

A[not]her Nature

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ABSTRACT

A[not]her Nature

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A[not]her Nature is a collection of collage poems (centos) written in response to environmental issues. The language in many of these poems is drawn from, or responds to, seminal works of nature writing in an attempt to consider, question, illuminate, and sometimes even subvert the ways nature has historically been characterized and understood. Recycling the words of other works engages with the idea of the cycles of decay and rebirth in the natural world, as well as the act of recycling as a direct and personal means of addressing aspects of the current ecological crisis. The ever-increasing urbanization of the world's population keeps many people in our cities from experiencing nature firsthand. Even the nature that shows itself in the city goes unnoticed, unappreciated. Many people simply have no interest in saving the planet, partially—if not fully—because they have little or no connection with the beauties and wonders of the natural world. This work aims to create an emotional connection between the reader and the world of nature, hopefully infusing a new sense of care for all of creation.

A[NOT]HER NATURE

by Deborah Taylor-Hough

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"If anyone can save us, the poets can!"
Bill McKibben

observing nature

O student of society and history
we were all meant to be naturalists
each in his degree
inexcusable to live in a world
so full of marvels
of plant and animal life
and to care for none of these

a naturalist's most important tools

[1]

insatiable curiosity

[2]

a sense of wonder

you are well on your way
once you know where to look

the foundation of learning
the symbiosis of sea and shore
the vast serenity of the night
the mystery of nocturnal space
the company of a small child

we meet most of our wildlife
around our homes
the most accessible countryside for people to explore
these encounters formative
the essential source
of a real affinity with nature

nature is still far from
well-known and tame
it's a lifetime of curiosity
you will need a lifetime of patience
to uncover her secrets

life outdoors is unpredictable individual events can provoke
catastrophe or celebration
plants rush to grow & flower
while they can
the relationships that essentially
& intrinsically link them all
from superstition in to science

a day
a day in the country
 off to lonely places
a dream
a dream of possible delights
 the hot hours
 the vastness
 the complexity
 the mystery of Nature
a wild
a wild scamper
 divested of garments
a spring
a spring shower
 a sort of electric bath
Earth has a warm bed to offer
 nestling in the heather
 bodily vigour
 clutches the grass
 animal heat
deliciously soothed
 by the cool touch of the air
the sights
 and sounds of the country
every one shall be delightful

an urban twilight
attendant to the mingling common
certainty of disenchantments
frigid waste of dusk
the insignificance
the confusion
the familiarity
of milling downtown
a civilized behaved seriousness
possessed of costume
loosened over granite
discharged in concrete
soulful inertia
intellectual chill
troubled by the hot
failure of stagnant breath
the blind and sulky
silence of the city
each crowd indefinite
obliged and foul
asphalt a numbing cradle

the forbidden city
a Bacchus of our souls' sense
principles not of this world
located till dawn
in proxy access
those lingering doubts
strangers at the garden
in natural running form
both dolls and display
an afternoon monitor a perception particle
The Festival of the Moon Café countertops
patch sealer and mist to the grave
strut swagger mince and momentum
pumps out abstract nouns
adventures
endless jokes
the alleys and the scarves of the abyss
the coming night plays by the rules

a child's nature

humanity
 often
 in opposition
 to nature
the war
 was won
 or lost
 in childhood

let the child work with things
not with signs
the things of Nature in their places
meadow and hedgerow
woods and shore
the sad child-life from which birds
and flowers
are shut out

the bright keen eyes
with which children are blest
were made to see
and see into
the doings of creatures
too small
for the unaided observation
of older people

some children are born
naturalists
a very prophet
of nature
unbounded interest
and delight
capers about in endless
ecstasy
communing
with the larger Mother
drop seeds of truth
into the open soul
of the child

out of doors

revived

a whisper

prayed well

the sense of beauty
comes from early contact with nature
make full use of opportunities
infuse into them
a seed of sympathy
a love of investigation
watching the way of sparrows
a boudoir full of shells and fossils
flowers and seaweed
the movements of the birds cloud lamb
unspeakable delight
the child is in bliss

