Welcome to the webpage of

THE POETRY AND ECOLOGY PROJECT

“Poetry, like chlorophyll, is a catalyst for turning light into energy”

(Dr Madhur Anand, U. of Guelph)

We believe that the poetic imagination can be an instrument for renewing the earth, as it awakens our imaginations to new ways of seeing the world.

On this page you’ll find seven leaflets, about Food, Water, Trees, Birds, Wild Creatures, Flowers and Pollinators, and Degraded Land. Each leaflet contains three poems by local poets, and a list of environmental organizations that are particularly concerned for the issue addressed by the leaflet.

We hope you will enjoy these leaflets, and follow up on one or more of these issues in our local area!

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“Poetry, like chlorophyll, is a catalyst for turning light into energy.”

- Madhur Anand, poet and environmental scientist
The ore of her thinking
is red,
like the flush from standing
too quickly
at the end of a day of gardening.
Her fingers are asparagus stalks,
stubbed and coiled cucumbers,
thick from years of having carried the charge
of her burly, grandmotherly care,
the pots of turnip
that needed lugging to the kitchen.
She digs her hands in the soil,
abstracts the weeds
with the informality of a doctor
who has decorated a lifetime
in the service of a single organ.
When she works, the rose of her kerchief
covers her hair.
She wipes her forearm against it to rest,
the dirt has dried in the folds
and falls away crisply
like heels of rye that have been opened
over borscht.

Food Chains (For Cathie) // Bernadette Rule

I can’t kill spiders anymore,
find it increasingly difficult
to think bacon and eat pig,
won’t at pastel egg yolks
and remember that at least
Aunt Rose’s chickens ran loose
under her porch and trees,
work so hard at denying
the obvious connections
that the subtler connections
between my hamburger
and someone else’s starvation
run headless under the porch
of my ambivalence, trailing blood.

Last summer I waited for my sister
in front of a turkey plant,
fighting the stench as white
feathers blew past free
and useless. There was time
to count the cages on the semis
that kept pulling up: 500 a load.
A white coat walked by and said,
“One hour from truck to butterball.
They never know what hits them.”

That’s why I can’t kill spiders
anymore. I know what hits them.

But if the problem were that simple
I could be a vegetarian
in an infested house.

Eating dismembered plants.

The radio says government
health standards allow
for a certain level
of insect parts in flour,
bread, cereal, et cetera.
I pictured an Inspector
watching the packaging of a field,
grain and creatures caught
in the fist of machinery—
the Inspector’s checkmarks
shaped like buglegs.

Too much sensitivity
is unfitting me for life.
Living requires eating requires death.
But does it require cruelty,
outrage, disrespect or ignorance
of the weight of our link…
this link the earth is wearing
like a noose?

Bernadette Rule was born in Kentucky but has for many years lived in Hamilton, ON. “Food Chains” comes from Full Light Falling (Image, 1988); she has published six other volumes of poetry, including Gardening at the Mouth of Hell (West Meadow, 1996); The Weight of Flames (St Thomas, 1998); and The Literate Thief (Larkspur, 2006). In 2017 she won the Hamilton Arts Award for Writing.

Beetroot // Adam Dickinson

The ore of her thinking
is red,
like the flush from standing
too quickly
at the end of a day of gardening.
Her fingers are asparagus stalks,
stubbed and coiled cucumbers,
thick from years of having carried the charge
of her burly, grandmotherly care,
the pots of turnip
that needed lugging to the kitchen.
She digs her hands in the soil,
abstracts the weeds
with the informality of a doctor
who has decorated a lifetime
in the service of a single organ.
When she works, the rose of her kerchief
covers her hair.
She wipes her forearm against it to rest,
the dirt has dried in the folds
and falls away crisply
like heels of rye that have been opened
over borscht.

Adam Dickinson teaches at Brock University in St Catharines, ON. He has published three volumes of poetry: Cartography and Walking (Brick Books, 2002), from which “Beetroot” comes; Kingdom, Phylum (Brick Books, 2006); and The Polymers (Anansi, 2013), which was a finalist for the Trillium Book Award for Poetry and the Governor General’s Award for Poetry.
In the near future we will grow food vertically. The condo bubble in Toronto must explode first.

Suds, sofas, coffeemakers, and dreams will be mopped up. Glass towers higher than First Canadian Place will be filled up with light, whole wheat, and arugula. There will be machinations, of course. Like where to put the cows. The bankers will enjoy their occupations. And I will still want this: strangers to read these poems.

Some organizations in and around Hamilton, Guelph and St. Catharines concerned with healthy food production and distribution:

**The Mustard Seed Cooperative Grocery**

“Our mission is to provide the Hamilton community with a member-owned and operated grocery store that offers a bountiful selection of wholesome foods, prioritizes local producers, and creates an educational environment that nurtures the relationship between people and the food they eat.”

