. Because I knew that hate and harm will touch her one day. Yes, they will and more than once. I felt my heart cry out in yearning to protect her. Her young heart, that dove. How can we remain tender, but also have the strength to flourish in the world? Picasso said, “All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he (she, we) grow up.” What stifles, blocks, crushes our creativity, our natural expression of our curious and loving child spirit within?

5. FIFTH SLIDE (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

Adverse childhood experiences impact the individual child, our families, our communities, and our society. Long after the event is over, and there may be many such events, their deleterious impact may continue to overcome body, mind and spirit. The legacy of household dysfunction, neglect and abuse, be that emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, word or verbal abuse, and/or witness to violence can lead to terror and fear. In the words of esteemed psychiatrist Judith Herman in her text, *Trauma and Recovery*, “Psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force. When the force is that of nature, we speak of disasters. When the force is that of other human beings, we speak of atrocities. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning.... Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human

adaptations to life.... They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe.”

6. SIXTH SLIDE (The ACE Study)

The ACE Study is a clarion call to the medical profession and all those caring for children and families for prevention, intervention and a systems approach to a PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS which is based upon the profound impact of trauma on the developing brain.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Study done in the 1990's was a collaboration between Kaiser Permanente with the Centers for Disease Control to examine the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and health throughout the life span. The population studied were over 17,000 middle to upper middle class adults, 50% women and 50% men with an average age of 57 years old ranging from 26 years old – into the 90's years old, 80% white including Hispanic, 10% Black, and 10% Asian. 74% had attended college. The researchers, Dr. Robert Anda, an Epidemiologist from the Center for Disease Control and Doctor Vincent Felitti, a Preventive Medicine Physician of Kaiser Permanente.

They added 10 questions on adverse childhood experiences (prior to the age of 18 years old) to the standard health screening questionnaire: three forms of abuse: did you experience emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse; two forms of neglect: emotional neglect, physical neglect; and five forms of household dysfunction: witness your mother being treated violently, loss of a parent due to separation or divorce, living with someone who abused drugs or alcohol, living with someone who was mentally ill, and having a member of your household who was in prison.

Their results showed ACES to be common: 64% had at least one ACE. 21% had been sexually abused, 19% had a mentally ill parent, 28% were physically abused. The researchers found that the more ACES one had, the greater the risk of negative health and social outcomes: an ACE of 4 carried 2x the risk of heart disease, an ACE Score 5 carried an 8x risk of becoming alcoholic, and those with an ACE score 6 or more shortened life expectancy by almost 20 years! (from the video ACES Primer, KPJR Films, on ACES Connection website)

An ACE of 7 or more had a 31 fold increase for attempted suicide that an ACE of 0.

The study dramatically showed the severe and long lasting neurobiological consequences of traumatic stress on the developing brain. Efforts to calm the brain that had become hyper-aroused and damaged related to the body's cortisol and adrenalin outpourings due to trauma, led to short term compensatory behaviors and ultimately to long term dire effects.

7. SEVENTH SLIDE (Experiencing Life Through Trauma)

Experiencing life through the lens of trauma can be pervasively negative resulting from bio-psycho-social and spiritual changes: a traumatized brain and body, impaired ability to relate, impaired ability to verbalize, difficulty modulating emotion, impaired ability to self-soothe, decreased rational problem solving ability, an increased risk of unhealthy coping behaviors which may have served to help in the short run but are devastating in the long run, such as drugs and alcohol, and a loss of purpose and meaning.

8. EIGHTH SLIDE (Fall of Icarus – Painting)

Here is Icarus falling from the sky to his death. Trauma may impact our own lives tremendously and the lives of our loved ones, but to others it is not even noticed it all. Does not register, is of no consequence. This can only add to the trauma survivor's sense of isolation and alienation.

9. NINTH SLIDE (Landscape with the Fall of Icarus)

As physician poet William Carlos Williams wrote:

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus

According to Brueghel
when Icarus fell
it was spring
a farmer was ploughing
his field
the whole pageantry
of the year was
awake tingling
with itself
sweating in the sun
that melted
the wings' wax
unsignificantly
off the coast
there was
a splash quite unnoticed
this was
Icarus drowning

This reminds me of Bessel van der Kolk's observation in his *The Body Keeps the Score*, "The essence of trauma is that it is overwhelming, unbelievable and unbearable. Each patient demands that we suspend our sense of what is normal and accept we are dealing with a dual reality: the reality of a relatively secure and predictable present that lives side by side with a ruinous, ever present past."

10. TENTH SLIDE (The Scream)

Edvard Munch wrote this poem on his inspiration for the Scream from his January 1892 diary entry:

"I was walking along the road with two friends – the sun was setting – suddenly the sky turned blood red – I paused, feeling exhausted, and leaned on the fence – there was blood and tongues of fire above the blue-black fjord and the city – my friends walked on, and I stood there trembling with anxiety – and I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature." The terror we feel is unknown to those outside our own skin. There may be

danger ahead, but we have not reached that point on our life journey to even know it is waiting for us. As my Aunt Gertrude once wrote in a poem on a family death, her niece's eyes, my eyes, "were still dry" as I was too young to understand the sorrow others were feeling. Is it possible to regain human connection and community when we are suffering?

