

# Grief-Writing

## Navigating Ecological Suffering Through a Relational Pedagogy

Jodi Latremouille

Volume 7, Number 2, 2022

Poetic Inquiry for Synchrony & Love: A New Order of Gravity

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1094865ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18432/ari29669>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

University of Alberta

ISSN

2371-3771 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Latremouille, J. (2022). Grief-Writing: Navigating Ecological Suffering Through a Relational Pedagogy. *Art/Research International*, 7(2), 439–457.  
<https://doi.org/10.18432/ari29669>

### Article abstract

It's been a tough couple of years. Each one among us could list off the news headlines as a lengthy and overwhelming reminder. And each one among us could certainly curate a personalized list that amplifies and extends our collective sufferings. The past couple of years have left me wondering, "what could possibly be next?" I heed David Geoffrey Smith's (2014) call to "reimagine new, wiser human possibilities" for our overlapping worlds of suffering. As an educator, mother, world-lover deeply concerned with all forms of justice, I share grief-writing: poetic stories of small-town sufferings through floods, stories of family hurts, heartaches and loss, stories of love enduring through hopelessness. I engage life writing and poetic inquiry to undertake a dialogue with my own heart-memories, my loved ones, my scholarly ancestors—towards hopeful pedagogical possibilities for healing.

© Jodi Latremouille, 2022



This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

**érudit**

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>



---

## GRIEF-WRITING: NAVIGATING ECOLOGICAL SUFFERING THROUGH A RELATIONAL PEDAGOGY

---

Jodi Latremouille  
Vancouver Island University  
[jodi.latremouille@viu.ca](mailto:jodi.latremouille@viu.ca)

**Jodi Latremouille** completed her doctorate at the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. She is a professor in the Faculty of Education at Vancouver Island University. Her research interests include eco-hermeneutics, ecological, Indigenous and feminist pedagogies, social and environmental justice, life writing and poetic inquiry.

**Abstract:** It's been a tough couple of years. Each one among us could list off the news headlines as a lengthy and overwhelming reminder. And each one among us could certainly curate a personalized list that amplifies and extends our collective sufferings. The past couple of years have left me wondering, "what could possibly be next?" I heed David Geoffrey Smith's (2014) call to "reimagine new, wiser human possibilities" for our overlapping worlds of suffering. As an educator, mother, world-lover deeply concerned with all forms of justice, I share grief-writing: poetic stories of small-town sufferings through floods, stories of family hurts, heartaches and loss, stories of love enduring through hopelessness. I engage life writing and poetic inquiry to undertake a dialogue with my own heart-memories, my loved ones, my scholarly ancestors— towards hopeful pedagogical possibilities for *healing*.

**Keywords:** poetic inquiry; life writing; grief; ecological pedagogy; relational pedagogy

## An Invitation

Without deep reflection, we have taken on the story of endings, assumed the story of extinction, and have believed that it is the certain outcome of our presence here. From this position, fear, bereavement, and denial keep us in the state of estrangement from our natural connection with the land.

We need new stories, new terms and conditions that are relevant to the love of land, a new narrative that would imagine another way, to learn the infinite mystery and movement at work in the world.

Give praise and nurture creation.

—Linda Hogan, 1995, p. 94

It's been a tough couple of years. Each one among us could list off the news headlines as a lengthy and overwhelming reminder. And each one among us could certainly curate a personalized list that amplifies and extends our collective ecological sufferings. My little hometown of Merritt, British Columbia has had a tough couple of years: hit with fires, floods, renewed Residential School heartaches, school closures, layered overtop of the grief of pandemic times. My little family has also had a tough couple of years: shaken by mental wellness troubles, evacuation orders, broken limbs, destroyed homes, injured brains, crashed cars. The past couple of years have left me hurting, struggling, lashing out, retreating within, sometimes hurting those I love most at the very moments they needed me the most. The past couple of years have left me wondering: "What could possibly be next?"