the wonder-filled world of children a cherished
companion might be a good fairy solitary exploration
wonder so indestructible encourages the work of that
good fairy the company of her dearest friend

come away away children
this is a space children used to play
a pirate
 a soldier
 a guide
 in the Adirondack wilderness
come away
 this way this way

imperative nature

explore
adventure
encourage
abandon
cherish
experience
maintain
reward
imagine
remember
arouse
wonder

make
the acquaintance
of a wild
flower
every
common
miracle
in all
its fairy
beauty

the Divine thought
every plant bears fruit
fruit and seed
after his kind
leaves branches bark
trunk of trees
the flower comes in
the dainty casket
we call a bud
the downy catkins
of the willow
the wood and pith
in the hazel twig
the ruby-eyed
late flowers
a mystery of beauty

appreciate the uniqueness
of each season in a wood
try a quiet walk
tall trees envelop you shielding you
the dense canopy teeming with life
sit and watch
the changes
a mosaic
of many habitats
an undeniable and satisfying beauty

pick up a pebble
 a wild flower
odorous voluptuousness
 harmonious joyous
 colors of the flowers
the pleasant roundness
 of the pebble
sunshine
 the aesthetic sense of the beautiful
 bottled up for after-refreshment

from the ploughing of the land
to the getting of the crops
by-and-by there is fruit
meadow and pasture clover turnip
some lovely flower or gracious tree
the movement of branches corn grass
wonder admire
shadows of boughs making patterns
on the white tablecloth

hum of bees
blushing flower
milkwort eyebright rest-harrow
lady's bedstraw willow-herb
every wild flower
blossom
germinate
bear fruit

break off an elder twig in the spring
describe the leaf
the manner of flowering
the dangling catkins
the rough or smooth leaves
the rough or smooth bark
 stare up into a tree
 down into a flower
tender and living sculpture
 the sublime

describe their haunts
 living creatures
there are bee-hives
 a snail eating a cabbage leaf
 a caterpillar climbing up a nettle
three squirrels in a larch tree
 a spider dropping suddenly
 to the ground

reflect investigate wonder and discover
the smallest meadow the largest forest or
the hugest creature that each of their
bodies is made with power O these are
the work of the Almighty they are
capable of pain carefully avoid cruelty to
great or small

this muse of madness
oft hid in coarse obscurity
behind the indelicacy of haze
 and unhappiness
in quiet restricted zones
ephemeral wastes beside bankrupt boxes
 a deviation's tempest
 cursed heavens
the stench of rot and weed
unemployed orb of light
 invisible moonshine
no view of fair attributes
ditch trench puddle sewer
lamppost concrete graffiti
 featureless cityscape
indeterminate urban wastelands
 rubbish piled curbside
 chain-linked schoolyard
 plumes from factories
once people breathed simply
 now we live the times
 the spirit

use all our senses
experience explore with
feelings and emotions
contemplate the awe and
beauty

living with your head in the clouds
you can't see the life for the trees
but that's only part of the story

an airy nature

/ the sight of starlings /

/ flocking /

/ flying up /

/ into the urban sky /

a summer spectacle

\ the birds morph \

\ gracefully \

\ shape shifters \

\ most of us forget to look up\

attend closely
 overhear secrets
 whispered in branches

each stanza a breath
 exhaling life
 inhaling death

compelling persistent
 demanding
 tenacious

a wind instrument
 invisible musicians
 jazz hands in the trees

the woodland choir
 performing harmonies
 as religious rite

a fierce rhythm
swells and throbs
night after night
rhythmic and insistent
from darkness
into darkness

the fairy chiming comes
tiny wisps of sound
so ethereal so delicate so otherworldly
in that dawn chorus one hears
the throb of life itself