11. ELEVENTH SLIDE (Emily Dickinson poem)

Can we overcome the dissociation we may feel that protects us from overwhelming memories of mind and body, as Emily Dickinson so powerfully describes?

There is a pain—so utter—
It swallows substance up—
Then covers the Abyss with Trance—
So memory can step
Around—across—upon it—
As one with a Swoon—
Goes safely—where an open eye—
Would drop Him—Bone by Bone.

In his article, "Out of sound – Out of sight": Emily Dickinson and the Poetics of Trauma" published in PSYART: A Hyperlink Journal for the Psychological Study of the Arts (December 15, 2009) Robert Howard proposes, "Emily Dickinson as America's "writer of trauma" *par excellence*" and argues that in Dickinson's poetry one finds, not a roadmap to her own personal traumas, but rather a fine-grained *phenomenology* of trauma — a psychologically acute description of trauma as a distinctive emotional and cognitive state.

He further states that, "In Dickinson, poetry becomes a privileged means for telling the truth about trauma and, therefore, for integrating traumatic experience into the self. Or to put it in the words of (poet) Wallace Stevens, poetry is "a violence from within that protects us from violence from without. It is the imagination pressing back against the pressure of reality.

12. TWELTH SLIDE (Unspeakable Trauma)

Psychiatrist Judith Herman states, "...the most traumatic events of her life take place outside the realm of socially validated reality. Her experience becomes unspeakable" (Herman, 1997, p.8). Severe trauma can render us speechless, mute. There may be no words to express what we feel. The trauma memory is fragmented into body memories of sensations. There may be no speech/language memory recorded that would be for us a coherent narrative that provides recollection and meaning. Is there a path back to safety, to security, to wholeness, to words?

13. THIRTEENTH SLIDE (What do you see when you see me)

Instead of an unfolding into more and more life, a response to trauma can be a pulling away from life, withdrawing our consciousness back inside ourselves for safety, which instead becomes a prison. To hide and yet also at the same time wanting to be seen.

What do you see when you see me?

A face
A body
Skin covering bones
When you look in my eyes
Do you see your own reflection
Or perhaps me
Hidden in the shadow
Somewhere in that eye
Hovering in a corner
Looking out cautiously
Waiting so patiently
Afraid of what I might see
Afraid of being seen
I know I have courage
I know I exist
But not yet throughout the body
Only pressed against a corner
Of the eye
Anticipating freedom
Waiting in eternity
What do you see when you see me
A face
A body
Skin covering bones

14. FOURTEENTH SLIDE (Whole Brain)

We need a healthy healed brain to be whole, the right hemisphere and left hemisphere fully communicating and integrating our experiences.

Psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk describes in his 2014 text, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* how the rational brain's Frontal Lobes, the medial prefrontal cortex (he calls it the watchtower) is unable to function as the "high road" in the face of overwhelming sensory input to the thalamus (which is supposed to act as a "gatekeeper" of what to pay attention to and what to ignore and to organize in a coherent story) but instead the thalamus instills fragmentary frightening sensory imprints

leading to trauma memories. Our executive functioning, our unique power of choice and discernment is hijacked by the “low road” of the limbic system, the amygdala (our smoke detector), brain stem and hypothalamus leading to activation and over-activation of the stress response with release of cortisol and adrenalin and the arousal of the sympathetic nervous system. Sympathetic means in function with the emotions and it becomes just that. Fight, Flight or Freeze. There is an amalgam of past, present and future, and what happened then becomes what is happening now and won’t stop. Ability to utilize our Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex for planned action is compromised, our insula’s ability to embody our experiences is faulty. Our memories of trauma are shattered not whole, and we are haunted by the ever present past. (the above is either direct quotation from or adapted thereof of Bessel van der Kolk’s, The Body Keeps the Score and also his presentation at the New Frontiers in Trauma Treatment conference held on September 17 – 18, 2015 in Portland, Oregon)

15. FIFTEENTH SLIDE (Brain in Harmony)

And more artistically rendered, we need the qualities and capacities of our entire brain working together to enhance our creativity in facing life challenges.

16. SIXTEENTH SLIDE (Multiple Intelligences)

We need to access as many of our multiple intelligences as we can to get unstuck, unfrozen, regain our voice, to wake up from the trauma trance.

17. SEVENTEENTH SLIDE (Trauma and the Body)

And we need to reconnect with our body. Learn to calm it from the first trauma induced hyperarousal and now repeatedly re-triggered hyperarousals to reclaim its strengths. As Peter Levine says, "Trauma sufferers tend to identify themselves as survivors, rather than as animals with an instinctual power to heal. The animal's ability to rebound from threat can serve as a model for humans... We must pay attention to our animal nature to find the instinctive strategies needed to release us from trauma's debilitating effects." (Levine, 1997, p.98)

18. EIGHTEENTH SLIDE (The Healing Relationship)

Rejoining with others, learning to form and tolerate and manage attachment relationships can be especially daunting when the perpetrator of abuse was a family member who betrayed our trust and distorted the meaning of words and values. But reconnect with safe others we must, as recovery cannot be done or sustained in isolation.