David Geoffrey Smith (2014) calls for educators to "reimagine new, wiser human possibilities [economic, ecological, social, cultural ...] given the deep damage suffered at local domestic levels, both at home and abroad" (p. 1). I heed the call, but in these times of ecological suffering, I do not feel up to the task. I am lost, lonely, twisted by confusion, short-sightedness, and a stubborn dislocation from my sense of purpose. I keep wandering, stumbling, bumping into walls and tripping myself up, falling headlong into crisis after crisis. I have a near-constant low-grade headache. I feel untethered, yet invisibly weighed down. I cannot shake this feeling. As an educator, mother, world-lover deeply concerned with all forms of justice, I am constantly "struggling to raise [my] consciousness and figure out the best action to take" (bell hooks, 2003, p. 107). But there is something about these days. Each day feels like I am pressing a reset button. I start the struggle over again from the beginning. There seems to be no progress, these days, in figuring out much of anything. I am constantly reminded, from all quarters and reliable sources of information, that "we are living in extraordinary times" (Ellyn Lyle, Jodi Latremouille & David Jardine et al., 2021, p. 3).

The past couple of years have also left me wondering, “[i]n the mess of the world” (James Hillman, 1983, p. 49), has it ever been any different? “Was there ever a time that was not extraordinary? Even as [I] acknowledge some of the unique experiences that make our time remarkable, [I] feel [my] focus shifting away from the immediacies of contemporary distraction and exhaustion and panic toward a newly-emerging *consciousness of and presence with*” (Ellyn Lyle, Jodi Latremouille & David Jardine, 2021, p. 3). In my embodied attempts to compose, de-compose, and re-compose, to follow these tangled threads of life through a relational pedagogy of consciousness and presence, I remain “willing to endure the shame of falling short as a price of admission” (Wendell Berry in Bill Moyers, 2013, n.p.). I bring this deeply personal poetic grief-writing into the light as a movement towards resonance, towards kinship, towards generative dialogue, towards our collective earth-healing. I seek to share with others “a new narrative that would imagine another way” (Linda Hogan, 1995, p. 94). As it is shared out in community, I learn from others just as much as I teach. I am nourished and replenished in the writing, the reading, and the return.

In the coulee a pocket of darkness.  
 Marbled pairs of reflected light,  
 briefly glow, then shimmer and fade out.  
 Alone now, they wind through tangles, relentless,  
 And re-emerge into one.  
 Call up to the creators; we are here, we are here.  
 —Judson Innes, 2014, p. 102

I often feel alone in my grieving. I recognize that I have been conditioned through cultural norms to pick myself up and carry on without a hitch through great loss, to put on a brave face, to be strong in order to protect others from big feelings, to numb out with prescriptions, distractions and other coping mechanisms, to reserve my scary emotions for moments of aloneness. As a teacher and educational leader, what I am slowly learning is that our collective strength of spirit may emerge through the courage to be vulnerable, to share the earthly mystery and profound beauty of love and loss, grief and praise, in a communion of *continual emergence* (Ted Aoki, 1993) with others. This writing is offered up as an invocation to this communion, and as an “invitation to readers to listen for the call, to hear their hearts, to hear the hearts of others beating with poetic rhythms” (Carl Leggo, 2006, p. 75).

I engage poetic inquiry and life writing (Ivan Brady, 2009; Lynn Butler-Kisber, 2005, 2010; Erika Hasebe-Ludt, Cynthia Chambers & Carl Leggo, 2009) towards a relational pedagogy which asks for “openness to vulnerability as we attempt to reconceptualize ourselves as teachers” (Ellyn Lyle, 2019, p. 2). This grief-writing is one small attempt to “address the complicated issues of living ethically and with empathy

