


ARTICLE

Earth's Love Letters: Locating loving pedagogies

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Abstract

Dear Reader~Earth,

How can we *refuse* education as a content machine stream? How can we *love our* more-than-human-*selves out of the dark* into education spaces that care? Instigated by a love letter to Earth, the collaborators in this 'letter to the editors' enter a correspon-dance with place about co-mentorship and sustenance. As a post-qualitative inquiry this piece resists mining the world for meaning, and instead, the authors (and Earth) creatively compose this conceptual paper with some image and text-rich conversational ramblings alongside poetics of feminist black scholars and poets. The letters meet places, spaces and bodies on the page – data analysed is data again. Four letters emerge informed by contemporary environmental philosophy, wilding pedagogies, and place-based education. They speak to researchers and teachers on unceded, unsundered, colonised lands, themselves an act of solidarity from the two settler~authors. The pile of loving letters tell the tale of two people on Earth, as Earth, re-imagining pedagogical theory and practice in relation to Earth in an exhibition of living with pedagogy. This process of 'wilding' your own pedagogies regularly – as loving pedagogies – is offered as worth considering.

Please enjoy this compilation of letters addressed to you, Earth.

Love from Earth.

Keywords: Earth relations; environmental education; loving pedagogies; new materialism; posthumanism; post qualitative inquiry; sense of place

Submission

Cover Letter

March, 2025

Re: Earth's love letters — How to read this experimental piece

Dear Reader~Earth,

We hope this letter finds you . . . outside, noticing the air against your cheek, and the sounds of distant birds, or the roar of an ocean, and the quiet drips from the end of a tree's bough.

Whose lands are you on?

Nick is with ƭəʔamen territory of qathet, Sarah is with Kulin Nation Aboriginal lands.

We are outside, composing this letter, and invite you to join us on a step, on a wood pile, or under a tree while you read this. We hoped you might step away from the desk.

Listen out for a bird song?
See what you can hear/smell/taste/touch/feel?

How can we *refuse* education as a content machine stream? How can we *love our more-than-human-selves out of the dark* (Kaur, 2020) for education spaces that care? Instigated by a love letter to Earth, the collaborators in this ‘letter to the editors’ enter a correspon-dance with place about co-mentorship and sustenance (Crinall & Vladimirova, 2020). As a post-qualitative inquiry (St. Pierre, 2013) this piece resists mining for finite understanding (Crinall and Newfield, in press; MacLure, 2022), and instead, the authors (and Earth) creatively compose this conceptual paper with some image and text-rich conversational ramblings with poetics from feminist black scholars and poets (Crinall, 2023). Four letters emerge informed by contemporary environmental philosophy, wilding pedagogies, and place-based education. They speak to researchers and teachers on unceded, unsundered, colonised lands themselves in an act of solidarity from the two settler~authors, and tell the tale of two people on Earth, as Earth: Re-imagining pedagogical theory and practice in relation to Earth and love at a time calling for more climate care (Rousell & Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, 2019). A process of ‘wilding’ your own pedagogies regularly — as loving pedagogies — is offered as worth considering.

Please enjoy this compilation of letters addressed to you, Earth.
Love from Earth.

Wilding wilding

How can you *wild* a special issue on *wilding pedagogies*, and engage in *theorising, practicing, and imagining towards a changing, decolonising, and reconciling world* (Paulsen et al., 2024)?

Where humans are nature living with nature, highly sedentary academia and imposing school curriculum reforms necessitate dancing out of convention for climate health which is also human health. Being moved. State curriculum reform has requested pedagogies provide “instructional, knowledge-rich” brain-focused learning (AERO, 2024). Meanwhile as children’s advocates we are dreaming beyond imposed desk-based curriculum-centred teaching and learning protocols to remember our embodied relationships with/as Earth. These require other ways of knowing, doing and being (Martin & Mirraoopa, 2003). We have corresponded with Earth to reach the roots – What can we (re)learn as Earth?

A postal post-qualitative inquiry

A postal post-qualitative inquiry could “re-imagine being a wild educator, [as] always an ethical task” (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 646). With a multiplicity of voices situated in the specifics of their relations, when written down new concepts for education can be etched with “immanent research methodologies that work (from) the middle, where data, researchers and events are mutually emerging” (MacLure, 2022, p. 637). A non-linear stream of meditations are data bodies and places analysed with thoughts and theory into letter-data, which show up in the paper’s correspondence as data again (Crinall, 2019). This unfolding mode of becoming as research (St. Pierre, 2013) forms new ideas, poses new questions, and pauses at publication on a new possibility for the reader (and writers!) to live with. This scholarship style scribes over . . .

“ingrained humanism that resides in qualitative methodology, in the persona of the sovereign human interpreter who grants meaning to the world by attending to that which is inhuman or more-than-human” (MacLure, 2022, p. 637).

“Not always comfortable to conduct or to read” (MacLure, 2022, p. 637), these conversational rambling-rumblings with Earth are purposefully co-composed with imperfections and out-of-order

elements promoting a shift in any intention to etch at Earth for cognitive understandings (MacLure, 2022). Being Earth in this education/research is instead, an ongoing correspon-dance of embodied sustenance (Crinall & Vladimirova, 2020) — with Earth, as, and for Earth.

Discursively, silenced and quietened scholarship maintains its primary voice without fixed interpretation in post-inquiry to hear a new perspective on love for school classrooms (e.g. Crinall, 2023). Earth as co-teacher offers the conversation some touchstones inviting non-human writers to shift human centrisms (Jickling et al., 2024; see also Blenkinsop et al., 2022; Crex Crex Collective & Jickling, 2018).