19. NINETEENTH SLIDE (The Sun)

How can we return to The Sun after we have experienced The Scream?

The Arts are a way back from trauma as through the arts we can enter it, contain it, transform it, and return again being changed and charged with a message to share. The hero's journey culminates in shared humanity and with gifts to others from the wounds we have suffered. Art can serve as a witness to ourselves, to let us be known with other individuals and can hold a mirror to society.

Through poetry and story, emotions and traumatic realities can safely be contained, given shape, form, rhythm, meaning, and multiple dimensions for new understanding. It does this through the senses, imagery, and word play. We can reflect upon our thoughts, feelings and actions. We can travel through time and rewrite the past, enrich the present, and imagine a new future. We can take on other voices besides our own. Imagination is our magic carpet ride. Metaphor allows us to experience, understand, and communicate in new ways. In making the poem, the self is expanded and re-created. Through this poetic relationship, emotions can become experiences to embrace, feel, know, take in, let go of, integrate, and ultimately to share with ourselves and others in more life affirming ways. Through this poetic journey in which we enter our own self and into the self of others, we come to recognize that as human beings we are not alone despite the separation of our physical bodies.

20. TWENTIETH SLIDE (In Memory of the Future)

In Memory of the Future is both witness to tragedy and call for action. The Newtown, Connecticut killings were horrifying. Hour upon hour for that entire weekend, the sounds, faces, words, and images of that terror, that overwhelming grief, entered me. And I entered it. I had to write a poem. No. I was galvanized to write a poem. I could not be mute, turned into stone, in the face of this Medusa. Like Pegasus born out of her blood, I had to awaken and know I had wings. With poem in hand, I went to Newark Arts High School. I felt so strongly that this inspired poem contained an energy that could inspire others to express and create. I want "In Memory of the Future" to travel the world so that everyone who hears it will make the poem their own, by choosing to end violence in whatever ways they can (Kaufman, 2014, in John Fox's Poetic Medicine Journal).

The poem was powerfully rendered in music, art, dance, and voice by Newark Arts High School students. Many of these students have witnessed and/or experienced violence within their own lives and communities. Their passionate voices are can be heard far beyond the borders of Newark as they reach out actively to the families of the victims, across the United States, and into the larger world.

In Memory of the Future

We all participate in the pain of the world
Some make it
Some endure it
Some turn their eyes away

Some plead for the pain to stop
Some are witnesses
Some are perpetrator
Some are victims
Some are innocents
Some are hateful
Some carry anger
Some carry rage
Some carry tears.
And weep for us all
Some carry guns and pull the trigger
Some carry burdens so great
Breaking hearts and spirits
Splitting us from God and each other
20 elementary school children murdered
6 adults trying to protect them
Slaughtered on the altar of violence
They learned awful things in school that day
And we the living
Do we dare to look upon
Unfathomable
Unimaginable
Terror and pain
In the face of a 20 year old
But as that was not nearly enough
26 more dread deeds had to follow
Then turned the gun upon himself
Mourners must mourn
Cry out their pain and seek solace
Wherever they may find it
That is their task
When all bodies have been buried
Some will think to feel to ask
What will the days after bring
Will we honor or forget the dead
Who once laughed and played
And loved and lived like us
Take meaningful action
Or hopelessly bow our heads
We all participate in the pain in the world
Shattered hearts despair more bloodshed

21. TWENTY FIRST SLIDE (Poetic Medicine Poem)

Our thoughts, our words can be an incantation, a wish, a spell, an intention for release and renewal. Poetry through its rhythm and imagery can take us into realms that our ordinary language cannot. A poetry writing group is an invitation to access ourselves, our creative wisdom, on a deeper level. I wrote Poetic Medicine while facilitating a Poetry and Medicine elective for medical students at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. We were used John Fox's text Poetic Medicine and the invitation was to write a potion. Here is mine:

Poetic Medicine

There's always a big black pot
Simmering
Bubbling
Boiling over with troubles
Scalded air rising hot
Burning eyes and skin
A big wooden spoon
Hands spellbound
Can't release the grip
Stirring wildly
Stirring non-stopping
And it's always darkest night
The brew gets thicker and thicker
As more troubles keep piling in
You ask yourself, "Oh! When will it ever end?"
A whisper replies, "Pour out the pot and start all over again!"

Years later in conversation with Simon Keller, a trained in Japan ceramicist, who was facilitating an expressive arts workshop with our medical students, I realized that the "pot" itself could be poured out and reshaped and not just its contents. There was a "higher knowing" already in the poem, as if the poem were preparing a message for me to be absorbed once I was ready to receive it.

