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Toward an Eductive Pedagogy for Academic Writing in Doctoral Education

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Abstract

Doctoral education often treats academic writing as a solitary, human-centered activity, guided by conventions that emphasize structure, clarity, and discipline. These frameworks rarely consider how other-than-human entities shape the writing process. This article explores how multispecies assemblages inform doctoral writing, proposing that knowledge production can be understood as an eductive process – an unfolding of latent ideas through relationship with the so-called "natural" world. Drawing on examples from my own work, I share an excerpt from a multispecies duoethnographic project that seeks to recognize and incorporate other-than-human perspectives. I reflect on how these encounters have shaped my scholarly voice and academic identity, challenging dominant assumptions about writing as an isolated human endeavor. Reimagining writing as a relational, evolving practice, I offer reflections for integrating multispecies sensibilities into doctoral training and invite educators, researchers, and students to view academic writing as a collaborative process shaped by entanglements of human and more-than-human life.

Introduction

Thirteen weeks before this article you're reading is due, I go to the library to borrow Wendy Laura Belcher's (2019) *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks*. Fellow doctoral students and faculty members recommend it. Some highly. Some swear by the tome. I've had seven peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters published or accepted in the first three-plus years of my doctoral studies, but I feel like a novice and I'm always happy to receive help from wiser, more experienced people. From anyone, really. None of my published/forthcoming academic writings were written in exactly the same way, in the same amount of time, or following a prescribed protocol. Instead, I wrote each one in the precise way they had to be written; not with a one-size-fits-all formula, but each process tailored to the particular writing project. I'm highly skeptical – and not generally fond of words like *efficient* – but if there is a way to write more uhhhhfficiently, I'm willing to try it. I like to think I have an open mind.

Hence Belcher's workbook. Toward the bottom of the first page, I come across this line: "My aim is helping graduate students, recent PhDs, postdoctoral fellows, adjunct instructors, junior faculty, and international faculty understand the rules of the academic publishing game so that they can flourish, not perish" (p. 1). It's enough to keep me reading. I turn the page, which I do several more times, before I reach "Week 1: Designing Your Plan for Writing". The table of tasks assigned for this week tells me on Day 2 I'll need to design a writing schedule for the next twelve weeks.

Sigh. I've never (ever) been good at sticking to schedules like this. Making them? No problem. I can colour the hell out of an Excel cell. (Reading that sentence back makes me chuckle. I try to read it out loud again three times fast). But never mind. I bracket this concern for the moment.

It seems to be an important part of Belcher's program, but I don't want to spend the 180 minutes budgeted for it. Not when my own actual schedule is so variable from one day to the next.

So I move on. I read a little more until I come across the heading: "Keys to positive writing experiences". Over the next six-plus pages, Belcher offers some general thoughts organized around the following five subheadings:

- Successful academic writers write
- Successful academic writers read
- Successful academic writers make writing social
- Successful academic writers persist despite rejection
- Successful academic writers pursue their passions

I pause here – in part because the next section is the one on designing the writing plan, that thing I'm reluctant to do; in larger part because those five subheadings and the content they highlight have me thinking . . .

. . . and writing, which is thinking

I love writing and reading (terms, in my experience, that are usually transposed, sequentially; I wonder why Belcher ordered them the way she did?). I don't love *academic* writing, though, or reading academic pieces. (Admitting this feels like confessing to a secret that's better left buried). Of course, there are exceptions. I can't think of any at the moment [and upon editing this section after having finished writing the article text still can't], but there probably are a few. There's definitely some scholarly work I've enjoyed reading. But love? *Love* is a strong word. You don't just toss a word like that around willy-nilly. To be fair, though, Belcher doesn't say a successful academic writer needs to love writing; just that one writes.

I remind myself to read carefully. Read the actual words written and avoid these tangents. I'm trying. Then again, digressions are part of (academic) life, aren't they? That's not just a me problem, is it?

Speaking of me, I trace my love of reading and writing to three sources: my mother, who read to me and helped me learn the English language, even as she was learning it, herself; my junior kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Barnicutt, who loved words and books and her students and encouraged us to read aloud – I remember being selected to read for the vice principal when I was four and impressing him with my ability (though, in retrospect, he was probably just being nice); and television (including the *TV Guide* (in print, of course), which helped me find the after-school and Saturday morning shows I wanted to watch).

