



**SO  
WE  
DON'T  
FORGET**

an anthology of nature - themed poems

edited by Kate Davis

SO  
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WON'T  
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# Editor's Note

The title of this book comes from a song by Khruangin called “So We Won’t Forget.” The song’s constant rolling beat layered with nostalgic, almost mournful lyrics feel fitting for the way I view nature and our relationship with it. Underlying the song seems to be a lurking feeling of nostalgia and a desperate need to savor what we have before it leaves.

Living in the Salt Lake valley during the twenty-first century has given me a simultaneous appreciation and anxiety concerning our natural world. I’ve grown up nestled in natural environments that take my breath away. Then, twenty years into my life and two thousand and twenty into our calendar years, I was diagnosed with RAD, and I realized my breath was, once again, taken away. This time, though, my breathlessness was a direct consequence of my sucking down our over-polluted valley air every day.

I’ve begun gathering these poems and stories in an attempt to be honest about where we are in relation to the natural world. These poems and stories are some of the papers and some of the letters I’ve clung to in an attempt to remember. I’ve gathered bits from friends and family, and drawn from a well of some of my favorite writers whose work echoes this theme. Poetry has an important ability to capture what is felt in an empathetic and communicable way. I hope that reading these pieces will let you unlock your own truth about nature: your relationship with it, the damage we’ve collectively done, and what steps we can take moving forward.

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do not belong to me. I do not own any rights to  
poems not written by myself.**



# So We Won't Forget

Ooh, one to remember  
Writing it down now  
So we won't forget  
Ooh, never enough paper  
Never enough letters  
So we won't forget

Call me what you want  
Call me what you need  
Words don't have to say  
Keep it to myself

Ooh, every minute  
Every hour  
So we won't forget  
You don't have to be silent  
Say to remind me  
So we won't forget  
Ooh

Call me what you want  
Call me what you need  
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Never enough letters  
So we won't forget

Ooh, every minute  
Every hour  
So we won't forget  
You, don't have to be silent  
Say to remind me  
So we won't forget

Ooh, say you remember  
For I think I've lost it

—Khrungabin

*For Justin. Thank you for teaching me  
the power of verse.*



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### To Make a Prairie

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,

One clover, and a bee.

And revery.

The revery alone will do,

If bees are few.

—Emily Dickinson



## Toxic Beauty

A girl ran free  
laughing at the those  
who would stop her.

Songs sung on the breeze  
That We could not understand.  
But she knew.

Till the day man invented  
The mirror.

The lies didn't hide  
in its sanitized surface  
but in her cavernous pupils.

Convinced she needed more,  
longing to reflect our world,  
We made her over.

Botox fixed the crooked rivers' lips;  
concrete poured along the sides,  
cementing her smile in place.

Ridges wrinkled her planes,  
carefully sliced away by highways  
revealing fresh young asphalt.

Mountains soared over her middle;  
We slimmed her ballooning belly  
sapping the strength of her core.

The drab stars in her eyes  
Were never bright enough for our taste

So We glazed them over with a creamy fluorescent glow.

Her profile lacked strength and pride.  
Our towering skyscrapers gave her structure,  
thunderous cheekbones that scraped the sky.

Oily mascara highlighted her eyes  
but her tears washed it all away  
as slimy black stains on the ocean's surface.

Pale as her seaside complexion was,  
We gave it new color —  
Pink plastic bottles, and red soda cans.

Heavy smoke poured  
From her flaming full lips,  
catching the breath of those around her.

We dyed her trees with chemicals  
Branches broke into brittle split ends,  
with creeping yellow highlights.

“Beautiful,” we cheered,  
“Perfect, glorious,  
At last you are just right,”

but dark mists began  
To cloud her vision,  
her eyes glassy and vacant.

SO WE WON'T FORGET

Someone gently reached out  
To stroke the trees,  
Covered in soft grey dust,  
The waves began to roar,  
beating themselves  
like milk in a blender.