And this is the writing prompt I wrote later as companion to "Poetic Medicine" for *Cracking Up and Back Again: Transformation Through Poetry* (2007):

The pot which is our own vessel of being will surely break as in breakdown or crackpot unless we do something about it and ourselves. The poetry you are about to read is one person's perilous journey to become and be real. It is by surrendering ourselves to the process of learning through life that life as our teacher, reveals to us the essence of what it means to be alive. When one person breaks silence, the truth in all of us gains strength. There

comes a time when the only answer that makes sense is to “pour out the pot and start all over again.” When we empty ourselves of our false nature, we are ready to be filled by a power greater than ourselves, which is Nature itself. Are you ready to take your “poetic medicine?” How sick to you have to make yourself in order to get well?

22. TWENTY SECOND SLIDE (Apollo, Artemis and Ascepilus)

My birth name is Diane. I was named after my mother’s one doll. Because I was the youngest, the baby of my family, the endearment for my name became, Dianee. As an adult woman and medical doctor, I called myself Dr. Kaufman. But as I began to understand more about art and medicine, I boldly asked to be known as Diana. Little did they know and rarely did they ask, the reason for my request. Diana is the Roman equivalent of the Greek Goddess Artemis, who is the twin sister to Apollo. Artemis, and how interesting that her name begins with “art,” is the “Hellenic goddess of the hunt, wild animals, wilderness, childbirth, virginity, and protector of young girls, relieving disease in women; she often was depicted as a huntress carrying a bow and arrow” (Wikipedia, 2014). She was worshipped throughout Greece with the most famous temple being at Delos where she was said to have been born. Her temple in Iona, Turkey was one of the Seven Wonders of the World (Wikipedia, 2014). I wanted to invoke the presence of Artemis and Diana into my life.

Artemis’ twin brother is Apollo, their parents are Zeus and Leto. One rendering of the myth is that Artemis upon being born, then helped her *own* mother to birth her twin by serving as midwife. Apollo was “variously recognized as the god of light and the sun, truth and prophecy, healing, plague, music, poetry and more.” Apollo was the “oracular God – the prophetic deity of the Delphic Oracle.” He was the God of **Medicine and Poetry**. Apollo’s son, born from a union with the mortal woman, Coronis, was the **God of Healing**, Asclepius. (Wikipedia, 2014).

The original Hippocratic Oath, recited and pledged upon becoming a physician harkens back to these mythic origins:

I swear by Apollo, the healer, Asclepius, Hygieia and Panacea, and I take to witness to all the gods, all the goddesses, to keep according to my ability and my judgment, the following oath and agreement...” It ends with the words, “If I keep this oath faithfully, may I enjoy my life and practice my art, respected by all humanity and in all times; but if I swerve from it or violate it, may be the reverse be my life (Wikipedia, 2014).

In swearing allegiance to the God Apollo and what he represents, medical practitioners are actually pledging themselves to the practice of art *and* medicine, whether they have that conscious awareness or not. Healthcare providers can trace their origin to the mythic realm of art and medicine.

23. TWENTY THIRD SLIDE (Medusa and Pegasus)

The connection between Poetry and Trauma also find origin in mythology. Medusa was once a beautiful woman, a virgin priestess to the Goddess Athena, who was raped by Poseidon, the God of the Sea. Athena released her wrath not on Poseidon but on Medusa,

turning her hideous with her hair now writhing snakes, and all who looked upon her turned into stone. All but victorious Perseus, who decapitated Medusa, with the help of Athena, by wisely looking into his shield in order to see the reflection of her hideous face. From Medusa's blood arose a winged horse, the full grown Pegasus and a twin, the warrior Chrysaor, wielding a sword. Not only could Pegasus fly, but the strike of his hoof caused underground well-springs to flow. So esteemed was Pegasus, that it was Pegasus, to whom Zeus entrusted to carry his fearsome thunderbolts (Hamilton, 1969; Mason, 1999). Pegasus is the energetic symbol of poetry.

Trauma expert Peter Levine, PhD describes the mythic connection of trauma recovery as follows:

“Interestingly enough, when Medusa was slain two things emerged from her body: Pegasus the winged horse, and Chrysaor, a warrior with a golden sword. We could not find a more appropriate metaphor. The sword symbolizes absolute truth, the mythic hero's ultimate weapon of defense... Since the horse represents instinct and body, the winged horse speaks of transformation through embodiment. Together the winged horse and the golden sword are auspicious symbols for the resources traumatized people discover in the process of vanquishing their own Medusas.” (Levine, 1997, p.66)

24. TWENTY FOURTH SLIDE (Realm of the Archetype)

The arts can bring us into touch with the archetypes. Jung (1990) declared the potency of the archetypes and warns that “it is a great mistake in practice to treat an archetype as if it were a mere name, word, or concept. It is far more than that: it is a piece of life, an image connected with the living individual by the bridge of emotions. The word alone is a mere abstraction... But the archetype is living matter.”

25. TWENTY FIFTH SLIDE (Symbolism and Metaphor)

Jung also spoke of the natural tendency of the psyche to form images, just as a “plant produces its flower.” Poetry is especially replete in image, symbolism, sensation, simile, and metaphor. Its rhythmic language can alter consciousness, and open us to new ways of knowing. Poetry can be a waking dream.