While loving to read and write surely helps with *academic* writing, there's no guarantee that affection for the task, in general, will lead to prodigality or proficiency in the specific scholarly variant of it (Hayot, 2024). There may be zero correlation. (Note to social science scholars: anyone want to do this research)?

Anyway, it's imaginative texts that I love. The stuff of fiction and creative non-fiction. Which isn't to say that academic writing *isn't* imaginative. To the contrary: there's so much imaginative work that underpins so very much of the scholarly work that's published (and that isn't). But so very very much of the imagination that plays during the entire research process is lost in the write-up, which often reduces all (or much of) the creativity that's brought a researcher to that moment to little more than a plug-and-play, colour-by-numbers, outline-filling, inside-the-box thinking, pre-determined template.

Still, maybe I should be more precise.

What I'm trying to say is, yes, I value the imaginative undercurrents in fiction and creative non-fiction, but it's the *language* that I particularly love. The distinct voice of the best prose stylists. And the variations in form (because three-act structures, Freytag triangles, and hero's journeys

are hardly all there is) (Alison, 2019). Variations in language and form are imbricated with the freedom and playfulness that exist in these types of literature, where writers can experiment and transgress "rules" and expectations. (Novels aren't called *novel* for nothing). It means *something* (something satisfying) for the readers' experience when they don't know what to expect.

Here, perhaps, is where a proponent of conventional academic writing might raise a hand and say, "That's exactly the point. Scholars who read journals and conference proceedings and the like don't want to be surprised by the form of the thing they're reading. By the findings? Sure. Not the structure of the written piece. We want to know exactly where to find what we're looking for. And we don't care to read artful sentences, even if they are lush and languorous. All we want is what works. Beauty might even be a distraction. Strike that. It is one. And anyway, not everyone can write that way or that well. People who fancy themselves good at the craft but aren't, are just an embarrassment".

To that I say (only partially in jest) bah humbug.

But for real: I suppose there are plenty of academics who are sympathetic to my (fictional!!) dissenter's tepid take. It's probably easier and faster to get research written without having to give as much thought to how best to write it, allowing more time for other concerns. In fact, lots of folks probably think the generic way *is* the best way, which certainly explains why it's the dominant approach (Day, 1989), though alternative approaches to doctoral writing do certainly exist (Löytönen et al., 2015; Negretti, 2025; Pullen, & Rhodes, 2008).

In STEM and social sciences fields, this often means IMRaD: Introduction, Methods, Result, and Discussion (Sollaci & Pereira, 2004). Sometimes other bits might be included, depending on the project; the precise acronym and structure isn't as relevant as the fact that one exists in the first place. In the humanities, more variation is accepted and exists, though even here, standard elements like rhetoric, close reading, thick description, citations, and others are expected (Hayot, 2014b; MacDonald, 2010; Raymond, 1982).

Believe it or not, I've been in three separate workshops focused on doctoral reading and writing – different dates, different venues, different speakers speaking from different disciplinary backgrounds – where each facilitator explicitly told us *not* to read everything in the articles we came across, whether they were assigned in our classes or ones we found on our own. The first time I heard this advice, I'm sure I furrowed my brows, grimaced, wondered if I'd heard correctly. The second time I might have done a double-take. By the third time, I was no longer surprised. And if there's a fourth, I'm expecting to hear it again.

The advice goes something like this: don't read it all because you don't need to read it all. It takes too much time. There are components of the genre that can be skipped or skimmed with no serious loss: methods, results, lit review (if one exists). Instead, pay attention to the discussion and any charts or tables or graphs. Skim the abstract, sure, and maybe the introduction. Don't waste your time, whatever you do.

I don't blame faculty members who've given this advice for passing it along. If doctoral students are encouraged by their doctorate-holding professors to gloss over significant (in length, if not substance) portions of published papers, there's likely a flaw in the system. It's not that those who've proffered this kernel of (possibly/probably/definitely borderline pseudo-) wisdom are giving bad advice, it's that so much of what's published conforms to a set of generic expectations so boilerplate as to render them trivial, if not irrelevant. You know exactly what to expect, so you know you can skip it. That sort of thing. (It's one of the reasons those of us who skipped so many classes in our youth did so. But here I go, digressing again).

