



Social Sciences and Humanities
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Canada



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!

©Dr Deborah Bowen, dcbowen@redeemer.ca
with senior students Elise Arsenault, Liane Miedema, and Joshua Voth

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Caring for our **FOOD**

The Poetry and Ecology Project

Renewing the earth through the poetic imagination.

No. 1/7



"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.

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In this leaflet, on "Caring for our Food," Bernadette Rule comes to recognize that finding food inevitably requires certain sorts of death, but asks whether this has to mean cruelty and disrespect for the sources of that food. And Adam Dickinson describes his grandmother's love of working hard in her garden and her kitchen, in a way that will make you too want to enjoy her borscht. Meanwhile, Madhur Anand imagines a very high future for food production.

Food Chains (For Cathie) // Bernadette Rule

I can't kill spiders anymore,
find it increasingly difficult
to think bacon and eat pig,
wonder 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,
waste, disrespect or ignorance
of the weight of our link...
this link the earth is wearing
like a noose?

Photo Credit : Pablo M. Montes

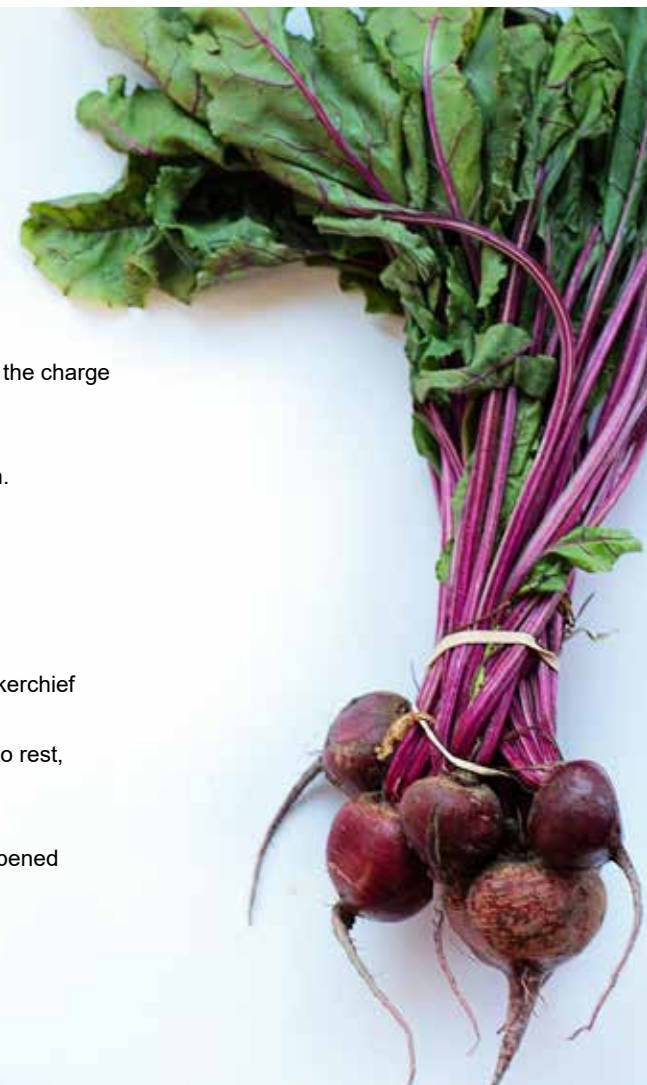
Bernadette Rule was born in Kentucky but has for many years lived in Hamilton, ON. "Food Chains" comes from *Full Light Falling* (Image, 1988); she has published six other volumes of poetry, including *Gardening at the Mouth of Hell* (West Meadow, 1996); *The Weight of Flames* (St Thomas, 1998); and *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,
stubbled 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.

Photo Credit : Jill Wellington

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.



Evan Said // Madhur Anand

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.

Madhur Anand is a professor in the School of Environmental Sciences at the 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).