among all our relations” (Erika Hasebe-Ludt, Cynthia Chambers & Carl Leggo, 2009, p. 14). This grief-writing is also an attempt to “recognize [myself] in the mess of the world” (James Hillman, 1983, p. 49). This grief-writing is a dialogue with my own heart-memories, my loved ones, my scholarly ancestors; it is a request for comfort and reminders, a small attempt to tell new stories, to “give praise and nurture creation” (Linda Hogan, 1995, p. 94). The grief-stories in this collection are written in my own voice and travel poetically down the left margin of the page. They navigate from school hallways to bathroom floors, from 200-year-old floodplains to cattle ranches. These stories engage in an intergenerational dialogue with the voices of my scholarly ancestors, through a series of brief and pointed reminders located on the right margin of the page, written in italics to represent the quietude of these voices of our elders, who are always present and waiting to teach me, when I am ready to hear them. In my panic, suffering, and untethered moments, these wise interruptions may ground me, or carry me, or shake me awake, as they call attention to the vastness, incompleteness, and mysteriousness of life on this planet. They remind me that I am not alone; nor am I the only, nor the first, to walk this path. These grief-stories and the responses of my scholarly ancestors are shared in hopes that I, indeed we, may orient our living and teaching to *healing*. This wholeness (Old English: *hale*, healthy) is not an endgame or goal, but rather a process that is already at play, a potential, poised for the moment when I can give in and allow my bodily responses and grief-stories to flow through me. The work of healing “is never perfect, never finished, yet always [already] *whole*. Through healing, scarred bodies [and stories] may become sites of remembering: sites of difficult, hopeful, joyous learning” (Jodi Latremouille, in Jodi Latremouille, Antonella Bell, Mandy Krahm, Zahra Kasamali, Lesley Tait & Dwayne Donald, 2016, p. 11).

As I worked on the following grief-writing, I shared the bits and pieces with trusted friends, colleagues, and family members. I give thanks to Lesley Tait and Robyn McLeod for sisterly friendship, our years of shared ecological suffering, grief-work, laughter, and writing, and for their permission to share some small overlapping strands of our interwoven life stories. I also give thanks to David Jardine and Tiffany Cece, who make the time to read everything I throw their way. I also give thanks to my scholarly ancestors, whom I cite with first names and family names, in order to properly address and recognize each contribution to this poetic research. Last names may refer to ancestries and family relations, communal and even often contested histories, while first names may highlight the importance of the role each of us grows into within our communities, as well as the unique gifts we bring to this work and this life. Multiple authors are listed repeatedly, as a kind of meditation, repetition, return to those names, over and over, in the same sense that working through grief is a cyclical process without an end point or final resolution. The end-piece, entitled *A Return*, emphasizes this insight, by providing no final, clear, or tidy resolution. I give thanks to puppies and newborn teenagers and husband and garden

and piano and volleyball and bees. In offering these thanks, I recognize that grief, as both a mirror and outgrowth of love, is also a form of gratitude for what is precious.

## Grief-Writing

### ***Grief: Emptiness.***

My dear friend, Lesley,  
co-author and conspirator,  
reached out.  
Lesley wanted to write.  
She wanted to write about grief.  
I started writing with her,  
for her, alongside her, through her.  
I held out my strand of the braid  
writing through my own heartaches and hardships.

*You stand on the edge of a canyon and you shout something.*  
—Richard Wagamese, 2016, p. 118

But I wasn't ready. It was too fresh, too open.

I used to pride myself in my quick thinking.  
Now the words won't show themselves.  
They play peek-a-boo behind the aspens,  
popping up here,  
disappearing,  
peeking out there,  
behind my back.  
I turn to catch it in action,  
a shadow flits  
out of sight again.  
I know what I want to say.  
It just stays embedded, tucked away deep in the forest,  
just out of reach.  
Giggling and whispering.

My mind is stuck.  
Slowing, miring, grovelling, begging, insignificant, purposeless.  
It was too fresh, too open.