**Environment Hamilton**

“A not-for-profit organization that has worked since 2001 to inspire people to protect and enhance our environment. The Good Food Box is a program that makes healthy fresh produce affordable and accessible to everyone.”

**Hamilton Victory Gardens**

“A not-for-profit team of community volunteers dedicated to alleviating hunger and food insecurity in Hamilton and local communities by using urban agriculture to provide fresh produce to local food banks and meal programs.”

**A Rocha Hamilton Environmental Stewardship**

“An international Christian organization which, inspired by God’s love, engages in scientific research, environmental education, community-based projects and sustainable agriculture. Building on our success in organic farming, we’re equipping community gardeners to grow food for their less-fortunate neighbours.”

**Plan B Organic Farms Flamborough**

“Growing delicious, high-quality produce using organic farming methods in harmony with our environment and accessible to households in our region, while creating a place where our community learns about organic farming, the source of our food, and the natural cycles of our bioregion.”

**Ignatius Farm**

“Ignatius Farm in Guelph has become a model for organic agriculture and mentoring of organic growers. The Farm bridges the urban with rural, and invites the surrounding community to enjoy and get involved in their local farm - through Community Shared Agriculture, working shares, Community Gardens, intern training, and acreage rentals.”

**Marigold Farm**

“We practice sustainable agriculture, consuming conscientiously, and work with our local St. Catharines community. We believe that that change begins at home, that every small change can make a summative impact on the health and well-being of the global community.”

**Niagara Farm Project**

“A collaborative organization that recognizes food production is an important ecosystem service, central to human welfare. Our goal is to develop a system of farming, specific to Niagara, which establishes a self-reliant food economy through permaculture principles that protect our soil, water, air and biodiversity.”

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Caring for our
WATER

The Poetry and Ecology Project
Renewing the earth through the poetic imagination.

“Poetry, like chlorophyll, is a catalyst for turning light into energy.”

- Madhur Anand, poet and environmental scientist
“The environmental crisis is a crisis of the imagination.” So says Laurence Buell, a literary critic and environmental pioneer, now retired from Harvard University. We believe that poetry has the power to awaken our imaginations to new ways of seeing the world around us. And once we can see better, we will care better.

In each of these leaflets, we bring you two or three poems on a particular theme by poets local to our area, and the names and contact information for a number of local environmental organizations that are concerned to reimagine this theme in our post-industrial society. If you’d like to get involved, please follow them up!

In this leaflet, on “Caring for our Water,” John Terpstra fancifully describes what Hamilton Bay was like “a few thousand years ago,” and Bernadette Rule points out our present responsibility for “the lake beside us, / the lake in our faucets.” And Daniel David Moses describes how even in sad or difficult times we can learn from the Grand River, if we just “bend / and reflect it.”

Giants // John Terpstra

There used to be giants, and they loved it here. They’d sit their giant hinds in a row along the top edge of the escarpment, and pick at the loose rock with their hands or their feet, then throw or skip the smoothest stones across the bay, to see who could land one on the sandstrip, three miles away;
or they’d spring themselves off the scarp top like you would off a low wall, and go running all the way to the end of the sandbar, and jump across the water to the other side, or jump in, splashing and yelling up the ravines, chasing each other’s echoes.

This was only a few thousand years ago, and the giants were still excited about the glaciers, which were just leaving; about not having to wear their coats all the time, and what the ice and water had done, shaping and carving this gentle, wild landscape!

They loved it here.

I’m telling you, they absolutely loved every living minute here,

and they regretted ever having to leave.

City With a View // Bernadette Rule

We are a city on the edge and beyond. On the escarpment one becomes a small child lifted onto her father’s shoulders again, astonished at the sudden vistas.

Yet we dream of being Toronto dreaming of being New York. Erecting brave new buildings over derelict lots we demolish old trees and fountains.

We believe the lake should be used and not seen. Pool owners and cottagers, we come to work every day oblivious of the lake beside us, the lake in our faucets.

This lake which we are poisoning will poison us, who so love being a city that we have forgotten the earth, except here and there:

here in the gardens where memory sweetly lingers to water our senses and to pollinate light with colour,

and there on the edge of the escarpment where we are surprised again every time by where we are.

John Terpstra is a Hamilton writer and cabinetmaker. He has published ten books of poetry, many chapbooks, and four prose projects, including Falling into Place (Gaspereau, 2002), about the geography of the Iroquois sandbar in Hamilton. “Giants” appears in this book. Disarmament (Gaspereau, 2003) was a finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award and The Boys, or, Waiting for the Electrician’s Daughter (Gaspereau, 2005) was shortlisted for the Charles Taylor Prize.