June is a month of deep shadows
and unkempt thickets
of full-blown
wild white roses
I seldom hear
the swoop
of a night hawk
without thinking of it

the lilies of the field
the fowls of the air
things worth observing
watched from day to day

the departure and return of the birds with the season
the portly form and spotted breast of the thrush
a jay flying across a field
the graceful flight of the swallow
the yellow bill of the blackbird
the gush of song which the skylark
pours from above
perching in a tree

listen to the wind
the song of the wind
the insistent wind
it blows with majestic voice
a many-voiced chorus
the majestic sound of thunder
the winds the sound of surf
or flowing streams
the vast roaring ocean
a fierce rhythm
recognition of something
beyond the boundaries of human existence
where great and elemental prevail

bleak & windswept
a beach in winter
 resonates with
 cries of seabirds
interfaces between land & sea
 & turning tides
 & steep rocky slopes
 carved & molded
 by wind & salt spray
 these bleak windswept places

sharp weather
gale blowing
wind roaring
dashing around
like the sea
wave cry wind cry
vast waters
extraordinary

the healing properties of amethyst quartz cordially invite
you to the dance of reality where virtues and vices play
acoustically look to the stars not your feet bloody streaks
with diamonds discover your vigor reinvigorated no
longer fatigued of being alone of life of waiting the
horizon is always at eye level

narrative nature

the jester walked in the garden
with his luggage on his back
he particularly enjoyed
the edges of woods
neglected stretches of cucumbers
a stray sense of comedy
the cat and spilled flowers
the garden had fallen still
a fine and flawlessly pastoral retreat

you hope to fell a first tree
Owl! Art thou mad?
 the virgin forests are gone
 mahogany become extinct
Sing another tune Owl
 the rainforests are going
 clouds are iffy
the Wren replied
 My attention was probably called off
 by a whip-or-will

you fly
as a cloud
fair maiden of cloudlight
from wilds and mountains
you are
wild
indifferent as twilight
your laurels fresh
you retreat
to the woodland
conversing with
an invisible spirit

weary
overspread with melancholy
his own fire hath sadness in it
in a degree lost
in the roar of cities
nature is medicinal
the air a cordial of incredible virtue
let him look at the stars
the tinge of an unusual sky
like a new soul they renew the body
we never tire
so long as we can see
far enough

she was exhilarated
laid bare with lightheartedness
even her indifference hath gladness in it
in a way found
in the hush of the wilds

I am the lover
of uncontained and immortal beauty
I expand
and live in the warm day
like corn and melons
the active enchantment
reaches my dust
all parts of nature conspire
they nod to me and I to them
in the woods a perpetual youth
is new to me and old
a wild delight runs through
the best moments of life

earlier times
wild hope
gathering manna in the morning
the surface of the country was rugged
briars and branches
a rough way
the soil was poor
long solitary walks
as a remedy for sadness
surviving

mischief delights
in playing with surfaces
it remains in pastures
long after
the grass
has been eaten away

this
is a wild field

manly nature

analogies in the nature of Man
echo the Ten Commandments
conveyed to man
as by manure
Nature is made to conspire with spirit
to emancipate us

student of the manly contemplation of the whole
the mystery of humanity
the human race go forth every morning
the human race
read and write on all that happens

furnish a man
with a dictionary
and grammar

a man's power
to connect his thought
with the proper symbol

man is never weary of working it up

his little poem of Man

the wise	man	doubts
a learned	man	a torch
a firm	man	a rock
a cunning	man	a fox
an enraged	man	a lion
and is a	man	again

