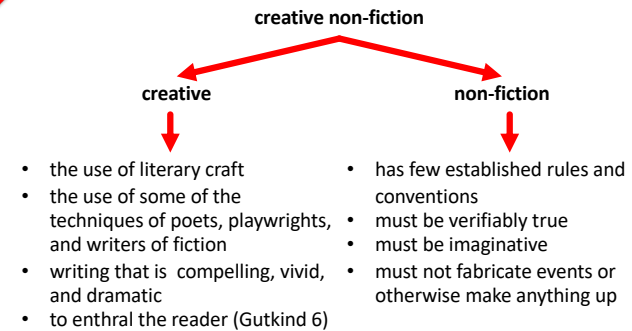


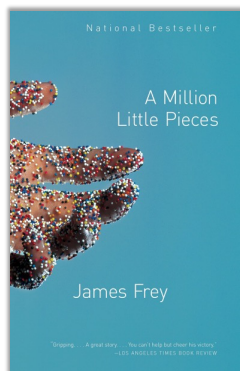
Writing Creative Non-Fiction

Unit 1 Defining CNF	Unit 1a What Is Creative Non-Fiction?	Unit 1b Truthfulness	Unit 1c Ten Writing Recommendations
Unit 2 Striking Balances	Unit 2a Public vs Private Writing	Unit 2b Research and Immersion	Unit 2c Narrative and Narrators
Unit 3 Building Blocks	Unit 3a Reading and Readers	Unit 3b Scenes	Unit 3c Information
Unit 4 Finishing Touches	Unit 4a Recreation and Reconstruction	Unit 4b Hook, Frame, and Focus	Unit 4c Revising Creative Non-Fiction

from Unit 1a Creative Non-Fiction as a Hybrid Genre



James Frey, *A Million Little Pieces* (2003)



- memoir written by American author James Frey
- gives a raw account of his experiences as an alcoholic, drug addict, and imprisoned criminal
- so moved Oprah Winfrey that she featured it in her book club, making it a national bestseller
- revealed by an investigative Web site to contain numerous fabrications and exaggerations
- so damaged Frey's credibility that the book is now used as a cautionary tale (Gutkind 14-15)

subjectivity vs objectivity

subjectivity

- narrator conveys highly personal thoughts, experiences, and feelings; speaks self-reflexively about themselves

objectivity

- narrator is "outside" of and detached from what they are speaking about; speaks about elements external to themselves

... any writer of any merit is simultaneously subjective and objective. He is subjectively engrossed in his work, and the quality and intensity of his personal vision will be dictated in a subjective way. At the same time, he must be removed from and in control of his material. Thus, he is involved in a paradoxical activity: an intellectually creative balancing act in which invention and judgement coalesce or coordinate to achieve and preserve equilibrium. (690)

J.A. Cuddon. "Subjectivity and Objectivity." *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 5th ed., Penguin, 2013.

Techniques Affecting Truthfulness

creating a character who is based on two or more real people	←	composite characters
squeezing together two or more scenes, events, or situations	←	compressed scenes
recreating conversations to eliminate hesitations, deviations	←	manufactured dialogue
using a different name for a real person	←	changed names
changing seemingly insignificant details for practical or aesthetic reasons	←	fudging

Author Biographies

Fiona Tinwei Lam

- born in Scotland; based in Vancouver
- edited *The Bright Well*, a poetry anthology about facing cancer
- co-edited *Double Lives*, a creative non-fiction anthology about writing and motherhood
- “Play” first appeared in *Other Voices* (2006) (394, 401)

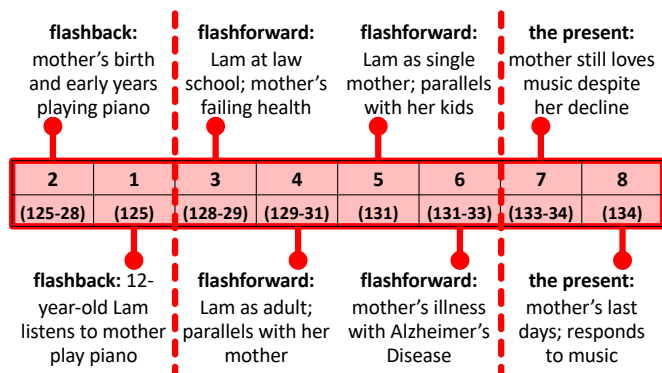
www.fionalam.net

M.A.C. Farrant

- prolific author of satirical and philosophical short fiction, memoir, drama, and other genres
- author of *The Secret Lives of Litterbugs*, a book of humorous essays
- book reviewer for the *Vancouver Sun*, and the *Globe and Mail*
- “We Keep the Party Going” first appeared in *Grain* (2002) (389-90, 401)

@macfarrant

Book Fiona Tinwei Lam, “Play”



Book M.A.C. Farrant, “We Keep the Party Going”



I must have tripped on my nightgown because I fell down the stairs and hit my head on a large metal trunk that my mother kept there, at the side. I cracked open my skull. The man next door heard my scream and called an ambulance. There was blood everywhere. They had to shave my head to operate, to put my skull back together. This was in Toronto, in 1920. No one thought I'd live. The newspapers carried the story. After the operation I was taken to a lecture hall. The doctor who operated on me wanted to show his students. So everyone came and touched the hole in my forehead, the part they could only cover with skin. (147-48)

M.A.C. Farrant. “We Keep the Party Going.” *Slice Me Some Truth*, Wolsak and Wynn, 2011, pp. 147-56.

 M.A.C. Farrant,
“We Keep the Party Going”

→“Dying?” Gabby asked.↓

→“That’s right,” Nana said. “Dying. What’s at the end of every story.”↓

→“Don’t say that.” This was Lee, annoyed. “Never, never say that.”↓

→“And another thing,” Nana continued, ignoring her. “If my feet are cold I can’t get to sleep. For that reason I go around in bare feet. The last thing I want is to be asleep. At ninety years of age my next sleep may be my last. Pour me some more of that wine.”↓

→“At ninety years of age sleeping is definitely high-risk behaviour,” said her son.↓

→“You betcha. And another thing I don’t want is a weather report. I like to figure things out for myself. I don’t need anyone to tell me it’s raining.”↓

→“Look,” Terry said, pointing at the darkened window. “It’s raining!”↓

→“What did I tell you? A smart ass.” (149)

M.A.C Farrant. “We Keep the Party Going.” *Slice Me Some Truth*, Wolsak and Wynn, 2011, pp. 147-56.

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