

# Loving Language: Poetry, Curriculum, and Ted T. Aoki

Carl Leggo

University of British Columbia

*As a curriculum researcher and poet, I am committed to honouring complexity, asking questions, acknowledging tensions, and challenging answers. As curriculum theorists, scholars, and educators, we need to attend to language. Ted T. Aoki (2005a) reminds us to attend to “the voice of play in the midst of things—a playful singing in the midst of life” (p. 282). Poetry can invigorate our curriculum studies by helping us imagine new ways of attending to language, new ways of knowing and becoming, and new ways of inquiring about living experiences. In this paper, I offer a sequence of poems, anecdotes, and ruminations composed as responses to Ted T. Aoki’s curriculum scholarship.*

*En tant que poète et chercheur penché sur les programmes d’études, je suis engagé à respecter la complexité, à poser des questions, à reconnaître des tensions et à remettre en question les réponses. Comme théoriciens du curriculum, universitaires et éducateurs, nous devons porter attention à la langue. Ted T. Aoki (2005a) nous rappelle de porter attention à « la voix ludique au milieu des choses—un chant joueur au milieu de la vie » (p. 282). La poésie peut dynamiser nos études de curriculum en nous aidant à imaginer de nouvelles façons de concevoir la langue, de nouvelles façons de savoir et de devenir, et de nouvelles façons d’étudier le vécu. Dans cet article, j’offre une série de poèmes, d’anecdotes et de ruminations composées en guise de réponses aux recherches de Ted T. Aoki sur les programmes d’études.*

*So prosaic are we that much of what we deeply experience, we know not how to say [emphasis added]. (Aoki, 2005j, p. 334)*

*What does it mean to dwell poetically? [emphasis added] (Aoki, 2005k, p. 375)*

*Earth, measure, temple, mouth, echoes, to speak/to say—these are the polyphonic strands of poetry [emphasis added]. (Aoki, 2005k, p. 375)*

As a poet and curriculum researcher, I ask questions, acknowledge complexity, test tensions, and interrogate answers. In poetry I linger in the alphabet, diction, grammar, syntax, language, tropes, modes, and stories in order to inquire about identity, memory, and lived and living experiences. Like Ted T. Aoki, I am seeking “a clearer vision of a different research reality” (2005m, p. 110) informed by “critical competence” (2005b, p. 133), and “pedagogic attunement” (2005l, p. 164), and “indwelling dialectically” (2005l, p. 164) within “an open landscape of multiplicity” (2005h, p. 207), and “an architectonics of lines of movement” (2005h, p. 211), as I learn how to live poetically “in the dwelling place of mortals where one may hear the inspired beat of earth’s measure” (2005k, p. 375).

While writing this paper, I was listening to Jim Byrnes, the Vancouver blues performer. He sang: “He Was a Friend of Mine.” It is a song on Jim Byrnes’ album *Everywhere West* (2010). This folk/blues song has been around a long time, at least since 1939; it has been performed by many singers including some of my favourites, Bob Dylan and Willie Nelson. While writing about Ted, I heard Jim Byrnes sing: “He was a friend of mine,” and I acknowledged with a simple sense of insight and delight that Ted was a friend of mine. He was my teacher, my sensei, my mentor. And he was my friend. I have written poems and essays connected to Ted, and while writing this essay, I realized that I will likely write about Ted for the rest of my life. I do not continue to write about Ted in order to lionize him like a VIP on a reality TV show called *Celebrity Curricularists of Canada*. I write about Ted because he is singular; he sings a song I seldom hear. As far as I know Ted did not write poetry, but he lived with a poet’s heart and imagination and longing for language.

In this essay I present a few fragments, a few moments. There is nothing comprehensive or conclusive in this essay. In a biography about Harlan Hubbard, the Kentucky painter and writer, Wendell Berry (1990) wrote that Harlan Hubbard “saw his life as a work of art which he was morally obligated to make as good as possible” (p. 56) because “Harlan Hubbard...was a painter intent not only upon the art of painting, but also upon the art of living” (p. 70). Harlan Hubbard and Wendell Berry, too, remind me of Ted. In writing about Harlan Hubbard, Berry recognized that “the effort to understand a long lifetime of work and thought is full of risks. The responsibility is intimidating, and the result is almost certain to be to some extent reductive and to some extent wrong” (p. 101). Berry acknowledged that Harlan Hubbard “will escape our classifications ... and that his escape is exactly what we should hope for” (p. 101). So, I offer a few memories, poems, anecdotes, and quotations, not in order to re-present Ted T. Aoki, but to conjure Ted’s presence among us as an inspiring living curriculum that we must not forget because his singularity sings with sustaining signification and significance.

