Ecopoetry

Climate Corps Fellows: Kelly Hoogland and Kailyn Klotz
Origins.

Ecopoetry originated at the end of the 1950s as part of the “Beat” counterculture. This was largely due to the rising awareness of ecology and the concern for environmental disaster around the world.

San Franciscan native and ‘Beatnik,’ Gary Snyder, is famous for popularizing ecopoetry through his own poems.

A study, Song of the Earth, was done by Jonathan Bate on the ecological differences of the British Romantic tradition. This helped define ecopoetry to how it know it today.
What it isn’t.

- **“Nature Poetry”**
  - Nature as a theme rather than an investigation of culture, language and perception

- **Complacent**
  - Ecopoetry goes beyond using nature as subject matter

- **Anthropocentric**
  - Humans should not be the subject

Ex: Nature Has a Feeling - John Clare

All nature has a feeling: woods, fields, brooks
Are life eternal: and in silence they
Speak happiness beyond the reach of books;
There's nothing mortal in them; their decay
Is the green life of change; to pass away
And come again in blooms revivified.
Its birth was heaven, eternal it its stay,
And with the sun and moon shall still abide

Beneath their day and night and heaven wide.
What it is.

“Ecopoetry is nature poetry that has designs on us, that imagines changing the ways we think, feel about, and live and act in the world.” - John Shoptaw “Why Eco Poetry: there is no planet B”

Propellant of environmentalism

There are several interpretations:

- Confronts disasters and environmental injustices, including the difficulties and opportunities of urban environments.
- Connected to the world in a way that implies responsibility
- Explores humanity’s ethically challenged relation to other animals.
- Aims to unsettle - urgent

Interdisciplinary

- Science
- Ethics
- Spirituality
- Politics
- Environmentalism
Characteristics.

- **Interrelatedness** - everything is related to everything else
- Nature centered system of **values** - fights for the protection of natural systems
- **Awareness** of one’s presence within the external world
- **Call to action**
Themes.

- **(Re)connection** - Arises out of the extended self, a sense of belonging to the widest community that we can imagine and experience
- **Witness** - Attention is required when documenting environments and wilderness, as well as its devastation
- **Resistance** - Political position or stance is made apparent
- **Vision** - Offers, or hints at, what an alternate reality
Eco Poets.

Juliana Spahr - American poet, critic, editor. Professor at Mills college in Oakland, CA.


WS Merwin - American poet influenced by Buddhist philosophy and deep ecology.

Alice Oswald - British poet. T.S. Eliot and Griffin Poetry Prize winner.

Dominic Bury - British poet. 2018 National Poetry Competition winner.
Eco-poetry is a flexible and powerful art form!
Thank You!

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