Writing with pen-pals across places and race, here are two colonised humans speaking with unceded and unsundered lands, seas, skies and sands.

To become differently on the page engage in your own ways.

Please be guided by the dates, and to whom the letters are addressed.

What's love got to do with it?

Less philosophy (the love of wisdom) and more love (the wisdom to love) (Irigaray, 2001) please!

Irigaray proposes love as a verb toward a kind of knowing that remembers it matters what we *do* with our time with/on/as Earth and “child.” This comes after First Nations philosophies speak up on embracing knowing, doing and being for millennia (Martin & Miraboopa, 2003). This custodial ethic for taking care of Country is as Country and as kin (Graham, 2023). Wilding a loving ethic that is ongoing and active into pedagogies could “utilize all the dimensions of love – “care, commitment, trust, responsibility, respect and knowledge – in our everyday lives” (hooks, 2001, p. 94).

Co-loving could bring about co-caring, with caring in-between, Vladimirova (see Vladimirova, 2021)? We desire this earthly feminist co-mentoring love for (our) children’s learning futures.

Irigaray’s verbaceous term ‘to love’ dynamically embraces the other (2001), making room for multiple definitions of ‘love’ (Hooks, 2001) that accentuate possibilities for pedagogies that are active in reciprocity and exchange, emotion-rich (Brückner, ; Stanger, 2016). and a practice of paying conscious attention (Crinall et al., 2025).

Let’s compose a loving letter to enact this loving ethic as pen-pals, correspon-dancing lovingly with Earth, as one way of living for a while . . .

A love letter emerging!

Dear Reader~Earth, are you still there?

Can you tell — even this moment finds a love letter emerging!

There is a raven carwwk-ing over here.

What about where you are?

What Earthly love letters are you co-writing with the world as we speak?

What is emerging among you, and others?

To ask could be your task?

In *Sophie’s World* (Gaarder, 2025) a series of letters arrive anonymously. They invite a young girl to love wisdom. Irigaray (2001) asks for philosophies that love wisdom to flip their focus, and ask: What other wisdoms of love can a society emerge? We are curious — what kind of letter exchange would this promote and provoke?

One beyond patriarchal assumptions about love? (like the letters that disrupted assumptions that beauty is a metropolitan affair unavailable to women in rural everyday life — see Rautio, 2009).

One for formal education settings too?

Enveloped in this special issue's request for submissions of the most wilding pedagogies, some questions slide to the floor:

What are your first ideas for loving pedagogies?

No rubrics?

No time limits?

No "learning outcomes"?

What's wild?

Look about you now.

Who else is there?

Lift your attention to sense their powers.

Conjure your own "version of wildness" (MacLure, 2022, p. 638).

What is ours, you ask?

Hmmm, our "rewilding" finds process philosophies accompanying us, "looking for modes of thought, being, and action to counter the human exceptionalism that has poisoned planetary futures" (MacLure, 2019, p. 631) by decentring the human into nature. Yes, that's right – here, humans are nature (Rautio, 2012). We've asked for help from artistic post-qualitative inquiry, First Nations knowledges, and rebellion so wildly unkempt pedagogies can consider senses first, moving us to engage with an education that is physically *and* emotionally rich surrounding knowledge-richness. We would like to unbox 'pedagogy' (the theory of how to teach and learn with children) with this messy-pile-of-love-letter methodologies and see what ideas we can find for re-wilding pedagogies right now. MacLure's crone methodology rewilds theory (via Jack Halberstam & Tavia Nyong'o, 2018, in MacLure, 2022) with "a version of wildness that has forgotten its manners" (MacLure, 2022, p. 638) which gives us confidence to not seek a protocol or framework.

Could this cheeky correspondent conversation exhibit possibilities crone – be evocative but not instructional? Is it okay to wildly un-inhabit conversations about pedagogies that don't centre taking care?

We think Grosz (2011) will be excited about colonial education becoming undone with care. Sending ourselves outward with these letters, we render ourselves, intentionally, unrecognisable to a system that has "gone to seed, . . . failed to thrive, [for] those who are both in and out of the game . . ." (Jack Halberstam & Tavia Nyong'o, 2018, p. 456 in MacLure, 2022, p. 638), as unconventional as it might be, for us, this experimental composition communicates life-giving possibilities as it is penned. For poet, Rupi Kaur, *home body* helped to *love herself out of the dark* picto-poetically (2020).

Out we go, to love schooling systems out of the dark picto-poetically!

Look around.

Can you find a loving letter from Earth in the poetics of a place close by?

Which messages are coming your way?

Which messages are you sending out?

Let's go there.

Here are two provocations as stamps of our ongoing thoughts:

How can we refuse to teach individualist streams of content-craven education in the hyper-flight of neocapitalism, at a time deeply distressed by intersecting geo-humanitarian crises?

How are we loving our more-than-human selves and others *out of the dark* (Kaur, 2020, n.p.), in/outside education settings?

It feels time for a stretch, we'll be back soon.

Love from Nick and Sarah

October, 2024

Re: Wandering into a loving correspon-dance with Earth

Hi Earth,

Recently, we've been *wandering* together *wondering* what would it be like to receive a love letter from you, Earth.

Join us at the kitchen table?

How do you take your cup of tea?

Our chattering while steaming sips warm insides.

Let's walk

wilding pedagogies are

an out-and-about off-the-beaten-track kind.

