



## ***Why we write. A mildly unusual workshop on scientific writing***

**Anna Jelec**

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

*I was asked, “So, why do you want to study botany?” And I answered, “Because goldenrod and asters are so beautiful together, and I want to know why. I want to know why these stand together. Why do they grow together and look so beautiful when they could grow apart?”*

*“That’s not science,” he said. “You should go to art school if you want to study beauty.”*

Kimmerer. Robin W. 2013. Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants. Milkweed Editions.

Today’s Academia is so restless. Artificial Intelligence is here, and it is popular, accessible and user-friendly. At first, we were afraid undergraduates are going to employ machines to write their theses and term papers. Now, researchers are bragging about using AI in most parts of our jobs: from conducting data analysis to writing literature reviews. After all, why not? These tools make academic work faster, more efficient, less demanding. There are apps that summarize books and research papers, regurgitating their contents as digestible lists and bullet points. There are tools for research writing, keeping writers’ block at bay, filling endless pages with clever insight encased in round, polished phrases, allowing us to publish rather than perish.

There is also one small issue. If you put two and two together, you have to face the likelihood that you might be citing a paper that nobody read - and nobody wrote. Or you might become the author of one. This is as good a moment as any to ask ourselves, linguist to linguist: why do we write?

In this workshop, we will look at scientific writing from the past and present to see what kinds of writing will shape the future. We will focus on practical issues of clarity, structure and style but also dip our toes into deeper waters, such as the impact and audience of scientific writing. Ultimately, (paraphrasing Robin Kimmerer’s “Braiding sweetgrass”) this workshop would like to show you an important truth. Whoever told you that science shouldn’t concern itself with beauty was lying.