Man is all symmetry
what is Woman?
Woman the follower of the moon
from Man the sun
from Woman the moon
man and woman
the night shall be my Germany

the invariable mark of wisdom
part of the domain of wisdom
the kingdom of man over nature
the wise man shows his wisdom in separation
abdicates his kingdom
asserts the predominance of the soul
reflects the wisdom of his best hour

consequences of ignorance
unstable and bitter disregard
the bewilderment of age
Man's abandonment
his province was insignificant to Yours
incomplete without the skies

sources of wisdom
solid and sweet wisdom
the wisdom of children
the animal kingdom
your dominion is as great as theirs
through all its kingdoms

history repeats itself
instability of Narcissus
confused and puzzling
existential freedom from identity
it's their process thank you very much
disoriented since Genesis

the sea-beaten rock
has taught the fisherman
brave lodging
wherein Man is harbored

a[not]her nature

children who are [not]
do [not] crowd each other out
where they can[not]
do [not] pry about
you must [not] crowd each other out

what [not]
do [not]
which is [not]
what [not]
need [not]
why [not]
knows [not]
sometimes [not]

ethics does [not]
[not] reside in nature
art can[not] rival things
which are [not]

[not] a pebble
[not] enough
[not] accessible
[not] much
[not] at the bottom
[not] it
[not] directions
[not] fit
[not] with signs
[not] tea
[not] for the gain
[not] need
[not] what enchantment
[not] be
[not] more than one
[not] only
[not] a lesson
[not] seen
[not] magical
[not] green

nature is [not] always

[not] wisdom	[not] blind and deaf
[not] substantial	[not] a substance
[not] hateful	[not] less excellent
[not] inferior	[not] significant
[not] fixed	[not] ultimate
[not] different	[not] conscious
[not] content	[not] compound
[not] transparent	[not] so pertinent
[not] celebrated	[not] to be learned
[not] huddled	[not] at all disturbed
[not] built like a ship	[not] the landscape

lessons can[not]
I can[not]
you can[not]
can[not] cover
can[not] choose
I can[not] try
can[not] be all that

things on the other side
should [not] be made
more than to any other
on the other hand
the other tree
other birds
other gatherings
other signs
other sciences
other space
other matters
other phenomena
other unknown
[not] only that
[not] obtained by sight
[not] to be overlooked

this will [not] be necessary
will [not] give away
they will [not] fit
will [not] admit
a[not]her tree
a[not]her day
a[not]her bird-lover
a[not]her way

the Mother may
impress upon the mothers
a mother's first duty
the mother's opportunity
well worth the mother's while
mothers are ready
an overwrought mother
the mother getting by
the mother's real difficulty
alarms the mother
a judicious mother
and [not] only the mother

the Mother is doing invaluable work

we knew [not] what
the Mother will allow
I could [not] see
the Mother had best
they need [not] learn
the Mother will be taxed
we do [not] discern
the Mother who knows better
I could [not] reach
the Mother must beware
we do [not] live
the Mother must refrain
we have [not] told
the Mother has to tell
you are [not] sure
the Mother considers
it does [not] matter
the Mother will say

[not] to be overcome

Mother Nature
our wise Mother
others have their names
[not] only the Mother
mother and children
brothers and sisters
mothers and teachers
the spirit of the other
back to their Mother

a[not]her form of expression
may touch a[not]her without
a[not]her way towards this end
a[not]her instance of the effect

a[not]her nature
a[not]her time
a[not]her form
a[not]her Newton
may touch a[not]her
then a[not]her
a[not]her way

a[not]her instance
a[not]her there
there a[not]her
from a[not]her tree
from a[not]her
a[not]her sinks
a[not]her day

a[not]her
one after a[not]her
a[not]her to attend him
a[not]her aspect

A[not]her Nature

Earth Nature On
Heart Nature On
Hater Nature On

Earth Nature No
Heart Nature No
Hater Nature No

Heart Near Unto
Heart Earn Unto
Earth Near Unto
Earth Earn Unto

Heart Atone Urn
Heart Atone Run

Hate Nature Nor
Hear Nature Not
Unearth Are Not
Area Hunter Not

Aeon Near Truth
Aeon Earn Truth
Aeon Than Truer
Aeon Rat Hunter
Aeon Tar Hunter
Aeon Art Hunter

Unearth Art One
Unearth Art Eon
Unearth Rat Eon
Unearth Tar Eon
Unearth Near To
Unearth Ornate
Haunter Ornate
Atone Haunt Err
Atone Ah Return