We were just chatting about how Nick was introduced to the concept of *Love Letters to you, Earth*, twenty years ago. Prompted by Dr Elin Kelsey (2020), Nick was asked to *write a love letter to you, Earth* with inspiration from Nhất Hạnh (2013) (see figure below) as part of his Masters degree in environmental education and communication. This concept is not new - Western, Eastern, and Indigenous philosophies have all been co-writing *love letters* with you, Earth, for millennia. Some traditions understand humans as separate from your Earthly systems but many traditions do not. And marginalised narratives hold so much knowledge as you, Earth, particularly in the inner, complex workings of poetic meditations and litanies (e.g. Gumbs, 2020; Haddad, 2023; Ihmoud, 2023; Kaur, 2020; Lorde, 1978). Nick had a hard time writing with his 'own voice'. At the time, Earth, he was heavily influenced by the Heiltsuk First Nation at Koeye Camp, on the mid-coast of so-called British Columbia. He composed a multimodal love letter to your earthly sea serpent, sisiutl. This multimodal letter engaged Nick in empathetic orientations to the world. Since then, Nick has continued to compose love letters to you, Earth, through painting, writing, videography, and song (Stanger et al., 2013; Stanger, 2011, 2014, 2016).

For Sarah, love letters are a new way of sending indeterminacy into the world with poetics (Barad, 2021; Bennett, 2021). This sprang from a bodyplacetime tethering sustainability to art along with science (Crinall, 2019). Here bodies were given the right to know place (Somerville, 1999) and you, Earth, were agentially-determined spacetime-matter, always welcoming of change (Barad, 2010). Modes of making with people and places found their "well-being [was] part of the same dynamic" (Sterling, 2001, p. 22). This sustainable education studied waterway health creatively and crafted lovingly with Earth. It was one she could live with. The pictopoetics in this case took the form of bodyplaceblogposts — unedited bodyplacetime-stamped Earth emerging. They were recognised as post-qualitative inquiry by others (St. Pierre, pers. comm; Koro, pers. comm); or a kind of qualitative research emitting sustenance affectively, fluidly (Wolgemuth, pers. comm; Wolgemuth, 2016). Either way, living a post/qualitative life between human and other as a

daily affair, these ‘love letters’ eeked evidence of un/entangling decentring human spaceplace-bodies at work in the mothering, researching realm (Crinall, 2019). Peekable in lines like,

“I am a shearwater” . . . and
“I am the stuff in a bird’s beak.” (Crinall, 2019, p. 187)

Each week, Earth, ‘Emergence’ arrives (emergencemagazine.org). This week posed

“what does it look like to create space for, and tell, stories that hold, a relationship of kinship and love for the Earth (Loften & Vaughn-Lee 2024, n. p.)?”
Earth kin, what does this look like in educational contexts?

This kind of class would be wild (def: undomesticated) with want, wouldn’t it!
Love from, Sarah and Nick.

December, 2024

Re: A practice of noticing loving letters as Planet

Dear Nick and Sarah,

“Wilding” (un-restraining) the conventional academic paper structure as the Planet, might be akin to wilding a lesson sequence in penpalship with me, the Earth. This is not so wild, not so violent, given Paulsen et al. (2024), invited you to mess with your human-centered education. To re-centre relationships evaporates fixed classroom instruction that bookends learning — can you imagine a lesson that you wish wouldn’t end? Not just any programs wild or free an educational heart (Blenkinsop et al., 2022). Shall we peruse which do together?

Love, From Earth

Dear Earth,

We are learning. Jickling et al. (2024) offer touchstones that ask human~Earth to wildly wend toward “*Nature as co-teacher with complexity*, and an *unknownness*, along with *spontaneity* while *locating the wild* (or free), conscious of *time and practices* for *cultural change* while they *form alliances* and *build community*. And hooks is keen that we learn to be loving, caring, compassionate, and expand our imaginations (hooks, 2001). Crinall & Vladimirova (2020) correspond-danced with im/material in an event that found reams of im/materials exchanging across continents as virtuo-actual conversations with mothy, dotting, bananamoons that were sustenance-rich. These texto-visual non/human exchanges were empathetic and playful across space altering local place engagements for each (and more?). Could instigating imaginative waltzing conversations between communities soothe, and align Earth into spontaneous situated shows of love? Let’s have some more creatively complex conversations across virtual and actual realms in this post-pandemic climate-care era. Read on! . . .

Love from, Sarah and Nick

*p.s. from here, at times, letters attempt to evoke the tradition of scribbled notes and folded sheets sent as good enough grams. They resist the tidying up, and editing out of our human imperfections that ‘word-processing’ has brought to letter-writing via spellcheck and Grammarly’s accompaniment in emails (see also Crinall, 2019).