Bernadette Rule was born in Kentucky but has for many years lived in Hamilton, ON. “City With a View” comes from Full Light Falling (Image, 1988); she has published six other volumes of poetry, including Gardening at the Mouth of Hell (West Meadow, 1996); The Weight of Flames (St Thomas, 1998); The Literate Thief (Larkspur, 2006); and Earth Day in Leith Churchyard (Seraphim, 2015). In 2017 she won the Hamilton Arts Award for Writing.
Look. The land ends up in stubble every October. The sky today may feel as empty. But just be like the river -- bend and reflect it. Those blues already show through the skin inside your elbow -- and flow back to the heart. Why let a few passing Canada geese up set you? Just remind yourself how the land also renews. Don’t despair just because they’re already too high to hear. Your heart started beating with their wings the moment you got sight of them -- but that’s no reason to fear it will still when they disappear.

Look away now. Let loose. See? The river’s bending like a bruise.

Daniel David Moses is a Delaware playwright and poet who grew up on a farm on the Six Nations lands on the Grand River near Brantford. He has published five volumes of poetry and six plays, for which he has won numerous awards, including the 2001 Harbourfront Festival Prize and a 2003 Chalmers Arts Fellowship. “Some Grand River Blues” comes from River Range: Poems, a 2012 CD with original music by David De-Leary. Moses presently teaches drama at Queen’s University.

Some organizations in and around Hamilton, Guelph and St. Catharines helping to care for our water:

**Wellington Water Watchers** wellingtonwaterwatchers.ca
“Dedicated to the protection, restoration and conservation of drinking water in Guelph and Wellington County. Educate. Advocate. Celebrate. Learn more about your water, and how you can help protect its quality.”

**Grand River Conservation Authority** grandriver.ca/en/our-watershed/Water.asp
“The Grand River flows through the heart of one of the richest, most diverse regions in Canada. As Canada’s oldest water management agency, we play a leading role in protecting this vital resource.”

**Hamilton Conservation Authority** conservationhamilton.ca
“Dedicated to the conservation and enjoyment of watershed lands and water resources. HCA will work to ensure healthy streams and healthy communities in which human needs are met in balance with the needs of the natural environment, now and in the future.”

**Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority** npca.ca
“With its unique resources, the Niagara Peninsula is one of the most complex watersheds in the Province. It includes lands drained by the Niagara River, Twenty Mile Creek, the Welland River, the Welland Canal, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. NPCA programs focus on initiatives that help keep people and their property safe from flooding and erosion while retaining our drinking water safe to drink.”

**Bay Area Restoration Council** hamiltonharbour.ca
“The degradation of Hamilton Harbour over time has resulted in the need for a Remedial Action Plan (RAP). For 25 years the Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC) has been at the forefront of Hamilton Harbour restoration issues. BARC promotes, monitors, and assesses the implementation of the RAP and serves to communicate Harbour issues to the public.”

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Caring for our
TREES

The Poetry and Ecology Project
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“Poetry, like chlorophyll, is a catalyst for turning light into energy.”

- Madhur Anand, poet and environmental scientist
Adam Dickinson teaches at Brock University in St Catharines, ON. He has published three volumes of poetry: *Cartography and Walking* (Brick Books, 2002), from which this poem comes; *Kingdom, Phylum* (Brick Books, 2006); and *The Polymers* (Anansi, 2013), which was a finalist for the Trillium Book Award for Poetry and the Governor General’s Award for Poetry.

“The environmental crisis is a crisis of the imagination.” So says Laurence Buell, a literary critic and environmental pioneer, now retired from Harvard University. We believe that poetry has the power to awaken our imaginations to new ways of seeing the world around us. And once we can see better, we will care better.

In each of these leaflets, we bring you two or three poems on a particular theme by poets local to our area, and the names and contact information for a number of local environmental organizations that are concerned to reimagine this theme in our post-industrial society. If you’d like to get involved, please follow them up!

Adam Dickinson’s poem “Corpus Callosum” suggests that trees can be tamed to fit our urban environments, even to the extent of being reduced to skeletons of themselves as telegraph poles. But John Terpstra’s “Place” argues that trees can never be truly out of place; in fact in “The Highway that Became a Footpath,” the trees of the future come out triumphant, offering shelter and healing to the whole community.

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The Poetry and Ecology Project

**Corpus Callosum // Adam Dickinson**

From some angles these trees make perfect sense.

They don’t crowd the electric wires, or curl into the foundation like bitter, wooden frosts.

They don’t threaten to splinter into climbing children, or catch in the throat of a startled mother.

