

Ink and Water: Creative Writing as a medium for communicating environmental contamination  
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Creative writing is often written off as an ineffective way to explore, discuss, and propel forth the realities of science. But at the root of creative writing, which is also at the gist of the human experience, are stories. Science purely by itself, in particular science relating to contamination, does little to convey stories and the realities of the human experience. Stories, however, draw people in, make them reflect, and provide an emotional connection that raw data does not. This paper shows the investigative processes behind the development of “Ink and Water” a draft of a novel exploring the issues of contamination amongst working class families in Ticonderoga, NY. This project explores the issues of sabotage, betrayal, contamination, and struggle as mill families deal with the politics and impacts of a discharge pipe being cut at a local paper mill. The research process began with interviews, government documents, public records, newspapers, site visits, and the building of a bibliography of stories surrounding the issues of contamination and science. In addition to this, elements of creative work—specifically the blending of contamination and science in storytelling—were researched throughout the writing and drafting process. Stages of revision and workshop also occurred. This paper highlights the importance of creative writing as a medium for communicating the issues and realities of environmental contamination within blue-collar communities and what that research and creative process entails.