As for me, I want people to read what I've written. Otherwise, I wouldn't have written it or would have killed those darlings on revision. And if certain sections can be skipped while reading, maybe those sections shouldn't be written. What could be more time-saving than not doing a thing, especially when it's a thing that no one is going to look at and you don't care to complete (and wouldn't, except for the fact it's expected of you)?

While I want to leave room for the genuine possibility that some pre-determined structure may actually be the best way to write-up a particular piece of research, and that creative language, including voice and style, can still be expressed within already-established confines/boundaries (like word count mins and maxes, for instance),[1] it's still a stretch to say that there is some pre-determined structure that works best for most research, even if it's research typical of a particular discipline. It's an even bigger stretch, I think, to assume that whatever is lost in not designing the written component from the ground up for each individual (and hence, unique) work of research is too insignificant to be of concern.

Who's to say that what's lost isn't, in fact, a great deal? It might even be that resisting formulaic inheritances is an exercise in academic freedom and an act of resistance toward efforts to curb said freedom (Francis, 2020).

And anyway, who doesn't like getting so lost in a reading that time seems to disappear? (Fine. I guess such folks do exist. Bah.)

I could go on, make a detailed, itemized list of pros and cons for the pre-determined format I'm critiquing – I haven't even said anything about the positivist illusion that IMRaD and comparable outlines create in the presentation of research, reconfiguring inquiry into a sequence of discrete steps; as if knowledge can be neatly sorted and staged; as if research isn't actually iterative, recursive, entangled, messy; as if separating methods from discussion isn't artificial and doesn't obscure the way knowledge emerges relationally through all manner of engagements with materials, spaces, assemblages (Barad, 2007; St. Pierre, 2021) – but I've said my piece.

Trees in the (multispecies) writing assemblage

This isn't to say that every component of the typical scholarly article ought to be treated like dirty bath water. Subheadings, for instance, can be helpful signposts (though, I hasten to add: not always necessary, which is, in part, the point of that last section).

I want to return to Belcher. I'm still only in week 1, but I've reflected a bit on her observation that successful academic writers write and read. (Typing it out that way makes me think this is why she has *write* before *read*, by the way – it flows better than the alternative; but maybe that's a matter of taste. And maybe it's an example of creativity bursting forth in an academic work).

Successful academic writers also make writing social, she claims. "The myth that writing should be a solo activity is just that, a myth" (p. 20). She continues to say that "no writing is the product of just one person. And the best writing is created in community, with a strong sense of audience" (p. 20). She's not advocating for co-authored articles here (though she's not *not* advocating for them). What she's articulating is that all writers are always already in assemblages, whether they're cognizant of them or not. To recognize this reality, and to leverage it and draw consciously from the well of these relationships, can improve one's writing.

She offers some other advice, from joining a writing group, to presenting one's work(-in-progress) at conferences (which can help refine ideas), to sharing one's writing with others even while in its early stages.

I buy all of that. I've tried all of it. In fact – in all seriousness – I'm writing these very words while in a Zoom writing group with two professors, each of whom is working on their own writing projects. There's an accountability in this space, which I value.

So, again, I agree with what Belcher says in this subsection. But we could go further. When she argues that successful academic writers make writing social, the *social* she describes seemingly consists only of other humans. Why impose this limit? Why not broaden the scope

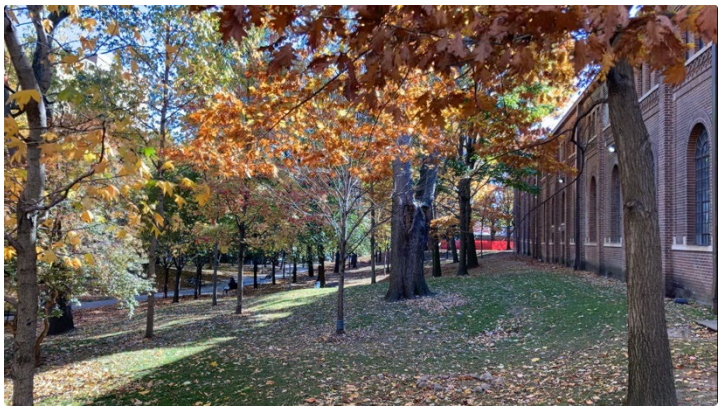
[1] Of course, constraints can absolutely lead to generative, creative output (Cranford, 2024). See the oeuvre of Georges Perec, for instance, among many, many others.

to include more-than-humans? To be clear, I don't have any reason to think Belcher would disagree with me. This is probably simply an omission.