When all of the leaves have been stripped, the upper branches snap their wings, and like one side of a brain, peer endlessly through the sense of things.

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**The Highway that Became A Footpath // John Terpstra**

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and I saw the holy city, coming down out of heaven, and the holy raving protester who climbed into a tree to resist the building of the last highway was still in among the leaves, but the tree had grown much taller, and the protester had been living up there for such a long time, not alone, that several generations of protesters now populated the canopy, freely trafficking the branches of their swaying neighbourhoods, as the six-lane highway wound between the trunks below as wide only as a footpath, a red-dirt earthway busy with pedestrians.

And the highway-that-became-a-footpath led past the longhouse raised during the same resistance, down in the valley, for it still existed (both longhouse and valley existed still) and other longhouses, which were standing at that location several centuries earlier, had re-materialized, their hearth-fires burning still; an entire village, thriving beside the hallowed creek that ran through the east end of the city.

And I saw the trees that formed the longhouse walls take root, and continue to grow, forty-thousand times forty-thousand, their canopy providing all the roof that the people needed.

And from a privileged perch at the top of the escarpment, watching as the new city came down out of heaven, it was clear that the leaves of those trees were for the healing of the community.

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Adam Dickinson is a Hamilton writer and cabinetmaker. He has published ten books of poetry, many chapbooks, and four prose projects, including *Falling into Place* (Gaspereau, 2002), about the geography of the Iroquois sandbar in Hamilton; *Disarmament* (Gaspereau, 2003), which was a finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award; and *Brilliant Falls* (Gaspereau, 2013), from which this poem comes.

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A tree, when it first begins to shoot from the ground, immediately senses the potential lying within that one location and is persuaded to stay.

By never moving from its original location a tree is in the unique position of learning all there is to know about that one particular spot: the composition of earth, the characteristic of each wind, the inquisition of water, both above ground and under, the traffic of animals, humans, and more – most, or all, of which is modified, or determined, by its presence.

Every tree therefore is a specialist, the one expert in its own self-defined field, and cannot be made redundant.

From Naked Trees (Netherlandic, 1990; rpt. Wolsak and Wynn, 2012)

Some organizations in and around Hamilton, Guelph and St. Catharines concerned with the protection and cultivation of trees:

Royal Botanical Gardens  rbg.ca/files/pdf/exploreandlearn/naturallands
“As a National Historic Site the Garden’s properties protect many remarkable trees. The nature sanctuaries contain 400 hectares (1,000 acres) of forest, while the horticultural areas have over 500 specimens. RBG’s forest ecosystems are a priceless resource that we are committed to preserving.”

Trees Hamilton  treeshamilton.ca
“The City of Hamilton Street Tree program offers free trees for homeowners in Hamilton. Trees beautify our surroundings, purify our air, act as sound barriers, manufacture precious oxygen, and help us save energy through their cooling shade in summer and their wind reduction in winter.”

Hamilton Conservation Authority  conservationhamilton.ca/more-trees-for-hamilton-please
“As of fall 2017, we’re initiating a $30,000 project called More Trees for Hamilton Please! We’ve picked out areas throughout the Hamilton Harbour watershed where we can replace the many trees we’ve lost to disease and weather damage with approximately 1,500 healthy native trees.”

Bruce Trail Conservancy  brucetrail.org
“The BTC is committed to establishing a conservation corridor with a public footpath along almost 900 km of the Niagara Escarpment from Niagara to Tobermory. Our goal is to protect natural ecosystems and to promote environmentally responsible public access to this UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.”

Guelph Arboretum  uoguelph.ca/arboretum
“The Arboretum at the University of Guelph is modeled after the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard. Plantings started in 1971 and are now maturing to produce a beautiful landscape, within which we continue to develop specialized gardens, botanical collections, and gene conservation programs.”

Ignatius Jesuit Centre Old Growth Forest Project  ignatiusguelph.ca/old-growth-forest
“This 93-acre nature sanctuary of trails, forests, meadows, wetlands and waterways is situated at the northern edge of the City of Guelph. It is the Project’s goal, with the help of community volunteers, to assist in the regeneration of retired farmland, from old-field meadow to old-growth forest.”

Walker Arboretum  brocku.ca/rodman-hall/walker-botanical-garden
“Walker Arboretum in St Catharines consists of a collection of exotic trees and plants amid extensive grounds on the embankment overlooking the Twelve Mile Creek. The garden’s microclimate has enabled many unusual species of trees and plants from around the world to overwinter.”
“Poetry, like chlorophyll, is a catalyst for turning light into energy.”

- Madhur Anand, poet and environmental scientist
The one virtuous act of the dictator // Adam Dickinson

The crow sat in the poplar like a black boot.
He was, at first glimpse, a prank,
the remnants of an unruly evening
beside the only rail lines in town.

