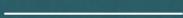


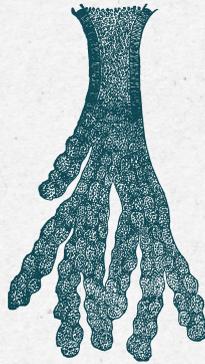
imagining  
multispecies  
belonging



a recipe book



2023  
collated and edited by Rae Turpin



# contents

- 2** Foreword: The Tapestry We Weave Together
- 3** Return by Louise Amelia Phelps
- 5** Liquid Sunshine: Hypericum as a Portal into Connection  
by Sophie Spiral Schultze-Allen
- 9** Tree Task by Walking Forest
- 12** The 5 in 5 Ecological Selfie by Joe Culhane
- 16** Beach Kaleidoscope Workshop by Sarah Macbeth
- 19** Back to Queer-ality by Rae Turpin
- 23** Creation in Relation to Seasonal Species by Deborah Porter
- 25** The Theatre that Reconnects: Serving a Multispecies Dialogue  
by Uri Noy Meir
- 29** From Separate Self to Entangled Self by Hannah McDowall
- 31** Ownership of Public Space by Mac Ince
- 35** Canned Slugs by Jill Doubleday
- 37** Object Lessons: A Litter Picking Dérive by Rae Turpin
- 40** Learning to See Pigeons by Esme Garlake
- 43** Sound Walk Event: Entanglements by Annie Goliath
- 47** Talking with the Expansive: An Autistic Connectivity  
by Inga Hamilton
- 51** Birdsound: A Recipe for Multispecies Belonging by Dhruvi Shah
- 53** Acknowledgements

## **Foreword: The Tapestry We Weave Together**

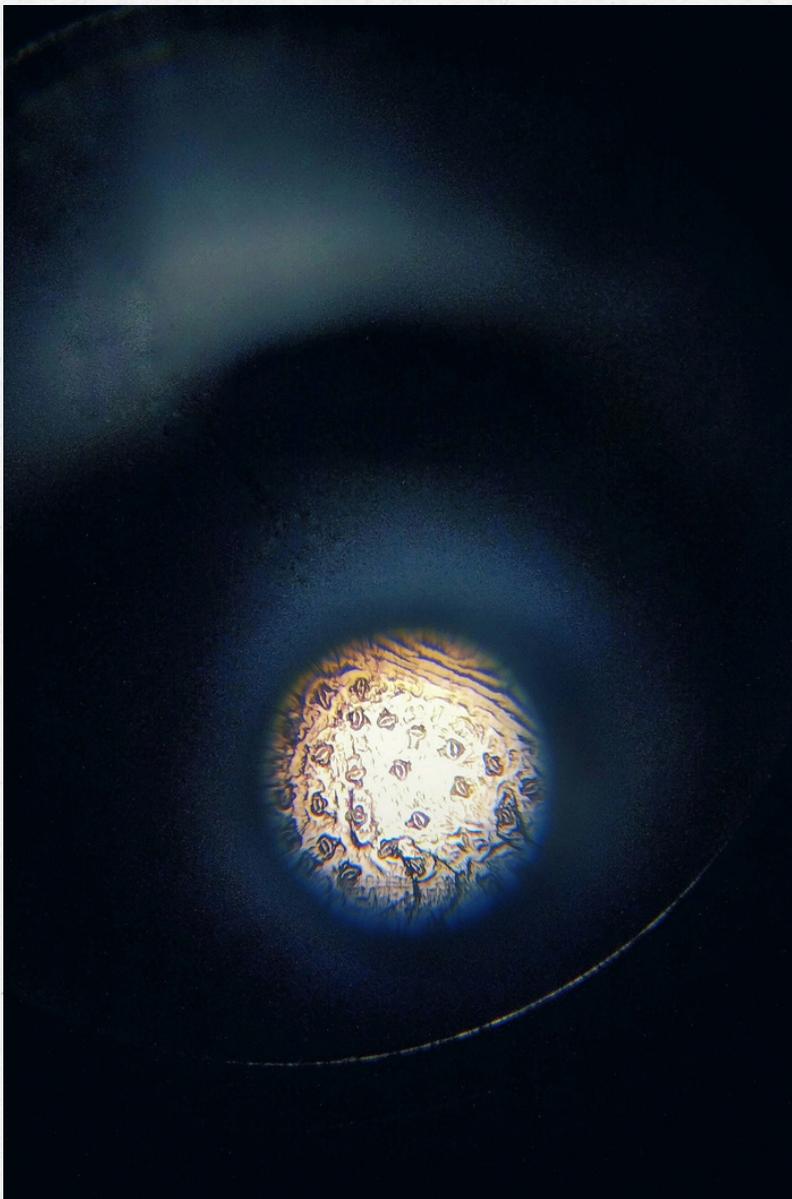
In times where existential threats reverberate ever more loudly, the need to protect all planetary life and restore harmony to our shared world has become increasingly urgent. Yet, amidst wide-spread inaction, the question that beckons many of us is how can we bridge the gap that humankind has carved out between humanity and 'nature'.

What panaceas are available to us? This zine emerges as an offering to rectify this gap - a remedy for the crisis of disconnection. Collaborators have shared their vital, deep and embodied work towards restoring a multispecies belonging through practices of collective imagination. Here we find a myriad of recipes, where the term 'recipe' has been used loosely, welcoming everything from step-by-step guides to poetry, reflections, stories and imagery. Each serves as a tangible prompt to enliven practices relating to what it does (and what it can) mean to belong in a multispecies, more-than-human world. Through this work we may also find that ideas of collective practice may look slightly differently, where rather than other humans, practitioners may instead invite you to imagine with more-than-human kin, be it: berries, oak trees, pigeons, wildflowers and much more.

Together, we hope that these recipes can be used to prompt more imaginings and more imagination practices, as we continue this quiet yet pressing work across our own separate-yet-inseparable corners of this more-than-human world, and carry ourselves through these unsettling times.

Thank you for joining us in taking this time to reimagine a rewildened belonging.