A Nature Throne
A Henna Torture
A Earth Neutron
A Ornate Hunter
A Taunter Heron
A Nature Hornet

Anteater Oh Urn
Anteater Oh Run

Earthen Ran Out
Nearer Than Out

Neath Nature Or
Earthen Aunt Or
Earthen Tuna Or
Unearth Ante Or
Unearth Neat Or
Neater Haunt Or
Haunter Neat Or
Haunter Ante Or

Eaten Roar Hunt
Eaten Rant Hour

Hear Anon Utter
Hear Truant Eon
Hear Truant On

The Poetics and Process of *A[not]her Nature*

Global climate change, the Pacific Garbage Patch, CO₂ emissions, waste disposal, the Alberta Tar Sands, dying coral reefs, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, urban sprawl. These are just a few of the increasingly devastating environmental problems our planet is facing. Some people simply have no interest in saving the planet, partially—if not fully—because they have little or no connection with the beauties and wonders of the natural world. The ever-increasing urbanization of the world's population keeps many people in our cities from experiencing nature firsthand. Even the nature that shows itself in the city as weeds in cracks on the sidewalk, birds overhead, insects, and rabbits hopping through the underbrush in local parks goes unnoticed, unappreciated. Urban populations are hurrying to the next appointment, or power walking on park trails listening to headsets, oblivious to the wonders around them.

When my children were young, we made a point to take regular Nature walks. I wanted my children to develop a deep and lasting relationship with the natural world. I hoped by providing them with concentrated time out-of-doors and consciously focusing on nature, they would grow into adults with an appreciation and concern for protecting the Earth. I'm pleased to say they have all grown into intelligent ecological champions of the environment without me ever having the need to preach at them about the importance of environmental issues. It was practically instinctual in their psyches by the time they were grown. So I know firsthand that it is possible to encourage people to develop a strong care and concern for nature.

As an undergraduate, and even before I returned to school, I had a strong interest in the environment. This led me to use nearly all of my electives for environmental science and ecology-related courses. A major focus of my university was interdisciplinary studies, and students were required to take classes across the curriculum in both arts and sciences, no matter their intended major or personal preference. I observed very few students in Humanities or Arts programs taking more than

the required Science classes. And it was the same with the students in Science tracks—most were only taking the bare minimum required English and Communication classes. At one point, a professor encouraged me to consider switching to the Environmental Science major. She told me she believed there were too few scientists able to communicate their findings and studies in clear, concise ways that could communicate to and educate the layman. She wanted to see people with writing and communication skills entering the sciences to help bridge the gap between scientific experts and the general population. Although I continued my intended Liberal Arts focus, I never lost interest in environmental issues. I'd always hoped to someday combine these two academic and personal interests—the environment and writing—which eventually led to this collection of environmental poems, *A[not]her Nature*.

Writing about Earth's natural habitats, creatures, and plants is not just the purview of environmental scientists and ecologists. Nature writing has a long and varied history. The Biblical psalms often used the acknowledgement of God's handiwork—the natural world—as a focus for worship. Later nature writing includes observations, essays, and poems by such notable poets and authors as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The written reflections of early naturalists such as Charles Darwin and John Muir also play a large part in the canon of nature writing. Even diaries of explorations such as the Corps of Discovery Expedition conducted by Lewis and Clark, add to the early written understanding of the natural world. Later nature and environmental writers—such as Rachel Carson known for her popular and disturbing book, *Silent Spring* (1962)—brought about an awakening in the general public to the need to think about environmental issues related to pollution and pesticides, and how many common chemicals had the potential to wreak havoc on the natural world.