26. TWENTY SIXTH SLIDE (Active Imagination and Healing)

Actively dialoging with images is the key to releasing archetypal energies. As Robert A. Johnson (1968) describes, “You have invited the unconscious: the images have risen up in your imagination. Now you are ready to begin the dialogue. Making a dialogue is mostly giving yourself over to the imagination and letting it flow” (p.179).

27. TWENTY SEVENTH SLIDE (Arts Medicine a Child Psychiatrist's Story)

28. TWENTY EIGHTH SLIDE (At the Crisis Clinic)

In 1994, a grandmother brought her young granddaughter to the crisis unit. The child's mother has been murdered. When I asked the little girl about her wishes, she told me she would like to "fly on the back of a bird" to see her mother again. I was so moved by what she said, that I wrote her a story called "Missing Mommy."

29. TWENTY NINTH SLIDE (Missing Mommy)

In the story her dream comes true. When she awakens, still full of happiness and excitement, she turns to her wise grandmother, to ask her if her dream was true, had she really seen her mother. I gave the story to the grandmother saying, perhaps one day many years from now, if she thought it might be healing, to share it with her grandchild. I never saw or heard from them again. In 2014, when my own granddaughter was born, and my own mother had died many years before, I remembered the story of "Missing Mommy" and decided to have the story illustrated to become a children's book. Perhaps on an unconscious level, the story had to do with my mourning my own mother even as I celebrated my daughter and granddaughter. All these were going on at the same time. The book could be a transitional object, and a testimony to grief and love. And the story could help others. At the mental health clinic, I met a young girl who was sad because her mother had abandoned her. I showed this child some illustrations from the story book. I asked her which one was her favorite. It was the one where the little girl was flying on the back of the bird to see her mother again. She said that was what she wanted to do, too. I told her about the grandmother in the story, and how they had hugged and cried at the end, and how safe that little girl felt with the grandmother's arms embracing her. Even though the little girl missed her mommy, she also had love in her life now. The young girl sitting in my office told me she felt a little better and began to smile.

30. THIRTIETH SLIDE (Missing Mommy illustration)

31. THIRTY FIRST SLIDE (Missing Mommy illustration)

32. THIRTY SECOND SLIDE (Missing Mommy illustration)

Missing Mommy

Once upon a time there was a little girl. Her name was Layla. Layla's mommy had died. Layla missed her mommy so much. When people asked her, "Where is your mommy?" Layla would answer, "My mommy is in heaven and heaven is in the sky. How I wish I could fly to heaven. How I wish I could grow wings just like a bird. How I wish I could fly on the back of a bird to see my mommy again."

Each night Grandma gave Layla a sweet bedtime kiss goodnight. And on one special night, Layla had a magic dream. Layla had beautiful wings that shimmered and sparkled in the light of the moon. And with these wings Layla could fly! She flew all the way to the top of

the sky, past the moon, and beyond the stars, and into the brightest light she had ever seen. All at once, Layla knew that the bright light was her mother's love lighting up the way. Layla and her mother hugged each other. Her mother's wings covered them both. Layla could feel the beat of her heart. She could feel the warmth of her love. Layla felt so happy.

The next morning when Layla awoke, she remembered how she had flown to heaven to see her mother.

"Grandma, grandma! Let me tell you my dream!"

"Yes, please tell me." said Grandma.

Grandma was a good listener and she listened to every word Layla said.

Layla asked her Grandma, "Is it true? Did I really see my mommy? Did I really grow wings and fly just like a bird?"

Grandma was a wise old lady and this is what she said:

"The world is a mysterious place my sweet Layla
This I know to be true
Love is the light that shows the way
Love is the light that brings each new day
Love is the reason angels have wings
Love is the song every bird sings"

Grandma and Layla hugged each other. They began to cry. There were tears of love and tears of sadness. Tears of grief and tears of gladness. And in that moment, Layla felt safe and she felt loved. Layla began to smile a beautiful smile, and her tears glistened like jewels upon her face.

33. THIRTY THIRD SLIDE (A Boy is Depressed and Paralyzed)

A teenager was hit by a car and paralyzed when he was a very young boy. He is quadriplegic and has a tracheotomy. He is depressed and has a history of psychosis. His name is Cody and he was my patient. "Strangers come together for an artist in need" was the title of The Star-Ledger article (2010) written about him:

"Speaking isn't easy for Cody Smith. His words surf the labored waves of his breathing, audible when he exhales, receding to near silence when he breathes in. That's why the young man, a quadriplegic since he was struck by a car fifteen years ago, has turned to art to find expression.

"I write a journal," he says. "Sometimes I write poems. Sometimes, I paint."

Cody's computer had crashed and he was no longer able to write in his journal. His depression was worsening despite medication. I believed that his passionate need for artistic expression was vital for his recovery. Through an amazing series of synchronicities, I was able to have Cody apply for funding from the Paul Jackson Fund (in honor and memory of a man who had become paralyzed himself) for a new computer and to participate at the Wellness Arts Enrichment Center,

an arts program serving those with disabilities. As Cody shared in the Star-Ledger article, "I'm happy when I can paint and write."