- Rae Turpin



Stoma of a Bay Leaf by Louise Amelia Phelps

## Return

by Louise Amelia Phelps

Return, go where it's quiet. Go where the voice of the trees is greater than your own.

Go there and remain, until you remember what you are made of.

.  
. .  
.

When we are still we become shelter, we allow life to gather at our edges.

Be still until the birds arrive and insects land at your feet.

Be still until you realise the Angels you have heard of actually have 4 eyes and many more legs.

Become a haven.

Become an act of giving through being without doing.

This is a beginning.

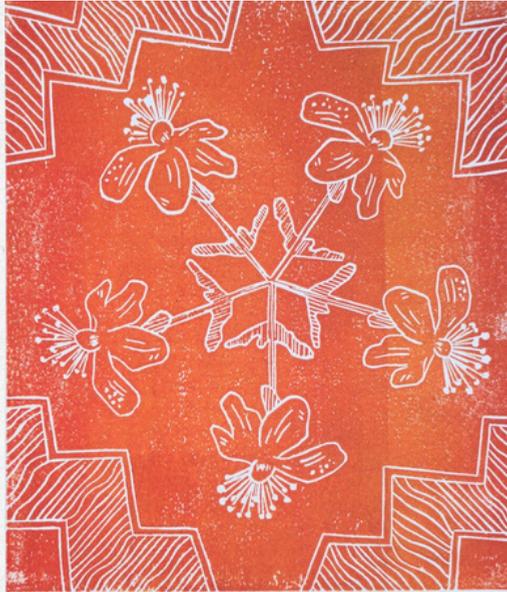
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How do you carry this reverence with you?

And how do you know?

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Find out more about Louise's work at [www.louiseameliaphelps.com](http://www.louiseameliaphelps.com).



## **Liquid Sunshine: Hypericum as a Portal into Connection**

by Sophie Spiral Schultze-Allen

My deep dive into herbalism came with Hypericum – also known as St. John’s Wort. A bright yellow flower with spotted green leaves blooming in high summer. It was June 2020, emerging from the first Covid lockdown in Berlin and grieving the ending of a six-year partnership when Hypericum became a portal into my sense of multi-species belonging.

During Covid, I wrote a Master’s thesis in dance studies on the disconnection between humans and so-called ‘nature’ so I was curious about how to bridge my own sense of alienation from more-than-human species. I have been curious for a long time about how artistic practices can support us to come into deeper connection with Earth. In their book, *Towards a Transindividual Self* (2022), Ana Vujanovic and Bojana Cvejic share how the alienation from the self

as connected to other species has left “individuals incapable of imagining and building their own common future of possibilities” (p 249). Thus, I wonder how my artistic explorations and connection with *Hypericum* allowed me to become aware of such co-emergence and its necessity towards imagining a future of multi-species collectivity.

Connecting with *Hypericum* became a portal for me to reach past the human-centric bubble and realize that there is love and support from our flora friends. I didn't expect *Hypericum* to find me so immediately! For the summer solstice, I co-organized a retreat for a small group of women and non-binary folks as part of a collective of herbal/mycelium enthusiasts called, Psychedelic Agora, that I joined and co-founded in Berlin in 2017. We'd been dreaming about it for years and perhaps the intensity of the pandemic motivated us to make it happen. We were all starving for community and connection – and indeed it's what we manifested together in what was a beautifully transformative weekend. On the way back to Berlin from the countryside – I mentioned my recent interest in herbalism and my desire to make medicine to support me out of depression and heartbreak. One friend who is also an herbalist suggested that I look for *Hypericum* and make a tincture. How do I find *Hypericum*, I asked? She said to look for the bright yellow flowers that turn dark red when squished between your fingers. This is a sign of the deep medicinal quality of the plant – the flowers preserve the energy of the sun and it can be made into a tonic against winter depression. This is why I call my St. John's Wort tincture “liquid sunshine” because in the dark gray winters of Berlin, it's just what I need to feel alive again. I reflect that in comparison to other years, 2020 had particularly a lot of *Hypericum* growing wildly throughout Berlin. Since that summer, it has not been as plentiful – it's like Earth knew that we especially needed it that year.

I found hypericum just two weeks after moving into a new yellow-painted room. Quite empty still, the yellow color filled the open wound of the loss of partnership. I had lost myself in the relationship and needed to find myself again. Hypericum filled my center with warmth, love, and creative energy. I sat and drew the flower in my sketchbook, searching for the right yellow-colored pencils. As I learn more about herbalism, I notice that a huge part of the work is learning how to become open to receiving the support from the plants. Most societal environments these days demand us to desensitize ourselves to protect from overstimulation. I have had to create strategies to protect my own sensitivity by refraining from watching certain media or only checking the news sparingly. My emotional wellbeing and nervous system are easily tipped off center and instead I create opportunities via creative practices to refill my cup of positivity to support myself and others. Hypericum has been my ally in this work, and I noticed that by going on the herbalism journey of harvesting the plant myself and making the medicine, as well as being in relationship with it via my dancing, drawing, and printmaking practices – these processes allow me to open to the plant’s gifts of warmth and support. Perhaps it’s the difference between eating in a chain restaurant and preparing a home-cooked meal. The love infuses a different kind of nourishment – try it for yourself!



### **Liquid Sunshine Recipe:**

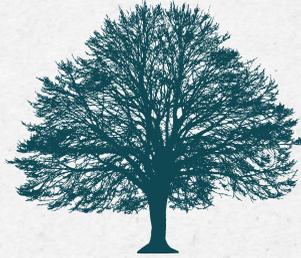
Look up pictures and information about Hypericum and envision yourself finding a big patch around the summer solstice. Ask herbalists you know in person or online for support in identifying the plant. Take scissors, a basket (and perhaps a friend) on your journey - once you find the plant, only harvest max. one third of what you

see. Best to take just a couple flowers and some leaves from each plant. Leave plenty for the bees, insects, and other humans that also need the medicine. Lay the flowers out on cardboard or a plate for a few hours to ensure that all the bugs can run away. Chop up the plant material into small pieces with scissors and fill a glass jar half-way. Try to find a jar that matches the amount of plant material you have found.