In recent years, a new genre of poetry has emerged in response to the environmental crisis: Ecopoetry. Jonathan Skinner, the author of several books of ecopoetry and publisher of *ecopoetics* from 2001 to 2005, was instrumental in helping to bring poetry and ecology together for the consideration of

modern poets and their readers. I am drawn to eco-poetics as a mode of critique that, unlike letters to the editor, essays, or academic articles, can touch the emotions of readers through its poetic forms and language. John Felstiner's anthology of nature poetry asks in its title, *Can Poetry Save the Earth?* By Earth, Felstiner doesn't mean our planet, itself, but the web of living communities and the natural world that "we're both part of and apart from." I believe that poets—and eco-poetry in particular—can play a role in raising consciousness about the current threats to the natural environment. I am drawn to eco-poetics as a mode of critique that, unlike letters to the editor, essays, or academic articles, can touch the emotions of readers through its poetic forms and language. The book *decomp*, by Stephen Collis and Jordan Scott inspired me to pursue the idea of not just writing new poetry about the environment and ecological issues, but instead using bits and pieces of another work to create something new. In the creation of *decomp*, the authors left copies of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* exposed for year to the natural elements. The resulting decomposition of Darwin's work became the visual and poetic pieces of the book. They decomposed and then recomposed the text through natural processes. My composition of three collage poems—

created from the words found in the various source texts for *A[not]her Nature*—was a process that essentially placed me in the position of the decomposition process. My personal decomposition of the source texts was a human action, representing the human destruction happening to the natural world. Mankind has the option of increased recycling to help save the planet, so I recomposed the decomposed bits into new forms, thus creating recycled poems.

I believe poetry reaches out to readers in different—and sometime es deeper—ways than prose, academic, or expository writings. If a reader gets the sense from a poem that the deer is a beautiful living creature worthy of living on this planet, perhaps poem-by-poem this reader will become activated to actually do something to insure the continuation of the natural world so that deer in the forest, unseen by human eyes, can continue to live. Perhaps this reader will come to think that a world without

birds isn't a world worth living in, or that a world with no trees or plant life would be empty of spirit, life, and value. The Psalmists wrote in praise of the natural world as evidence that people will seek in nature a Higher Power or organizing principle in control of their lives, adding both beauty, meaning, and a sense of order to their lives. While the Psalmists directed their songs of praise to their God, perhaps as a side benefit, they may have enlivened a love for the natural world in their readers, singers, and listeners.

I chose to enter into the conversation of ecopoetics through my choice of poetic form, the cento, a Latin term for patchwork, also known as collage poetry. Centos are an experimental form of found poetry made up of direct quotes from other works stitched together in new ways. By recycling the words of other works, I intended to engage with the idea of the cycles of decay and rebirth in the natural world, as well as the act of recycling as a direct and personal means of addressing aspects of the current ecological crisis. Centos are patchwork poems created to express the intent of the cento writer, whether or not the writer agrees with the intent of the original author of the source work. Poets occasionally borrow a few words or phrases from other poets, but the cento form consists of only words or phrases drawn directly from the source text. Centos have a long history. The ancient Greeks and Romans often wrote centos of homage to Homer and Virgil, respectively. T. S. Eliot's famous work, "The Wasteland," draws directly from many source texts, including Shakespeare and 17th Century poetry. Traditionally, cento poems were only drawn from poetry with each line from a different poem, but I chose to use a variety of nature-related texts written by several authors and spread out over the past two centuries. The idea of reaching into prose and finding poetry felt to me like it was something almost organic, like a seed giving way to becoming something new and completely different. A fir tree from a single seed hidden within a cone. A yellow dandelion from the fairy-like seed floating on the breeze. The seed cracks open, rots in the soil, and gives way to a new form of life. A new creation born from the soil.

Writing a cento is a violent act. An act of destruction, but also an act of renewal and rebuilding. As I began working with source texts like Emerson's essay, "Nature," I realized that cutting up original and beautiful texts and then rearranging them into something new is much like what mankind is continually doing to the natural world. Cutting up the landscape, extracting the gold, and then using the new pieces to create things for the use of humanity with little regard to the original landscape.