*I was so wrapped up in my own grief at the time,  
I had a hard time recognizing or maybe remembering  
the grief of everyone else around me,  
and all the different ways it happens.*

—Robyn McLeod, personal communication, February 25, 2022

I used to be a writer. Now I don't know what I am.

I have nothing left to write.

***Grief: The river.***

In the old days, our backyard used to be a river bed.  
When you dig down into the sandy soil,  
you can see the pathway it used to take,  
the river rocks buried  
deep and cool.  
We keep digging, around,  
Under.  
River rocks, turned up and flung aside  
in little piles around the yard  
to make way for a new garden.  
Each year, they just keep turning up.  
They were once sitting strong on the surface,  
now turned up again  
burst through  
for a new purpose.  
The earth shifts ever so slightly.

*You must believe in spring ...  
Because silence is not silence without sound.*

—Jan Zwicky, 1998, p. 76

Renewal— once again.

***Grief: Future-Memories.***

I once read about an ancient woman  
who had no memories left to hold  
but only memories-  
so she danced around the old folks' home  
barefoot in her too-long nightdress  
cuddling and cooing to a smudge-faced plastic baby doll  
wrapped in a receiving blanket

wrapped and re-wrapped many times a day  
 to make sure she was comfortable.  
 Babies like to feel secure, so we  
 wrap them nice and tight.  
 Her aging daughter once kidnapped that baby doll  
 and threw it in the washing machine. So callous  
 and practical.  
 Baby's matted, spiky half-melted hair  
 bore the hot trauma for all the world to see.  
 She smoothed it down with a low lullaby,  
 her crow hands keeping time  
 to the rhythm of her forgotten grief.

My daughter's neck arches back, grin wide  
 as she spins  
 around, around, and around, again.  
 I can see my own wiry, young-aging hands  
 crossing over themselves,  
 gripping so tightly to her smooth-padded palms,  
 my eyes locked in on her face as we whirl.  
 The blue grass swirls and blurs  
 but her face is frozen, shimmery-clear in the spring,  
 her dandelion sundress billowing out above  
 those familiar, knobbly, playful-bruised knees.

*My autobiography is embedded in the land of my ancestors.*

—Narcisse Blood, 2009, p. xvi

I am already  
 lost to the dream  
 rehearsing this day, this moment, this spin-  
 over, over, over, again.  
 Nostalgia for this moment,  
 for the future  
 that has not yet found its rhythm. Pre-emptive  
 grief for this  
 baby girl growing  
 out of her too-short sundress.

### ***Grief: Perspective.***

I have sort-of studied,



without discipline or true understanding,  
for many years.

The first book by Thich Nhat Hahn,  
a bathroom book stumbled upon at 12 years old,  
stolen from my dad  
years later,  
when I realized the value,  
the famousness and godliness  
of the author. He suddenly became  
worthy of theft.

“Peace is Every Step.”

I had no clue.

I was just grasping at straws of substance

Lifelines of love

back then.

Is it any different now?

If I had known the famousness, the godliness  
of the author, would I have taken the words  
more seriously  
back then?

How could I have missed them, sitting there,  
right in front of me?

I think,

I must still be missing the point.

*The moment we believe to be the moment of birth  
is only a moment of continuation.*

—Thich Naht Hahn (Plum Village App, 2022, n.p.)

### ***Grief: Teachings.***

My best friend Robyn's father. Bob.

Robert, to his mother.

The rancher.

We grew up scrambling up and down  
his rows of haybales.

We grew up camping out  
overnight in his barn.

Hiding from imaginary robbers in his hayfield.

Running from imaginary wolves

lurking at the edges of the woods.

Coming home to him sitting in his office,  
The corner of the kitchen island counter,  
Perched on his stool,  
smirking at us from his corner throne.  
Cigarettes, honey sandwiches, Coors Light beer

*Coors Light forever and ever. Terrible stuff.*

—Robyn McLeod, personal communication, February 26, 2022

Generations of ranching  
infused down-through-into his weary bones.  
You can't write that shit down.  
You just gotta do it, over and over,  
side by side, hand over hand,  
following footsteps, stepping  
in cow patties, stumbling along behind,  
learning to keep up.