Stumps reshaped in braces wither  
A Hollywood smile of dead teeth  
tombstones with no names, only ages.

She could take no more.

With that she was gone  
leaving us to stand  
On her beautiful corpse.

—Ellie Smith





## Agua

waves

gently engulfing. cooing

but

sinister. unpredictable. two-faced.

capable of manipulating the downfall of endless layers of rock, of shale.

geology, once worshipped as supreme

is defeated - slowly, so slowly

all because of their

deliberate

relentless

pulsing

—Kate Rasmussen



## Ligaments

you can stretch & bind simultaneously

maybe that is how

we support our growth, we anchor, & we expand

as we tread that delicate line, inhabit that mercurial, silvery  
space where we expand

without

exploding

—Kate Rasmussen

8.24.2020



**Sonnet XVIII**

[Each day the red horizon inches higher]

Each day the red horizon inches higher

off the lithosphere — or else the sky sinks

closer to the earth in grief, burdened

by our ponderous breathing.

I feel it too, the suffocating ambit

of my choices: paper or plastic, oil or gas.

Soon our ashy exhalations will choke out the stars;

alpine trees will have to pierce the troposphere

to catch a breath, and we'll be collateral

damage. Bottom line, this is a matter

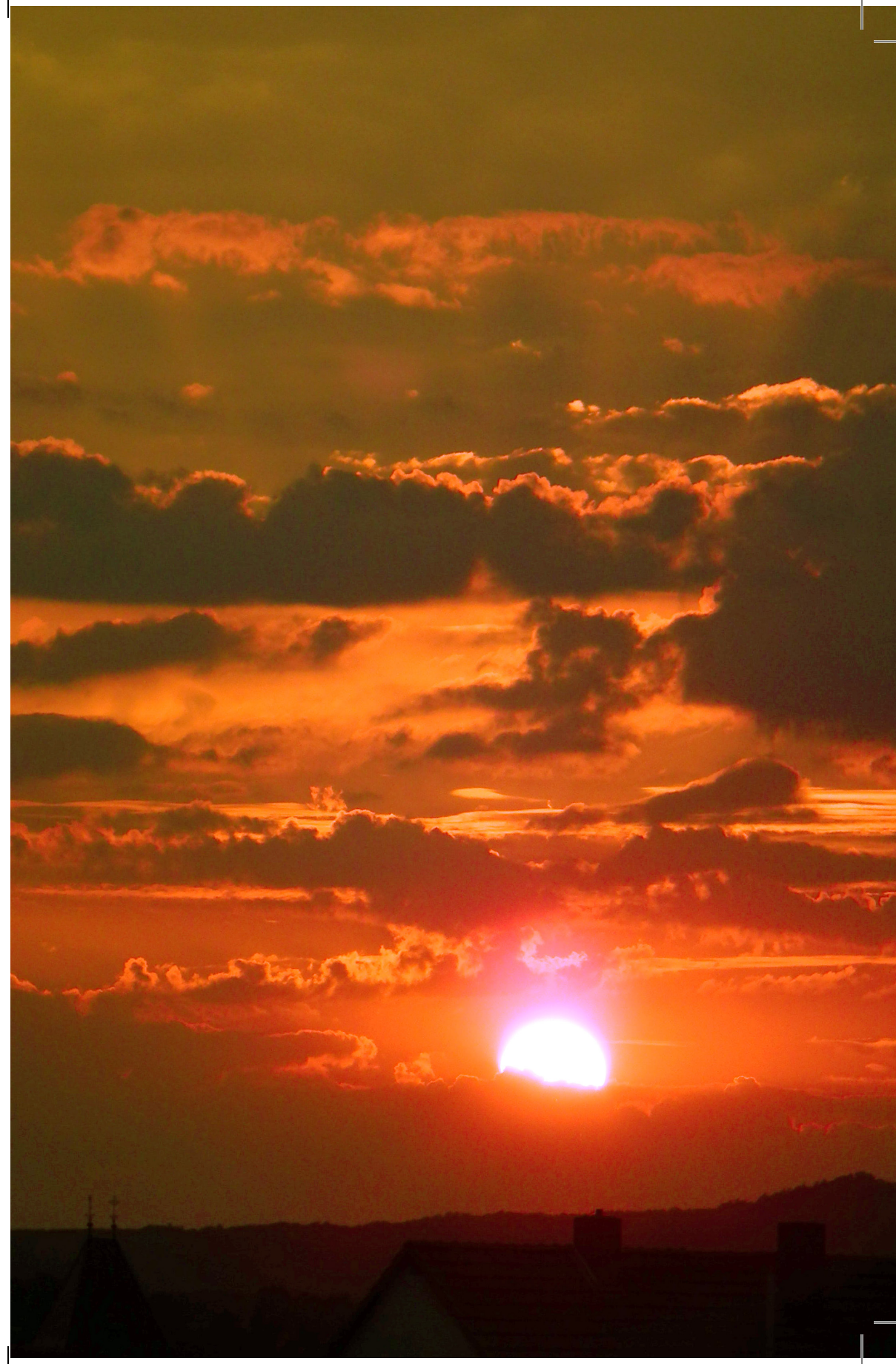
of waiting. You know,

I thought one day I'd name a baby.

Instead the sun has taken on a stoplight

glow, and I know to obey.

—Nain Christoffersen



## Obersteinberg

a hearty, resilient stream meanders down the hillside

it leaps over stones, through crevices, carries lifeblood all the way through to its slenderest veins without discretion

feel the cool tendrils of the water embrace your tingling fingertips

think about nothing, be open to everything

I realize, now, there may be such a thing as

Eternity

—Kate Rasmussen

## Naomi Shihab Nye on the In-Between

“I have always loved the gaps, the spaces between things, as much as the things. I love staring, pondering, mulling, puttering. I love the times when someone or something is late—there’s that rich possibility of noticing more, in the meantime . . . Poetry calls us to pause. There is so much we overlook, while the abundance around us continues to shimmer, on its own.”

- Naomi Shihab Nye