One of the laces dangled from his beak,
a stick that he had clipped and untied.
When the crow stretched his neck,
he was a boot that reached to the knees.

From the wooden balustrade
he cast his decoration,
it hurried through the branches
in the slapping of its own applause.

When I caught the stick, the crow
quit the tower, his body an adamant march
beyond these houses, back to his bunker
having simply made the trains run on time.

I saw your mate up the river // Anna Bowen

I saw your mate up the river
her red crown like pine needles in the snow
soft gray body, a suggestion

You are downstream
with geese that pepper the frozen riverbank
standing slim-legged on the ice
burying their bills in their wings,
their tracks point backward --
arrow in retreat
tracing unworn paths in the snow

You are white-breasted
black-crowned, beak
a curved upholsterer’s needle

The geese have been crossing
the path of commuters --
who stop on their afternoon rush home
to mates and frozen riverbanks
gingerly circumvent the geese
laying a new path

For a moment trespassing
the paths they are meant to follow,
watching feather-pressed breasts pass safely.

Adam Dickinson teaches at Brock University in St Catharines, ON. He has published three volumes of poetry: Cartography and Walking (Brick Books, 2002), from which this poem comes; Kingdom, Phylum (Brick Books, 2006); and The Polymers (Anansi, 2013), which was a finalist for the Trillium Book Award for Poetry and the Governor General’s Award for Poetry.

Anna Bowen is a writer and editor who lives in Guelph, ON, where she has recently been the poet in the collaborative installation project ReMediate, on the former Eastview Landfill site. She is presently fine-tuning her collection Holding Places—Locations of Care and Exception, from which this poem comes.
We’re learning how to divide the gulls. Pinkness of leg, thickness of beak, herring or ring-billed. The naked eye can’t tell from a distance. True things, even the matter-of-factness of a seabird cry, have a tendency to fly. Fine lines, first V-shaped, then imperceptible on the horizon. We may slow down, domesticate, adjust our binoculars, memorize the guidebooks, move out to the coast, and still not stop novelty: white-eyed, black-beaked, yellow-footed, brown-hooded, glaucous-winged, swallow-tailed. We’re all taking this course, and we’ll all get some credit. See, it’s the common that dictates the wild undercurrents of interior, surface, or sea.

Some organizations in and around Hamilton, Guelph and St. Catharines concerned with the appreciation and protection of wild birds:

**Ruthven Park Bird Banding**
[ruthvenparknationalhistoricsite.com/discover/bird-banding](ruthvenparknationalhistoricsite.com/discover/bird-banding)
“Situated between Lakes Ontario and Erie and along the Grand River, Ruthven Park offers a unique location to see a variety of birds. During migration season the bird banders focus on neotropical birds who fly north to breed and forage for food.”

**A Rocha Hamilton**
[ararocha.ca/where-we-work/greater-toronto-area-hamilton](ararocha.ca/where-we-work/greater-toronto-area-hamilton)
“A Rocha is committed to the conservation and restoration of the natural world through both scientific research and practical conservation projects aimed at slowing or reversing the trends of habitat loss that are affecting many species. We conduct bird surveys and collect data on a myriad of species.”

**Hamilton Naturalists’ Club**
[hamiltonnature.org](hamiltonnature.org)
“Early achievements include the designation of Cootes Paradise as a nature reserve in 1927. Members have maintained detailed records of bird species for decades, providing an invaluable barometer of changes in the local environment. Download the What’s Alive in Hamilton Bird Checklist.”

**Wild Ontario**
[wildontario.ca](wildontario.ca)
“Wild Ontario is a live-animal, environmental education program based at the University of Guelph. Our staff, volunteers and animal ambassadors travel the province, spreading our love for Ontario’s nature and wildlife. An encounter with our birds is unforgettable. Their stories spread the word about our impact on wildlife, and how to turn it from negative to positive.”

**Royal Botanical Gardens**
[rbg.ca/birding](rbg.ca/birding)
“Easy access to some of the most diverse birding in Ontario. There are several habitat restoration and enhancement projects currently being undertaken by RBG to benefit bird populations. The most important of these include providing quality habitat and space for endangered species such as prothonotary warbler and least bittern populations, and providing nest boxes for species like wood duck, eastern bluebird and American kestrel.”

**Grand River Conservation Authority**
“There are excellent birding opportunities in the Grand River watershed. More than 300 bird species have been recorded, including many rare species. Birding only requires a good pair of shoes, a bird book and a pair of binoculars. Download the Trails Take Flight brochure.”

