

POETIC INQUIRY

UNEARTHING THE RHIZOMATIC ARRAY BETWEEN ART AND RESEARCH

Adam Vincent

University of British Columbia; University of the Fraser Valley

Series in Education



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Written with an engaging, conversational tone, this book captures the best of both academic and creative expression. There is generative movement at the heart of practice that in this articulation of poetic inquiry has the ability to pause and listen deeply, and to attend to the self-in-relation with humility, awareness and sensitivity to practice.

In terms of contributing to the field of education, this book is both timely and definitive. Vincent identifies critical issues concerning poetic inquiry and arts research in general, and invites us to consider the integrity of poetic practice as an artist, researcher and teacher, resulting in a book with the needed coherence, rationality and style to facilitate opportunities to re-think and re-make innovative practices in schools, in university classrooms, and beyond.

The genealogy of thought documented in interviews with leading scholars offers an original contribution to historical understandings and recognises the vitality of learning and mentoring relationships that nurture such possible spaces as research. The analysis of specific works and identification of hallmark traits add new layers to the discourse of poetic inquiry and demonstrates further how this book makes an original contribution to knowledge. The concluding chapter is well-crafted, and serves as a guide to how poetic inquiry, as a rhizomatic array of diverse approaches, is contingent on the researcher's disposition to research questions.

This book offers a key contribution to the study of poetic inquiry, and in particular, it honours the legacies of those who have made poetic inquiry possible. Vincent's vision for the future is rooted in equitable, inclusive and diverse applications, and as a result, this book serves as an open invitation to students and scholars alike to take up these practices.

Vincent is indeed living poetically.

Dr. Anita Sinner
Program Coordinator, BFA Major
Art Education, Faculty of Fine Arts
Concordia University

Dr. Vincent takes a close look at four leading artist-scholars in the field of poetic inquiry with insight and grace in Poetic Inquiry: Unearthing the Rhizomatic Array Between Art and Research. His analysis, coupled with his poetic response to their work, offers the reader a rich lens to better understand the complexity and possibilities of poetic inquiry as a research methodology. This book is invaluable for arts-based scholars, practitioners and educators who have a particular interest in poetic inquiry. Within the ten chapters, Vincent provides a detailed historical evolution of the field, a robust literature review, plenty of examples of engaging in poetic inquiry in diverse ways, and last but not least a convincing and compelling argument as to why this approach is much needed in scholarship and for community engagement.

Dr. George Belliveau

Professor and Head

Faculty of Education, Department of Language and Literacy Education

The University of British Columbia

In this delightful book, Dr. Adam Vincent invites us to consider how poetic inquiry can form a methodology for educational audiences. Beneficial to educators, as well as scholars, readers and creators of poetry, and arts-based practitioners, this book will serve as a pioneering resource for years to come."

Dr. Derek Gladwin

University of British Columbia)

Author of 'Rewriting Our Stories: Education, Empowerment, and Well-being'

For JV,
for SV,
for BV,
and
for CV,
my muses,
my motivation,
my meaning,
my soul's poetic music.

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Preface

This book is derived from the original intellectual and creative product of the author, Adam Vincent's, doctoral dissertation at the University of British Columbia. All participants have consented to the creation of this book and have provided full support in sharing the findings of the study.

The interviews and fieldwork that took place in the dissertation were covered by UBC Ethics Certificate (REB) Number H18-00402.

A version of the literature review appears in *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal*:

Vincent, A. (2018). Is there a definition? Ruminating on poetic inquiry, strawberries and the continued growth of the field. *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal*, 3(2), 48-76. doi:10.18432/ari29356

A version of the discussion around my poetic fieldnote practices appears in the following book chapter:

Vincent, A. (2020). The poetry of fieldnotes. In Burkholder, C., & Thompson, J. (Eds.). *Using fieldnotes in educational research: Approaches, practices, and ethical considerations* (138-150). Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9780429275821-12

