Remembering Karen

in dappled light and summer hues

We are delighted to welcome you to this, our second issue of Notes from the Field: Reimagining Curriculum. This issue is dedicated to the memory of our colleague and friend, Karen Hawkins, whose untimely death cut short a brilliant career as a scholar, editor, teacher, and pedagogical researcher. We are proud to continue the work she began with this continuation of “Notes from the Field,” where Educational Insights gives space to practicing educators to share their learning and understanding gained through active pedagogy and inquiry in their classrooms.

Notes from the Field publishes and celebrates the insights gained by a cohort of teacher-researchers, this time a group of Vancouver mainland teachers, many of whom are teaching in inner city schools. The articles in this issue illustrate how teachers within their own classrooms can engage in valuable research that can allow them insight into their own practice as well as offer these insights within professional and scholarly communities.

Karen’s life exemplified the qualities of commitment and challenge, in her work as an educator, in her deep love for her family and friends, and in the impeccable courage with which she lived her life even as illness began to limit the vibrancy and energy with which she approached any activity she took on. She met the challenge of re-imagining curriculum, not only within her work as a teacher, writer and scholar, but also within the poetic, joyful, thoughtful way in which she lived her life. Memories of her wide and brilliant smile, her amazing ready laughter, and the generosity she extended to everyone who met her remain with us as hallmarks of a life lived well. Last year, in her introduction to Notes from the Field, Karen wrote:

We invite you to listen carefully to the notes that are sounded from the field in this issue; to incorporate them in your own educational dialogues; to let their echoes act as a prelude for you, testing your voice, and providing you with an alternative vantage point from which to view your own research, action and reflection.

In that spirit, we invite you to listen to these echoes of presence and joy in Karen’s poem, where she puts into images her love and care for the natural world, her laughter, and her intense joy in living.

Luanne Armstrong
Special Issue Editor
Notes From the Field: Reimagining Curriculum
Days Of Green And Gold

Laughing because the grass does
Running to make my heart pound
Spinning because it feels good
No better reason sought or found

Hiding where no one seeks me
Summer days stretch warm and bold
Backlit by remembrance
In shades of green and gold

Singing because the wind does
Reaching to touch the moon
Dreaming because you must to live
Knowing morning comes too soon

Climbing trees that touch the sky
Lifting black into the blue
Lying safe under their spreading arms
In dappled light and summer hues

Laughing because the grass does
Singing the wind's sweet song
Backlit by remembrance
Green and gold live on and on....

—Karen Hawkins, 1961-2005
About the Author

Luanne Armstrong is a novelist, freelance writer and editor, and publisher from the Kootenay region of British Columbia. She completed a BFA in Creative Writing at the University of Victoria. She has an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC in Vancouver and is presently working on a PhD, also at UBC. She has worked at a variety of jobs, including coordinating women's groups, teaching at a First Nations College, and in Indonesia with an environmental organization. She has taught Creative Writing at the University of Alberta, the College of the Rockies, the Kootenay School of Arts in Nelson, and the Okanagan School of the Arts in Penticton. She was the Berton House writer in residence in Dawson City, Yukon, from September to December 2000. She is the managing editor of Hodgepog Books, which publishes literary and children's books.