



*Left to right: Pam Childers, Eric Hobson, Joan Mullin*

*Pamela B. Childers:* I remember when my grandfather and I searched for broken robins' eggs and blue jay feathers in the grass of my childhood yard. Colors, shapes, landscapes, and two Renoir prints on my bedroom walls were my world of reading, writing, and imagining. That visual environment led to years of stories, poems, and degrees in biology, English, writing, secondary education, writing across the disciplines, and adult education. My husband Malcolm's lessons on how to see as an artist have given me new ways of seeing my writing in a different format (photography). I still immerse myself in my visual surroundings—living walls of Malcolm's art, a real view from our mountain home, a writing center filled with art posters, landscape photographs, and a wall of windows overlooking Chattanooga and the mountains beyond. Whether I live within the historically steeped structural designs and greyed colors of London or New York, the pastoral lush greens of New Zealand and Ireland, the soothing ocean blues of Martha's Vineyard and Maui, or the desert sage, orange, and brown of the Four Corners, the visual culture continues to stimulate my reading, conjuring new learning activities, and writing. Each day brings ideas for new and different writing workshops with the visual arts.

*Eric H. Hobson:* The grandfather I never met was an artist, and I think that may be one reason for my parents signing me up to take art lessons one summer. Although those lessons were short-lived, I think that in combination with genetic agents, they played a role in who I am. I came to my current teaching position as assistant professor of English in a circuitous manner. Stumbling into an undergraduate English program because it offered a one-quarter earlier graduation

date than did majors in art history or studio art, I doodled and sketched my way through the Ph.D. specializing in composition. Since then I have put my visual talents to work teaching writing and in developing and administering writing centers and writing-across-the-curriculum programs. Although reconciled to the fact that a career as a professional artist is not in the offing, I continue to draw (especially during committee meetings) and paint whenever I can make free time in my schedule as a teacher, father, and faculty developer.

*Joan A. Mullin:* Our household was the proud purchaser of a *New World Book Encyclopedia* in the 1950s, and I was fascinated by the visuality of the alphabetical writing in the beginning of each volume: Sumarian, Phoenician, Greek, Roman. So even before I could really read, I spent hours copying down the forms in columns, figuring that when I had finished, I would be able to write (speak) in all those languages—even prior to being able to write in my own. From there I took to sketching pictures from the *World Book*, sketching objects in my room or outside, but it was all very covert because such things were not known in my culture or class—nor were they encouraged. Reading was—which is why I took to creating metaphoric and colorful pictures in my head. This proved an acceptable substitute to all concerned, especially since school schedules left no time for anything other than Latin, world history, economics, and literature. Nonetheless, I would pick up sketching pads now and then, draw for my children, and, finally, had the opportunity to work in a writing-intensive art history design class—a venture so successful that the faculty member and I have continued to do so for five years. This, and my reading on the intersections of art and language take me right back to my beginnings.