When I began doctoral studies in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta in 1987, Ted had already retired as the Chair of the Department and moved to Vancouver. Ted was no longer present at U of A, but his presence suffused (or infused) the vitality of the Department. His name was mentioned often. I had chosen the Department of Secondary Education because it had a reputation for supporting creative scholarship. I had wanted to pursue a PhD in Creative Writing, but there were no such programs in Canada at the time, and I couldn’t afford to go to the United States. So, I went to the University of Alberta and studied with Jim Parsons, John Oster, Marg Iveson, Therese Craig, Terry Carson, Jan Jagodzinski, Max van Manen, and others. U of A was a good place for me—a place where I pursued the kind of research I wanted to pursue—a place where Ted’s influence was abundant and abiding.

After I completed the PhD, I eventually found my way to Vancouver. I first met Ted at the University of British Columbia. I presented a paper titled *Living un/grammatically: A poet’s postmodern musings on language education* at the Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics Annual Conference in Vancouver on May 28, 1994. One of the poems I performed in that presentation was “Glossolalia”:

### **Glossolalia**

I speak in tongues  
in other words

other languages  
I do not know

like the believer  
who speaks in tongues  
from the spirit  
not the mind  
my words are not mine

but unlike the believer  
with anointed words  
I am polyglot  
with glossitis  
my words flat without gloss

I am a babbling poet  
a wanderer in the alphabet  
seeking my glossographer

but I want no glossarist  
who will define me

I call a glossator  
who will charge into the dark places  
where lines run skew

will you be my glosser?

don't read my words only

read the margins where  
the words begin and end

read the spaces in the words  
where the unwritten is written

read beyond my words  
to scribbled words  
of others almost hidden  
in my words

and speak in tongues  
in other words  
other languages  
you do not know

Ted was in the audience and spoke kindly to me after the presentation. That was the beginning. I felt a kinship immediately. I liked the man. I liked his eyes and his smile. In hindsight, I now realize I fell in love with Ted. Have you ever had that amazing experience of meeting someone and feeling a sense of dizziness and sturdiness woven together? That is my experience of falling in love. You feel like you are falling, but you also know you have never felt more stable, even safe.

**“The cosmos works  
by harmony of tensions,  
like the lyre and bow.”**  
(Heraclitus, 2001, p. 37)

Two frequently used words in Ted’s writing were ambiguity and ambivalence: “And now I am drawn into the fold of a discursive imaginary that can entertain ‘both this and that,’ ‘neither this nor that’—a space of paradox, ambiguity and ambivalence” (2005f, p. 317). Ted also taught that “the tensioned space of both ‘and/not-and’ is a space of conjoining and disrupting, indeed a generative space of possibilities, a space wherein in tensioned ambiguity newness emerges” (2005f, p. 318). In *The culture of speed: The coming of immediacy* John Tomlinson (2007) wrote about “balance ... as taking positive control of life” (p. 158). According to Tomlinson, “balance-as-control is not about coming to rest. It’s more or less the opposite: a process of constant reflexive *re-balancing* in the face of contingency” (p. 158). As we seek balance in tension, Tomlinson claimed that we “apply effort to become nimble and graceful life-performers. The goal is balance. The reward is poise” (p. 159). The reward “is to experience ourselves as capably and sensitively attuned to our fast-moving environment and so as existentially flexible, responsive and resilient” (p. 159).