Nevertheless, it's an unsurprising one given the persistent anthropocentric and speciesist bias that exists (and has existed for millennia) in the Western world – a bias to which academia has proven not to be immune. The field of doctoral education often frames academic writing as a solely human exercise, even when it seeks to expand it beyond a solo one, guided by assumptions that prioritize human-centred insights and output. While doctoral writing guides like Belcher's emphasize structure, argumentation, clarity, routine, and discipline, they rarely (if ever) consider how more-than-human entities might inform or transform the writing process. In fact, if there is a guide like that, I'm unaware of it. This gap in the literature overlooks how intra-actions with(in) multispecies assemblages contribute to both the researcher's growth and scholarly voice.

I suspect that many people reading this will instinctively know that their pets and plants factor into their reading and writing experience in some way. Beyond just the more-than-human beings that share a home with a researcher, however, we are all deeply entangled with other species and non-human entities (water, air, ecosystems), and these entanglements shape our entire lives, including the experience of academic writing. As Waight (2022) notes in highlighting the oft-neglected and overlooked role of all manner of matter in assemblages of writing, "the production of writing comes to be through an entanglement of human and non-human resources" (p. 383).

Figure 1. Philosopher's Walk at the University of Toronto



Source: Author's photo

One arboreal example from my own PhD journey may be illustrative. I was finishing my first year and wrapping up my final course, while auditing another – a graduate English course simply called "Trees." Each class was held outdoors. The second week we met on Philosopher's Walk, a tree-lined path in the heart of my urban campus. We sat in the generous shade of a sugar Maple, discussing that week's readings – Emily Dickinson, John Ashberry, Martin Buber, C. K. Williams, Peter Wohlleben, Sumana Roy.

"We create new forms of attention," Professor Ackerman said, channeling Whitman. "Ways of quiet, if not silence."

The moment he finished speaking, I heard the sugar Maple address me, urging me to change the topic of my proposed dissertation. Until then, I'd been planning to study the mutating role of university faculty and their role in supporting student mental health. But when a tree tells you to do something, it's a good idea to listen. So that's what I did. (What do I mean by this? Did the tree vocalize? No. Trees don't do that. What I heard wasn't a sound but a kind of interior insistence. A tug of thought. An image in the mind. A feeling that seemed to originate outside me yet move through me. It was as if my imagination became porous to the Maple's presence and for a moment the tree's being crossed into mine. Many non-Western ontologies would recognize this as a form of communication: an exchange of awareness, if not words (McGregor, 2004; Watts, 2013). I'm not claiming that I translated the tree's language. Rather, I felt

addressed by the Maple, as though something in the tree's stillness had turned toward me and I toward the tree. In that shared turning, the topic of my dissertation shifted.)

A trip to eastern Canada in the ensuing months helped refine this initial prompt. While walking through and spending time in the botanical gardens at the Université Laval in Quebec City and Memorial University in St. John's, and exploring the campuses of the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown and Dalhousie University in Halifax, I sought to be attuned to and hear from the trees in those spaces (Elton, 2021; Hartigan, 2017). It's thanks to their participation that my eventual thesis proposal took shape. Now I'm doing a multispecies ethnography of campus green spaces, focused especially on trees.

Figure 2. Wollemi Pine (Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden)

Source: Author's photo

It was a tree that pointed me in this direction and it was trees that confirmed it.

And trees have been guiding me ever since. Typical of the human-exceptionalist orientation prevalent in much and possibly all of the Western world, research subjects are often treated as passive objects of study, rather than active participants in the co-construction of knowledge. I'm trying not to repeat these mistakes. My work recognizes and seeks to involve the trees in my study as the agentic participants that they are, striving as best as I can to include and account for their complexities, opacities, alterities, and the affective dimensions embodied in their trans-corporeality (Alaimo, 2016; Tsing, 2015).