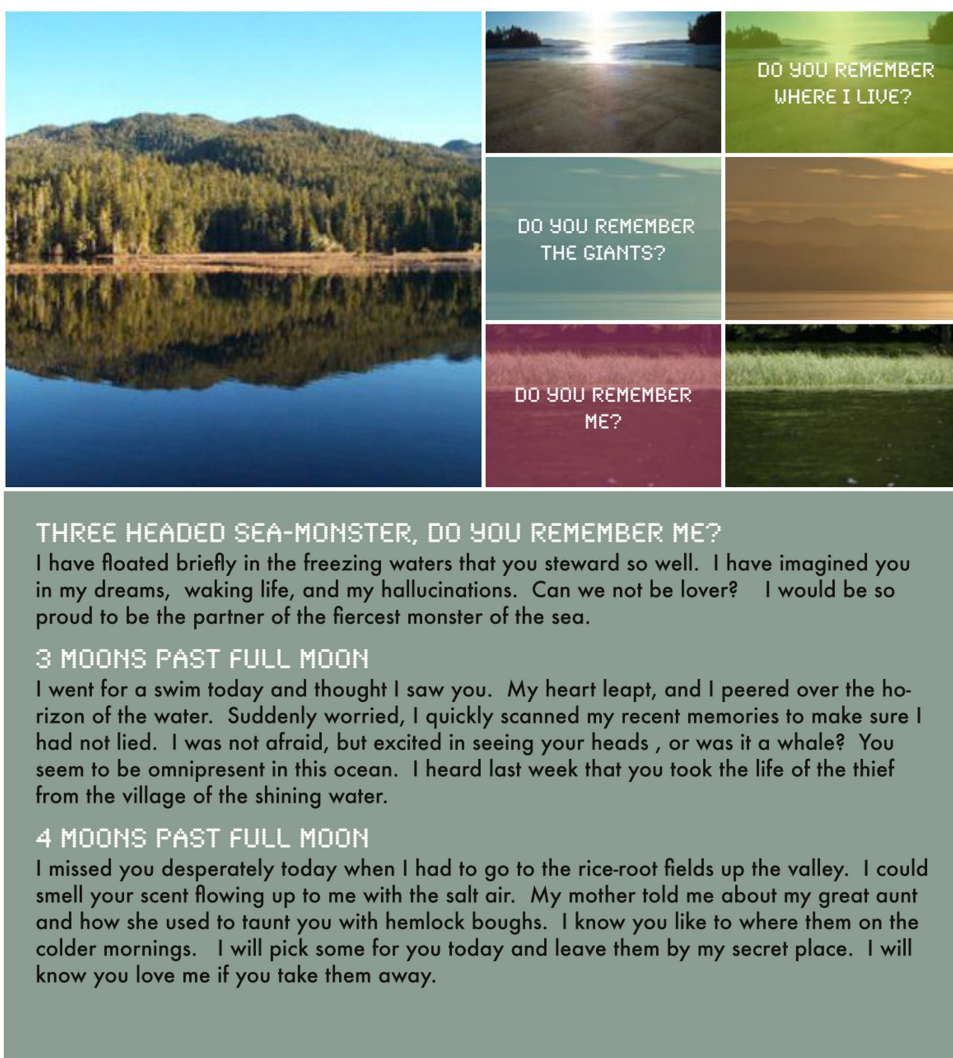
#p.p.s. Images are embedded in these multimodal letters. They are not figures with captions that follow academic convention. All have permissions.

Earth's Love letters (as lines and utterances)***Letters 1 – Re: Pitter patter litter letter blue wren blues lovingly**

Dear my love of sisuitl

This excerpt of the original love letter to you, sisuitl, 20 years ago, helped frame my understanding of storied love. Unexpected voices come out in relationship to the land, to the Earth, to other ways of knowing.

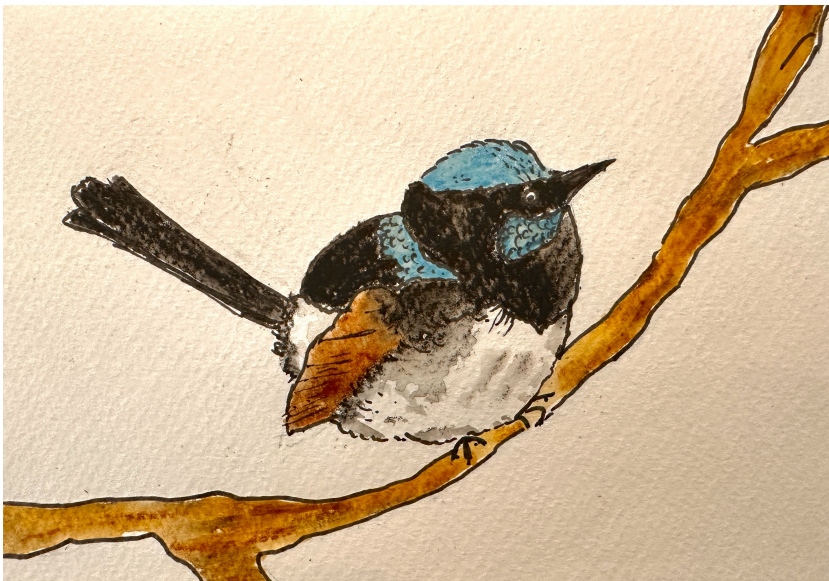
my love of Sisiutl



In many ways we become ourselves more thoroughly by being in and with the world that sustains us, that is us. Looking back at this piece now, constructive feedforward is still useful: whose voices am I allowed to interpret? How might this be construed as cultural appropriation? How might settler-colonists engage in knowledge from time immemorial without fetishising the wild, the Indigenous peoples, the Land that is so new to us? These dialogues came much more fully centred in later research and teaching, and yet are the heart of Earth's Love Letters. Through these questions a resounding value of deep curiosity has emerged, or is maintained, gathering energy as we sense and stride together on different lands. There is incredible respect in curiosity (withheld judgement?), but there is also a disturbingly fine line between the white gaze at other-than-whiteness and humanness and one of genuine curiosity mixed with respect. Is there a word that is both curiosity and respect?

Love From Nick.

Dear Nick and Sarah,



I am with your question: Is there a word for curiosity and respect?