Kari Pilger

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

The Mustard Seed Cooperative Grocery

mustardseed.coop

"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 environmenthamilton.org/view/page/good_food_box

"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

hamiltonvictorygardens.org

"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 arocha.ca/growing-in-hamilton

"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

planborganicfarms.ca

"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

ignatiusguelph.ca/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

marigoldcsa.com

"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

niagarafarmproject.ca

"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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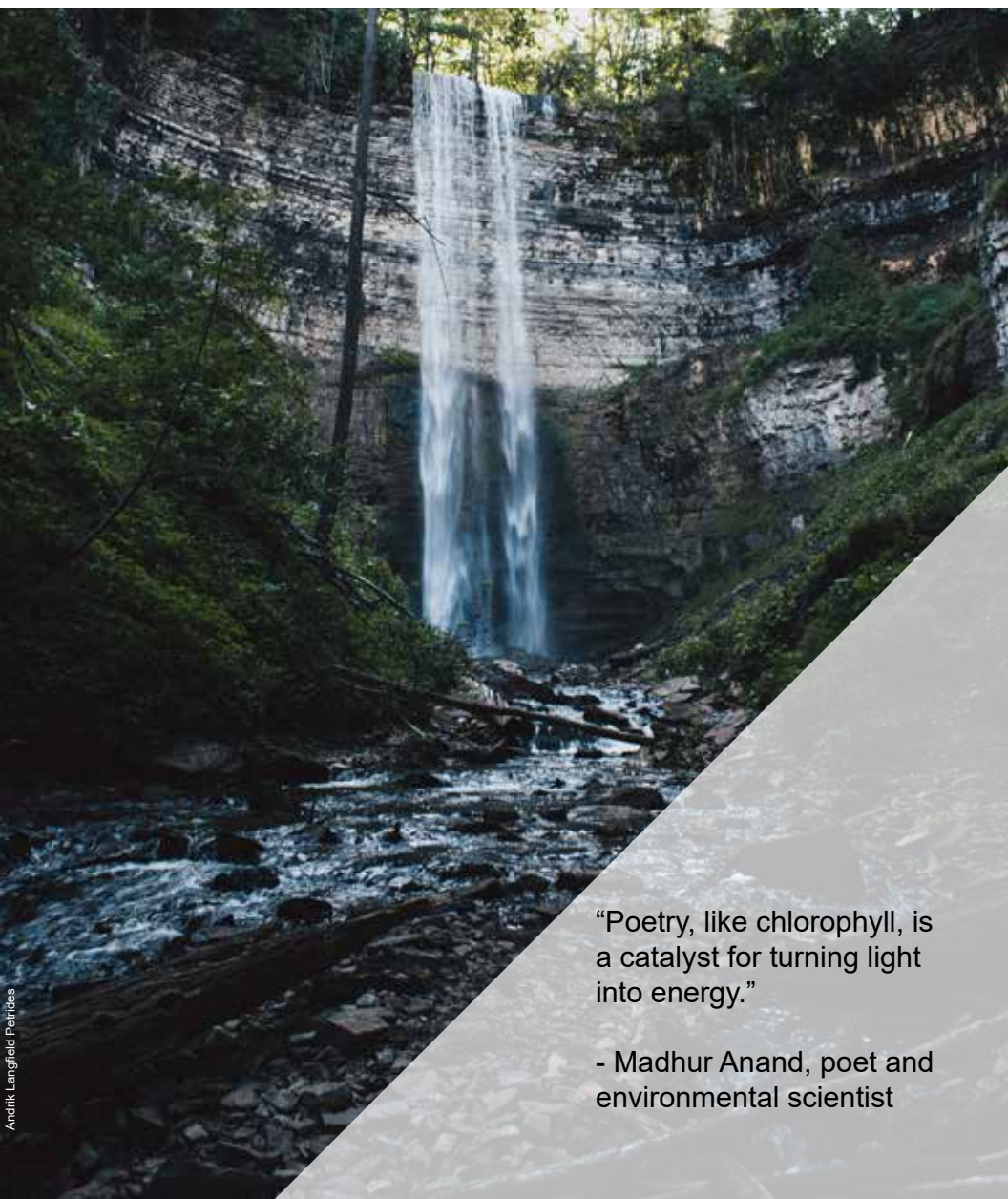
REDEEMER
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Caring for our **WATER**

The Poetry and Ecology Project

Renewing the earth through the poetic imagination.

No. 2/7



“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."

The Poetry and Ecology Project

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.

Liane Miedema

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.

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.

Photo Credit : Colin Wouda

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 *Garden- ing 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 Grand River Blues // Daniel David Moses

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.

Grand River Rafting Co.