Foreword: The Journey to Self-Discovery In/ Through Poetic Inquiry

Kedrick James

University of British Columbia

“I thought I saw you before”: In this book Adam Vincent takes the reader on his journey of discovery into the realms of poetic inquiry. As many great poets of antiquity had their guides or muses, Vincent presents four scholars whose work is germinal in the field of poetic inquiry, whose writing grows in the world of the academy. The academy is both germane to and distant from poetry, a genre that is “capacious”, to quote one of those four key figures, the late Carl Leggo, in a way that academic writing is not. In this book, Vincent engineers a bridge between these two genres and the worlds they encompass by studying how they are situated both awkwardly and generatively, one within the other. It is possible to understand this relationship from a variety of angles and Vincent takes up more than one, much like seeking points where these opposite banks are closest, and testing the firmness of the ground on which to build the connecting points of that bridge. He not only writes about poetic inquiry, but he also utilizes poetic inquiry as both a reflective tool, as a way to summarize ethnographic interview notes, and as a relational tool, as a way to appreciate the person behind the poetry. He also employs some facets of literary criticism or close reading to fabricate a sense of the poetics that motivate these academic researchers to adopt poetry in order to conduct their inquiries into the human condition. But this is not typical literary critical writing, for it seeks to do something critics take for granted, that is, it seeks to know the utility of form and to understand poetry from an efferent stance (from the Latin “effer”, *to take away*). What are the takeaways i.e. how does poetic inquiry contribute to banks of human knowledge and understanding?

Vincent borrows from a cornerstone of literary theory in education, Louise Rosenblatt (1978), in that his stance toward the poetry of academic inquirers leans toward the efferent as opposed to the aesthetic. He does not judge the poet and does not turn a critical eye upon the aesthetic value of their work as founders of a genre of academic poetry. In keeping with Rosenblatt’s transactional approach, he “does not permit honorific use of the terms ‘literary work of art’ or ‘literature’ [so] we can thus leave open the evaluative question of whether the transaction has produced a poor or a good literary work of art” (p. 155). As

such, he poses interesting questions that are timeless, partly because they are unanswerable and devious. For poetry to serve its aesthetic purpose, it must be free from the limiting interpretation of what is right or correct. Rather, it should create an ambience within which the reader, viewer, or listener pours their own experience and knowledge, making its linguistic space a habitus of their own imagining. But this is decidedly not the scientific, nor even the social scientific environment of discourse which relates repeatable findings that have specific kinds of applied meanings and uses. Indeed, the genre of academic discourse is notably verbose and largely of an impersonal tone, whereas much that is recognizable as poetry strives for the opposite – the compression of language into crystalline forms of meaning that resonate in a harmonic series of cognate associations, and whose fundamental tone is personal to the nth degree. Therefore, the challenge this book addresses from the outset is the central contradiction that confronts poetic inquiry when poetry is indentured to the service of so-called knowledge mobilization.

This dilemma, which Vincent introduces through his own youthful encounter with the relational power of poetry and his subsequent efforts to unshackle himself from the droll standard essay format, his cross-genre provocations as a student, but also as a university instructor boosting students' academic English or teaching Communications and Educational Studies courses, becomes apparent through his encounter with Carl Leggo and the subsequent masters and doctoral work under his tutelage until Leggo's death from cancer in 2018. It is indeed fortunate for Vincent and his readers that Vincent's research was already well underway before Leggo's tragic passing, and that this book contains the last sustained interview on the topic of poetic inquiry that Leggo gave. There can be no more central node in the distributed, rhizomatic network of poetic inquiry than Carl Leggo. As Vincent explains, Leggo, who always saw himself as a poet first and a scholar second, tirelessly advocated for the spirit of creative rebellion and resistance within the academy (e.g. he mocked notions of academic rigour, spoke of vigor as rigour, and would parenthetically add "mortis" when it was spoken of). In 2005-2007, Leggo supervised the postdoctoral appointment of Monica Prendergast, who is also one of Vincent's four "participants".