## Song for Autumn

Don't you imagine the leaves dream now  
how comfortable it will be to touch  
the earth instead of the  
nothingness of the air and the endless  
freshets of wind? And don't you think  
the trees, especially those with  
mossy hollows, are beginning to look for  
the birds that will come — six, a dozen — to sleep  
inside their bodies? And don't you hear  
the goldenrod whispering goodbye,  
the everlasting being crowned with the first  
tuffets of snow?

The pond  
stiffens and the white field over which  
the fox runs so quickly brings out  
its long blue shadows. The wind wags  
its many tails. And in the evening  
the piled firewood shifts a little  
longing to be on its way.

—Mary Oliver





## Pollution-Induced Asthma

Air has been routinely leaving me  
The space puff sliding out of my windpipe a couple of seconds  
too soon

The bottom half of my face assembling itself into an  
emotionless, silent scream.

My lungs are wracked with a vague memory of how it once felt  
to be satiated,  
now constantly chasing a full measure of oxygen.

After a slew of blister packs, tiniest beige square pills, and  
pocket-sized inhalers replete with primary colors,  
each producing a marginal to negligible improvement.

Remembering the time when the oxygen flowed freely  
When my ribs didn't feel drawn about three inches too tightly  
around my chest.

I wince when I visualize the two decades of nonconsensual  
secondhand carcinogens infiltrating my alveoli  
Consumed gulps a second, without moderation or restraint.

—Kate Davis  
9.28.21





## Feast and Famine

I wrote during famine and only during famine. The flat blank space of my page creating an alternate reality, a cursory hologram of what I wished to see come to fruition. My deepest hopes for myself, or sometimes a slow to hardy wellspring of what my Soul needed to express to my wearied mind, my hopeless heart. Writing gave permission to acknowledge the inevitable. It instigated sparks, flares, and bonfires in my expanding chest. It wrapped around me in a silvery strand, and tugged me bit by bit: away from the grief, toward the possibility, alongside the pretty and prosaic. It was my only common denominator, the floor beneath me when it all fell away.

