Writing and Resilience: Thinking Transdisciplinarily about Writing and Pain

Since Fall of 2019, the Writing and Resilience Working Group, sponsored by the Humanities Center, has been meeting to explore the possible ways that research in psychology on expressive writing and wellness can inform writing instruction across a variety of subfields such as creative writing and writing studies. Our understanding of expressive writing includes the writing exercises practiced in therapeutic and clinical settings to surface and process emotions as well as expressive creative writing that provides a means of encapsulating and generating distance from traumatic experience and creating compelling opportunities for connection, community, and empathy. Our goals have included exploring the possibilities of transferring research design and methods from the study of written expressive disclosure to the field of English. In this talk, we’ll survey what we have covered as a group and discuss further directions for pedagogy and research.

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Caroline Maun is the Chair of English at Wayne State University in Detroit. Her poetry publications include the volumes The Sleeping, What Remains, and three chapbooks, Cures and Poisons, Greatest Hits, and Accident. She is the editor of The Collected Poetry of Evelyn Scott and author of Mosaic of Fire: The Work of Lola Ridge, Evelyn Scott, Charlotte Wilder, and Kay Boyle.

Clay Walker is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English at Wayne State University where he teaches general education writing courses, as well as courses in writing studies at the undergraduate and MA levels. His research is focused on how literacy and language are related to power, change, and agency for individuals and institutions.