Prendergast's two-year postdoctoral work undertook two landmark projects: the first was an interdisciplinary survey of social science qualitative research publications for all instances where poetry was included, resulting in an annotated bibliography of over 1000 pages; the second, in collaboration with Leggo, Prendergast convened the first International Symposium on Poetic Inquiry (ISPI) held at the University of British Columbia in 2007. The event was modestly attended, with about 50 people who gathered at St. John's College atrium for three sunny days, but that special vigor that Leggo so admired was in great abundance. The event prepared the ground for the growth of a poetic

inquiry network, like “a strawberry plant” (as Leggo describes it). To plant strawberry fields forever, one must begin with “starts”, the nodes from which tendrils will branch out and start their own nodes in a strawberry patch. Among the “starts” who presented at the first ISPI were Vincent’s two other interviewees, Pauline Sameshima and John J. Guiney Yallop, both education scholars nearing completion of their doctoral degrees and employing arts-based research methods in their dissertations. It should be noted that Leggo was also Sameshima’s supervisor.

What captures Vincent’s interest is not just the start of a particular network of arts-based scholars who explore the potential of poetry in research, but also their keen resistance to the whole notion that what they are doing as poetic inquirers can be easily assimilated or defined, either as research methodology or as practice of an artform. Each participant of Vincent’s study is reluctant to speak when confronted with Vincent’s quest for some consensus on what poetic inquiry actually is or does. And this might be one of the most revealing aspects of this book: poetic inquiry, at present, encodes an act of resistance to the norms that govern professional, disciplinary discourses. It demands room and cannot be boxed in to definitions or a specific repertoire of practices. It is as if each new inquirer to join the rhizomatic fold brings their own practices, needs, insights, origins, expectations, talents, and voices to this vigorous and fruitful field. In the case of the poet-academics Vincent focuses on, they come with varied disciplinary backgrounds: Guiney Yallop in sexuality and gender studies, Sameshima with visual arts and health studies, Prendergast with drama and theatre studies, and Leggo as a literacy scholar in the central role. What each has in common is their connection to education.

This book is therefore most specifically about the journey of educators and researchers who find their way to poetry and discover the potentials it holds for encoding more than just the facts; more, even, than the narrative of events and findings. What they discover is that poetry evokes otherness in the way we come to know and understand, and this otherness holds vital information which is not otherwise made accessible. Perhaps the biological corollary of poetry’s role in academic writing is the strange phenomena of human heart cells: when a heart cell is put in a petri dish with another (different) heart cell, both cells begin to contract and expand in sync. Poetry is the medium which best allows two distant heart cells in different bodies to inhabit the same rhythm, to correspond as if one, to inhabit the same emotional and psychic space. Importantly, however, this is achieved precisely because it does not necessitate a limitation on the experience of that space. It does not tell the reader what to make of it. More than any other genre, poetry makes room for others to participate in the making of meaning; poetry celebrates what the New Criticism scholar, William Empson (1966), enumerated as the *Seven Types of*

Ambiguity, each of which is anathema to most mainstream academic discourses. Emerson states that “the machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry” (p. 3) and “so far as poetry can be regarded altogether dispassionately, so far as it is an external object for examination, it is dead poetry and not worth examining” (p. 248). This is very clearly not the goal or disposition of almost all other forms of knowledge production in the academy, which strive to do the exact opposite – to remove ambiguity and dispossess it of vigor in favor of rigorous object analysis.

Much of what follows in this book is Vincent’s doctoral dissertation, which incorporated portions of published articles on the topic of poetic inquiry that began to draw attention and was then quoted by the same people he saw advancing this interdisciplinary method, which ultimately helped Vincent find his own niche in the academy. Like Guiney Yallop and Leggo, Vincent has a Canadian maritimer heritage, and he had been publishing about his Acadian heritage through the lens of place and identity, and exploring the poetic use of field notes in addition to his literature reviews of poetic inquiry. For Vincent, there was a particular thrill to undertaking interviews with people whom he admired as leaders of the field, which he describes in illuminating detail, like the creaking of an office chair when interviewing Leggo or getting lost in the halls of the University of Victoria on his way to visit Prendergast. But once his ingénue anxiety subsided, he began to find his *raison d’être*. He structured this book on the combination of his poetic and academic sensibilities, as well as on the comparative analysis of his participants’ uses of poetry and their poetics.