Fill the jar completely with alcohol or vinegar. Alcohol of min. 40% (80 proof) will have the longest shelf life, but if you prefer not to use alcohol then vinegar is also an option. The jar should be filled to the brim so that minimal air is in the jar because this can lead to molding plant material. Make sure to label your jar with the date and herb and leave the jar in a cool dark place (on any shelf will really do) for 4-6 weeks. Cast a spell while you make it and shake some love into your potion every few days. Once the time has gone by, separate the plant material from the liquid with a fine mesh strainer or perhaps a tea or coffee filter squeezing the last potent drips from the plant. Discard the plant material into the compost bin and begin using your tincture! Share a small bottle with a friend ☺ Add a few drops to water or warm (not too hot) tea 2 times per day. If you really need a good boost, then I like to put some in a water bottle and take it throughout the day for a short period of time. In general, taking herbs is best on a regular schedule. Let the light shine through you in any creative way, it will heighten the power of the medicine.

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Find out more about Sophie's work at [www.sophiespiral.com](http://www.sophiespiral.com).



## **Tree Task**

by Walking Forest

(Anne-Marie Culhane, Lucy Neal, Ruth Ben-Tovim, Shelley Castle)

**Walking Forest** is a 10 year artwork culminating in 2028 with the planting of a new intentional woodland to honour global women earth defenders. We connect to seeds, trees and tree networks as a source of inspiration, nurturing and learning. Walking Forest awakens a collective sense of what it is to stand up with, as and on behalf of the natural world.

*I come here to listen, to nestle in the curve of the roots in a soft hollow of pine needles, to lean my bones against the column of white pine to turn off the voice in my head until I can hear the voices outside it: the shhh of wind in needles, water trickling over rock, nuthatch tapping, chipmunks digging, beechnuts falling, mosquito in my ear, and something more - something that is not me, for which we have no language, the wordless being of others in which we are never alone. After the drumbeat of my mother's heart, this was my first language.*

- Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass

We would like to invite you to spend time with a tree '*actively listening*'

**Take with you:** a notebook and pencil or pen, a watch or phone to keep the time.

Go into a woodland or choose a tree (or let a tree choose you). The tree can be any size, small or large. Don't take too long to choose - trust your instincts.

Find a place near the tree where you feel comfortable. Stand still and use all your senses to take in the tree – the size, textures, colours, movement, smell, sounds, shape. Notice the reach of the tree canopy, the shapes of the branches, the texture of the bark. Does your relationship with the tree change when you slowly move closer or further away?



When you feel that you have a sense of your tree try to 'listen' and open yourself to the tree as another living being. To do this you may need to take a moment to really slow down. Try and clear your mind of any thoughts, focus on your breathing and become aware of your feet on the ground. You could bring your body into connection with the tree and see what this feels like with your eyes closed or open.

**Spend time with the tree, just wait and listen. We invite you to do this for a minimum of fifteen minutes.**

After this, take a bit of time to write some notes, questions or observations or draw or sketch - anything that comes up for you from this experience.

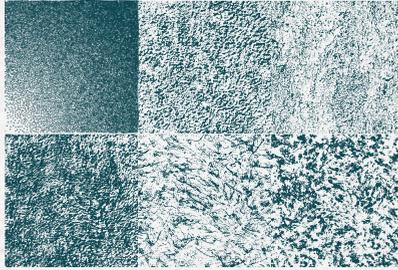
When you have done this, take another few minutes to imagine this tree underground: roots stretching out and down; fungal threads entwined with the roots; connecting to other trees through the mycelium (threads of fungi); dark, rich soil; microscopic and burrowing creatures, insects. You might want to get closer to the ground. You are invited to draw or write about this too.

As you finish up, express your thanks to the tree in any way you choose before you leave.

This task is designed for your own personal experience. However, if you would like to share any of it with us we would be happy to hear from you.

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Find out more about Walking Forest's work at [www.walkingforest.co.uk](http://www.walkingforest.co.uk).



## **The 5 in 5 Ecological Selfie**

by Joe Culhane

This recipe, the 5 in 5 Ecological Selfie, is one of the primary processes and engaging activities of a new App that has been in development for the past 18 months called, ReBe. ReBe is short for Relational Being. ReBe is a time, place, and space based art focused App that is in its early stages of testing and development. It's roots have sprouted from the Institute of Relational Being, a young organization that was co-created by humans and various ecological companions, among them the River Dart, Jackdaws, and Nettle friends in Devon, England, and the Canyons, Coyotes, Owls, and Elder Tree friends of Los Angeles, California.

The invitation for this recipe is to take five pictures in five minutes. Four of these pictures are of your surrounding multi species ecological community, one is with you in the picture. Through this brief but meaningful activity you will have an opportunity to slow down, breathe deeply, practice presence, and engage with your surrounding ecology. Sensorially connecting with the multispecies ecological community you are a part of and ideally through this, activating a deepened sense of belonging, curiosity, imagination, and belonging.

**Take five pictures in five minutes:**

**Four** pictures of compelling companions that are not humans (plants, birds, insects, trees, clouds, rocks, etc.), then take **one** picture where you are in the frame.

Allow yourself to be drawn towards a more-than-human being, once you have done this, explore connecting with it however you'd like.