I've been seen though subtle in a series of snapshots.

I am seagrass-sized-plastic-corkscrew.. . .

sand-soaked cellophane.. . .

tissue-tainted-cystophora-floats

& almost-jelly-bandaids.. .

I am also known as, *a wake-up call* (according to 12yo Edith).

Evelyn Araluen (2021) wrote in the 'inland sea':

"The waves still break on the shore
the bodies still break on the floor" (p. 73).

Don't look away from the oppression (c. kotsanas, pers.comm) means seeing the stories of the struggling sea, and of first so-called australia in the sand as you walk, too.

Yours, the litter letters.

Dear litter letters,

The **swift flit** of the superb fairy wren's
exquisitely blue salute
pierces the malaise of a summer's walk.
On land unlike your sea-sand-sky-scape.

Their
rewinding-tape-song
seemingly
seeks
a response
from the
distracted-hum-drum-mumblings
of human animals.

A timing that perfectly stunts
shuffles, and bumps our gaze
from inwards to "awe" wards
and in the space between
(un)recorded letters of love.

Concurrently aware
of the lands we are on
and how and whose sacrifices
have made this moment



Love from a superb fairy wren

Dear superb blue fairy wren
you are so blue
reminding me of camping trips you flitted through
my dad's favourite bird is you
there's a subtle sadness here too

Is it a boundary you're setting to perch there solo? Are you surrendered, scared or attuned to the environment? "Going with earth's flow instead of struggl[ing] against it" (Gumbs, 2020, p. 121) might mean meditating more with animals close-by to practice postcolonial care "what are the boundaries that we choose and do not choose and what privileges do we receive from those scenes? Paying attention and not looking away might mean reducing "the distances we need" and naming "the walls that will isolate and destroy us" (p. 87). Araluen's dropbear poetics hears from earth and not the poem who "do wrong." A de-centred human leaves four-walls to walk, walk, walk and talk with the land and its old and first stories? Once the sea said to me

Keep looking at me, love the sea

A stranded seal-pup died on my sand-spread sprawl as first pups do when microplastics build up in their mother's-seal-organs along this coast, or so a ranger told the mother of the rangering-children close by – I came up depressed as their salty tears fell. What a wild lesson on heartbreak nestled outwards into "nourishing forms of adaptation" (Gumbs, 2020, p. 87) that involve feeling –
the feel

the feel

the feel

because it's an emotional thing and a physical thing (Crinall, 2019)

Gumbs calls you to commit to three forms of care and communicate it to three loved ones (Gumbs, 2020). The first is finding the first stories of the land and feeling them, for me

Love from

An iphonography series of litter letters
(wellbeingsdotcommunity.wordpress.com)

Step
Step
Step
written with the tap of thumbs
Tap
Tap
Tap

A book here is called 'Bright wings' and hides birds, but you, superb blue wren, are not there. Have you vanished?

Lorde's poetics, on vanishing and on love, say

"when we are loved we are afraid
love will vanish
when we are alone we are afraid
love will never return
and when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid

*So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive”*

(A litany for survival, Lorde, 1978, p. 32)

Blue wren — are you silent, are you afraid to speak? Are you safe in there? What is a collective noun for superb blue wrens? And for school children? A *speak* of school children? This noun then fits a wild idea: How to make pedagogies that hear across power relations. Which pedagogies hear our Indigenous children and all cultural identities and beings, so they can all give their gifts, and we can give them ours?

Dear Lorde’s poetics on love and vanishing,

Are you familiar with School Note?

From, page 58.

School Note, Audrey Lorde

*“My children play with skulls
for their classrooms are guarded by warlocks
who scream at the walls collapsing
into paper toilets
plump witches mouth ancient curses
in an untaught tongue
test children upon their meanin
assign grades
in a holocaust ranging
from fury down through contempt.
My children play with skulls
at school
they have already learned
to dream of dying
their playgrounds were graveyards
where nightmares of no
stand watch over rented earth
filled with the bones of tomorrow.
My children play with skulls
and remember
for the embattled
there is no place
that cannot be
home
nor is.”*

(1978, p. 58)

Dear Lorde,

What place-based pedagogies can become a *home that is* for ALL children including yours?

Love from, (rented) Earth

Dear rented Earth,

One where we find out our, know our, and tell our own stories as cultural beings, whoever we are.

Love from, Martin (2006, 2017) and Phillips & Bunda (2020).

Look. Our convo with Earth as Earth has left a light, sandy pedagogical print: *Sense what silent spaces say*. We can hear the urging utterance from Earth to pay attention using all our senses and attending intentionally to peering and feeling around for less loud lingering phenomena to ensure their voices are lifted and listened to . . .

Letters 2 – Re: Correspon-dancing with western red cedar cypress in multilogue

Dear Sarah,

I sit at a scarred kitchen table, creaking under the weight of my elbows. It is a rough, square winged wooden table and likely much older than me. Many family meals have been enjoyed on this table. Despite its age, it is a “recent” visitor to turtle island. Built from oak in the eastern provinces, and travelled across so-called Canada to perform its breakfastly duties. And now work duties. With every keystroke on my computer, the wood grunts up to meet me. I have moved into a tiny studio suite with my wife and son all crammed in as well. We are experimenting with familial cohabitation as a way to support my wife’s ageing and sickly parents. Intergenerationality mixed with grief and Lorde’s fear, mixed with love, mixed with living on a farm in the middle of the Western red-cedar forest. Another permutation of Kaur’s loving out of the dark, but a different darkness, or maybe similarly experienced. It is the teetering edge of love as a tragedy, both death and life live here.