34. THIRTY FOURTH SLIDE (A Child Witnesses a Violent Killing)

A young child who has already experienced traumatic loss in his life looks out the window and sees his beloved pet cat attacked and killed by pit bulls. He wants to rescue his pet but is held back by his grandmother. He and a sibling are in treatment for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. As soon as they enter my office, I can sense that something is very wrong. With many tears the family tells me of the brutal attack. I put down my prescription pad and decide another kind of writing is needed. I act as their scribe. I affirm that what happened was horrifying and that their cat did not deserve to die and to die so brutally, nor did they deserve to have such a loss. I also suggest that their last memories of their cat does not have to end with images of violence, but that they can recall the love of their cat and their cat's love for them. Out of this interchange came their acrostic poem:

35. THIRTY FIFTH SLIDE (Patches We Love You)

Patches We Love You

Patches we love you
Wearing your black tuxedo jacket
With a white shirt beneath it
Inside your ears it was pink and red

PLAYFUL

Patches was playful
He was fun

ACTION

Patches was so active
He liked to run around the house
And play with me

TENDER

Patches was caring
He rested his head on me
He liked to fall asleep on me

CLIMBING

Patches loved to climb
On cabinets, trees, tables and people
He liked to climb on chairs, too

HEART

Patches had a lot of heart
He loved to rub A on her leg and

Then go to the door and pull it open with his paw
That's where the cat food was and
Every day at three o'clock he would climb
On the windowsill and wait for B
Patches would meow so loud when he saw him

ENERGY

Patches had a lot of energy
He loved to scratch the chairs and B-
He loved to run from room to room
With his tail standing straight up
Jumping from the floor to the tv to
B's wardrobe and top bunkbed
He would climb on A's bed and
Jump off and land on the floor
He would sit there and jump onto
A's bike and then the windowsill
And then he's jump off

SWEET

Patches was a sweet cat
He liked to cuddle with us
He liked when B gave him a bath
He liked when A poured out his cat food
Patches never tried to hurt anyone
Patches was always just playing
Patches favorite was B
That's because they both like to run and jump

Patches we love you
We will never forget you

They signed the poem "Love" and then wrote all their names and asked for me to sign my name as well. They drew a picture of Patches with RIP, Rest in Peace, and added pictures of themselves. I made copies of the picture for them and put their picture up on my office wall. The girl sang a song about Patches. I gave them copies of their poem.

In 2010, The Star-Ledger was writing an article about Poetry in Medicine Day at the University and how poetry can help us to heal. The article ended with these words:

"Dorothy Thomas, 67, of Newark, was exposed to the poetic technique last year, when she brought her two grandchildren to be treated for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Together, the foursome wrote a poem about Patches, a family cat who was killed. "I thought it was a good idea, because they could speak about how they felt about Patches," Thomas said. "I framed it and put it in my house. Every now and then, we pick it up and read it. It helps to remember him" (Mascarenhas, 2010, p. 24).

Poetry much more than prescribed capsules for ADHD is what helped these children and this family on that day and continued to help them in the days into year that followed. Their poem will offer healing all of their lives (Kaufman, Chalmers, and Rosenberg, 2014).

36. THIRTY SIXTH SLIDE (A Grieving Mother and Child)

A young girl accompanied by her mother is scheduled for a psychiatric intake appointment. When asked what had happened that led to their coming to the clinic for help, they both immediately relive and tell the terrifying death by fire of the child's grandmother and step-father, as if it were happening that very moment. Now was not the time for a standard intake evaluation. Now was the time to *connect* with this traumatized mother and child; to validate their feelings, acknowledge the terror of their experiences and to open a place within them for healing. I turned to arts medicine for help, specifically to mythology and the search for meaning.

37. THIRTY SEVENTH SLIDE (Myth of the Phoenix)

I shared with them the myth of the phoenix, the beautiful bird who lives from five hundred to a thousand years, from whose ashes arises the birth of the new phoenix. Some have said that the story represents Jesus Christ and the resurrection. The story teller Hans Christian Anderson (1850) thought the phoenix represented the creativity and rebirth that comes from poetry. I asked the girl if she would like to write a poem. She replied that she would like to do that. Her mother joined in the poem-making as I wrote their words on the computer.

