

“BREATHING THROUGH OUR WORDS”: REFLECTIONS BY AUTISTIC AUTHORS ON THE POWER AND POTENTIAL OF CREATIVE WRITING



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Purpose This study explores with professional autistic writers how their autism interacts with their writing, and what they perceive as the potential positive impact of creative writing for autistic individuals.

Method Poetic transcription is employed to capture participants' ideas in a dynamic and evocative form.

‘Poetic transcription ...creates a deep yet distilled essence of participant and researcher voices. [It] adds to the richness of the available methods as it helps to build relationships with participants, facilitates more personal understanding of the subject, and allows for multiple interpretations of transformative work’ (VanDeusen & Peritore, 2026 p.53).

Results Three ‘found poems’ were created to articulate participants’ expressions.

Findings Writers shared how the intensity of autistic interests can be a source of material, how autism impacts creation of character, that working creatively facilitates navigation of emotions and enables communication, and that the writing process can support processing of memories, anxiety and sensory stimuli.

Sample from Poem 1

I’ve been writing for years.
It links to my special interest at the time

I’ll want to know everything about my interest
find out about it
understand it
read all about it
live it, breathe it.

When I think I’m getting my head round it
I explain it to someone else
(whether they like it or not),

And when I still lack understanding
I use poetry.
It’s an interesting process.

Reference

Vandeusen, E. A., & Peritore, N. R. (2026). Poetic Transcription as a Powerful Tool in Poetic Inquiry and Research. In *Narrative Methodologies in Educational Research* (pp. 53-88). IGI Global Scientific Publishing..

Sample from Poem 2.

Along this rollercoaster
there is a slope up high, and it takes a while to
get up there.
Sometimes my brain takes a long time to process an
idea,
a thought, my emotions,
things that I have seen or heard or touched.
But once I get to the top, then I write.
Then I write intensely.
I focus on the suspense and that moment up high
and the releasing all of what is inside me.

Sample from Poem 3

I breathe through my words.
They shift in and out of me like the tides,
carrying me along their currents.
I smile through them,
I laugh through them,
and most importantly, they are my screams.