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**Bell Curve // Madhur Anand**

We’re learning how to divide the gulls. Pinkness of leg, thickness of beak, herring or ring-billed. The naked eye can’t tell from a distance. True things, even the matter-of-factness of a seabird cry, have a tendency to fly. Fine lines, first V-shaped, then imperceptible on the horizon. We may slow down, domesticate, adjust our binoculars, memorize the guidebooks, move out to the coast, and still not stop novelty: white-eyed, black-beaked, yellow-footed, brown-hooded, glaucous-winged, swallow-tailed. We’re all taking this course, and we’ll all get some credit. See, it’s the common that dictates the wild undercurrents of interior, surface, or sea.

**Madhur Anand** is a professor in the School of Environmental Sciences at U. of Guelph. This poem comes from her first book of poetry, *A New Index for Predicting Catastrophes* (Copyright © 2015 Madhur Anand. Reprinted by permission of McClelland & Stewart, a division of Penguin Random House Canada).

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Caring for

WILD CREATURES

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John Terpstra is a Hamilton writer and cabinetmaker. He has published four prose projects, including Falling into Place (Gaspereau, 2002), about the geography of the Iroquois sandbar in Hamilton, and ten books of poetry, including Disarmament (Gaspereau, 2003), a finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award. “To God, as a Small Pest” comes from Devil’s Punch Bowl (St Thomas Poetry Series, 1998, reprinted in Two or Three Guitars, Gaspereau, 2006).
Looking for a Fast Buck // Bernadette Rule

For four years and four months
I took the road through the woods
twice a day and more
and only saw the deer six times.
I still believe they were there
at least six hundred times,
but I wasn’t quick or lucky
enough to spot them.

Sometimes
I looked so hard each branch
became a rack. Whole hillsides
of deer raised their heads
with the wind and spent
some cool contempt on me
before fleeing on all sides,
leaving me only mundane meadows.

Bernadette Rule was born in Kentucky but has for many years lived in Hamilton, ON. “Looking for a Fast Buck” comes from Full Light Falling (Image, 1988); she has published six other volumes of poetry, including Gardening at the Mouth of Hell (West Meadow, 1996); The Weight of Flames (St Thomas, 1998); The Literate Thief (Larkspur, 2006); and Earth Day in Leith Churchyard (Seraphim, 2015). In 2017 she won the Hamilton Arts Award for Writing.

Some organizations in and around Hamilton, Guelph and St. Catharines concerned with the protection and care of wild creatures:

Hamilton Conservation Authority conservationhamilton.ca
“HCA’s Wildlife Conflict Management Strategy has been developed to minimize the potential for wildlife conflicts on HCA lands, support the environmentally sustainable management of HCA lands, provide for the safe enjoyment of HCA’s Conservation Areas, and promote improved understanding of wildlife and wildlife conflict management issues.”

David Suzuki Foundation davidsuzuki.org/our-work/biodiversity
“We are a part of nature and must live within its limits. Let’s work together to change the way we do business and live our lives so that we respect, protect and restore all our relations in the natural world. Let’s fight for the survival of the species and spaces we depend upon. We need to stay vigilant and on top of the always changing federal and provincial laws that affect plants and animals and their habitats.”

Guelph City wildlife guelph.ca/living/pets-and-animals/city-wildlife
“The existence of wildlife in urban areas enriches our environment, bringing a little bit of nature to life in the city. Urban wildlife is part of life in Guelph where there are 1,000 hectares of parks and open space at our doorstep. To learn more about coexisting with wildlife and for information about the safe, humane removal of wild animals, visit Canadian Federation of Humane Societies.”

Ontario Wildlife Rescue ontariowildliferescue.ca
“Our primary goal is to connect people who have found injured or orphaned wild animals with those who can look after them and get them back into the wilds. Through a network of rehabilitators and wildlife rescue centres across Ontario, we try to save as many wild animals as possible.”

Royal Botanical Gardens Fishway rbg.ca/fishway
“The Fishway is located at the outlet of Cootes Paradise Marsh. As part of the marsh restoration, it is a barrier designed to keep the large non-native carp in Hamilton Harbour and out of the marsh, while maintaining the natural flow of water and native fish. After a century of decline, the marsh has improved each year since the Fishway’s installation in 1996.”

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Research and design assistance from senior students Elise Arsenault, Liane Miedema, and Joshua Voth.
“Poetry, like chlorophyll, is a catalyst for turning light into energy.”

- Madhur Anand, poet and environmental scientist
“The environmental crisis is a crisis of the imagination.” So says Laurence Buell, a literary critic and environmental pioneer, now retired from Harvard University. We believe that poetry has the power to awaken our imaginations to new ways of seeing the world around us. And once we can see better, we will care better.