**Suggestion:** Say hello ;)

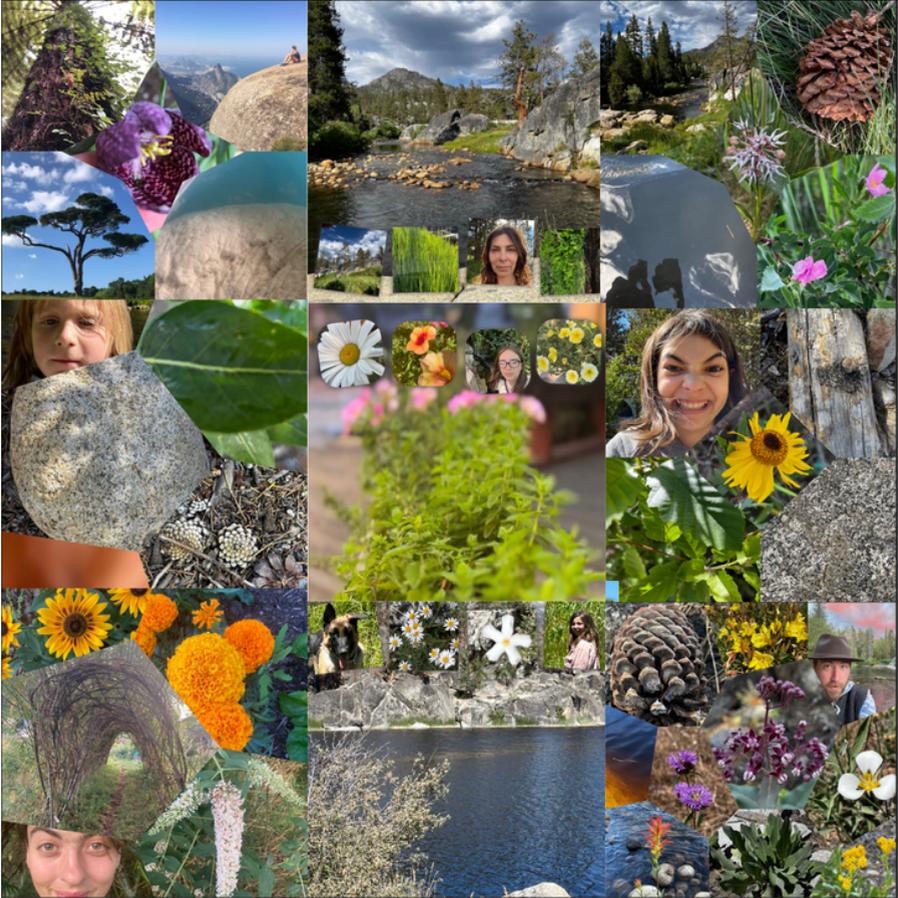
**Encouragement:** Ask permission to take their picture.

Then before taking the picture, sit with this being and take **three** DEEP breaths. Then take the picture. (You are invited to say thank you at this point, too).

Repeat this process with **three** other more-than-human beings.

Finally, take **one** picture (repeating the three deep breath process), with the camera facing you, ensuring that you are in the frame.

Once completed, the ReBe App will produce a collage of you and some of the surrounding ecological community you are a part of, providing a time, space, and place based piece of art.



This recipe, and process, provides a real-time practice to engage in multispecies belonging, for an individual human, a group of humans, and also importantly for the ecological beings of the more-than-human world we're engaging with. This recipe has the potential to add value to numerous settings and interactions. Imagine doing this practice at the beginning of a workshop, conference, or small gathering or meeting. Whether online, or in person, this recipe provides a simple, yet engaging way to be in relationship with the natural world you are entangled with, in a way that invites slowing down, breathing deeply,

being present and mindful. It also intentionally intertwines human and non-human collaborations, energies, and imagination into whatever personal or shared process you are engaged in.

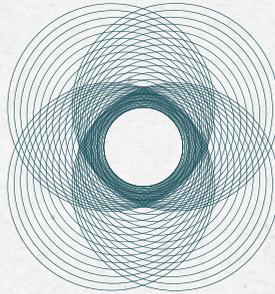
Perhaps what else is of great value in this practice, process, and recipe, is the outcome of a lovely collage presents a more eco-centric view of reality, de-centering humanity while also putting humans back into nature's frame. In this way it helps us to better see ourselves as a part of nature, not separate from it. Viewed in a collective manner, it also provides a compelling example of how vibrantly alive this shared reality we're a part of is.



This recipe, as noted above, is part of the ReBe App which is in development, and will launch its first publicly accessible prototype as soon as mid-October. I have been giving workshops and presentations on this larger work, exploring Relational Being here in what is currently referred to as the continental United States, and internationally, for the past 18 months, in person and online. There are a series of other recipes that will be a part of the App in later iterations of its development which I'm excited to share more about soon.

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Find out more about Joe's work at [www.iorb.earth](http://www.iorb.earth).



## **Beach Kaleidoscope Workshop**

by Sarah Macbeth

This cultural probe is designed as a playful tool to motivate participation and engagement around the concepts of reciprocity and relationality between human and nonhuman worlds. Everyone collects small items from the beach, places them in a kaleidoscope and enjoys viewing the resulting patterns. A discussion then focuses on what people might 'gift' back to the beach environment.

The workshop creates a space for people to reflect on their connection to place and other species. They experience being on the beach, discovering materials both natural and manmade and reflect on their feelings and responsibilities to place and other species. The kaleidoscopes become discursive objects that can conjure scenarios through the experience of creation and use. There is a lovely element of surprise when they are completed.

People can work together. The discussion in the group would be guided towards collective responsibility and generating ideas around collective action.

### **Making your kaleidoscopes:**

The following materials are required for each person to make a kaleidoscope:

- One cardboard tube
- Three equal-lengths of reflective card or mirror
- Masking tape
- Scissors
- Two plastic tube ends that fit over the cardboard tube (one for viewing with a small hole and one to contain the found items)
- One clear circle of plastic.



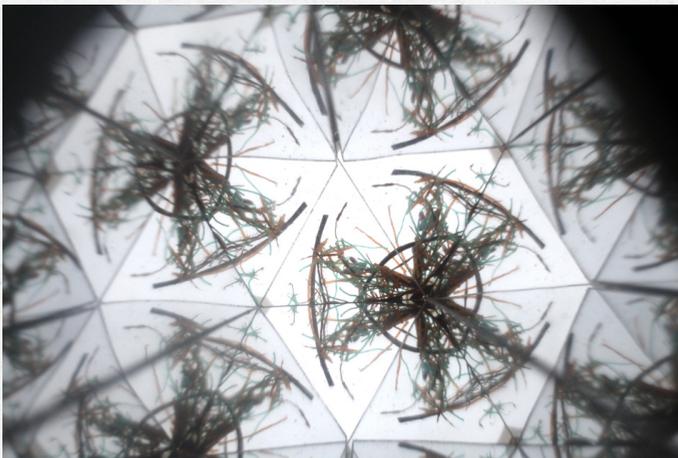
DIY kits can be purchased via online retailers such as Baker Ross (UK based) or you can use recycled plastic food packaging and empty cardboard tubes.