—Kate Rasmussen  
10.5.2021

### Excerpt from Song of Myself

A child said What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands;  
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.  
I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,  
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,  
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say Whose?

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,  
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,  
Growing among black folks as among white,  
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same,  
I receive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,  
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,  
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,  
It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps,  
And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,  
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,  
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues,  
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women,  
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?  
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,  
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,  
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,  
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,  
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

—Walt Whitman





## I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

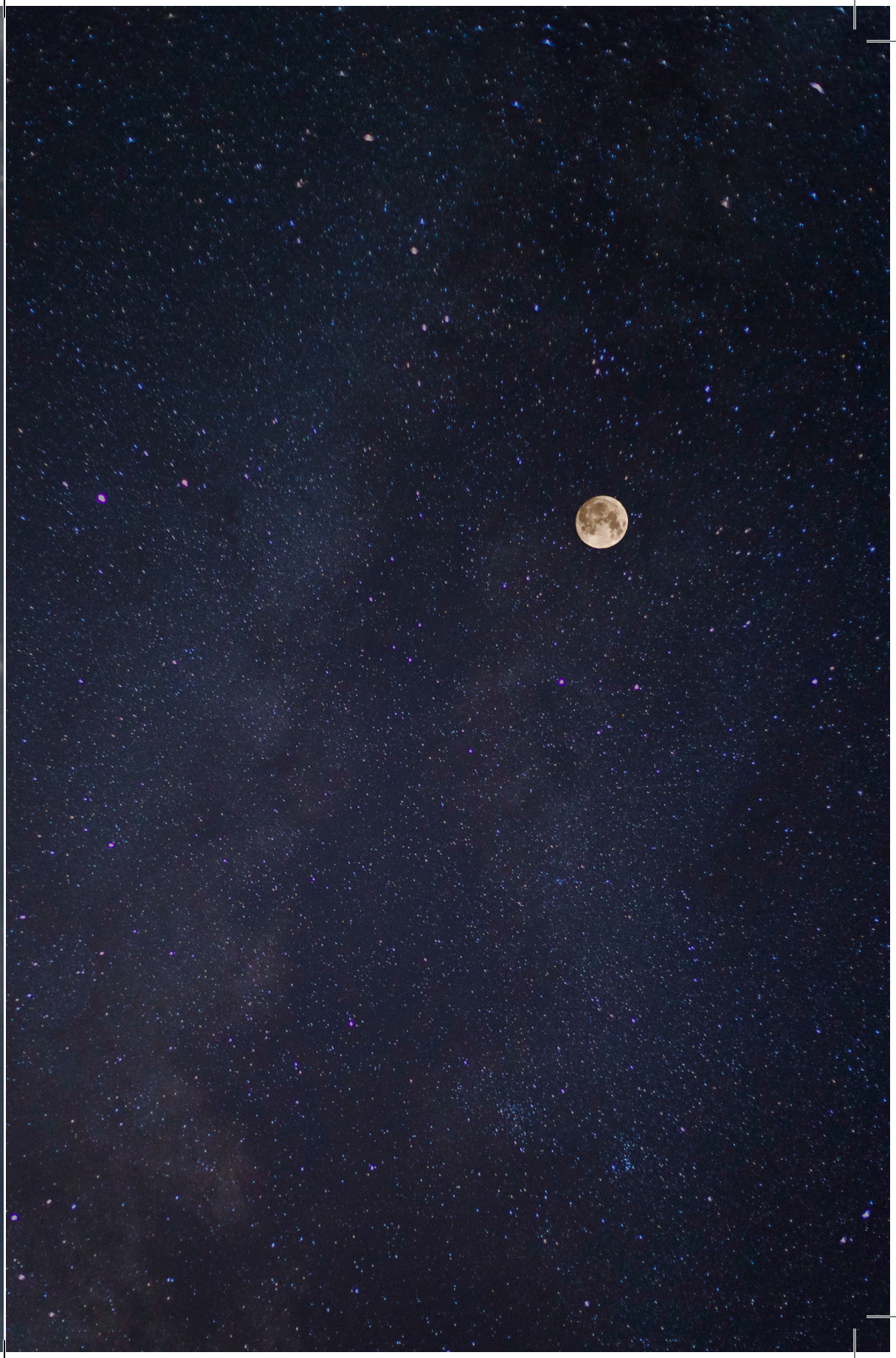
I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