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 DeLeary. 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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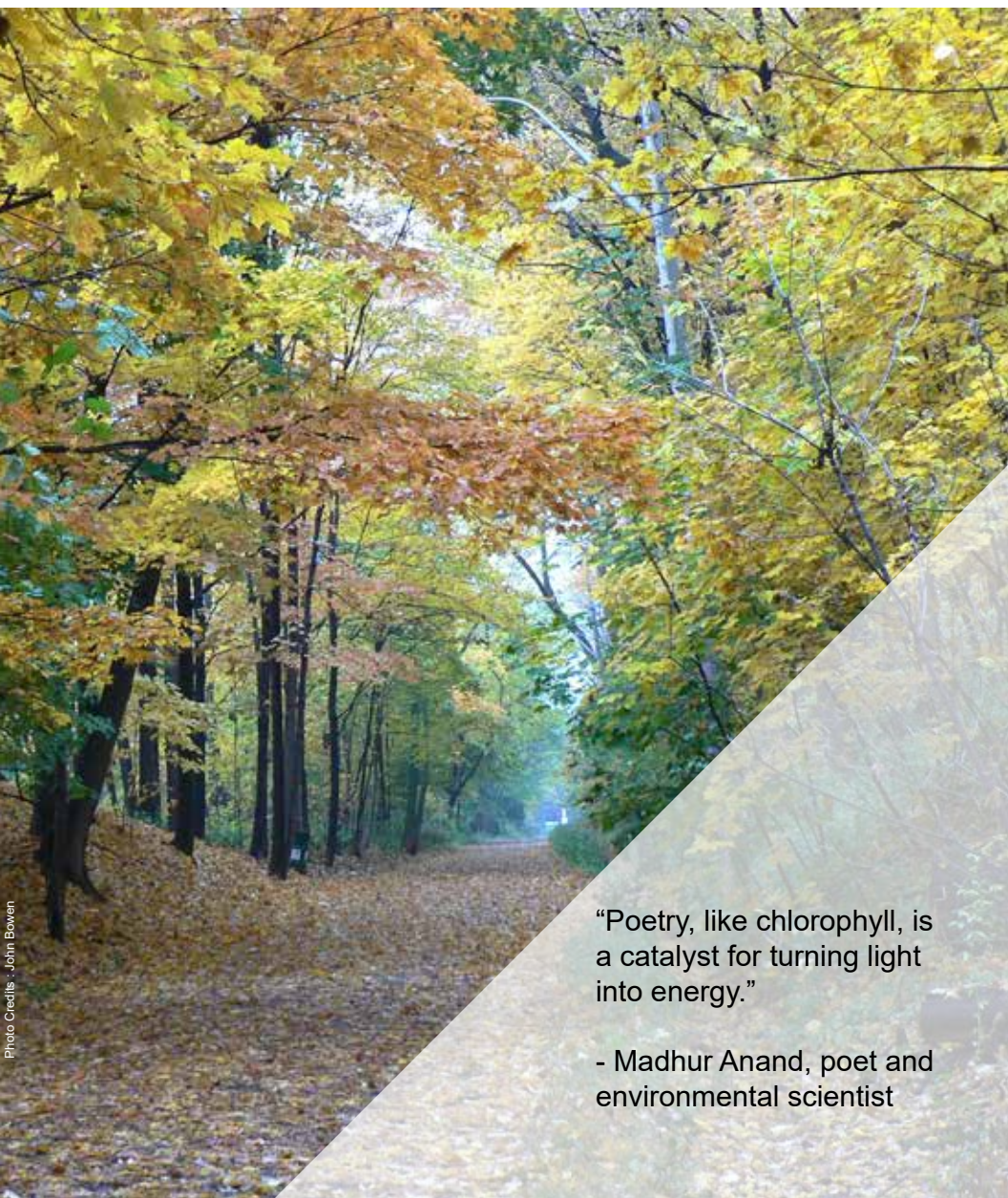


Caring for our **TREES**

The Poetry and Ecology Project

Renewing the earth through the poetic imagination.