Full illustrated instructions on how to construct your kaleidoscopes can be found [here](#):



**The workshop instructions:**

- 1** Pick a location on the beach and make a note of what you see. Take some photos too if you like.
- 2** Collect some small items that interest you from the beach, placing them in a small bag. You will probably find the more interesting things along the strandline (this is where waves carry debris including seaweed and driftwood, accumulating just above the limit of the highest tides).
- 3** Make your beach kaleidoscope (see previous page for instructions).
- 4** Take tiny pieces of your items and place them in the end of your kaleidoscope (they need to be fairly small to be able to move around in the space so you may need to use scissors!).
- 5** See the magical results through the kaleidoscope.
- 6** Apart from the goodies you have collected, what other gifts does the beach and the sea provide for people and what gift might you consider offering back to them in exchange?



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Find out more about Sarah's work at [www.sarahmacbeth.com/about](http://www.sarahmacbeth.com/about).



## **Back to Queer-ality**

by Rae Turpin

Nature is queer. We are queer.

To acknowledge queerness is to acknowledge difference: the way that all persons, bodies, and ways of being exist in the liminal, and seep outside of boxed definitions. It is to embark on ways of seeing and imagining that account for the diverse happenings, relations and conditions that come together to make each of us who we are. Queering our imaginations allows us to see the world as it is, beyond the categories and characteristics externally projected onto it. It is an exercise in greeting things as they are - experiencing them in their own unique personhood, rather than what we've been conditioned to see.

This practice can be applied to any species, happening or process that calls you. It can be embarked on alone or with others.

### **Ingredients:**

- An appropriate setting, ideally in a green space.
- A notebook, journal, or phone or tablet.
- Comfortable clothing and footwear. You might also like to bring a stool if you feel you may benefit from it.
- Around 45 mins - 1 hour.

**Steps:**

**1 Arrive within your space.**

This is likely to be a quiet, green space. Find and ground yourself there. Begin by taking several deep breaths with your eyes closed. When you feel ready, gently open your eyes and awaken all your senses to what surrounds you. Try not to rush this step, I suggest allowing at least 5 - 10 minutes.

**2 Allow yourself to be called to a particular species.**

This should be a species that is in abundance within your space, so take your time to acclimatise to the types of bodies in your ecosystem. Try not to overthink this part, and trust your gut.

**3 Be with your plant or other ally.**

Study them closely. You may choose to write, draw, make audio notes, take photographs, or some combination of these. I do however recommend drawing, as it allows for a particular type of deep-looking which is hard to replicate in other modes.

Some questions that might help you begin:

*What offerings are you making? For instance, your leaves hang low, waiting to be reached? Are you seeding or fruiting? Have you discarded any of these onto the soil beneath you?*

*What do you feel like to the touch? You may want to try touching different parts of their body against different parts of yours.*

*What does it feel like to be with you? What sensations, memories and emotions are evoked?*

*Are there other bodies or persons cohabiting with you? Are you providing shelter? Are you being sheltered? Who are you entangled with?*

Rather than answers, you may find yourself a lot of unanswerable questions - these are equally valid modes of inquiry.

Take your time, at least 10 - 15 minutes if possible.

**4 Move on to your next plant or ally.**

Take a deep breath for the purposes of cleansing your sensory palette. And when you are ready, find another plant or ally of the *same species* nearby and repeat the process of deep inquiry and study. Be sure to spend the same amount of time.

**5 Reflect on sameness and difference.**

When you have completed your inquiries, reflect on the experience and the notes you have created. What is the same of these two plants? What is different? Imagine the processes that have to happen to cause two bodies of the same species to diverge in these ways.

Spend some time with these questions. Consider what conditions or relational experiences may have contributed to these differences, and what different offerings they make as a result.

**6 Reflect on divergent perspectives.**

Consider the different observations you made of your allies. Did you ask the same questions of both, or did these change? If they did, why did they? What expectations did you approach each with, and how did this change how you were able to see them?

**7 Reflect on divergent perspectives, together.**

If conducting in community with other humans, you may want to take the opportunity to reflect together on the divergent experiences of the collective. If your inquiry has focused on the same bodies, you may want to explore where your observations and insights align, and where they diverge.

You may want to use these as prompts towards deeper conversations based on your own collective intentions, and about how - despite our differences in experience, perspectives and motivations - we can hope to arrive at collective visions.



This recipe is an invitation to unlearn binaries and relearn queerness, to unlearn monocultures and relearn polycultures. In doing so, not only are we better able to more appropriately and compassionately respond to difference, but undo categories and hierarchies of species into a more-than-human whole.

Find out more about Rae's work at [www.raejturpin.com](http://www.raejturpin.com).



## **Creation in Relation to Seasonal Species**

by Deborah Porter

The act of immersing myself within my local natural habitat to purposefully forage, find, and process is interacting with plant life. Working with the berry species makes me feel I am part of the cyclical nature of seasons, not just being a voyeur.

I'm grateful to be part of my habitat, not on the outside but within.

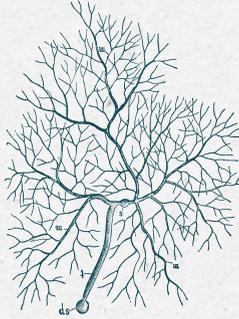
Integrating my art practice and working with the ecosystem reconnects and grounds me. My visual creations are offered to the collective imagination by sharing knowledge and explorations from nature gifts, my found fruits / berries, made into natural inks show the seasonal possibilities of using what is around us. Clear of what needs to be purchased / bought / manmade.