**Ambling (with)**

*the inherent ambiguity of any word*  
[emphasis added] (Aoki, 2005g, p. 266)

with Ted I amble  
leisurely languorously languishing languaging lounging

I am in no hurry to arrive  
skeptical about destinations, not destined to destitution

with Ted I am ambitious  
not for honours but for becoming in the earth and heart’s humility

I am not composing a CV  
because I am living a circle of life

with Ted I am ambidextrous  
right hand and left hand are dialogically dialectically dextrous

I am juggling words high in the air

full of trust they will return if they wish, sometime somewhere

with Ted I am ambiguous  
with multiple meanings mixed with momentous magnanimity

I am not seeking denotation definition declaration  
lost in the chaotic concord

with Ted I am ambivalent  
valiantly lingering in the midst of flux

I am not searching for the whole,  
enamoured with the hole to a vista faraway

with Ted I am ambient  
moving, surrounding, ever present

I am not still, always in movement  
like a carefully calibrated clock

with Ted I am ambulatory  
as we walk paths both determined and indeterminate

I am not following a cartographer's closed circuit  
with GPS confident certainty

Ambling (with)  
*the inherent ambiguity of any word*  
[emphasis added] (Aoki, 2005g, p. 266)

**“The harmony past knowing sounds  
more deeply than the known.”**  
(Heraclitus, 2001, p. 31)

According to Jean-Luc Nancy (2006), “poetry is at ease with the difficult, the absolutely difficult” (p. 4). Poetry is a kind of discourse that is always taking risks. Every poem is motivated by the possibility of new beginnings. A poem is like snowshoeing in new snow—there are paths but they are invisible, perhaps remembered, but definitely indecipherable. As curriculum theorists, scholars, and educators, we need to pay attention to language. Aoki (2005a) reminded us to listen to “the voice of play in the midst of things—a playful singing in the midst of life” (p. 282). Poetry can inspire our curriculum studies by opening up innovative ways for paying attention to language, which, in turn, opens up new ways of knowing and becoming, and new ways of researching the experiences of daily, quotidian, human experiences. I read Ted’s writing long before I met him; I have been reading Ted’s writing for over thirty years. I recently returned to *Curriculum in a new key: The collected works of Ted T. Aoki* (2005), and re-read the familiar essays with a keen eye for sentences and phrases I especially liked, at least in this most recent

encounter with Ted's words. I then selected my favourite ten quotations and shaped them into a found poem. I could write many found poems out of Ted's poetic writing, but the following found poem is the one I found in my recent poetic research.

### **Lingering Notes: Ten Tantalizing Tunes**

i

I recall being blamed  
for academic jargonese  
for using the term paradigm ... <sup>1</sup>

ii

critical competence is the way  
we choose to act  
to oppose inhumanity  
in songs and acts of joy,  
be they in the everyday  
idiom of music, art, play,  
poetry, pottery, or ... <sup>2</sup>

iii

this tensionality calls on us  
as pedagogues to make time  
for meaningful striving and struggling,  
time for letting things be,  
time for question, time for singing,  
time for crying, time for anger,  
time for praying and hoping <sup>3</sup>

iv

what seems urgent  
is the recovery  
of the fullness  
of language <sup>4</sup>

v

I am led to wonder if indeed  
these are different ways  
of understanding,  
different linguistic worlds,  
and different discourses

with different grammars <sup>5</sup>

vi

each one of us  
is a divided subject,  
constituted by both  
self and other <sup>6</sup>

vii

on this bridge,  
we are in no hurry  
to cross over;  
in fact, such bridges  
lure us to linger <sup>7</sup>

viii

what does it mean  
to become a teacher? <sup>8</sup>

ix

I know that what I see  
and how I see is because  
of who I am. I am what  
I see. I am how I see <sup>9</sup>

x

a lingering note, ...  
hopefully, like  
the ring of a temple bell,  
echoes and re-echoes  
as it fades into silence <sup>10</sup>

**“The rule that makes  
its subject weary  
is a sentence  
of hard labor.”**  
(Heraclitus, 2001, p. 53)

One of my favourite memories is the day I danced for Ted. A few weeks before my dancing debut, Ted had participated in a doctoral exam. The chair of the exam was a scholar from the Department of English. I have forgotten the scholar’s name so he will receive no citation in my