The last chapter (10) of this book undertakes a more reflective exposé based on his expanding network of affiliations who are also tackling the central issue of the book, which is to provide a working definition for this methodological field. Throughout the book, the question of poetics looms quite large but is obscured by purpose. One must regularly respond to the question of “why” in one’s research in the academy. The purpose and potential outcomes are what get funding for research, get jobs, promotions and tenure, and awards and accolades. The same is not true of poetics. You do not get asked why you have a particular poetics or what its use-value is in the knowledge economy. “Poeisis”, the art of making, is at its core integrated with praxis, the crafting of letters and words into a kind of *Tardis*, a time machine that is bigger on the inside than on the outside. Poetics comes as a *jouissance*, an excess produced by doing meaning-making in the embodied laboratory. Poetics describes what enables the poet not just to write a poem but to write many poems, to sustain a continuous mode of expression that can capture complexity and hold it long enough for someone else to crawl inside and witness it firsthand. And for the

poetic inquirer, this requires (sometimes arduous) work. The *jouissance* of the academic poem is a struggle of the pleasure-pain principle where, Derrida (1987) writes,

The imagination turns this violence against itself, it mutilates itself, ties itself, binds itself, sacrifices itself and conceals itself, gashes itself [s'entaille] and robs itself...But this mutilating and sacrificial violence organizes the expropriation within a calculation; and the exchange which ensues is precisely the law of the sublime as much as the sublimity of the law. The imagination gains by what it loses. It gains by losing. The imagination organizes the theft (Beraubung) of its own freedom, it lets itself be commanded by a law other than that of the empirical use which determines it with a view to an end. But by this violent renunciation, it gains in extension (Erweiterung) and in power (Macht). This potency is greater than what it sacrifices, and although the foundation remains hidden from it, the imagination has the feeling of sacrifice and theft at the same time as that of the cause (Ursache) to which it submits. (p. 131)

This sacrifice, combined with the promulgation of a cause, underlies the determination that poetic inquirers bring to the academy, by superimposing a poetics of expression on the work of scholarship, to the point where it is more than an idle fancy: it is a devotional practice which involves the whole of one's being.

Leggo's poetics were quite succinctly stated as "living poetically" (Leggo, 2005), a notion which he understood as the brave act of living with awareness, in synchrony with one's environment and all the beings in it. In particular, it was to dwell with language, not merely to use language to some other end, but to be and become with language as one's sustenance, a praxis he developed as a lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993), to invoke Leggo's mentor, Ted Aoki. Leggo's stance of living poetically within the academy is a lasting legacy that he passed on to all those who took guidance and inspiration from him, and that would include all the participants of the study this book articulates, its author, and indeed, myself. And this is a crux of the issue regarding poetic inquiry, one that Vincent provokes at various points in the following text. Many of the people who adopt the use of poetic inquiry at some stage in their research process come to poetry as academics, steeped in particular discourses and traditions from which they seek to liberate a sensuous, affective license to have an aesthetic experience in and through scholarship. But there are also those who come to the academy as poets, who adopt formal academic discourses as a way to dress up their feral language so as to disguise themselves. As teachers, instructors, and professors, we might recognize, from time to time, one of these language-obsessed creatures in our midst. To honour the work of Carl Leggo, as

this book and its author do, is to recognize that Leggo was especially good at spotting and supporting those who brought to the academy the wild heart of poetry, and who try their best to keep it in a box, hidden in a desk, kept out of sight lest someone oust them as inherently unreliable, always destabilizing discourse, making it do something beyond its purpose and utility.

