**TANGLED LINES: THE POET WEAVES WORLDS IN WORDS. EXCERPTS FROM CARL LEGGO’S MANIFESTO**

As a poet I live by the maxim that the world is words. As human beings, we are born into language, and as human beings we are borne up by language. We are awash in a sea of textuality. Like a whale that moves through the oceans with its environment pressing on its sides while it in turn presses its shape on its environment, we move through the ocean of language, universally pervasive, pressed and pressing. In our language use, we are constantly shaped and informed and defined, and we are constantly shaping and informing and defining. We are the words we speak and write and think and hear and read. We speak and write and think and hear and read ourselves into existence.

We weave words and in weaving words we weave our worlds. My concern is that in schools we often get in the way of word-weaving. We try to tame the wildness of language. We try to categorize and box and control the messiness of language. We try to contain the ocean in a pail. We try to chart the stars on poster paper. We try to squeeze an energetic foot into a pretty but non-functional glass slipper. We try to reduce language to basics and essentials and rules and conventions and patterns.

As a teacher I am committed to nurturing in others desire and confidence in word-making and word-weaving. I invite my students to write creatively and interrogatively and expressively. I encourage them to take risks, to experiment with diverse discourses, to challenge conventions, to seek truth. I have many fears. I am always concerned about inviting people to walk in the dark, hidden places of their hearts and memories, fearful that they might be lost, fearful that they might not be strong enough to make the journey. And I am always concerned about inviting people to question and contravene the rules, only to encourage them to confront and reject me.

Ideally I want to nurture an experience of community where our differences of opinion and story and personality and desire can be celebrated. We write and share our writing with one another. We tell stories of our lives, and we reveal ourselves in intimate ways, and we grow stronger in our conviction about the power of words to write our lived stories and to transform our living stories and to create possibilities for more life-enhancing stories. With my students I want to nurture a relationship that is mutually supportive, a complementary relationship, a relationship of writers who sing in our unique voices and who in our unique singing also seek ways to harmonize with one another. We are word-smiths, weaving our ways and our words, on journeys that are separate and isolate, occasionally convening to sing together, recognizing how often our journeys are parallel, how often our journeys intersect, how often our journeys are redirected and mapped anew in our sharing, how often our journeys are fuelled by the conviction that we are not alone. My hope is that my words will invite others to enter into dialogical relationships of word-making founded on risk-taking, trust, truth-seeking, courage, encouragement, nurture, desire, and unwavering commitment to the power of words for singing our worlds into creation.