To show nature's seasons in our public spaces and offer and create meaning from what is naturally around us is pure.



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Find out more about Deborah's work at [www.coreartjournaling.com](http://www.coreartjournaling.com).



## **The Theatre that Reconnects: Serving a Multispecies Dialogue**

by Uri Noy Meir

This recipe is a “pranzo completo” (“a complete lunch” in Italian) of an exploratory journey to embody and listen to unheard voices of both human and non-human beings, providing a playful, engaging, and deep space for multispecies dialogue. An Italian complete lunch is usually more common on Sundays or festive days. It includes all of the courses, but on most days of the week, only one dish (first or second) and even on some occasions, the appetizer will suffice. This is why each part below can be a stand-alone process and could be served in countless ways; the chef can combine or mix them into new dishes and meals.

### **Basic Ingredients:**

- 1** A circle of people holding diverse perspectives and life experiences is a key to all these processes. Twelve people is a good number to aim for
- 2** A green space will infuse learning with nature's inspiration, energy, and wisdom. Remember, nature is everywhere; we just need to pay attention to it.
- 3** A dedicated time-space to engage in co-exploration. A minimum of 8 hours.

**Antipasti (appetizer):** *Gifts, Wounds, Medicines, and Dreams*

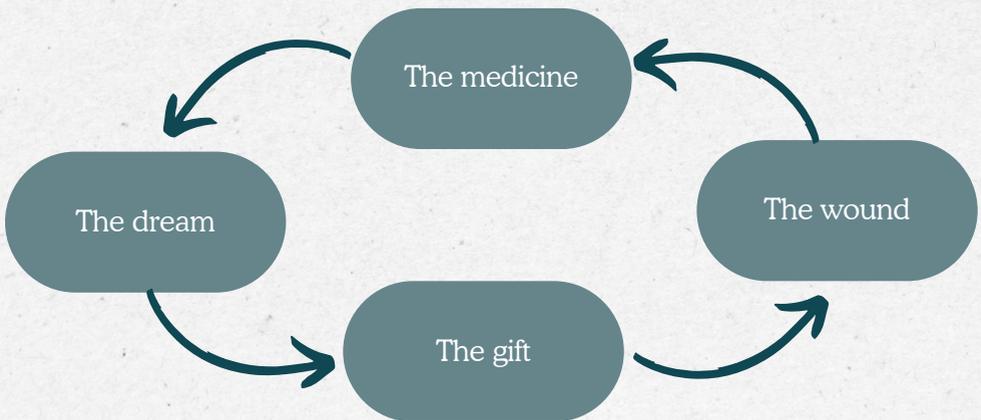
The "Gift, Wound, Medicine, Dream" are all steps in the Theatre that Reconnects framework and the individual's journey within the collective story. It is directly inspired by the Spiral of the Work That Reconnects by Joanna Macy (Active Hope) and the work and life of Hector Aristizabal (The Blessing Next to the Wound). Introducing each step to the circle of people, we alternate moments of silence and grounding practices. We sit in a circle, use a talking piece, and infuse the space with playfulness and creativity.

**The Gift.** What unique talents were you given at birth and recognized by others? Acknowledging these gifts supports us in understanding the interconnectedness of life.

**The Wound.** What challenging experiences have shaped your lives? Understanding our wounds and the trauma we carry is a transformative and essential part of this journey.

**The Medicine.** How can the experiences you had in your life inspire and support others? Only by giving others the medicine in our wounds can we help ourselves.

**The Dream.** What visions and dreams do you hold for the world? When we share our dreams with others, we can inspire action and become part of the collective journey.



**Primo Piatto (first course):** *Mapping the System*

Before we start the process, we decide on the critical issue critical to both human and non-human stakeholders to be explored. It should be connected to environmental and social challenges that affect one or more people in the circle, and that he/she/they are trying to do something about.

The Mapping ritual proceeds in this way:

- 1** The case giver shares shortly about the issue and what he/she/they are trying to do with the system, and together with the facilitator and group, identifies the key stakeholders, both human and non-humans, in the system.
- 2** A grounding meditation, allowing participants to connect with their bodily sensations—and practice stillness and movement.
- 3** Circle members step in, one by one, to embody the roles of the human and non-human stakeholders, creating a collective sculpture of the “current situation”.
- 4** Stakeholders silently move, responding to physical impulses, intuitively embodying the system's shifts towards “the highest future possibility”.
- 5** A reflective conversation to identify patterns that were seen, felt, and enacted.

**Secondo Piatto (second course):** *Theatre for Social Change*

To warm everyone up, the facilitator may consider introducing a theatre game that stimulates creative solutions and fosters out-of-the-box thinking.

A scenario from the map, which seems to have be a potential “seed” of transformative action, is replayed, to elaborate and go deeper. Be mindful, and avoid reenacting traumatic events involving acts of violence where no actual change is possible. Members of the circle are invited to stand in the shoes of one or more stakeholders (human and non) and, propose and negotiate systemic solutions.

**Contorno (side dish):** *A Legislative Play*

The performance at this stage could also involve people outside the circle, community members, and other stakeholders who can interact with themes in fresh and creative multi-species dialogue. We work to create a shared proposal with experts who are knowledgeable in proposing law or policy changes.

**Dolce (dessert):** *A Space for Action*

Finally, we harvest all insights gained throughout the process. To encourage creativity, we introduce art-sensing activities where we can visually sense our insights; cultivating our ability to create art and learn from silence is one of the most effective actions to foster multispecies belonging.

Further reading:

Work that Reconnects - [www.workthatreconnects.org](http://www.workthatreconnects.org)

Legislative Theatre - [www.themeteor.org/legislative-theatre](http://www.themeteor.org/legislative-theatre)

4D mapping - [www.u-school.org/4d-mapping](http://www.u-school.org/4d-mapping)

Visual Sensing - [www.visualsensing.org](http://www.visualsensing.org)

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Find out more about Uri's work at [www.linktr.ee/urinoymeir](http://www.linktr.ee/urinoymeir).