essay, but at least he will also never know I am still writing critically about him. I participated in the exam, too. The scholar from the Department of English was concerned (incensed is perhaps a more apt word) that the dissertation was creative, innovative, artful, and heartfelt. He held a strict fundamentalist view about what constituted a dissertation—prosaic, logical, linear, clear, coherent, expository, and argumentative. The scholar from the Department of English and Ted represented diverse approaches to scholarly writing. So, they were invited to present at a seminar in the Department of Language Education (LANE). I was invited to respond. Ted presented a vital and vibrant discussion of language as living and efficacious. The scholar from the Department of English presented a paper that sounded like many papers I have heard in Departments of English—bland, blonde, blunt, banal, blah! I was faced with a big challenge. How could I respond to two papers when I liked one vigorously and disliked one vehemently? I decided that my best strategy was dancing. When faced with a complex situation in the academy, it is always a good plan to dance! So, when I was called to respond, I asked everybody to put their hands over their eyes so they could only see partially through the gaps in their fingers. I also asked them to count to ten and then call out two orders: Right! Left! I then began to move with a slow robotic movement, and as participants called out “Right! Left! Right! Right! Left! Left!” I moved more quickly in efforts to obey the orders. I was an angular, stiff, earnest machine. Then, for my second response, I again asked everyone to put their hands over their eyes and look through their fingers. This time I asked them for no orders. I then began a loose-limbed frolic with arms and legs flexibly waving in the air like a scholar alone in his study after just reading an e-mail message that he’s reached a milestone on ResearchGate. At least that’s how I remember my second dance. I only know I was wild, my whole body shaking and grooving and responding to music that only I could hear. I was flexible, flowing, flamboyant, fiery, at least red-faced. I didn’t offer any interpretation of my dance. I just sat down. In “Narrative and narration in curricular spaces” Ted (2005i) remembered the seminar:

Early this year LANE held a departmental colloquium, a session given to a discussion under the title ‘Standard Academic Research and Postmodern Discourse.’ I was invited to participate in the departmental colloquium together with a scholar from the English Department.... Carl Leggo of LANE responded to the two talks. He performed by dancing a neat response. (pp. 404–405)

I love Ted’s observation that I danced “a neat response.” Ted rebutted binary oppositions. One of his favourite words was the conjunction *and*.

### **And**

*no mere conjoining word but ... a place of difference*

[emphasis added] (Aoki, 1993/2005, p. 282)

one of Ted’s favourite words  
part of speech    conjunction  
joins like a carpenter  
connects like a matchmaker  
glues logical consequence  
with a philosopher’s penchant for functional supplementarity

Ted understands *and*

stands in the midst of *and*  
an expansive space for play

Ted knows the magic of grammar  
how *and* is more than a dove-like joint  
for holding phrases and clauses

*a polyphony of lines of movement*<sup>11</sup>  
*a space for both conjunction and disjunction*<sup>12</sup>  
*a place of lived tension*<sup>13</sup>  
*a generative space of possibilities*<sup>14</sup>

like the ampersand  
*and* is pretzel twisted  
intersecting interconnecting  
looping with no beginning  
turning with no ending  
voluptuous with ample possibilities

if we ever exhaust the multiplicity of *and*  
then we can focus on the mystery of not-and

**“Applicants for wisdom  
do what I have done:  
inquire within.”**  
(Heraclitus, 2001, p. 51)

Ted and I worked together with many graduate students. They all pursued research that was artful, bold, creative, delightful, efficacious, fecund, gregarious, hopeful, intriguing, jubilant, kinetic, loving, magnanimous, novel, open, passionate, questing, rowdy, sensual, tantalizing, urgent, vivacious, wonder/full, xylophonic, yearning, zealous. And none of them ever sounded like Ted. A big gift of Ted’s influence is that he called others to hear their voices—unique, idiosyncratic, embodied—voices that had often been silenced by fear of what was possible or impossible in graduate research. Ted taught us to sing out in our voices. And like all the performers who have sung the folk/blues classic “He Was a Friend of Mine,” each performance was new, certainly connected to the old, but adding to the familiar words and concepts and ideas with original voices that linger in the heart’s imagination.