Perhaps then, poetic inquiry is a liminal zone where two kinds of wordsmiths meet, those for whom poetry is their ken, who move across the surface of disciplinary discourses like mimic octopi with intelligent legs camouflaged to blend in but capable of burrowing below, and those for whom the discourse of their field is a zone of comfort, who occupy it authentically but recognize the mystery that lurks beneath, and are drawn to it as sailors to sirens. Both navigate imposter syndrome for a period that is as long as it takes for a routine practice to develop, where doing and being something subconsciously blend. Whichever you, as a reader of this book, might align yourself with, you now have the opportunity to engage with poetic inquiry's special capacity as a form of aesthetic expression that escapes the tidy, expository, summarized spaces of discourse. When Vincent writes that poetic inquirers resist imposing "a singular view on what poetic inquiry should be" for fear that to do so causes poetry to lose "some of its power and some of its subjective e/affectiveness," he leaves room for both the academic poets and the poet academics to find a space of belonging. And in doing so, we expand the po/e/tential of the academy to be receptive to the mysteries of language (incorporating inspirited, intuitive, emotive, reflective and deeply personal knowledge/wisdom), to pass on a space of belonging to the artists and to the scientists in which they might be appreciated equally as essential contributors. The use of language impacts more than just the human universe; it extends to the more-than-human life forms that comprise the world as we know it and as we have yet to comprehend it. To be exposed in all one's vulnerability, to have one's storied-self unsheltered to the scrutinous academy, to venture beyond certainty of a stable and predictable language in the realm of professional identity, is at the heart of Vincent's journey bound in these pages: "I now see for myself / the power of poetry / functioning as / method and methodology / research and poetry / art and epistemology / craft and tool. / I will use it more deftly. / I will show others. / I will tell others. / I will continue to look and hear."

Kedrick James, 2022

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Prologue

Poetry. Yes, poetry. For some, the term brings to mind people wearing all black, snapping their fingers in a coffee shop (offbeat), with a beret wearing, patchouli-smelling bongo player. For others, it brings forth the fear of reading Shakespeare in grade nine English class, where you are trying to decipher iambic pentameter to better understand why in the world Romeo is so smitten by someone he just met. These are not my visions of poetry.

For me, poetry began in the seventh grade. The class was asked to write poetry by our teacher, Ms. Lumgair, “Just for fun.” I began my foray into Shakespeare years earlier, inspired by the Saturday morning 90’s TV show “Saved by the Bell.” In the show, Zack Morris (who was the protagonist and the coolest kid in school) was Romeo in Bayside High’s production of “Romeo and Juliet.” I recalled Kelly Kapowski (who played Juliet and who was, for me, the prettiest girl at Bayside High) being smitten by Zack’s words during the balcony scene. This was my first remembrance of language having power and impact. It sent me on a journey to find the play and learn the powerful poetic words. I thought if I were ever to find myself a Kelly that I would need some way to impress her; Shakespeare it was.

I went to the local library, figured out how to use the computer system, learned through trial and error how their collections were categorized and found a large Shakespeare anthology. I opened the book, careful to not further rip its already half-ripped dust jacket and flipped through until I found “Romeo and Juliet.” I found a mention of a balcony. I read the scene over and over again and set a few key phrases to memory, “But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east and Juliet is the sun” (Shakespeare, 2.2, 2-3). That would do.

This now takes us to twelve-year-old Adam, scrawling parts of the balcony scene in lefty, chicken-scratch writing on lined paper, recalling how Juliet is the sun in an effort to impress Ms. Lumgair. With time left during the free-write, I took it upon myself to explore more of my poetic voice. Why not? Having recently felt the sting of unrequited love, which I did not realize then would be a recurring theme for years to come, I began writing and rhyming. What I scrawled on the page was something to the effect of, “Are these tears in my eyes?/Or the blackness of the black flies flying by?” I submitted my work and went home to write more. The next day, Ms. Lumgair spoke about the results of the previous day’s free-write. As she did, she made direct eye contact with me and noted that there was “a poet in the class.” She did not name me, but her eyes indicated that she was referring to me. Me, a poet?