No. 3/7



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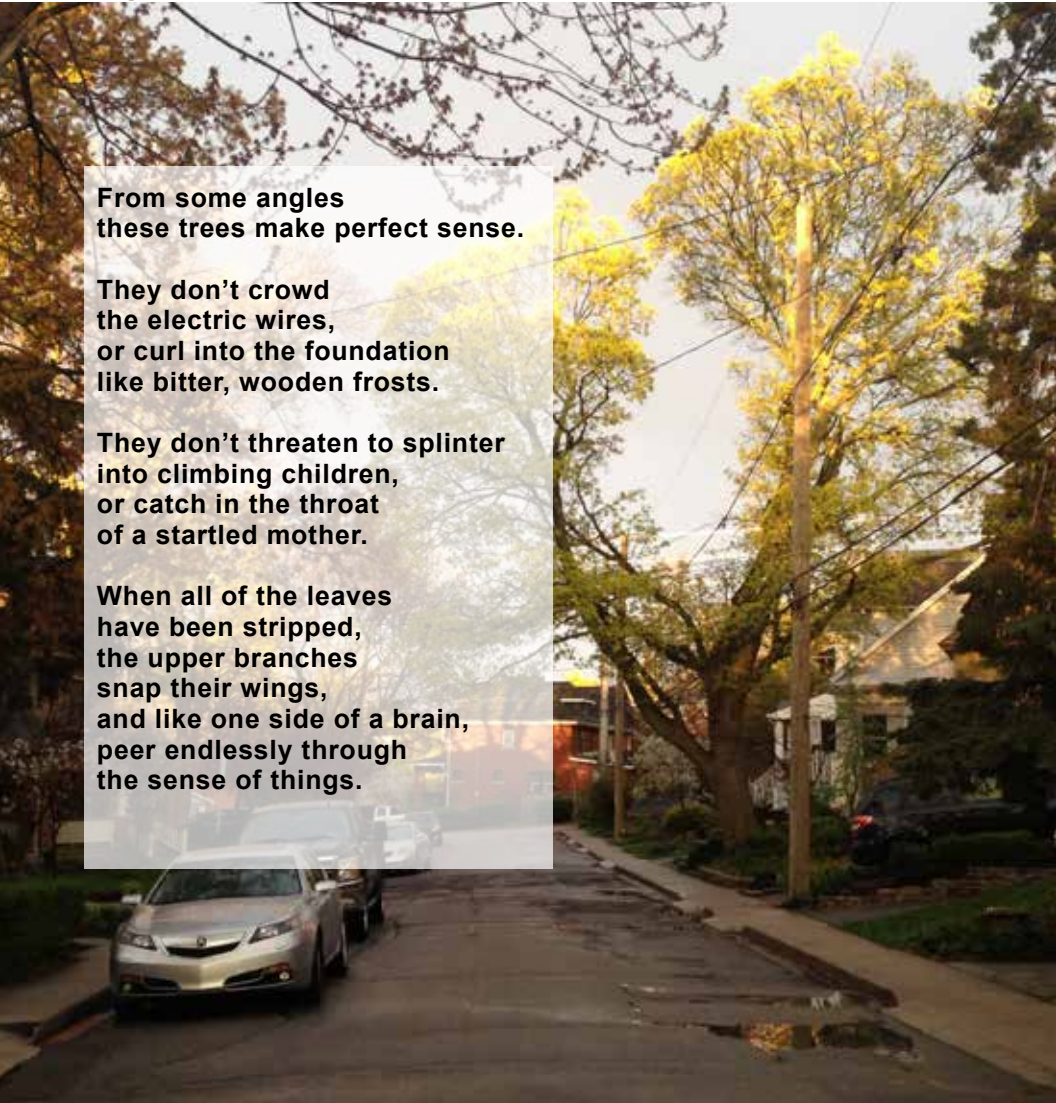
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Adam Dickinson's poem "Corpus Callosum" suggests that trees can be tamed to fit our urban environments, even to the extent of being reduced to skeletons of themselves as telegraph poles. But John Terpstra's "Place" argues that trees can never be truly 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.

The Poetry and Ecology Project

Corpus Callosum // Adam Dickinson



From some angles
these trees make perfect sense.