*an old dance held by an ancient beat*

—Garry Gottfriedson, 2010, p. 46

Nobody slows down for you.  
They look back but they don't slow down. There's shit to do.  
So much to learn.  
Three daughters, wife, all those grandchildren you can't even count on two hands.  
All so busy that day cramming ranching into their bones.  
I broke down, fell down,  
right there in the middle of my garden  
Fell down right there in the dirt I was digging up,  
busy putting my garden beds to rest for the winter.  
She wasn't finished learning.  
He had so many leftover teachings.

*[Reading this ...] made me cry in a good way.*

*It's been long enough that even the sad times feel ...*

*Special somehow.*

*Rosy, in remembrance.*

*I'm lucky in that I have few regrets or unfinished business  
when it comes to my dad.*

*I can just feel fond and loving when I think about him.*

—Robyn McLeod, personal communication, February 25, 2022

Nearly three years on, and on any given day, I still might break down  
with her, for her, alongside her, through her.

in secret,  
when she's not noticing  
when she's busy  
getting on with her life.  
So much more for her to learn, still.  
She's just gonna have to figure that shit out.

*and before the moon could comfort the night sky,  
he left as he came  
while I stayed to become a dancer.*  
—Garry Gottfriedson, 2010, p. 46

**Grief: Eternity.**

"Mom...did you know  
I am born with all the eggs  
of all the unborn children  
I will ever have,  
even the ones  
that don't even become babies?  
Do those eggs  
have all the eggs  
in them already, too?"

*It is impossible for a cloud to die.  
The cloud can only become the rain,  
the snow, the hail, the ice.*  
—Thich Nhat Hahn (Plum Village App, 2022, n.p.)

**Grief: Love.**

Coldwater River 200-Year Flood. November 15, 2021.

12 years of  
building up- soil, gardens,  
fences, irrigation- building up-  
layering, laying down dirt and mushroom manure,  
bone meal and fish meal, dead pets buried under rocks, layering,  
laying down roots and wings and love and hope for a form of justice that  
starts at home, that starts where I live and breathe, where my children  
eat carrots seasoned with flecks of dirt and save worms from the  
rain-filled puddles and pack flapping-squawking chickens

around in their skinny  
scratched-up  
arms.

Washed away.

***Grief: Justice.***

bell hooks.

No.

I wasn't finished.

***Grief: Failure.***

Why didn't I check just one more time?  
Why did I go to sleep?  
Why didn't I know?  
What's wrong with me?  
I should be able  
to protect my own babies.  
Isn't that my one single and precious motherly  
only task?

I didn't know.

Or did I wilfully turn a blind eye?  
My sacred duty, dropped, abandoned, ignored  
in a single instant.  
I can't see clearly through my clouded  
tears of self-judgment.  
How do I go on never knowing?  
I should have stayed awake.

I will never know how,  
but maybe  
maybe I could have should have saved them.  
It was sheer, utter, impossible luck!  
An accidental stroke of aleatory timing.  
I don't even know where to direct my relief  
Immeasurable gratitude

that they are still right here, now.

They don't know how they survived, either.

This not-knowing, it's not from stubbornness or pride or anger or shame or hate.

It's just not-knowing.

It's just a mystery

I will have to live under it, walk with it, pack it around on my back.

maybe sometimes, I will manage to put it down temporarily,

stretch my arms, and close my eyes, get some rest

in rare, tiny in-between half-asleep twilight-daybreak moments of

blissful forgetfulness.

*When despair for the world grows in me  
And I wake in the night at the least sound  
In fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.  
—Wendell Berry, 2016, n.p.*

**Grief: Gratitude.**

The day I finally grew up was tomorrow.