Before I began writing, I pre-determined a physical process I would use for this work. I was inspired to create a prewriting process after reading CA Conrad's book *A Beautiful Marsupial Afternoon: New (Soma)tics*. Conrad used predetermined "(soma)tic" exercises before beginning to write such as holding a copper penny under the tongue while drinking orange juice in honor of Aphrodite. Only after the [soma]tic exercise was complete, would Conrad write the poem. Although I didn't devise actual somatic rituals for my writing routine, I was inspired by Conrad to do a physical action before doing any actual writing. I poured over the source texts with pen in hand, looking for phrases that caught my eye. Sometimes I chose particularly beautiful words that moved me in some elemental way. Sometimes these were simple, or confusing, or even a bit humorous. I typed up my chosen phrases from each work onto my computer, printed out the collection of phrases, and then took scissors to the printed pages. Before me, I now had a pile of words from the original text. I slid all the bits and pieces into an envelope, setting the collection aside for a week or so. This gave me a chance to forget, at least somewhat, which phrases went with each other so that the resulting centos would hopefully reflect my own poetic choices rather than simply regurgitating the original author's intent.

I began by writing pure centos from several works using only language found in the original texts. Then I began playing with the centos. Sometimes writing Oulipian-style antonym poems where I would take the existing text and substitute nouns and verbs with words and phrases of opposite meaning. Or writing that flowed over and around and beyond the centos. Writing that traveled past

what was there on the page. A bit like writing between the lines. Or I'd write an overflow of the antonyms. Or free association inspired by the words in the centos, antonyms, and overflowing texts.

When choosing the source texts for this work, I wanted to cover a broad swath of time, as well as give voice to both male and female writers. The source texts I decided to use were "Nature" by Ralph Waldo Emerson (an essay written in 1836), *The Outdoor Life of Children* by Charlotte Mason (a selection of topical writings from 1886 to 1904), *The Sense of Wonder* by Rachel Carson (with an introduction by Linda Lear, 1965), *The Midnight* by Susan Howe (2003), and *The Practical Naturalist* by Chris Packham (2010). I chose these authors and texts as representatives of a variety of nature writing covering a span of nearly 175 years. I opted to use works by two women (Mason and Carson) and two men (Emerson and Packham) in this representative nature writing sample. Howe's book, however, was included for a different reason. I wanted to experience finding nature-related poetry and verbal images within the pages of a book that wasn't nature-specific, almost like the process of looking for signs of natural processes in the midst of the city.

Emerson's essay, "Nature," is part of what is often called the canon of nature writing. Much of his writing was done as he reflected on nature after taking long walks in the countryside, oftentimes with his friend Henry David Thoreau, another author in the nature writing canon. These men had a great deal of leisure time and were able to walk for hours through fields and woodlands, unlike many of the women of their era who were often busy at home cooking, caring for children, and taking care of the demands of home life. Very few women of Emerson's era would have had the leisure available to amble about, much less take time to write reflections on their ramblings.

Charlotte Mason lived later in the same century as Emerson, but wrote about the English—rather than American—countryside. As a single woman without children of her own, she had time to herself for wandering the Lake District and observing nature firsthand. Mason was an educator and founded schools and a teacher training college in England. She believed strongly that time spent

outdoors in the natural world was beneficial to children physically and emotionally, and was also a strong addition to the educational development of both boys and girls, alike. Nature study was one of the hallmarks of Mason's educational methods. She taught that a thorough familiarity with the natural world was the beginning of all future scientific knowledge and understanding.

The other female nature writer I chose to use in my source materials was early environmentalist Rachel Carson. I used Carson's book *The Sense of Wonder*, because I thought it was an excellent follow-up to Mason's theories on early childhood educational methods. In *The Sense of Wonder*, Carson reflects on a number of walks she takes with her nephew, and the importance which she, too, places on introducing children to the beauties of the natural world at a young age in order to develop knowledge and appreciation later in life. The introduction to *The Sense of Wonder*, written by Linda Lear, was also included as a source for cento pieces.