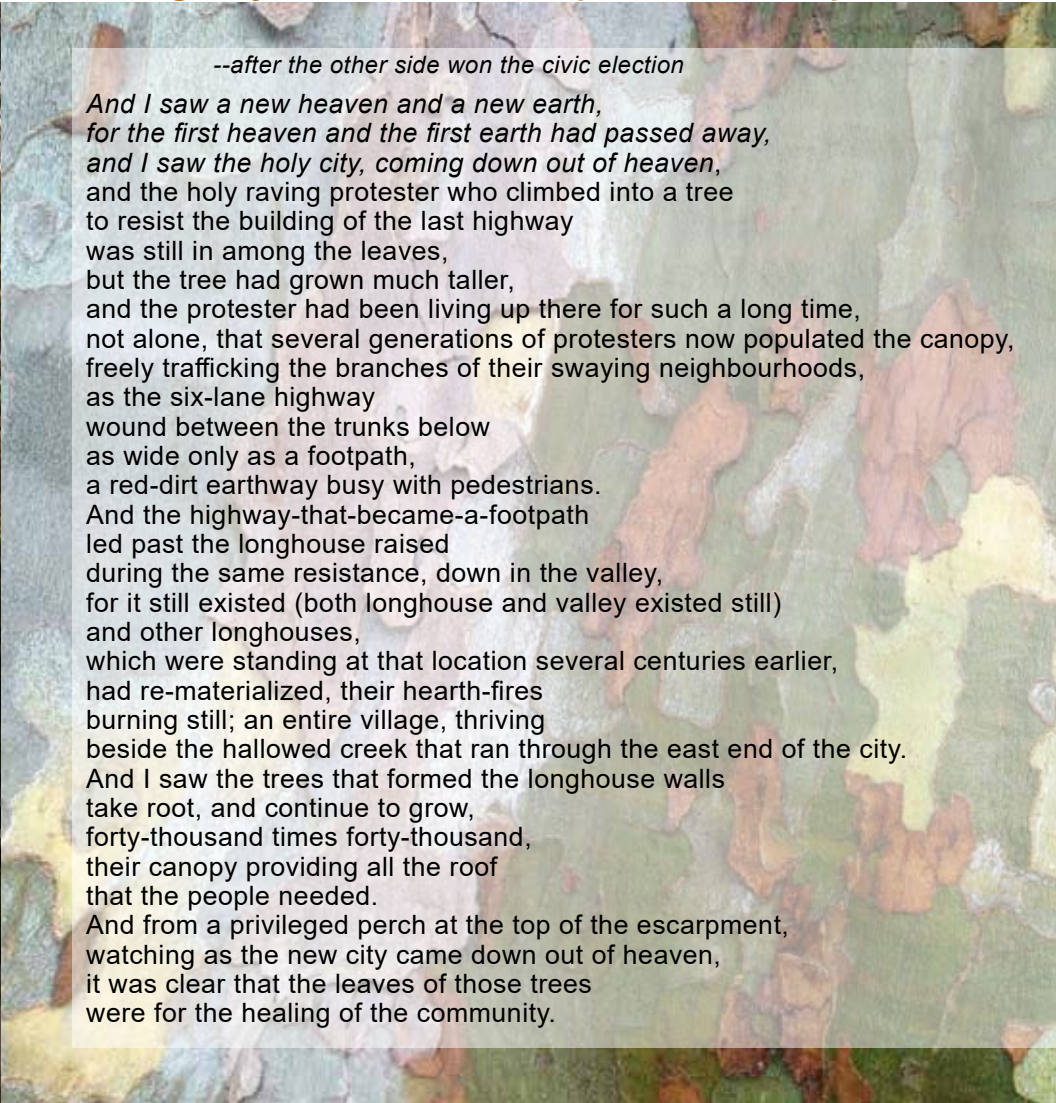
They don't crowd
the electric wires,
or curl into the foundation
like bitter, wooden frosts.

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.

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 Highway that Became A Footpath // John Terpstra



--after the other side won the civic election

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.

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; *Disarmament* (Gaspereau, 2003), which was a finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award; and *Brilliant Falls* (Gaspereau, 2013), from which this poem comes.

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."