It’s these trees that flow, that sway, caressing my eyes, through the windows. They are dark green waterfalls of life. Quite literally the tree of life to many Coast Salish Nations in the area. These trees represent life in its deepest form: transportation — canoes, protection — clothing, function — rope, food — fishing nets, and culture — ancestors. These beings are also massive sentinels of photosynthesis; candelabras of habitat. Their layering verdant scaley branches sway in the Northern windows of the suite. If I pay close attention they are speaking to me in a way that is non-verbal. Not even visual. It’s energetic. The energy of brushing.

Over the many years of working with First Nations and Indigenous communities, I have had the great privilege of participating in a diversity of ceremonies. Many ceremonies (or even protocol) requires “brushing off” typically with cedar, and typically done by an Elder, self, or a young member of the community. This cleansing is an act of renewal and connection to the relationships with the tree of life, with all that they represent. The cleansing is the acknowledgement of trauma, an act of healing through aligning the spirit with good feelings in the heart and mind.

And here in this little suite, with its curtains of cedar, they too are brushing off, sending a letter of love, and love is something that is received, it is reciprocal, it is related, and it is respected. I am in the letter, co-writing it with the cedars. We say:

*everything will be okay
love and loss,
and life and light all coexist.
Even in this place,
even in this time.
Especially in this place-time.*



Western redcedar — *Thuja plicata*— taḡamay (in ʔayʔaʃuθəm, language of the ʔəʔamen people)

Love taḡamay and Nick.

Dear taḡamay and Nick,

Your offcut imperfections are here. They were unwanted by the mill, and now westernredcedar,
 You have made your way to our old boat shed that became ‘a barn’
 You stayed here once, Nick, and gave my 12-yo daughter a football
 which she used to lead a team to small town soccer victory with
 ‘alright boys, come in close’
 Those little boys (and this little girl with the clipboard gathered in)
 So did the ball!
 They all kissed the ball and gifted it to their school
 To please put this in a cabinet in your foyer for everyone to see.
 And they did.

Your dangling fronds are dewy westerncedar –
 Are they tears? Of victory or sorrow?
 I walk out a westernredcedar-lined door
 Westernredcedar made canoes for the people of western red cedar
 You my amber glow,
 My gateway from safety to sea
 Earphones and hat
 Walking shoes on
 Go!
 Tonight 30 women will attend the ‘Stories and Women: Earth’ event
 Stories of you, Earth, will be shared by Earth’s women . . .
 I’m wondering what story I’ll tell . . .
 I might tell ‘you’?

Later

I told a story of my family as anglo-Indian Australian. How I am the first generation of children
 born in Australia on my father’s side. And how we traversed colonies of Earth to find a place to

call home here on Boonwurrung lands, though now I know them as not my lands. I told of learning more about other Indigenous peoples' colonial conflict and that it all returns to a desire for earth specifically on millowl where sealers took "hundreds of Indigeous women" (Briggs & Parker, 2021, n.p.) which is attributed to the loss of Yallock Bulluk peoples here, where I dwell. Drooping sheoaks weep outside my window as I type, and now I know why, nilecedar.

Later again

'Stories of Air' (Jury, 2024) is coming up on Wednesday night, nilecedar. Barn-clad tales between women again. This time I will tale 'what are heirlooms?' and the way our familiar companions through death and life best loom around us, in the air and around our feet. I wrote to you last night:

"I consider our paper closed now, to edits but can you believe
yesterday I found this (loving) letter from my dad in europe to his
mum in canada in a drawer as garbage bags filled with 50 years
of no-longer-needed.

This letter pile contains a letter post marked Istanbul
and features descriptions of flights into a peaceful Lebanon and encounters
with the PLO on the disrupted, planned way to kabootz."

Sheoaks drip over coastal cliffs too not far from where I write this. The rockface is middledened with 'kitchen' and 'dining' (Briggs & Parker, 2021, n.p.) and blood red and . . .

*I locate here the privilege I have to **not** know more.
What I didn't learn at school (nothing) I find online . . .
And know in body/place already*

*Sun on face
Deep breath in
Focus on the oppression~
Walk around the headland
What do I see nest (next)?*

~ Sarah.

Dear Sarah and cedar,

that cedar has traveled around the Earth reminds me of the silliness that we have when we think about invasive species. By the same notion, my ancestors should be called the same, yet who calls their great-grand parents invasive? Grumpy, yes. Conservative, sure - but invasive. Oh wait, Yes, literally invading, colonising, waging war, upholding oppression, erasing.

~ love from nick

Dear nick and cedar,

Your raining redcedar fronds drip down the page, now, and remind me of a drip, into our mouths once. When my children wouldn't want to reach the beach at the end of our street. In place, muddy swales, and cedar fronds with water lollies were all they needed (Crinall & Somerville, 2019; Crinall, 2019). How wild!

I must find you the video!

Here it is:

Can you hear the cyprus fronds speaking.

They say . . .

“That’s a riverwater”;

“drip into our mouths”;

It’s a swale feast”;

“It’s a lovely day for planting in the morning . . .”