The day I learned to walk the unknown, twisting, forgetful path.

I fought that path. I am still fighting tomorrow.

I can't clear it, I can't make it change course,

I can't make it any smoother or more predictable

I can't make the sharp rocks and hot sand any less painful

on my tender, reluctant, anxious soles.

I can't force anyone to walk with me.

I can't even force myself to move

if I am not ready.

The scars will never heal if I keep picking, picking, picking.

I might manage to fall asleep

but I will never sleep again.

**Grief: Humility.**

My face is a battleground.

What is roiling inside explodes out through my eyes,

bursts from my running nose,  
 shaking and trembling lips, cracking voice,  
 sweating, soaked pores.  
 Collapse outwards in a hollow scream.  
 Vision shrinks to a tunnel of wavy spots,  
 sounds fade in the pulsing rushes taking over my ears.  
 This is not weakness  
 even though I am glued to the bottom of the bathtub.  
 Scalding water rushing, flowing over my rounded spine  
 Over my dirty, tangled hair.  
 Into my mouth and nose.  
 A long overdue eruption  
 that demands my immediate attention.  
 Demands surrender.  
 There is no room for anything else.  
 Not at this moment.  
 No room for thinking.  
 No room to turn. Only facing. Eyes closed.  
 No hiding behind thoughts. Only feeling.

*What is the curriculum of being human?*  
 —Erika Hasebe-Ludt, Cynthia Chambers  
 & Carl Leggo, 2009, p. 12

It passes.  
 Recedes back within.  
 Still. Cool breath again. Victory.  
 I faced another wave.  
 I peeled myself up off the bathroom floor.  
 Try again. Face up again. Eyes open.  
 Victory is everything.  
 Nothing more.

### ***Grief: Noticing.***

Coldwater River 200-Year Flood. November 15, 2021.

Some of us sat on our kitchen tables.  
 Some of us broke windows to catch our saving breath.  
 Some of us had nowhere to run.  
 Others had no way to run.  
 In our front yard, my still-young crabapple tree,  
 bent over to the ground,

suffocating under a pile of rubble poured on top of it  
by the river that decided our front yard was the most likely pathway  
for its now-toxic journey back to the ocean.

Suffocating under a massive solid wood picnic table  
uprooted from its home next door.

Suffocating under a pile of fence sections pushed over  
by their unlucky placement in the river's new pathway,  
a stray lawnmower come to rest after  
a self-guided tour of the neighbourhood.

Suffocating, with only the bent-over still-flexible trunk sticking out  
under the rubble, like the Wicked Witch of the West.  
It was truly the last thing on our minds.

But my dad knows me too well.

He saw my pleading eyes.

He brought the excavator over, spent an hour picking off each  
piled-up-piece of our washed-away lives,  
the shreds and shards of neighbours' and strangers' activities,  
concrete picnic tables,  
asphalt roof tiles,  
broken lamps,  
soggy workboots,  
stretched-out mud-smeared bras,  
picking off each piece-  
one by one.

He tenderly avoided the low-hanging powerlines as he revealed that little dormant tree,  
lying bare and scarred on the ground.

*Many people think that heaven is somewhere else.*

—Thich Nhat Hahn, 2013, p. 61

We dug it out of the frozen dirt,  
disentangled its mangled branches,  
propped it up in a lop-sided brace  
rigged up with a two-by-four and some binder twine,  
For one moment, it was the only last thing on our minds.  
Deep breath, sigh.

*Ask the questions that have no answers.  
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.*

*Say that your main crop is the forest  
that you did not plant,  
that you will not live to harvest.*  
—Wendell Berry, 1991, p. 1

“Well, we’ll just have to wait til spring.”  
“We did our best.”