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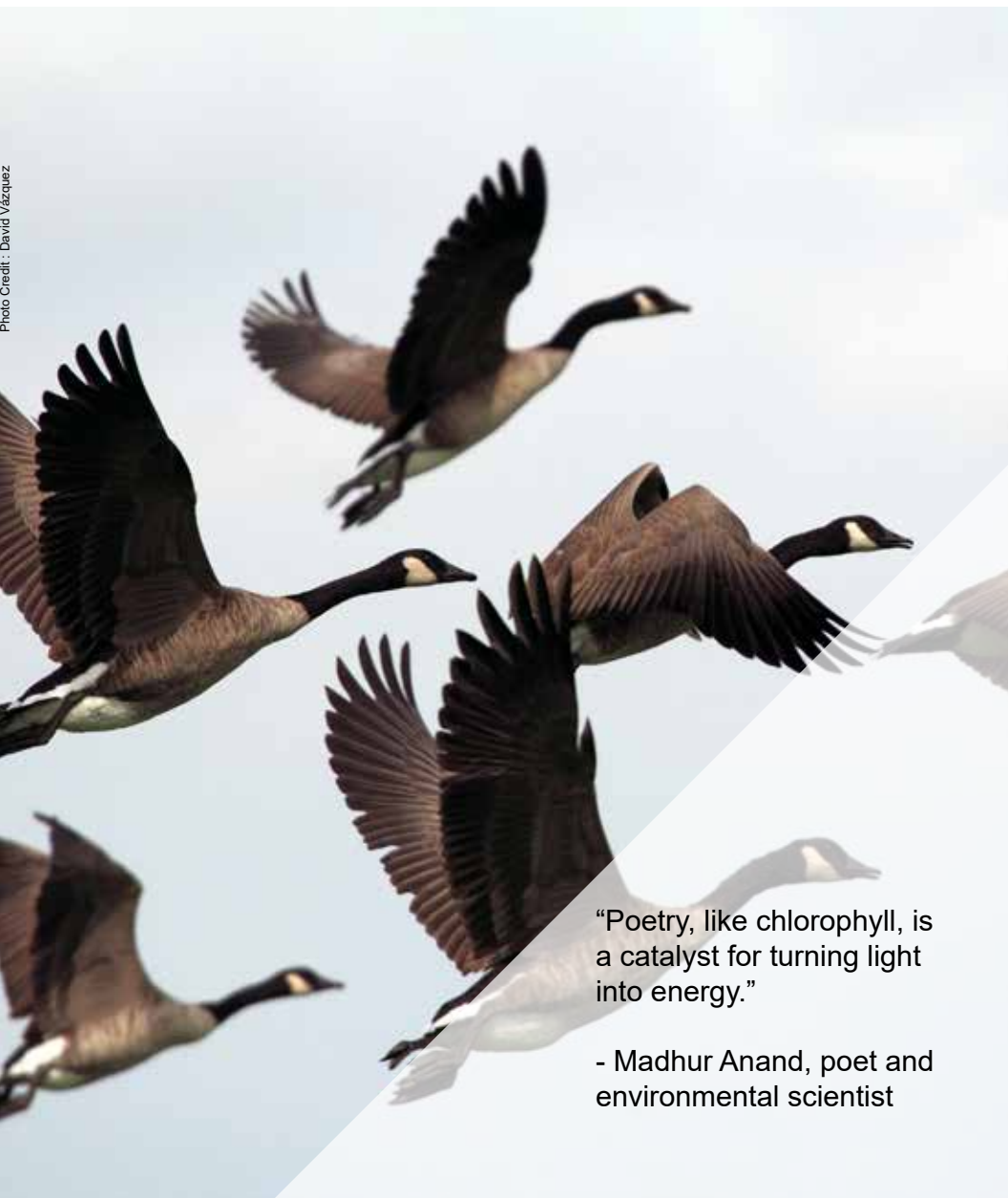


Caring for **WILD BIRDS**

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

No. 4/7

Photo Credit : David Vázquez



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Birds are profoundly their own creatures. They are able to reflect human qualities back to us, and yet to surprise us too. In the poems in this leaflet, Adam Dickinson recognizes the dictatorial whimsy in the behaviour of a crow; Anna Bowen ponders the winter relationships between mergansers, geese and commuters; and Madhur Anand celebrates the "wild undercurrents" of species-variety in gulls.

The Poetry and Ecology Project

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.



Photo Credit : Pablo M. Montes

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.

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 --
arrows 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.



Photo Credit : Jill Wellington

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.

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).



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

"Situating 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

"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

"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

"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

"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

grandriver.ca/en/outdoor-recreation/Birding.aspx

"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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Caring for

WILD CREATURES

The Poetry and Ecology Project

Renewing the earth through the poetic imagination.

No. 5/7



“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.

