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WHERE WRITING STARTS

How does this kind of writing happen?

What is it that...

... unleashes these opinions ... insights ... questions ... clever ideas
... and helps kids find the words to express them?

I can tell you that...

... it's NOT the district or state curriculum guide.
... it's NOT your school's writing goals.
... it's NOT the writing section of your language text.
... it's NOT the school style book.
... it's NOT the list of 4th grade or 11th grade writing skills.
... it's NOT the district (or classroom) portfolio system.
... it's NOT your scoring guide for writing assessment.

It is NOT any plan, program, checklist, handbook, or set of goals.
What causes (or allows) this kind of writing to happen is...

... two groups of warm, living, breathing human beings...
... KIDS and TEACHERS.

These are the real ROOTS of writing.

You're just beginning a whole book full of my ideas about how to help kids grow in writing. You'll see that I am very concerned about kids learning the writing process and perfecting writing skills... and about teachers setting goals, teaching specific skills, making use of portfolios, and designing a sound assessment system.

But writing is about human expression. It takes human beings to do it. And it takes live persons to help kids learn it. And so, the systems are NOT the heart of your writing program. The humans are.