***Grief: Waiting.***

*In the act of crafting,  
the spirit and the state of mind of the braid maker  
shine through.*  
—Erika Hasebe-Ludt, Cynthia Chambers  
& Carl Leggo, 2009, p. xxiv

My dear friend, Lesley,  
co-author and conspirator, reached out.  
Lesley wanted to write.  
She wanted to write about grief.  
I started writing with her, for her, alongside her, through her.  
I held out my strand of the braid,  
writing through my own heartaches and hardships.  
Common breath.  
Weaving life stories.  
When it was time, she wasn’t ready.  
It was too fresh, too open.  
I miss her. My co-author and conspirator.  
Half-woven braid in my hands.

*We are so young we hardly know what it means to be a human being.*  
—Linda Hogan, 1995, p. 35

***Grief: Unfinished.***

I wait.

## **A Return**

The work of this grief-writing was particularly difficult. I did not know if I was ready for the writing, nor if it was ready for the reading back. It felt forced, at first. It started to flow and roll, in time, but even now it still feels too vulnerable, too angry, too ugly, too



sharp, too broken. “Each time I return to a story, I am changed, too, and thus the work is never completely, neatly bound up and finished” (Jodi Latremouille, 2019, p. 222). And so it is with grief. And so it is with healing. And so, too, it is with relations. When I read, re-read, share, discuss, and return, it still feels incomplete and insufficient for the task at hand. Recall that “without deep reflection, we have taken on the story of endings, assumed the story of extinction, and have believed that it is the certain outcome of our presence here” (Linda Hogan, 1995, p. 94).

Short-tailed albatross

Whooping crane

Gray wolf

Woodland caribou

Hawksbill sea turtle

Rhinoceros

—Joanna Macy, 2014, p. 291

These ways of grief-writing are an attempt to attend to absences, through a relational pedagogy of consciousness and presence. These offerings attempt to take up Donna Haraway’s (2016) critical and creative challenge: “to make kin in lines of inventive connection as a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick present” (p. 1)

Staying thickly present to the weight of the world—whether that weight is the shattering of a young child’s lightness of being, a permanent family rupture, a natural disaster that cracks a community wide open, revealing previously hidden or ignored injustices and abuses, or the ever-more-urgent stomach-acidification of the climate crisis—is a way of attending to our ecological sufferings, our experiences and interpretations, “not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal creatures entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings” (p. 1). As Linda Hogan (1995) reminds us, we need new stories, new terms and conditions attuned to the mystery and movement at work in the world.

When we as humans begin to tune our hearts and our minds back towards these relationships with food and seed and land, [we may see that] the nature of life on earth herself is actually rooted in exponential abundance [and that] that spectrum of diversity will return again, and I’ve seen it happen. I’ve seen it happen in tribal

communities where certain varieties have been lost. But when other varieties of corn were grown out in substantial and bigger quantities in bigger acreage, as they began to revitalize the seeds and grow them out, that certain sacred varieties actually re-emerged from other varieties. (Rowen White in Ayana Young, 2022, n.p.)

*Because silence is not silence without sound.*

—Jan Zwicky, 1998, p. 76

Moving, writing, loving grief is *hard work*. It is digging up car-sized boulders from the centre of a gravel road. It is breathing through a child's panic attack on the floor of the hospital room. It is driving a rescue truck through two feet of rushing floodwater. It is falling asleep in a crowded airport with all the lights blazing. It is emptying myself of the last tear that I didn't think I had left over from the night before. And yet, in all its incompleteness and shortness of breath, it is unfolding just as it should—this grief-writing in praise and nurturing of all creation (Linda Hogan, 1995).

There are no formulas or timelines or step-by-step guides. There is only the desire to dream, teach, learn, and live well with all our relations. There is only abundance. There is only heartbreak. There is only praise.