## **Echo**

the nymph Echo loved  
to talk  
and insisted on the last word

until Juno  
searching for her wayward husband

among the nymphs

grew angry with Echo's  
chatter                      full of wile  
(while the nymphs hid)

and cursed Echo  
with the last word only,  
always reply, never the first word,

never an original word,  
and attracted to Narcissus,  
Echo repeated his words only,

words Narcissus heard  
    as mimicry, words  
that imitated his words only,

words with no promise or deferral,  
    only frustration,  
and Narcissus rejected Echo

till Echo withered away,  
    gaunt and craggy,  
a voice in mountain caves,

    the last word only,  
never an initiatory word,  
the imitative word only

**“Whoever cannot seek  
the unforeseen sees nothing,  
for the known way  
is an impasse.”**  
(Heraclitus, 2001, p. 7)

According to David Smith (2006),

loving the world, loving others, loving one's students suggest standing in a relation to them that does not determine in advance what they shall be for me, but rather accepting them in such a way as to accept the limit of what we can be for each other and not just its imagined possibility. (p. 31)

I am always intrigued by David Smith's scholarship which reminds me of Walter Brueggeman's (2001) "prophetic imagination," whose task "is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us" (p. 3). Smith reminds me that love always seeks connection while acknowledging alterity. I

stand in relation to others in a story of communion and communication, distance and silence. The other will always be other. After sixty-four years of introspection, self-reflection, life writing, and confession, I know little about Carl Leggo. I hardly remember the person I was. I can't explain most of my life. I can narrate a little of life, but most of my past will remain a montage of traces like faded film held in the dusk and twilight.

Last March, after almost twenty-six years, I moved from my old office at UBC to a new office. In clearing out my old office, I found an envelope of letters that Ted had sent me, mostly in the second half of the 1990s. My correspondence with Ted reminds me of many stories, still familiar even if the stories have been stored away for a long time. I lingered with Ted's letters, and selected a few favourite lines like old photographs, twenty-six fragments. I then composed a poem. You can hear Ted in the poem, but, if you listen carefully, you can also hear me—smiling, laughing, nodding, crying, all with delight.

### **Sorry for My Ramblings...**

*(fragments of letters from Ted Aoki, 1995 to 1999)*

a

I feel so good  
about your presence

...

opening up space  
within a department and faculty  
that allow some of your colleagues  
and all your grad students  
to flourish a-new in their becomings

b

I admire  
    your scholarly drive

your pedagogical enacting in dialogic spaces

c

just ongoing thoughts

d

the growing legitimization of live(d) curricula  
has led to an opening up of 'geo/graphic'  
and 'bio/graphic' spaces between  
curriculum plan and live(d) curricula

spaces of narrative writing of experiences

both earthly 'geo-graphic' and livingly 'bio/graphic

e

how can we as curriculum narrators  
dwell generatively and narratively  
in ... spaces of ambivalence?

f

thank you ten thousand times  
for your generous and un-tiring efforts  
in composing a conference that still lives in me

g

during the break (following the snowfall),  
I slipped and fell flat on my back  
(including my head)

my son and daughter-in-law took me  
to Emergency at the UBC hospital  
to see if the slip damaged or improved

the functioning of my medulla oblongata!

h

to show how a curriculum subject  
is in the throes of decentering disciplinarity

a generative space of possibilities and hope

i

we're looking forward to your vitalizing presence

j

may the turning of the last calendar page of 1997  
be a turning of a new fold as you,  
Lana and your children journey forth into 1998

k

just a note hoping to catch you in an un-busy moment!

l

enjoyed/inspired by your poetic performance

m

I value the warm and cordial friendship  
we have constituted here at UBC

let's continue with our activities,  
particularly with our grads

whose hopes and visions call us  
to join hands

n

your thoughtful poem on teaching

again you honour me

o

to enliven the ethicality in self-other

p

we're all proud of you, Carl,  
and your committed leadership  
in opening up the texture of our wor(l)d

q

I felt good clicking with you ...

r

I am hoping that you are  
at this very moment  
experiencing a restful/vital turn

s

with your writing we lingered  
in the world of pedagogy and ethicality

t

end of gossip

beer-time

u

the students you have been working with  
impress me much

v

I'm phasing out ... thanks for tuning in ...

w

marking an insight into language of 'insight'

x

so what's new?

y

sure like to hear what Carl says

z

sorry for my ramblings ...