I went through the rest of my high school education with few attempts at writing poetry in class. Instead, I wrote poems for myself at home. I sometimes created songs, usually about that familiar sting first recognized in the seventh grade. That sting of unrequited love had the most emotion behind it. I would also create poems by splicing together lyrics from songs (going from CDs to cassettes in my four CD changer) to say what I wanted to say, without ever having to say it myself. It was not until university, while in an Interdisciplinary Expressive Arts class, that I began to strengthen my voice as a poet. I began by weaving poetry or song lyrics (from popular songs) into personal narratives or formal essays to show different or deeper layers of meaning. The work was of my own creation. I had no idea that others were doing work of that nature as they were outside of my sphere. I joined creative writing groups, performed my poems in public spaces and sent pieces out for publication, yet I did not identify as a poet.

During my undergrad, with a focus on English and Creative Writing, I decided that I loved literature and wanted to become a high school English teacher. That dream lasted until I volunteered in a high school and swore to never return; it takes a certain person to work in that environment and I instead felt a calling towards adult education. I wanted to help others, like me, who had trouble finding their voice. I found work in my alma mater in the Admissions office and began an MA in interdisciplinary studies (focusing on the connections between academic and personal writing) taken at a Canadian university that was known for its online graduate programing, Athabasca University. I completed the majority of the program, making proposals for alternative assignments where I could; assignments that blended my academic voice with my poet's voice when I realized that something was missing. I no longer had my writing groups, no mentors in the flesh, no conference links, no opportunities to share my work with anyone except for occasionally with peers at work or the woman who would ultimately become my wife. I decided to look elsewhere.

After numerous searches for programs in Canada that would allow me to look more at what the practice of writing does for students, I found UBC's Language and Literacy Education program (LLED). At first, the program did not appear to be a home for me. I was not interested in EAL/ELL work specifically and did not yet see the ties between my work and literacy. I clicked through the LLED faculty page and stopped upon an image of man with long hair and a huge smile, facing into what appeared to be sunlight. Dr. Carl Leggo. I wondered what his story was. Why was he so happy? I clicked on his profile, saw his connection to poetry, read over a few of his published works and decided to email him to ask him if he thought I would fit in with the program. What did I have to lose?

I heard back a few days later from the man who I would come to know simply as “Carl.” He requested samples of my writing to see if my work was in sync with his. I sent him some samples of my interdisciplinary work where I wove story and lyric with citations from the literature that linked to the theme of my writing. I also sent him work that used my own poems and stories, without academic links, and I sent him an academic essay. He quickly replied to ask if we could meet to discuss my application to the MA program. We decided to meet at a Starbucks midway between where I was working in the city of Richmond, BC, and his home in Steveston village, an area on the outskirts of the city. I did not know then, but this meeting over coffee would be instrumental in the trajectory of my future.

Tuesday, October 29, 2013, at 3pm I sat anxiously, printed copies of my writing samples in hand, waiting for Carl to arrive. Would I make a good impression? How should I speak to him? Should I try to sound more academic? Should I speak like a poet would? Would I recognize his face when he was not staring into the sunlight? Would he be as happy as he looked in his picture?

I watched each car that turned into the Starbucks parking lot, hoping to see what he drove. Somehow, what he drove would tell me something about him. Car after car drove in. No one had long hair. No one had a large grin. I looked down at my papers, trying to think through what I wrote and why I wanted to join an MA program at UBC after having already completed the bulk of an MA program online through Athabasca University. I heard another car, looked up, and saw Carl walking around the corner. He was in black pants, a blue shirt and a black vest, hair loosely floating in the breeze of the unusually bright October day. He was walking towards the light. He looked happy. I remember this moment vividly as it was the moment that I met the mentor who would support my growth as an artist, educator and researcher.

We spoke for thirty minutes about my career as staff in higher education, starting in the office of the registrar and ultimately supporting students in The Learning Centre at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) as a coordinator who worked with students and trained incoming tutors. We talked about my brief stint volunteering in a high school English class that sent me fleeing. He seemed pleased with my unique teaching experience and praised my writing samples, in particular those which braided story, poetry and citations from relevant literature. He said I was on the cutting edge of something and he gave me his full support for my MA application. We shook hands and parted ways. At the time, I was unsure of what it meant, but would later learn the significance of having this “full support.”