“Call up to the creators: We are here, we are here”

—Judson Innes, 2014, p. 102

## REFERENCES

---

- Aoki, T. (1993). Legitimizing lived curriculum: Towards a curricular landscape of multiplicity. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 8(3), 225–268.
- Berry, W. (1991). Manifesto: The mad farmer liberation front. *Reclaiming Politics*, 30, 62.
- Berry, W. (2016). The peace of wild things.  
<https://onbeing.org/poetry/the-peace-of-wild-things/>
- Blood, N. (2009). A greeting. In E. Hasebe-Ludt, C. M. Chambers, & C. Leggo (Eds.), *Life writing and literary métissage as an ethos for our times* (pp. xv–xvi). Peter Lang.
- Brady, I. (2009). Foreword. In M. Pendergrast, C. Leggo, & P. Sameshima (Eds.), *Poetic inquiry: Vibrant voices in the social sciences* (pp. xi–xvi). Sense.
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2005). Poetic inquiry. In L. Butler-Kisber & A. Sullivan (Eds.), *Poetic inquiry in qualitative research. Journal of Critical Inquiry Into Curriculum and Instruction*, 5(1), 1–4.
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts-informed perspectives*. Sage.
- Gottfriedson, G. (2010). *Skin like mine*. Ronsdale.
- Haraway, D. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Hasebe-Ludt, E., Chambers, C. M., & Leggo, C. (2009). *Life writing and literary métissage as an ethos for our times*. Peter Lang.
- Hillman, J. (1983). *Healing fiction*. Station Hill Press.
- Hogan, L. (1995). *Dwellings*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. Routledge.
- Innes, Judson. (2014). A pocket full of darkness. In J. Seidel & D. W. Jardine (Eds.), *Ecological pedagogy, Buddhist pedagogy, hermeneutic pedagogy: Experiments in a curriculum for miracles* (p. 102). Peter Lang.

- Latremouille, J., Bell, A., Krahn, M., Kasamali, Z., Tait, L., & Donald, D. (2016). *kistikwânihk êsko kitêhk*: Storying holistic understandings in education. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 14(1), 8–22.
- Latremouille, J. (2019). Writing from the heart-mind: Cultivating not-knowing towards an “earthly pedagogy.” In E. Lyle (Ed.), *Fostering relational pedagogy: Self-study as transformative practice* (pp. 211–228). Brill.
- Leggo, C. (2006). Learning by heart: A poetics of research. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, Winter, 73–96.
- Lyle, E. (2019). Engaging self-study to untangle issues of identity. In E. Lyle (Ed.), *Fostering a relational pedagogy: Self-study as transformative practice* (pp. 1–9). Brill.
- Lyle, E., Latremouille, J., & Jardine, D. W. (2021). Now has always been the time. Editorial. *Journal of the Canadian Association of Curriculum Studies*, 18(2), 1–5.
- Macy, J. (2014). Appendix B: The bestiary. In J. Macy & M. Brown, *Coming back to life: The updated guide to the work that reconnects* (pp. 291–294). New Society.
- Moyers, B. (Host) (2013, October 4). *Wendell Berry: Poet and prophet* [Video]. Moyers & Company. <http://billmoyers.com/episode/wendell-berry-poet-prophet/>
- Nhat Hahn, Thich. (2013). *Love letter to the earth*. Parallax Press.
- Plum Village App. (2022, January 22). *No birth no death: Thich Nhat Hahn* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwoTsoelfcQ>.
- Smith, D. G. (2014) *Teaching as the practice of wisdom*. Bloomsbury.
- Wagamese, R. (2016). *Embers: One Ojibway's meditations*. Douglas & McIntyre.
- Young, A. (Host). (2022, June 15). Rowen M. White on seed rematriation & fertile resistance (No. 291) [Transcript of audio podcast episode]. In *For the Wild*. For the Wild. <https://forthewild.world/podcast-transcripts/rowen-m-white-on-seed-rematriation-fertile-resistance-encore-291>
- Zwicky, J. (1998). *Poems for relinquishing the earth*. Brick Books.