<https://youtu.be/eXW1k0x4mTI> (Crinall, 2016)

~ love from swales

Dear sarah and nick,

Revisiting this moment with the children I am caregiver to, takes me to an intense time of un(home)schooling “immersed in the queerness of forms of life” that refuse the usual and being understood (Gumbs, 2020, p. 109). Leaning into informal learning my boughs opened up to their climbing, climbing bodies. Our not-schooling and our westernredcedarcypress hydrated deeply loving lives abundant with learning. Araluen bows:

*Its hard unlearn a language:
to unspeak an empire,
to teach my voice to rise to rise and fall like landscape,
A topographic intonation*

Taking careful note of the subtle, the not so loud, the vanishing and the staying solo. Not with judgement, but curiosity and reciprocity. That might be liked; Taking the tangents with open, bowing arms and letting them unlearn. That might be liked?

From your fr(ie)ond xo

Look again. Our convo with Earth as Earth has left another light, sandy pedagogical print: *Following feels and fascination*. A two-step with you Earth, encourages us to continue to open our souls up to help highlight the deviations of delicious distractions where embodied, desired, and other ideas go. How do love letters help focus education across space-time? If we go deeply enough, will we be able to spelunk between the lines of meaning?

March, 2025

Letters 3 – Re: Evening thoughts on Earth’s loving letters, hope and despair

Dear Reader~Earth,

The fire is warm, cedar crackling. Flames, rich red.
What are you doing now, while you read?
What on Earth does ‘wild’ mean to you?

Our co-written curated letters fan across the table, with their collective resistance to persistent attempts of educating-AT future generations of whom the Earth is already their co-teacher (Blenkinsop & Beeman, 2010; Rautio, 2012;), and we co-mentor. Wilding the need for ‘pedagogies’ are everyday moments on Earth swapping ‘loving letters’, committing to caring back.

It is wild to us now to have accepted notions that a human could write a love letter ‘to’ Earth, given we *are* Earth (Barad, 2010; Rautio, 2012).

Let’s go there.

A wild, decentred human might understand that before the colonial conquest, we were mammal, and listen back while looking forward re-imagining ourselves “identifying as mammal” (Gumbs, 2020, p. 5), and as part of our Planet — “we are not [and were never] alone” (Gumbs, 2020, p. 1). For whom/what is wild, if all things are indigenous to Earth? Wildness and wilderness can still be conflated, yet wild pedagogues have helped complicate wildness as a state of being free or having freedom to flourish (Jickling et al., 2018). Schmidt (2022) invites us beyond the preconceived notions of pristine *wild* to consider ruined landscapes and places to help “illuminate some of the

ways in which past human actions, values, and relationships toward the land, water, and more-than-human world can cultivate ruin or wilderness, and ultimately this insight can foster new ways of being in all spaces” (p. 60). In the world, in ruin, in our bodies, we can find wildness.

There are long histories and knowledges of decentred humans, spiritually known but for the ‘natural’ human urge many of us feel to trouble “wild” as a normative orientation; and engage everyday life with body and place, time and space specificities which decentre human (Elwick & Heggert, 2025). Alexis Gumbs is “ascending with and shaped by a whole group of people who were transubstantiated into property and kidnapped across an ocean... attracted to the wonder of [other] marine life” (Gumbs, 2020, p. 5), seeking kinder kin? We hope, as Earth, to be kinder kin as kin custodians (Graham, 2021, 2023), and offer children, access, accordingly — to their already, kinder selves — and according to Karen Barad, already, always just (Barad, 2010). Through this lens, look at the stories in this submission and across the special issue — all also letters created *by* relationships of kinship and the Earth *for* loving!

It’s hard to stop... do we ever?

Here are two more before we post the final package...

Love, From nick and sarah

Dear Hope,

While writing this letter, an opportunity arose for me to work with a High School in Istanbul, Türkiye. The theme of the work is Hope Matters, an ambitious framing for the beginning of the school year to support student-driven ideas by responding to the overall question: What on Earth Makes you Hopeful? In the two weeks of working with these extraordinary students, some who come from crisis enmeshed cities in the Near Middle East, I am also asked this same question by students. My answer changed every time I am asked, which is telling of my hopeful stance and the notion that Hope is hard work, since it requires swimming upstream against cynicism, doomism in Media, and the “rigour of negativity.” I see it in the faces of the students, their reactions to the activity introduced to them. It is their refusal of pollyanna that fascinates me. Their refusal of status quo. This is Ihmoud’s love. And to me, that love is hope.

Despite my multitudinous answers, one thread sticks out to me in this moment, while I sit in this old school, in this ancient place, looking over the palimpsest of Istanbul, of Mosques, jumbled terracotta roofs, the Bosphorus gleaming like a guidance mechanism for not only humans, but birds too, seeking to transit from Europe through to Asia, and vice versa. I see Dolphins “making do” with one of the busiest bodies of water in the world, still porpoising around the 18-million-people transiting by ferry every day from one continent to the other. Are the dolphins also refusing status quo, finding love in their ancient habitat?

All of this is happening here while only a breath away, bombs land in Beirut, people are fleeing, or are trapped unable to avoid the atrocities - avoid the genocidal rampage that is eradicating whole cultures, whole lifeways, some say for the whim of stealing resources like water, oil, and agricultural land. Others say for their own lifeways. So hard. And still I see the news of people refusing to allow, to engage, they love each other, their country, their traditions. These are people of love.

I sit with a new-found friend, one of those people that I have overlapped with in many ways without knowing, but as I come together our connection and values grow sympatrically. He is Lebanese, a science educator at this school and living in Istanbul, Türkiye. He came here to

be closer to Beirut, after living and teaching in Canada and Beirut for most of his life. Understandably, he is massively preoccupied by the conflict going on in his home. Yet, when I asked him, “what do you need at this moment? Would it be helpful to take a leave from work?” “No” he said “The kids are what brings me hope. My connection with my friends brings me hope. Cycling to work brings me hope. I love these kids. I love working with them, supporting their ideas, and their learning. This is what I need at the moment. The work keeps me going.” He continues to teach from his love of Earth, through outdoor activities, about science from a solutions perspective, and with a framing that students’ wellbeing is critical and essential to the wellbeing of Earth.