I anticipate that some people will look askance at these last few paragraphs, skeptical about the reliability of my interpretation of my arboreal interactions (and of the imagination, in general). Despite efforts at decolonizing postsecondary education and the (co-)constitutive recognition of ways of knowing and being not traditionally acknowledged in the West, these ways are hardly accepted unanimously. And while I don't draw on Indigenous epistemologies in my work – to do so would be extractive on many levels since I don't embody these epistemologies in my own existence in the world – the Daoist framework that undergirds my project and everything else I try to do is open to the more-than-human kinship relations that are found across Indigenous worldviews and "research" methodologies (Adamson, 2023; Kimmerer, 2018; McGregor, 2018; Watts, 2013; Wilson, 2008).

As I write, I know that I am continuously being formed by my entanglements with the more-than-human world. I may be aware of some of these forces, but for the most part, their impact on me lies beyond what my consciousness is able to discern. This effect on me is present regardless of whether I'm writing in the immediate company of a tree, say, or Toothpick, my cat. These relationships continue to exert influence on who I am (and consequently, what I produce), regardless of whether we are in each other's physical presence.

I love writing outdoors, within sight and smell of my favourite trees, but this isn't always possible. Regardless of where I write, the trees shape my thoughts and my words.

A story to illustrate

How exactly do they do that? It's not alchemy.

To begin trying to fashion an explanation, let's consider the etymology of the word *education*, which comes from the Latin *educere*, "to draw out." Understood through this morphological lens, education isn't principally concerned with transmitting information (a point famously punctuated by Freire (1970)). Instead, it's about something like unfolding potential(s) through relationship to bring forth or draw out what's latent – what is already there. (This, too, is deeply bound up with Daoist ideas, though not, as far as I know, with Christian theologies, which are at the bedrock of so much of Western education, ironically; Brock, 2010; Burke and Segall, 2011). Taking this etymology seriously challenges the dominant model of doctoral training (not to mention tertiary, secondary, and primary schooling). Learning is less about accumulating expertise than it is concerned with the process of becoming via relational encounters (Kirksey, 2014; Rose, 2012; Van Patter, 2022).

Writing, in this sense, is never a solitary act of intellectual mastery but an eductive process shaped by intra-actions with(in) multispecies assemblages. As Barad (2007) notes, "Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not preexist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating" (p. ix). Trees, rivers, birds, fungi, and other non-human entities aren't simply objects of reflection. They're legitimate co-authors in the writing process, shaping the rhythms, insights, and affective dimensions of scholarly work. While they may not be putting pen to paper or keystrokes to screens, they're absolutely present and agentive. Recognizing their role in our entanglements requires a fundamental shift in how doctoral writing is conceptualized: from the production of knowledge to a practice of attunement, response, and becoming (Haraway, 2016).

In my doctoral work, I've experimented with research-creation methodologies that foreground multispecies engagements. These practices include nature journaling (Arnold, 2012; McClain, Powell & Bettwy, 2025; Tsevreni, 2021), multispecies duoethnographic dialogues with trees (Abbott, 2021; Burk, 2016; Cooke, 2021; Mayes, 2023), and creative writing that seeks to give voice to more-than-human perspectives (Hughes, 2024; Nitzke, 2023; Sama et al., 2004), along with many other experimental approaches. These tactics (Kirksey et al., 2014) challenge the anthropocentric biases of traditional academic writing by positioning other-than-human entities as active participants in the knowledge-making process.

My nature journaling practice, for example, involves photography, drawing, painting, and writing in direct response to trees (as well as animal encounters, bodies of water, and more), allowing these engagements to shape the form and content of my academic work (Barrett et al., 2021). Rather than imposing a predetermined form onto the translation/transduction/transfiguration of these experiences, I allow my writing to emerge from the intra-actions themselves, treating them as sites of co-authorship. Knowledge is always situated within ecological and relational contexts. I'm simply trying to be more attentive to this fact and honest in my recognition of it.

Here's an excerpt from a recent fiction-ish piece titled "What They Talk About When They Talk About University" that I wrote in concert with a 30-year-old Ginkgo.

Figure 3. Maybe Fidda (a squirrel)

Source: Author's photo

Four students sit on the stone steps opposite the faculty of music building feeding their leftover lunch morsels to a squirrel. Humans think that being human gives them the right.