## **From Separate Self to Entangled Self**

by Hannah McDowall, of Canopy

*Credit: This exercise is based on one I was first guided by Sue Hollingsworth and Ashley Ramsden during a course they facilitated called Storytelling in the Community in Cape Town in 2014. Sue has given me permission to share it with you here.*

### **What does this collective practice invite?**

This practice invites you to ask how the more than human world is inviting you to interact with it, and to experiment with 'doing' in response to this invitation. It is a powerful exercise in shifting our attitudes as controllers of our environments to responders to it.

### **How do you do it?**

Find yourself in a space - a natural/outdoor space is good but it can be an indoor space if that isn't easily accessible. Invite all who are participating to take a space and stand still. Now look around and make a decision to 'do something' to a non-human object or being in the space (without damaging or breaking it). E.g. looking around, see a bench and decide to stand on it, or see a stick on the ground and decide to put it on a wall, or see a tree and decide to climb it. Once that action has been completed, stand still again, look around and do the next thing you decide. As human you are deciding how you will impose your will on this object/being (without harming it). Do this for about 10 - 15 mins so everyone has done several rounds of willful

## from separate self to entangled self

actions on the environment. It can be helpful to define the boundaries you will be working in so that it is easy to regather people for part 2.

Regather. Now invite everyone to find a space again but now when they look around ask the beings and objects in the space 'who would like to meet?' and notice what takes your attention. Look around, does something capture your curiosity? Approach that thing, and now ask it (not out loud but through your heart space) 'how would you like to meet? What would work for you?' or similar words which express an intention for meeting on their terms not yours. And now wait for the response, perhaps a tree will answer 'just really listen to my leaves' or 'you may touch my bark'. And then respond to that invitation. If you find yourself wanting to do something but you aren't sure if the invitation came from the being/object rather than your will, check by getting specific (e.g. 'Bench, do I have permission to climb on you - would that be okay?') and wait for the feeling of the answer.

Again allow 10-15 minutes for this different mode of being (it is often slower so a bit longer than the first round is helpful).

Now regather. Have a conversation about how these two modes of being were, how they felt different, how they brought out different behaviors and sensitivities.

This exercise is a wonderful opening one to support people to notice how much of a 'power-over' mode our culture operates from even when intent is 'good'. And it grows a practice and sensitivity to working with and responding to which can infuse all kinds of imagination projects.

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Find out more about Hannah and her work at Canopy at [www.canopy.si](http://www.canopy.si).



## **Ownership of Public Space**

by Mac Ince

When I visit Sholing Valleys, it often brings a complex mix of emotions to the fore. I love the place. Deeply. I've nurtured it, and cared for it; I've opened myself to it. But it has done the same for me, many times over.

I have strong emotional responses to what I see, hear, smell and taste there. Much like the Valleys themselves. They peak, they trough.

Often overwhelmed when I spot my favourite bird, the Jay, bouncing along branches, stubbornly refusing to use its wings. It sets me up for a good day.

Occasionally deeply saddened by the scorch marks that others leave on the ground, through burning. It can ruin a whole week. Their selfish actions brand my universe. The humans on the site do bring me joy, but they are certainly more challenging than other life.

Recently this balance has been difficult. A developing sense of creeping apathy, and frustration. Those elated moments hearing the sharp screech of the Sparrow Hawk don't feed me as often, or sustain me as long as I'd hope. We get a lot of feedback from the public about the conservation work we undertake on the site. In a concerted effort to be positive I'd say I certainly count more people offering praise, approval or encouragement when the groups are out doing the vital volunteering. But is that enough? These passing interactions leave a softer mark on my thoughts.

There are interactions with fewer humans on the site that leave me with a heady mix of anger, frustration, and an unavoidable sense that what I do has no real positive change in the world.



Part of the work we do is to remove invasive species that didn't ask to be planted there. Nonetheless they found the reserve to be a suitable home. There are rules in nature (it isn't as "wild" as some might think). Some we create through legislation, but most we observe if we know what to look for.

Take our wonderful meadow for example. For thousands of years, nature has created habitat through interaction of species, humans included. Larger aurochs would graze the landscape, and create grassland for butterflies, and insects to live in and flourish. We don't have those anymore. Nor do we have at Sholing some of the domesticated species that would mimic this habitat. So who does all this work now? Well the volunteers artificially do. By cutting the brambles and keeping the trees at bay, we ensure this maintains the balance. The woods keep on being the woods. The grassland is kept as grassland. It is never-ending work. What also seems to be perpetual is the removal of the aforementioned invasive species.

We have a few different species at Sholing. I hold no grudges against these plants. They are simply trying to survive. But I do feel annoyed at the misguided Victorians that introduced them into the wild, ignorant of the consequences it would have. And I am even more frustrated with local gardeners who, despite having this information at their fingertips, still repeat the same mistakes from over 100 years ago. And what's more, they do it with a completely misguided framework. "I think it's so pretty". Putting aside for a moment that beauty is completely socially constructed; beauty in the sparse landscape of a winter meadow is there if only you had the right framework to approach it.

All this is leading me to give an anecdote that punctured my heart, and left me angry, sorrowful, and frustrated for several weeks. Making me want to quit volunteering here entirely. The wound is still not healed, because any healing would simply alleviate a symptom of disease and it is the cure that needs to be found. Not a dressing.

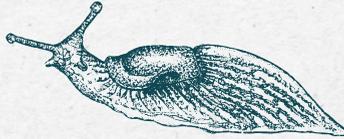
On one of our monthly sessions some wonderful volunteers had come down for a conservation day. Giving something for free in a world that seems to continue to take. We were on species control duty. Our invasive species on this day was the Virginia creeper. As the name gives away, it is not from Hampshire. Back to the human rules: It is an offence to plant or cause these to grow in the wild in England. Bear that in mind. We legally need to control it. And what about the rules of nature? As it doesn't come from the UK, it has an advantage over indigenous species. Nothing really eats it. Nothing really stops it spreading (other than human hands). So it can continue to take over the reserve as it pleases.