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In this leaflet, on "Living with wild creatures," we look at three creatures that humans can find it tricky to live with: bats, squirrels, and deer. Adam Dickinson vividly describes the bats in his chimney, and a generous way to get them out of the living room; John Terpstra imagines that the squirrel eating his soft-fit may have a deeper significance than he at first suspects; and Bernadette Rule wishes she had been "quick or lucky / enough" to spot the deer in her local woods.

Disappointment in the Masonry // Adam Dickinson

There is little doubt
that bats are in the chimney.
At dusk, you can hear
the folded sheets
of their slender ascent,
a private appearance
over rooftops,
the steam from a bath
that has just been filled.

Their modesty confounds us.
They dart in the cover of tree tops
as though rushing from bathrooms to dress.
When we see them in the dark
we are half of the mind
they are leaves we've mistaken.

One evening, something
clung to the ceiling
above the fireplace,
cramped in its brown shiver,
the body of an old man
hunched before a tub.
We didn't think to get
the paddle or the broom,
but opened all of the windows,
turned out the lamps,
and felt for the railing to the street,
its cold abashment
working blindly in our hands.

Photo Credit : Erika Wolfe

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.

To God, as a Small Pest // John Terpstra

The squirrel scrambling, light-as-air, over the roof
is you, is it not? The roaming slope
to peak, across and down, scratches
delicate as destruction,

shows that old animal
spirit trying to find a way in, never yet
poking a grey head past the edge of the skylight,
so I may see.

I believe, now,
you have no pride: an imagination
that ranges wildly, seizing any
shape that fits, adopting
what'll do,

with a relentless playfulness,
and your insidious intent;

and I resist
this recognition, as strongly
as the gnawing at my fascia, soffit,
that I imagine comes next, and tense and listen for.

I rather looked for you in the birds gathered
about the feeder, the many separate
thoughts one has, the argue and agreement
of wings, and a hungry abandon to the truth
of contending against another winter's advent.
New this Fall is the balled nest of leaves no bird
comes near, that the highest-reaching branches of the ash
lift eye level to the attic room I hole in.
You're home. Comfort and warning
co-habit,

as when I stood below, preparing
breakfast, and happened to look, you
halfway up the trunk, our eyes locked
and I wondered what,

what was that small round
black thing
you held in your mouth?

Photo Credit : Caleb Martin

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

davidsozuzuki.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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Caring for

FLOWERS & POLLINATORS

The Poetry and Ecology Project

Renewing the earth through the poetic imagination.

No. 6/7



“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

They offer
Your eye! From the shade,
This blue blush, see-

Of aching breath,
Destination,
Everything—

A scent to who-
Ever's running
By. And the gift

Through as rain,
Washes you to
A standstill, empty

Photo Credit : Lizzie

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?

Photo Credit : Natalia Luchanko

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).

Anna Bowen

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.

Photo Credit : Matt Quinn

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.

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."always changing federal and provincial laws that affect plants and animals and their habitats."

"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/leisure/recreation/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