In each of these leaflets, we bring you two or three poems on a particular theme by poets local to our area, and the names and contact information for a number of local environmental organizations that are concerned to reimagine this theme in our post-industrial society. If you’d like to get involved, please follow them up!

In this leaflet, on “Flowers and Pollinators,” Daniel David Moses celebrates both the generosity of wild roses “In the Month of May” and the “flare” of “Dandelions at Dusk,” while Bernadette Rule suggests that “To walk through a blossoming orchard is to visit celebration itself.” And all of these, Anna Bowen reminds us, are dependent on the “most sensual job” of the “Rusty Patch Bumblebee.”

Daniel David Moses

In the Month of May

How generous Wild roses Are, tendering A scent to who-
Ever’s running By. And the gift

They offer Your eye! From the shade,
This blue blush, see-
Through as rain, Washes you to
A standstill, empty

Of aching breath, Destination, Everything—

In the Month of May

How generous Wild roses Are, tendering A scent to who-
Ever’s running By. And the gift

They offer Your eye! From the shade,
This blue blush, see-
Through as rain, Washes you to
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Of aching breath, Destination, Everything—

Dandelions at Dusk

Struck by the tilting light, The dandelions flare, a fire in a match-stick forest. So stop. Watch it burn. Even that tame a patch of flame teaches something. Maybe that night won’t quite put the embers out. Or maybe you learn to forget. The field flares up in stars. Daylight. Do you remember it?

Rusty Patch Bumblebee

I am beginning to know you, Phlox gymnasts, your tiny arms working the swaying flower heads A spray of silken purple flowers each one the intimacy of suckling your instinct like perpetual infancy instead of swallowing, you are the tongue that carries nectar to the throat

You are the intricacy of lovemaking How did you get awarded the most sensual job? To carry the perpetuity of reproduction against your thigh like an afterthought.

Anna Bowen

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Anna Bowen is a writer and editor who lives in Guelph, ON, where she has recently been the poet in the collaborative installation project ReMediate, on the former Eastview Landfill site. She is presently fine-tuning her collection Holding Places—Locations of Care and Exception, from which this poem comes.

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Daniel David Moses is a Delaware playwright and poet who grew up on the Six Nations lands on the Grand River near Brantford. He has published five volumes of poetry and six plays, for which he has won numerous awards, including the 2001 Harbourfront Festival Prize and a 2003 Chalmers Arts Fellowship. “In the Month of May” comes from A Small Essay on the Largeness of Light and Other Poems (Exile, 2012). “Dandelions at Dusk” comes from The White Line (Fifth House, 1990).
To walk through a blossoming orchard is to visit celebration itself

Each branch hosts two & twenty weddings
The grass is a blizzard of christenings
A risen incense
of courtship, of worship, of music
floats
The hillside is tipsy with layering
All that has been
or ever will be
is now

Bernadette Rule has published seven volumes of poetry, including Full Light Falling (Image, 1988); Gardening at the Mouth of Hell (West Meadow, 1996); The Weight of Flames (St Thomas, 1998), from which this poem comes; and The Literate Thief (Larkspur, 2006). In 2017 she won the Hamilton Arts Award for Writing.

Some organizations in and around Hamilton, Guelph and St. Catharines concerned with the protection and health of flowers and pollinators:

**Pollinators Paradise Project**
hamiltonpollinatorparadise.org
“A partnership project of the Hamilton Naturalists’ Club and Environment Hamilton, creating a ‘pollinator corridor’ of native plants and wildflowers that will provide food and shelter for pollinators across the city. Pollinator habitat is being created in public and private spaces with residents interested in making Hamilton a refuge for pollinators.”

**Eastview Community and Pollinators Park, Guelph**
guelph.ca/plans-and-strategies/parks-trails-planning/eastview-community-and-pollinators-park
“The former landfill site is north-west of Eastview Rd and Watson Pkwy N. where 45 of the total 81 hectares had been land-filled. The plan includes a pollinators park and preservation of wetlands. As bee, ladybug, butterfly and moth populations decrease, the balance in our environment is upset. We can help pollinators thrive by planting different kinds of native flowers that bloom in spring, summer and fall.”

**“Bee City,” St Catharines**
stcatharinesstandard.ca/2017/05/30/st-catharines-wants-to-be-a-bee-city
“St. Catharines is conserving existing pollinator gardens and naturalized areas used by bees as well as creating more habitats in public spaces. The city plans to remove non-native species and replace them with native plants and shrubs that will attract more bees. St. Catharines currently has three pollinator gardens: at Rennie Park and island, Walker’s Creek Trail, and Lock Tender’s Shanty in Port Dalhousie.”