**“All people ought to know themselves  
and everyone be wholly mindful.”**

(Heraclitus, 2001, p. 71)

Hélène Cixous (1998) reminds me about the rare gift of Ted's influence in my life when she wrote, “luckily there is a voice, that voice of poetry-philosophy, to think with or, in any case, to sing with; to inscribe, to play on, to strum the contradictions and the world as tragedy” (p. 37). Ted's voice is the voice of poetry-philosophy. His curriculum studies are steeped in language. In his writing and teaching, he riffed on “contradictions,” but for all the challenges he lived in his life, including internment, racism, prejudice, hatred, grief, and heart-break, he did not strum “the world as tragedy.” In English literature studies, we often speak about the modes of literary narrative as tragedy, comedy, romance, and fantasy, but there is a fifth mode of literary narrative we call contemplation. In some ways, the other four modes of literary narrative have often outshone contemplation. We have the Greek dramatic masks of tragedy and comedy. Hollywood has certainly emphasized tragedy and comedy, as well as romance and fantasy. The

mode of contemplation is perhaps not as readily exciting or adventurous or emotional as the other modes, but it is the mode we find in much literature and many films, including the films of David Lynch and Terrence Malick, and even most recently in Martin Scorsese's *Silence*. The mode of contemplation is what we need in this age of alternative facts, alt-right, fake news, post-truth. Ted's voice is the "voice of poetry-philosophy" that strums "contradictions and the world" (Cixous, 1998, p. 37) as contemplation, that invites us to breathe, to meditate, ponder, question, ruminate, and wonder. Ted's words slow us down. Ted's words breathe into us and inspire us to call back in our voices. Ted's voice is unique, his own, and he encourages us to speak and write in our voices, not his, not even an imitation of his voice. There can be no mimicry of the poet-philosopher's voice. Ted's work is Ted's. Ultimately Ted's work is the work of love. Cixous understood that "what words do between themselves—couplings, matings, hybridizations—is genius. An erotic and fertile genius. A law of life presides over their crossbreedings. Only words in love sow.... Clandestine semantics" (pp. 147-148). Ted's words are "words in love," generated in love, composed in love, and offered in love. Ted continues to inspire and infuse my poetry, my commitment to living poetically, my devotion to understanding curriculum as a way of being and becoming.

### **Witness**

*a poem is the sun  
soft suffused  
in morning mist*

I witness what I know  
or remember  
or think I know

my witness might be  
witless but I offer  
the witness as a gift

never sure it  
can be received  
a hungry fire

*a poem is you and me  
an Argentinian tango  
on the polished page*

in the garden  
the sparrow does not know  
where the worm is hiding  
and the worm does not know  
the sparrow does not know

not knowing writes

a hungry story, a thin  
line between life and death

*I want a poem  
voluptuously drawn  
with rhythms of desire*

she stands still  
like a heron stands  
still on the edge  
of the river  
where faraway  
I still walk the dike  
and stop to say  
oh, there's a heron  
here on the edge  
where the heron  
was still when  
you left, still  
there, so still

*a poem skates  
the limits of the page  
under a full moon*

as the earth drowned  
in tsunamis of God's wrath  
what did Noah know?  
what did Noah not know?

*I seek a poem  
that cannot remember  
all the alphabet*

in Alejandro Jodorowsky's  
*Endless Poetry*  
the Chilean daimonion  
sings the joke with joy  
and aesthetic arrest

I lived with romantic bravado  
ignoring everything  
like nothing mattered  
like something would emerge  
like anything could happen  
like a breathing plaything

could translate writhing  
into soothing writing

*after a busy day of meetings  
I seek the poetic in the midst  
of the seemingly prosaic  
sure poetry is everywhere*

where is everywhere?  
where is ever? whenever?  
where is anywhere?  
where is where?  
where is here?  
where is there?

there are no wholes without holes

returning from ice fishing  
in a Newfoundland pond

everywhere black and white  
like a newspaper or zebra

rendering visible the invisible  
surrendering to wonder

knowing almost everything is missed  
still refusing to miss the mystery

learning with every careful decision  
about brush colour stroke

how all artful knowledge is only  
enough to trust intuition and hope

**“The river  
where you set  
your foot just now  
is gone—  
those waters  
giving way to this,  
now this.”**

(Heraclitus, 2001, p. 27)

In 2000 Erika Hasebe-Ludt and I joined Ted at the University of Lethbridge to teach a three-week graduate institute titled “Writing Teachers’ Lives.” Ted participated in the middle week.