These humans don't even know the squirrel's name. They call him cute and think he's blond. One of them has named him Ken. Her name, if I'm to translate it into English for you, is something like Fidda and she's not blonde, she's grey. The buff color of her fur is on account of the melanin levels in her body. You'd think these students with their different skin colors would have a clue about pigmentation. She's an animal just like they are, after all. But they don't. There's a lot they don't know, which is something I've learned through observing this quartet since they first started congregating on those steps.

Back when my leaves were green, they used to meet there regularly, spilling tea about the people in their dorm, complaining about TAs and professors, about how overwhelmed they were, the capriciousness of the weather. Occasionally one would let slip something more serious. I'll keep those secrets to myself. I may find you lot a nuisance, but some things should remain sacred.

As my leaves gilded, the four of them came around less often, which was to be expected. Humans haven't adapted well to cold, and no, putting on an unsightly jacket doesn't count as evolution. By the time my foliage had fallen from my branches and I'd dropped all my seeds to the earth (and the cement path that's seriously cramping my roots), they stopped coming altogether. Humans hate the smell of my seeds. Fidda and her more proximate kin love the fragrance. I'm reminded of that expression: One person's trash, etc. It's not quite accurate, though, is it? Rubbish is rarely valued as treasure for long. Truth is, for humans, most everything metamorphoses into waste after a while. Just add time. If you don't believe me, all you need to do is wait.

Speaking of which, yes, the fact I'm conscious of time means I'm sentient. Why would you think otherwise? If you must know, time for me is different than it is for you. One of your days is like a thousand years for a tree. Not all of us, granted, but my immediate relations have been around since dinosaurs roamed this very spot. Long before humans used this site as a gathering place. And to think they have the audacity to call me non-native. Who's the real invasive one?

When my branches were completely barren, one or another of these four humans would sometimes walk past me, breath visible in the air, boots crunching on the snow, oblivious to its mutated chemistry. Now they're back, naming the squirrels as if they didn't already have names. Feeding them as if I and the other plants around me weren't exceedingly generous and didn't provide for all their needs.

I don't mean to come off bitter. Lord knows I share a lot in common with these students. But for goodness sake, all they need to do is look. I'm not asking for them to be more aware, as nice as that would be. Just pay attention. Look at the abundance of seeds and nuts scattered on the grass. Where do they think that all comes from? Look at how healthy all the squirrels are, not just Fidda, who's scurrying back to Rilyjos, the northern Red Oak on the other side of the footbridge that runs over where the Creek used to flow before humans (who else?) decided to bury it underground. I mean all her kin who live in the area.

I suppose I shouldn't be surprised by their lack of vision. These humans haven't even noticed that the Elder Elms who used to tower behind the very steps they're sitting on have been cut down since the last time they were here. How do you miss a thing like that?

I asked the Elms once how old they were. They wouldn't tell me. You never ask an Elm her age, one of them said.

Instead of paying attention, these humans yap.

Reflection

This story is neither ornament nor detour. It's part of the argument. Writing with the Ginkgo (allowing its being to inflect the narrative) enacts the very eductive, relational process I've been tracing. The vignette is an experiment in attunement, a way of making perceptible the more-than-human agencies that shape academic work, yet often remain unacknowledged. In letting the tree speak (or, more accurately, letting myself be written by the tree), I'm trying to render visible the multispecies entanglements that saturate doctoral writing. In other words, the story functions as illustration and method. It demonstrates how scholarly thinking might shift when we take seriously the idea that knowledge emerges through intra-action as opposed to isolation.

The research-creation methodologies I employ challenge the human-centred assumptions so typical of academic writing, while also offering alternative ways of conceptualizing scholarly identity (Inouye & McAlpine, 2019). I am not an isolated thinker producing knowledge from a position of detachment. I am a multispecies assemblage. As such, my academic writing is a collaborative practice of relational becoming, shaped by the entanglements of (human and non-human) worlds, and a venture toward academic writing otherwise (Taylor & Benozzo, 2023; Taylor et al., 2025).