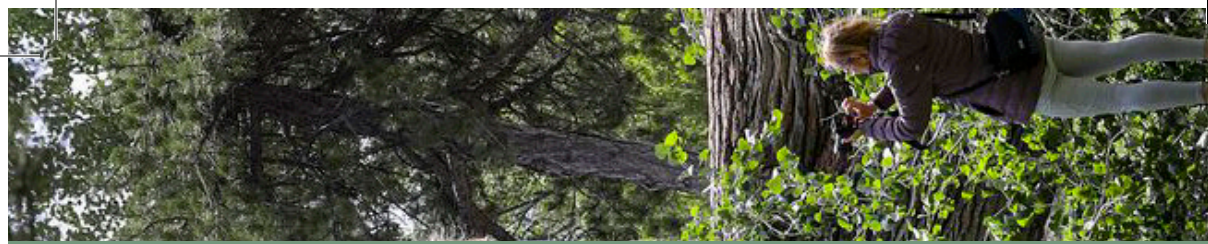
For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

— William Wordsworth

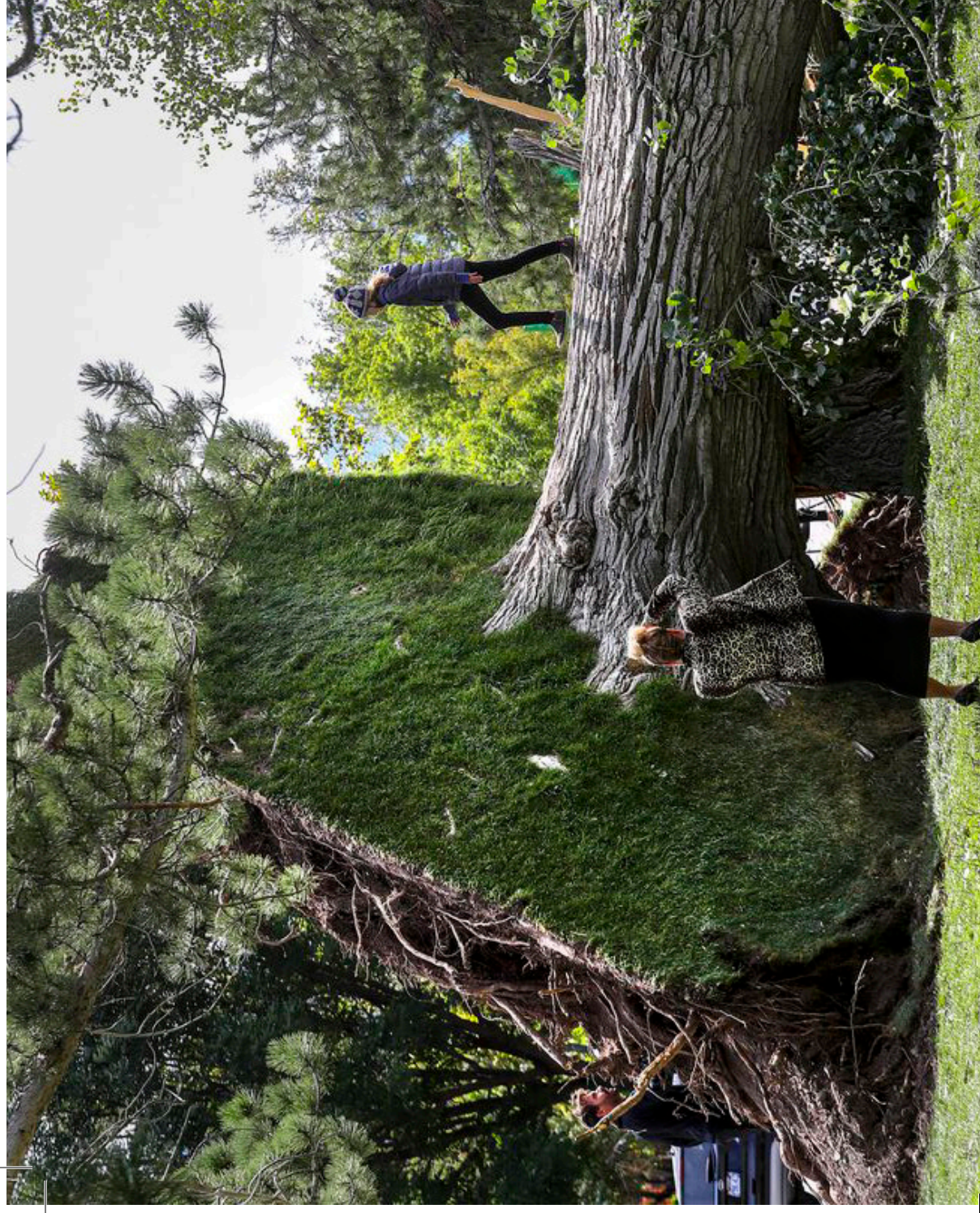




with these pictures?



what's wrong



## Stale

The wind blows  
with a vengeance  
Looking out across this hazy valley  
To those westward mountains, deflowered by human hand,  
gazing with gleaming green eyes  
The overworked stream still juts through this gully

Patiently, in forced companionship with clusters & mobs of  
plastic & canned exhaustive waste  
She misses her tall guardian trees

Once a constant assuring companion; they now lie in  
mourning, their very foundation forcefully ripped from under  
them; a bleeding massacre.

Our oxygen is muddy whilst we wrap our faces in man made  
shields; under some deluded notion of responsibility; we give a  
haphazard effort at best once the battle's long lost.

The air is fast disappearing. The earth weeps,  
and yet,  
the wind blows  
with a vengeance.

—Kate Rasmussen

10.10.2020

*The wind blows with a vengeance*

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## Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees

For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting. You only  
have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain are  
moving across the landscapes,

over the prairies and the deep trees,

the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air, are  
heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,

the world offers itself to your imagination,

calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting — over and  
over announcing your place

in the family of things.

—Mary Oliver



## Ode to blue

it's unfair that the population at large pins you as the color  
of melancholy

my happiest days appear through an azure lens

the shade most resplendence with vibrancy and the  
essence of human - ness

I see you under my puffy eyes after a late night spent in a  
sea of experience

you unify the heavens and firmament as the common  
thread

my reliable, lovely companion on otherwise lonely  
evenings.

—Kate Rasmussen

## Breakage

I go down to the edge of the sea.

How everything shines in the morning light!

The cusp of the whelk,

the broken cupboard of the clam,

the opened, blue mussels,

moon snails, pale pink and barnacle scarred—

and nothing at all whole or shut, but tattered, split,

dropped by the gulls onto the gray rocks and all the moisture gone.

It's like a schoolhouse

of little words,

thousands of words.

First you figure out what each one means by itself,

the jingle, the periwinkle, the scallop

full of moonlight.

Then you begin, slowly, to read the whole story.

—Mary Oliver





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gently engulfing. cooing

but

sinister. unpredictable. two - faced.

capable of manipulating the downfall of endless layers of  
rock, of shale.

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