38. THIRTY EIGHTH SLIDE (There is a Phoenix in Me)

Here is their poem:

There is a phoenix in me
I will rise
Whenever I know
When the time is right

The sky will be bright
That way I will know
Everything will be alright
Because that's God in my sight

And He is letting you know
That with His Light
The time is right

Look at the light
Coming through the window
That way you will know
He is there for sure

Real events in the space of the office (now become a sacred place for art, myth and poetry) entered into the poem when rays of sunlight streamed into the room lighting upon their faces. I suggested their exclaimed words “Look at the light coming through the window!” be added to their poem. I gave them copies of their poem which they wanted to share with their family. We scheduled another appointment for the following week and I continued with the traditional psychiatric “intake” procedure. But on that day when I first met them, we all agreed that something extraordinary was “taken in” and “given out.” Time passed and recently I met them again, following the girl’s many months of treatment in a higher level of care program. She was doing very well. We shared our memories on the first time we had met. She was moved to spontaneously recite by heart, the Phoenix poem that she had written. I opened the *Integrating Expressive Arts and Play Therapy with Children and Adolescents 2014* text to the chapter on “Poetry Therapy.” There was their story and poem, as they had given their consent for others to know what had happened on that day. I promised that the next time we would meet, I would give to them a copy of the book to keep and cherish.

39. THIRTY NINTH SLIDE (Mourning the Death of an Infant)

A teenager in treatment for depression becomes pregnant. The birth of the baby is a rebirth for the entire family. The baby dies a few months later. I had received a telephone message that something had happened. I knew it had to be terrible from the sound of the voice. But I had no idea how terrible it would be and how many would be mourning for all that had been lost. To help with my own healing, I wrote a poem but never shared it with the family as that would have been inappropriate. I shared it with my treatment team at the clinic. We cried. At the funeral a poem *was* read aloud by the grandmother. The poem was written by the *mother* of that little baby. And here is the poem that poured out of me:

40. FORTIETH SLIDE (Where Did Your Soul Go?)

To You

Where did your soul go
Oh little baby boy
Back to the heaven’s
Night stars that shimmer and glow?

And when you left this earth
Did you know?
Or was it just a sweet dream
Into forever long ago?

And when your mother held you
And screamed in agony
Did her pain reach inside you
Or had God’s angels already
Taken you away?

Alone I hear these echoes

Bleed words upon this page
To say what must be spoken

All hearts break for you
How great the cost of love
Where did your soul go?
Where did your life go?
Oh little baby boy

41. FORTY FIRST SLIDE (Responding to a Woman's Pain)

The adoptive mother of two children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder comes alone to a session as her children are participating in school testing. When I ask about the health of the adoptive mother's own mother, as I know she has been ill, the adoptive mother expresses great sorrow and pain. She was anticipating the death of her mother. It was as if the mask that covers all our faces had been ripped off and the pulsing ache of our hearts was revealed. Her words were so poignant, rhythmic and important, that I wrote them down as I also deeply listened to her. She knew that I was a poet. I asked her permission to write a poem or a song from what she had shared and she said "yes." I asked if I could share her story and she said "yes, if it can be of help to someone else." The poem that ended up written, inspired by her telling of her experience, was so beautiful that I had it done in calligraphy and artwork. I gave her a copy of the poem. She and her family later came to the annual Art Exhibit at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School to see the poem which was on display. The poem speaks from the heart to all hearts:

42. FORTY SECOND SLIDE (All There Is)

All There Is

Sometimes I don't know what to do
When mother says to me
Bring me flowers now
Not on the other day

I want to smell them now

When we were coming up
Mother would always say to me
Bring me flowers now
Don't wait for when I'm dying
To throw them on my casket

Back home from the hospital
Told nothing more can be done
My breath stops
Mother implores
I do not want to live this way

I do not know how to answer her

When she begs me for release

Living in denial of what is to be
With Grace and tears bittersweet
I just hold her hand and pray

Make time to smell the flowers
Before all time passes away

As a child I never understood
What mother was telling me
But now I do

The heart's bouquet is all there is
That and the smelling of flowers

43. FORTY THIRD SLIDE (A Psychiatrist Seeks Her Own Healing)

And now I would like to share with you more of my own arts and healing journey.

44. FORTY FOURTH SLIDE (The ARC of the TAAM Workshop)

In 2010 I attended for my own healing, a day long workshop, the second of the Therapeutic Arts Alliance of Manhattan's Wellspring Series. The theme was Integration and Identity: "the personal search for the roots of our artist and healer selves and the transformational integration of these various aspects into a renewed sense of identity as an artist" (from Archetypes, Hurt and Healing: The Bird That Wants to Fly).

At that workshop we were asked to take three pieces of paper representing three parts of our self, and using our non-dominant hand to move a crayon across the page. As I recall, there was no conscious decision on my part, just my hand moving across the page, attempting to let what was within come out of its own need to do so. I was instructed to look at and within the images, and pull out from them the image within the image. I looked with the belief that in this seeking, I would find. As I opened myself to the power of image to speak to me, I relinquished rational control and the lines and shapes on the page began to take greater form. Spontaneously and acting quickly, before this knowing would vanish, I drew more and added color as I increasingly sensed what was hidden and was now being birthed. I saw a bird, a horse, and a roller coaster. Now to name them.

45. FORTY FIFTH SLIDE (Bird Drawing – Bird That Wants to Fly)

The bird became Bird That Wants to Fly.

46. FORTY SIXTH SLIDE (Horse Drawing – Beautiful Animal that I Am)

I named the horse, Beautiful Animal That You Are which quickly transformed into Beautiful Animal That I Am.