**Mayors Common Park, Brantford**
brantford.ca/residents/leisurerecreation/parkstrails/parks/Pages/MayorsCommonPark.aspx
“Mayors Common Park is located on Clement Drive in South Brantford. In 2017 new benches and trees were installed throughout the new park area, with a beautiful all-season perennial garden along the road frontage, which includes pollinator plants for children to learn about butterflies and other pollinators.”

**David Suzuki Foundation: creating a pollinator-friendly garden**
davidsuzuki.org/queen-of-green/create-pollinator-friendly-garden-birds-bees-butterflies
“Canada is home to hundreds of bee species of all sizes, the smallest the size of the head of a pin! Some live below ground, some above. Every single species is beneficial to plants. As our most important pollinators, bees love to live in urban settings where there are short flight paths and a variety of different plants and flowers to sample. Honeybees and other bee species are declining, mainly because of habitat loss. You can make a difference just by creating a bee-friendly space in your garden.”

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Caring for our
DEGRADED LAND

The Poetry and Ecology Project
Renewing the earth through the poetic imagination.

“Poetry, like chlorophyll, is a catalyst for turning light into energy.”

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DEGRADED LAND

Jamie R. Mink

Healing our Harrowing // Greg Kennedy S.J.

Greg Kennedy S.J. is a Jesuit priest at Loyola House in Guelph, where he offers spiritual direction to retreatants and has concluded that God speaks most clearly through meaningful human conversation, good music and gentle trees. His profound concern for the land is also expressed through his poetry.

Some organizations in and around Hamilton, Guelph and St. Catharines concerned with the protection and care of the land:

We’ve tilled till we can’t; now the soil, elementarily confused, is more air than earth; all its dead and rotting traits ploughed up and set against us in a bipolar heaven increasingly hot and irksome.

Kelly Sikkema

We’ve tilled till we can’t; now the soil, bandaged with plastic, sweats beneath its suffocated weeds crazed by an inaccessible itch impossible to scratch.

We’ve tilled till we can’t; our fields far too well travelled: downstream from the farm leaving sandy, salty beaches behind.

We’ve tilled till we can’t; and a question gets planted in this desert: will we be as diligent and determined in our healing as in our harrowing?

Hamilton Conservation Authority
conservationhamilton.ca/protecting-land/

“The Hamilton Conservation Authority’s approach to open space protection is three-fold: environmental planning, watershed stewardship and land acquisition. In 1960, HCA began acquiring land for permanent protection and to date has secured 10,978 acres. These lands include 14 Niagara Escarpment properties, 7 major conservation areas, a magnificent 179-km trail network, and 12 wetlands.”

A Rocha Hamilton
arocha.ca/where-we-work/greater-toronto-area-hamilton/conservation/

“A Rocha is committed to the conservation and restoration of the natural world through both scientific research and practical conservation projects. Bill and Lyndia Hendry, the owners of the 150-acre Cedar Haven Farm north of Hamilton, very graciously extended an invitation to A Rocha Canada to steward their picturesque property.”

Ignatius Jesuit Centre, Guelph
ontariofarmlandtrust.ca/programs/land-securement/protecting-farms/ignatius-jesuit-centre/

“The 92-acre property of land at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre has been protected through an easement agreement to help limit urban sprawl and provide a buffer for Wellington County farmlands and beyond. This easement is the first of its kind in Canada that sees a Catholic Order partnering with a land trust to make a commitment to permanent land protection.”

Grand River Conservation Authority
grandriver.ca/en/who-we-are/GRCA-properties.aspx/

“The GRCA works to protect the natural environment through its involvement in planning and development activities. It acquires land to protect natural features in priority areas or to add to existing properties to expand habitat areas. Most of the land of the Grand River watershed is in private hands: landowners have an important role to play in protecting & improving the health of the watershed environment.”

Land Care Niagara
landcareniagara.com/about-us/

“As a not-for-profit community-based organization we seek to provide services and information to rural landowners and other users of private and public lands in Niagara through educational outreach, training initiatives, and land stewardship activities.”

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Sink yourself down into the wetland and stay awhile
Imagine the love you felt when you gathered up the dog to have her cremated
And then put your ear down deep against the silt of the Late Wisconsinan Wentworth Till
Attend to the task of imagining; it all needs to be imagined
The mallards rasping overhead and the white tatting of wild strawberry flowers
The lace-boned frame of swamp milkweed its white sap memoried into name
Strike a tuning fork against a rock and hold it up to the ear of a blossom
Fill your vial with a fine yellow film of sounds or pick up your paint brush and dust the pollen into fruiting.
If you make your bed with the glacial meltwater at your heels, curl into the deep ribs of bedrock, pull up a blanket of earth
The land we have come to accept as a hill may begin to know you; it may at last roll over and call you by name

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