david Suzuki.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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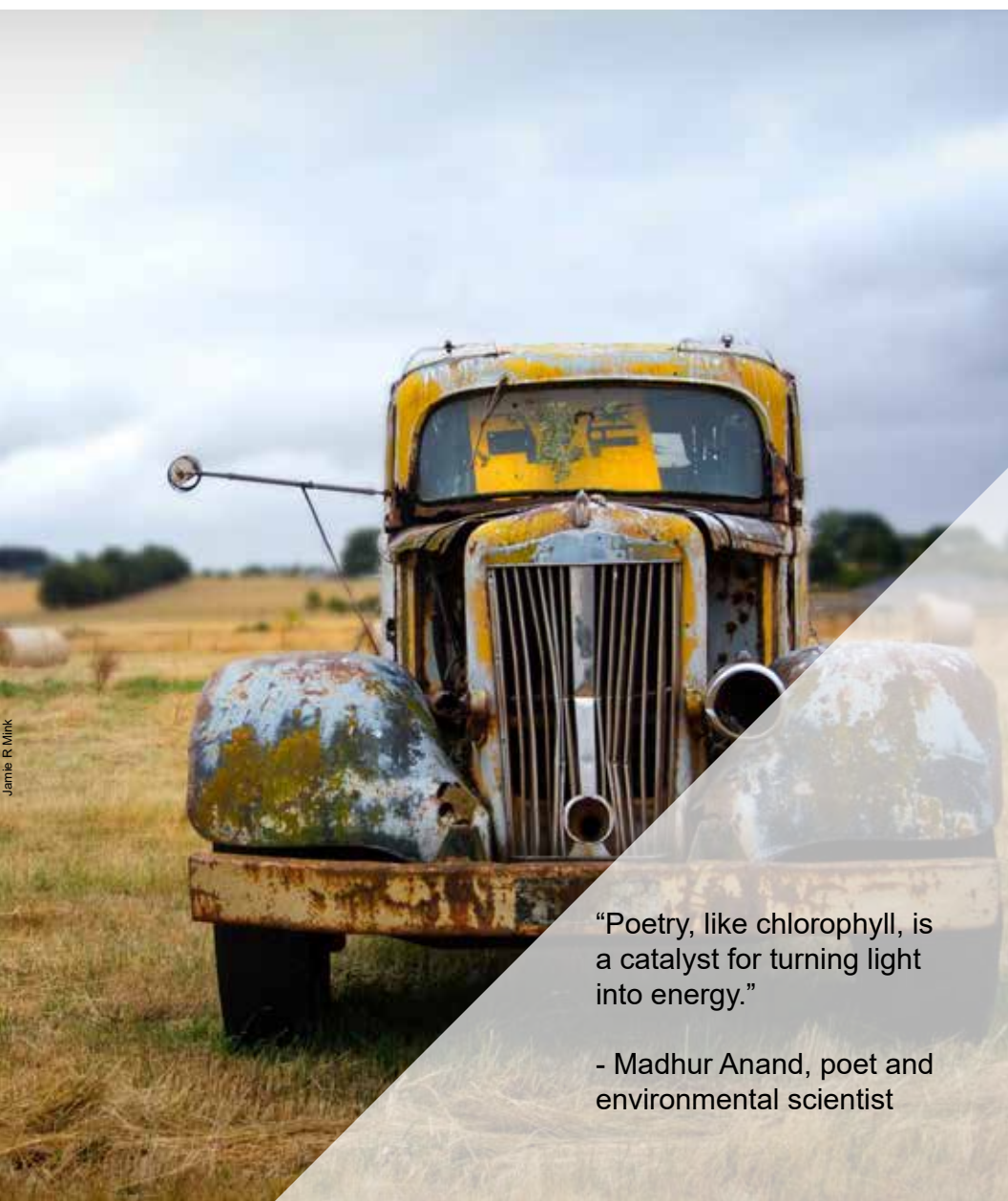


Caring for our **DEGRADED LAND**

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

No. 7/7

Jamie R Mink

A vintage, rusted yellow and blue truck is parked in a field of dry grass under a cloudy sky. The truck is heavily weathered, with significant rust and peeling paint. It has a prominent chrome grille and a single round headlight on the left side. The background shows a flat landscape with some distant trees.

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a catalyst for turning light
into energy.”

- Madhur Anand, poet and
environmental scientist

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In this leaflet, on "Caring for our degraded land," the focus is squarely on how humans have interacted with the land to deplete it, but also on what we might now do in response. Daniel David Moses asks the wind to be a wreath for an abandoned barn where no one knows farmer or sons; Anna Bowen suggests that, if we "attend to the task of imagining" the vibrant natural life of a landfill site, it may reward us by beginning to know us too; and Greg Kennedy asks the big question, whether we will be "as diligent and determined / in our healing /as in our harrowing."

A Barn off the 401 // Daniel David Moses

Hurry past the weathered
Boards—for there are no words
In whitewash now, no names

Or questions stretched across
The ingrained red. The man
Who wanted an answer,

Who painted Where will you
be in eternity?
Is gone already, just like

His farm. Only the wind
Remains, wandering
In the fallow fields

Beyond, too despondent
To do more than sigh. Why
Is it we never know

Who they were, farmers and
Their sons? Wind, settle down,
Be a wreath for this barn.



Photo Credit : Markus Petritz

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. "A Barn off the 401" comes from *A Small Essay on the Largeness of Light and Other Poems* (Exile, 2012).

How to love a landfill // Anna Bowen

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



Photo Credit : Evelyn Mostrom

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.

Healing our Harrowing // Greg Kennedy S.J.

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.

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?

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.

Kelly Sikkema

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

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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