During that week I was Ted's student. Ted whirled a piece of chalk like a conductor's baton or a magician's wand. He wrote on the blackboard and in the air—much of his writing swirled here and there with imaginative efficacy. Ted conjured ideas and concepts with mesmerizing flourishes. Like a cartographer he composed rhizomean paths in an intricate network of connections that mapped the landscape while always acknowledging how no single cartographer's specific narrative could ever exhaust all the possibilities of curricular flowing and flexibility and fecundity.

### **Complex Curricular Cacophony**

curriculum exploration  
curriculum implementation  
curriculum inquiry  
curricular landscape  
curriculum memos  
curriculum orientations  
curriculum research  
curriculum researchers  
curriculum scholarship  
curriculum talk  
curriculum theorists  
curriculum thought  
curriculum worlds  
curricular signifiers  
curricular spaces  
curriculum as planned  
curricular turn  
curriculum as lived  
polyphonic curriculum  
understanding curriculum

**“The beginning is the end.”**  
(Heraclitus, 2001, p. 45)

While I resonate with Heraclitus' (2001) wisdom that “the beginning is the end” (p. 45), I also know the end is the beginning. I last saw Ted in the assisted care home where he and his wife June lived at the end of their lives. I knew in that last visit that Ted was not well; he died a couple weeks later. But, of course, Ted lives on. From diverse spiritual and religious perspectives we could expound on how a human being lives on after death, but I will simply state that Ted lives on in memory, in his writing, in the writing of others who remember him, and in the curriculum research that many scholars pursue. Ted once wrote that “we need to seek out new orientations that allow us to free ourselves of the tunnel vision effect of mono-dimensionality” (2005m, p. 94). That is sturdy wisdom for living. Ted always understood how one dimension such as length, width, depth, or height is not sufficient to explain the complexity of human life. Mono-dimensionality gives us a line which is more than no dimension represented by a point, but the significant point is that neither a point nor a line can, on their own, demarcate a plane or

surface with its two dimensions. Even a figure with three dimensions that represent volume is not adequate to understand the hard work of transcending tunnel vision so we can see with multiple new orientations.

### **Curricular Kaleidoscope**

*(for Ted Aoki)*

with renewed configurations,  
the more I look, the more I see,

the more I see, the more I look  
spellbound, a whirlpool,

caught in confused movement,  
turbulent tumultuous turmoil,

no order in the disorder. If only  
I could learn to surrender

to the kaleidoscope, swirling  
maelstrom, lovely whirlwind

like the unseen spirit of breath  
in the alphabet's necromancy

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## Notes

- 1 Aoki, 2005c, p. 112.
  - 2 Aoki, 2005b, p. 133.
  - 3 Aoki, 2005l, p. 164.
  - 4 Aoki, 2005d, p. 238.
  - 5 Aoki, 2005g, p. 265.
  - 6 Aoki, 2005a, p. 289.
  - 7 Aoki, 2005f, p. 316.
  - 8 Aoki, 2005j, p. 337.
  - 9 Aoki, 2005j, p. 348.
  - 10 Aoki, 2005k, p. 376.
  - 11 Aoki, 2005g, p. 271.
  - 12 Aoki, 2005f, p. 318.
  - 13 Aoki, 2005e, p. 300.
  - 14 Aoki, 2005f, p. 318.
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*Carl Leggo* is a poet and Professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. His research interests include: creativity, arts-based research, poetic inquiry, well-being, and contemplative practices. His books include: *Growing Up Perpendicular on the Side of a Hill*; *View from My Mother's House*; *Come-By-Chance*; *Lifewriting as Literary Métissage and an Ethos for Our Times* (co-authored with Erika Hasebe-Ludt and Cynthia Chambers); *Creative Expression, Creative Education* (co-edited with Robert Kelly); *Sailing in a Concrete Boat: A Teacher's Journey*; *Arresting Hope: Prisons That Heal* (co-edited with Ruth Martin, Mo Korchinski, and Lynn Fels); *Arts-based and Contemplative Practices in Research and Teaching: Honoring Presence* (co-edited with Susan Walsh and Barbara Bickel); and *Hearing Echoes* (co-authored with Renee Norman).