I completed my MA in Literacy Education at UBC, with Carl as my supervisor. In my thesis, I explored ways in which poetry could be more effectively used in the teaching of literacy. I then moved into my PhD with a new set of advisors,

Dr. Anthony Paré and Dr. Kedrick James. I wanted to know more about a term that I stumbled upon, *poetic inquiry* (Prendergast, 2009). More than that, I wanted to know more about the people who used poetry in their academic work and what it did that other genre or approaches could not do. It was following my MA thesis that I finally described myself as a poet, embracing the title that others had called me along the way. I had also been conducting research, adopting the role of an academic researcher. Was I a Poetic Inquirer? Was that even a title? I had to know more about poetic inquiry. I believed that if I could glean exactly what poetic inquiry was, what it did, what the proponents of the work added to the academy, and where the work was going that I could offer insights into the work being done, and potentially unearth new understandings about teaching and learning. I could then share my findings with others, supporting their scholastic endeavours by giving them more information, and potentially find where I belonged.

Early in my PhD research, I identified that knowledge-creation approaches employed by poets, who are also academics, are unknown to many scholars or are omitted from significant discussions that have taken place in arts-based research (e.g., Jagodzinski & Wallin, 2013). Despite this lack of overt visibility in the arts-based and qualitative research communities, the work being done through poetry appeared significant when I found it in the literature. I wondered: What capacities do poets bring to academia? What are academic poets doing that others are not? Why do they do it? How do they do it? How can what they are doing inform approaches to research and scholarship?

I began by exploring poetic inquiry, its definition and how it had been used. This was a start, but it did not answer all of my lingering questions. I needed to know more. I needed to complete this study, a multiple case study with critical analytical elements. This gave me an opportunity to speak with practitioners of poetic inquiry, analyze their poetics and delve more deeply into the diverse literature on poetic inquiry. Then, and only then, could I fully answer my questions and critically assess for myself (and others) the merits of poetic inquiry, informing what is known and potentially adding to its credence as an approach to research and scholarship.

Chapter 1

This book. The study. Why Poetic Inquiry?

Poetic inquiry is happening. Poets are using it. Researchers are using it. I know that it is being used in by practitioners of qualitative research under different labels and for diverse purposes (Prendergast, 2009; James, 2017; Vincent, 2018). Why then, I asked, is it not in my qualitative research textbook? Why am I reading about impactful studies that use poetry in their research processes in academic journals, but I cannot find a definitive definition or a canonical book that tells me how to use it (akin to books about case studies, narrative studies or phenomenology) or how it functions? Why is it overlooked in critiques of arts-based research when it is using art and research? I quickly came to realize that not enough is known about poetic inquiry and its place in qualitative research. It was undertheorized. Nowhere in the literature was there a starting point for those interested in using poetry in their research and scholarship. There were examples of how it was being used, there were products, but other than suggested ways to approach poetic inquiry (as in Faulkner, 2019 and Leavy, 2018), there lacked a critical consideration of what poetic inquiry does that other methods or methodologies could not do. There also lacked a procedure for extracting the depths of knowledge that exist in the poetry of academic-poetic studies that extends beyond conventional forms of literary analysis. These poetic products of poetic inquiry studies, poetry produced as part of the data gathering, analysis or dissemination processes, are not only meant to exclusively showcase findings in aesthetic and affective ways. They also contain complex findings of the inquiry that need further, and different, examination. Why is poetic inquiry seen almost exclusively as generative? What approaches do poet-researchers use in creating their poetry? What can be gleaned from their poetry as it relates to the crafting of research-powered poetry? What more can be learned by analyzing poetry as it relates to participants' experiences or diverse concepts highlighted in/through poetry? These questions need answering for they have glimpses of something more; they appear to hold insights into ways that research and scholarship could do more.

This book showcases my doctoral dissertation research and represents my scholarly effort to understand more about this undertheorized area of research and scholarship that is somewhat obscured in qualitative research, yet evidently impactful. The findings, implications and applications of the study are further

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