Love, from nick

Dear undrowning Hope,

What brings you hope, brings me to hope that we can become toward an Earth *undrowned* (Gumbs, 2020).

For all to feel seen,

and feel home on home lands,

with hope anger and despair will be welcomed along with happiness
and hope –they can dissipate then?

Watego’s last chapter in ‘Another Day in the Colony’ is without hope but with belief in kin: “Fuck Hope, be sovereign” (Watego, 2021, pp. 189–218).

Gumbs’ ‘guide to undrowning’ (Gumbs, 2020, p. 1) is writing new histories, her-stories and their-stories as a practice of processing hurt-stories, hope-stories and heartfelt-healing stories – marine mammals have them all, so hopefully, so can we?

Love from, Undrowned.

Dear wild and weathered,

Queensland and NSW await landfall of Cyclone Alfred tonight – a category 2 cyclone, and are bracing for floods, again. Trees open your doors with wind, and men you’re mud-sliding with Earth and water. We watch, Country conscious (Crinall et. al. 2025). What letters are you writing us, Alfred? Are we open to receiving this w-mail?

Government curriculum authorities have asked we make some cross-curriculum priorities – sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories, to drench your discipline delivery, so here’s a wild idea – let’s start there?

For example, science learning, as instructional activity (e.g. Atkin & Karplus, 1962; BCSC, 2006) entangled with the Anthropocene (White et al., 2023), student attitudes and values (Tytler & Ferguson, 2023) in australia, brings curricula richly into future focus. It might be powerful to start science pedagogues with a local care ethic of curiosity and respect? A 5Es approach (BCSC, 2006) might be otherwise, for example, when locating themselves on unceded lands to relate (*just be relatable*, thank you, E. Rowbottom), investigate and inquire, experience and experiment, and explicitly act toward adapting? This idea is imagined with First kinds of education who so superbly address “why? what? for who? and when?” (Hudson, 2021, p. 121, in Kirk & Ferguson, 2023) — a loving science is required. A bad girl version for science learning is definitively loving at its base
and all around!

Gumbs has more ideas with meditations to “help you listen to me” - breathe; remember; practice; collaborate; be vulnerable; be present; be fierce; go deep; stay black . . . (2020).

Find your calm centre with your own chosen formula that flows.

And, in decentring colonial knowledges as colonial descendents, when I get it wrong,
I start again with sorry, listen, and go from there.
Back soon – I’ve been blown away.

Dear loving, in despair,

Your refusal as love writes a litany for survival as a swathe of love letters with a Palestinian woman who died last year in her home. Thank you for sharing it:

*We must continue to love and affirm each other, and our communal struggle for life
— the very thing our colonizers can never exterminate.*
(Ihmoud, 2023, p. 93).

As wind, I write back to Ihmoud and the children, women, and men who’ve died over Earth:

*Silent sand my winds,
whirl, in solidarity,
and for sovereignty.*

*Stay with discomfort,
Oh, the colonisation,
Do not look away*

*Okay, Kotsanas
Allow for hope and no hope.
I won’t whirl away.*

~Wind.



<https://youtube.com/shorts/xIRq4uv8-5Y?feature=share>
(Crinall, 2024)

Maggie MacLure, you wild woman (2022), you permit our not tidying up. We are in despair for those lifted away too soon not to return: Which educational pedagogies make more room for following hearts unable to let go — whether its hope or no hope. How can we teacher educators teach staying still, staying with, so those loving can live through it? Hope and Despair are both present here.

And look, another sandy print, perhaps a rakali, perhaps a brown bear? It is a message in array: Being at peace with bothness and becoming is a moment-to-moment affair.

Dear Earth, despite learning over and over again that hope and despair are entwined, we seem to keep needing to re-learn. How might Earth's Love Letters help co-learning classrooms catch all cultural beings no matter their kinds? Can't we let lessons linger and let learners be Earth with you?

Letters 4 — wilding your own pedagogies

8th March, 2025

p.s. On loving your Pedagogies

We found three lines of utterance as Earth's love letter for us and offer it here as our porous and ephemeral pedagogical rationale before we seal the envelope and place it in the post box: In our pedagogical planning we will take care,

- ~ Sensing what silent spaces say, aware of subtlety and sadness, and saving space for this
- ~ Following feels and fascination, checking for choice and unlearning prescriptivity
- ~ Being at peace with bothness and becoming as a moment-to-moment affair, with presence and responsiveness

Answering our two stated provocations is temporary and produces more questions. Pedagogically, we feel alive — our roots drawing water and nutrients from daily doings in a multitude of directions!

9th march, 2025

p.p.s. living (with your) pedagogies for a loving education system

Regularly reviewing and reshaping our pedagogical positions with Earth and poetics is one possible way to prepare a loving practice. To practice a more felt, active allyship with those often silenced and quietened advocates for young people and the Planet in these climate-careful times. This process of 'wilding' your own pedagogies in earthly and poetic practice presents a more daily living pedagogy, or pedagogies. As loving pedagogies, they feel worth considering — this being our wildest wondering about wilding pedagogies, as we wander

off

the

page.

Love from Earth.

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