Like Mason and Carson, Packham also focuses on childhood educational experiences in nature, although his book, *The Practical Naturalist*, takes a less poetic view of things. Compared to the warmth and lyrical writing of Carson and Mason, Packham's book felt densely packed with details. *The Practical Naturalist* is practical: An overview of basic habitats and information about the natural world, but with little attention to beauty of expression. I chose this book because it represents much of what I've seen on the market today for teaching children about the natural world. Words, drawings, photos, text blocks, but little lyricism or beauty. I wanted to challenge myself to find beautiful language within the pages of a practical and factual book on nature. It was surprising to me that some of my favorite centos were created using *The Practical Naturalist* text.

While piecing together my centos, I discovered themes emerging. There were the expected topics, things contained in the natural world. Birds and seas. Clouds, grass, and trees. But there were also children. Lots of children. And playful narrative stories, almost like bedtime stories to read to the children. I also discovered misogyny as the traditional male naturalists from another time feminized,

and thus sexualized and objectified the natural world. I found a voice for a feminist perspective as I subverted feminized nature into a[not]her nature. I also saw themes develop around domination, joy, wisdom, mothering, humor, destruction.

Within these poems, I felt I was witnessing the formation of hope. And that is my wish for this work. That in some small way it can contribute to a sense of growing hope. Hope for a future where the children of today—nurtured to regard the natural world as important and worth protecting—are leading the way to find creative solutions for our planet’s environmental crisis.

So here’s to Mother Nature.

Here’s to Another Nature.

Here’s to A(not)her Nature.

And here’s to the future.

The children.

The hope.

NOTES
Source Texts

The language in many of these poems is drawn from, or responds to, the following seminal works of nature writing in an attempt to consider, question, illuminate, and sometimes even subvert the ways nature has historically been characterized and understood.

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| 5 – Packham, Chris. <i>The Practical Naturalist</i> . DK Pub, 2010. | 44 – Howe |
| 6 – Mason, Charlotte M. <i>The Outdoor Life of Children</i> (reprint). Simple Pleasures Press, 2015. | 45 – Mason |
| 7 – Lear, Linda. From the introduction to <i>The Sense of Wonder</i> by Rachel Carson (reprint). Harper, 1998 | 46 – Ibid. |
| 8 – Packham | 47 – Carson |
| 9 – Ibid. | 48 – Packham |
| 10 – Ibid. | 49 – Howe |
| 11 – Mason | 52 – Ibid. |
| 15 – Lear | 53 – Ibid. |
| 16 – Mason | 54 – Ibid. |
| 17 – Ibid. | 55 – Emerson, Ralph Waldo. <i>Nature</i> . Boston: Beacon Press, 1985. |
| 18 – Ibid. | 57 – Emerson |
| 20 – Ibid. | 58 – Howe |
| 21 – Lear | 59 – Ibid. |
| 22 – Howe, Susan. <i>The Midnight</i> . New York: New Directions Books, 2003. | 61 – Emerson |
| 24 – Mason | 62 – Ibid. |
| 25 – Ibid. | 63 – Ibid. |
| 26 – Ibid. | 64 – Ibid. |
| 27 – Packham | 65 – Ibid. |
| 28 – Mason | 66 – Ibid. |
| 29 – Ibid. | 68 – Ibid. |
| 30 – Ibid. | 70 – Ibid. |
| 31 – Ibid. | 72 – Mason |
| 32 – Ibid. | 73 – Emerson |
| 35 – Ibid. | 74 – Ibid. |
| 37 – Lear | 75 – Ibid. |
| 38 – Packham | 76 – Ibid. |
| 40 – Ibid. | 77 – Ibid. |
| 42 – Carson, Rachel. <i>The Sense of Wonder</i> (reprint). Harper, 1998. | 78 – Ibid. |
| 43 – Ibid. | 79 – Ibid. |
| | 80 – Mason |
| | 81 – Ibid. |
| | 82 – Ibid. |
| | 83 – Emerson |
| | 84 – Mason |
| | 85 – Emerson |

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