47. FORTY SEVENTH SLIDE (Roller Coaster Drawing)

In front of the roller coaster, I added a Please Enter sign and the words, Roller coasting can be fun. True or false or both?

Next we were asked to embody and speak from each image as we stood in the middle of a circle made up of the individuals who also attended the workshop. Bird in me spoke of sorrow at no longer flying. Beautiful horse was strong and proud and confident. Roller coaster was up high and down low. Next we were asked to stay with our images, to engage in active imagination, reflect, and write, and out of me without one edit to be made, emerged the story, *Bird That Wants to Fly!*

The Bird That Wants to Fly was limping along by the winter carnival. She passed the Please Enter sign of the roller coaster attraction, tail feathers neatly tucked between her legs. "Oh my," she sighed. "Life is so long and dreary." The bird sees Beautiful Animal That I Am when she is about to step into a puddle. These words are on the water instead of her own reflection. She looks up and sees a horse who wants to know why the bird is walking and not flying. After taking a rest on the back of the horse, awakening to realize she's been so tired, bird explains that she gave up flying because of "snow storms, rainstorms, blizzards, freezing rain, children with rocks, men with shot guns, and birds bumping and crashing into each other." Beautiful Animal That I Am listens and asks bird if she would like a ride on the roller coaster. "I know the owner and it would be just us two." But first bird must fly. Bird, sitting on the Please Enter sign, chirps up her courage, spreads her beautiful wings, and flies. Together with Beautiful Animal she enters the Winter Carnival.

With the help from the workshop facilitators, I formed a psychodrama sculpture with chosen group members to enact the final scene of the story, creating a new whole from all three self-parts. But the story of The Bird That Wants to Fly did not end there. In fact, it was only just beginning.

I began to wonder about the powerful images in Bird That Wants to Fly. Yes, they were part of my individual story, but they also seemed alive in a story much larger and greater than my own. A creative space opened in me and the "archetypes" began to intrigue me.

I contemplated that bird and horse are elements of Pegasus, the flying horse, who is the mythic symbol of poetry. As a poet, this was especially meaningful for me. Then I read of Peter Levine's declaration that Pegasus, born of Medusa, represents ultimate resources in healing from trauma. The awareness of a secret trauma from my childhood, my being molested by some neighborhood children, and how Bird That Wants to Fly was helping to heal this wound, deeply resonated with the archetypal "poetic" image. I felt the story I

had written was also somehow writing me as it felt like a creative healing response to what I had written as testimony long ago to that trauma, a grade school composition I had titled, My First Enemy.

48. FORTY EIGHTH SLIDE (My First Enemy)

49. FORTY NINTH SLIDE (A Story of Resilience is Born)

A few months later while looking at the Salve Regina University alumni journal (I had done Expressive Arts Educational Facilitation Certification training there), I saw the artwork of a just graduated student Olya Kalatsei and immediately knew she was meant to illustrate the story. I picked up the phone and called the University, imploring them, "Please find her for me!" Olya and I, who never have met each other face to face, collaborated online for over a year culminating in the fully illustrated book, which is the result of our meeting heart to heart.

50. FIFTIETH SLIDE (Bird That Wants to Fly)

In 2011, I met Kevin Maynor at a grants award get together and I suggested we meet again to discuss the possibility of an operatic performance by him for Creative Arts Healthcare at the University of Medicine and Dentistry in Newark. I wanted Mr. Maynor to understand that I was an artist, too, so I took him to the Medical Sciences Building where there was an art exhibit. I showed him my framed story of *Bird That Wants to Fly*, and Olya's story board, and two illustrations. With great intensity Mr. Maynor read the story, tapping with his finger at every word. He turned to me and said with conviction, "This would make a beautiful children's opera!" And then he immediately called Michael Raphael, the composer, and told him of the vision he had for *Bird That Wants to Fly*.

51. FIFTY FIRST SLIDE (The Bird That Wants to Fly Children's Opera)

PLAY OPENING SONG FROM BIRD THAT WANTS TO FLY

52. FIFTY SECOND SLIDE (Spanish translation of Bird That Wants to Fly)

Just published earlier this week, a Spanish translation of Bird That Wants to Fly! My dream goal is to have the Bird That Wants to Fly translated into all languages, and to have it distributed by the United Nations! It's good to have a dream!

53. FIFTY THIRD SLIDE (Girl with Dove)

And so we return again, and will always return, to that little girl holding the dove so close to her heart. Our innocence, our psyche, our spirit, the peace of being, of our flying free.

“Art *is* the living manifestation of healing energy. Emerging from the collective unconscious, the archetypes want stories of trauma, hurt, and healing to be told within the supportive presence of others on the journey.” (Archetypes, Hurt and Healing; The Bird That Wants to Fly).

And we together have traveled an Arts Medicine journey from trauma to creativity, the work of **art** that can bless a lifetime.

54. FIFTY SECOND SLIDE (Thank you!)

Thank you! Thank you for the privilege of sharing **Trauma and the Work of Art** with you. I would be happy to respond to any of your comments or questions.