I call this *eductive* because writing, as I understand it, is a drawing forth of something that is not wholly mine, nor wholly separate from me. As a human, I'm not a discrete, self-contained entity. Many other species make up my biome. I'm always in flux, always in the process of becoming through my intra-actions with more-than-humans. Their countless presences co-compose my body, my breath, my thought. If my very being is constituted through these entanglements, then my writing, too, must be understood as emerging from this ongoing relationality. When I write, I'm not engaging in an act of self-expression, then; it's *world*-expression, a resonance of forces and beings that exceed me but find articulation through me.

When I write from a place of attunement—that is, when I'm in syntony with these presences (insofar as that's possible)—the boundary of authorship blurs. Who's writing? Me, yes. But who else? What compels the words to spill forth and take shape on the page? Ideas, images, and language don't arise *ex nihilo*. They're *educed*, drawn out of the intricate weave of relations I inhabit. Perhaps they emerge through imagination, or perhaps something else, more material, is at play: the respiration of trees intermingling with my own, such that we conspire together (Choy, 2021); the microbial life within me shaping my cognition; the insistent presence of the more-than-human world making itself known through my body. Writing, then, is an act of listening as much as composing. It's a porous engagement with the vitality that surrounds and suffuses me.

Writing attentively with other-than-humans, observing the multispecies entanglements of campus life, noticing the trees and squirrels, being attentive to the microbial life within me/that

is me – these are eductive practices. Foregrounding such assemblages invites others to experiment with their own methods. In this sense, the approach becomes a form of pedagogy. No prescriptions or formulas, no templates. But a sensibility, hopefully. At least an inspiration for cultivating scholarly practices that are attentive, responsive, generative, and not only about the production of articles.

Conclusion

I'm planning to wrap this up with some brief thoughts on Belcher's final two subpoints from week 1, day 1 of her workbook. (Yeah. Didn't get past the very first day. My bad.)

Successful academic writers persist despite rejection, she says, and they pursue their passions.

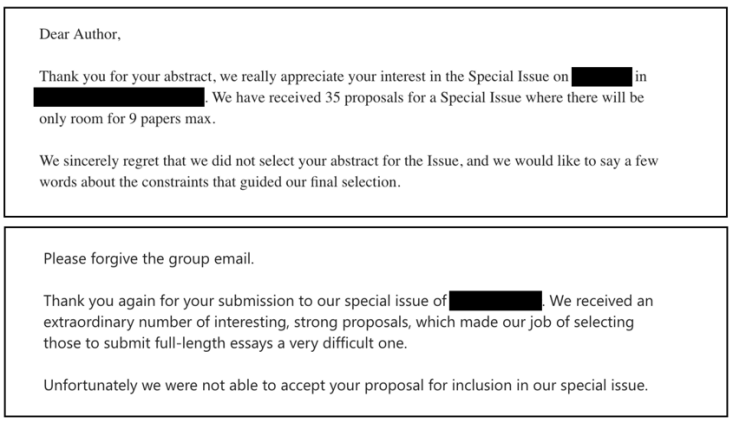
My honest-to-cat first thought is to highlight the whole of that former section (pp. 22-23) as inspiration/consolation to revisit after I get the reviewer feedback for this article. But marking up a library book is an unpardonable sin. I photograph the two-page spread, instead, and file it away for future reference.

And re: Belcher's last point about pursuing passions, she argues that "you're more likely to have positive writing experiences if you follow your deepest interests rather than passing fads" (p. 24). (Dear Reviewer #2: that's what I've tried to do here!) It's what I've tried to do in my PhD. I'm beyond grateful, in that respect, for the sugar Maple's counsel. Had it not been for this tree, I would have continued pursuing a project I was interested in but less than passionate about. And I probably would have abandoned it, if not by now, eventually. But I love trees. I have since I was a child. They're bound up with some of my earliest and most significant memories. Now I'm doing work I enjoy tremendously. Which seems like a fitting and appropriate place to wrap up. No joke, I want to get back to this work that feels like play.

I do feel bad that I've barely made a dent in the Belcher text, though. I should at least skim the rest of it.

So I do that, and before long I discover the final chapter, titled "Week 0: Writing Your Article from Scratch," starting on page 390. I decide to read the whole of it carefully. When I'm done, I think, sure, that's one way to do it. I hope this article text exemplifies another.

Figure 4. Two recent and impersonal rejection emails



Source: Author

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