This all sounds fine. Nothing emotionally dangerous here. The huge negative event happened after most of the volunteers had left. The interaction with a member of the public was short, shouty, and shitty. They stamped up to our Centre, and proceeded to call us vandals, and told us that we had no right to do what we did. We had apparently made the site worse for the work we'd been doing. They clearly didn't value all the work we do. My efforts wasted, in their mind.

Weeks later, (I chew on things that emotionally pique me), upon reflection, their anger was concern. Their emotion a clear demonstration of caring. Having used it more often than I have, and loved it longer too, they have every right to be frustrated. Their heart owns the reserve, they just don't view it through the same rules I do.

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Find out more about Sholing Valleys at [www.sholingvalleys.org.uk](http://www.sholingvalleys.org.uk).



## **Canned Slugs**

by Jill Doubleday

How many times do I pick up a drinks can that someone's discarded, turn it upside down to empty it before bagging or binning it, and realise a poor slug has met its death in there? Doesn't matter whether it was a can of lager or a fizzy something, that slug - sometimes two, like today near the Veracity Rec - was lured in and couldn't get back out.

Often the slug is too big to be shaken out, though today's two were small, so it was quite easy to free them. But I've been known to carefully cut a can in half with secateurs to free the slug.

Why do I go to such lengths? It's partly so I can put the can in the recycling bin without causing 'contamination'. I'm also kind of recycling the slug, though. It seems such a waste that it died needlessly, without feeding someone else. So maybe even a dead, possibly fermented, slug is a snack for someone, right? A fox, maybe. (Would the fox become tipsy by eating a fermented slug?)

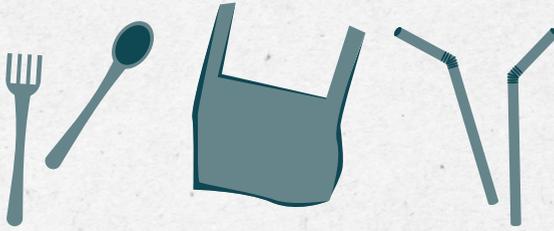


Really the best thing all round is to pick up a can before a slug has the chance to glide in. Among the litter picking humans I know, I think most do it for themselves, because the rubbish looks unsightly. They want to make a place look tidier. I'm motivated by thinking about the creatures who live and eat in these places, so am more inclined to pick up stuff from habitats and wildlife corridors – that's why I try to get to the glass bottles in the alleys around my home before they get smashed by someone. There are hedgehogs, foxes, birds, cats and dogs using these alleys.

Motivation doesn't matter much in a way, since even on a pavement with nothing growing, human trash presents a risk, so it's good that there are people willing to pick it up. Even if they are doing it for themselves, they're benefitting other species at the same time, which is all that matters.

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Find out more about Jill's work at [www.dandelionnature.org](http://www.dandelionnature.org).



## Object Lessons: A Litter Picking Dérive

by Rae Turpin

Urban environments are ecologies of immense complexity. Litter is one such component; encounters with discarded waste are a largely ubiquitous experience for humans and nonhumans alike. Some end up in waterways, and end up clogging stomachs and other vital organs. Some end up ensnaring and trapping those simply out foraging for food. Others pass into new ownership, repurposed. For instance, the corvids who have been found building nests from anti-bird spikes, mosses who move into the flesh of abandoned footballs, or fox cubs playing with lost toys. This is to say that these objects are artefacts with unique lessons to offer, specifically about the turbulent, entangled states of coexistence between humans and nonhumans. How can we begin to explore these questions from a grounded, place-based approach?

Emerging from traditions of psychogeography, the *dérive* is a practice of drifting with(in) place. It encourages us to move in response to the psycho-emotional affects of our surroundings, often unearthing overlooked spaces, perspectives and connections as we go. This recipe is a *dérive* drawing orientation from litter in the urban environment. Specifically, it invites us to peel away a human-centric

perspective on urban spaces, and connect with the experiences of other species who cohabit these places and engage with the artefacts you encounter.

This recipe can be practiced individually, or in community. However, if engaging as a group I would recommend following your own *derivés*, and then regathering afterwards. This will give you the capacity to fully engage in reflection, as well as caring for your environment by allowing for more litter collecting to occur.

### Ingredients:

- Litter picker and/or sturdy gloves
- Strong rubbish bags, ideally reusable if possible
- Comfortable and protective shoes and clothing
- A notebook and pen, or a phone
- You might also want to consider wearing a high vis, particularly if located close to roads and/or with children.

### Steps:

- 1 Arrive at a loose starting point.** Bear in mind that the nature of a *derivé* will lead you into unanticipated directions.
- 2 Set off.** Allow your movements with(in) place to be led in orientation towards a particular item of litter that you may see. This will follow one after another. Allow it to take you on a new and unfamiliar route where possible.
- 3 Engage with your litter.** As you bag up the litter you encounter, consider its life. Specifically, consider its relation to nonhumans and its entanglements in the urban ecologies. Some questions to begin with: Who may otherwise encounter this object? What harms, disruptions or even generative uses could this present to them?

- 4 Engage with places in the margins.** As you follow litter, allow yourself to be led off the well-trodden paths and into liminal urban spaces that you would not otherwise encounter. Be sensitive to the nonhuman life and habitats that you may encounter here and reflect on the various bodies that may frequent these spaces. Who are they? What are their lives like?
- 5 Engage with others.** Allow your senses to be diverted to anything else you may encounter, be it a new unknown blossom emerging from over a steel fence.
- 6 Document.** You may want to take photographs or make notes in some form as you go. Doing so will not only provide prompts for further reflection and collective sharing later, but also provide you with an extended moment of becoming-with the objects and imaginaries you find yourself entangled amongst.

**Alternative practice:** Practice your *dérive* in kinship with a particular ally, invite a member of another species in as a co-traveller or *Coimimeadh* (Scots Gaelic). Think and feel with a fox, pigeon, cat, crow, rat, hedgehog, seagull, squirrel, robin... Take a moment before you begin to reflect on their bodies - their shape, size, capacities for sense, movement and perception. As you conduct your *dérive*, allow this imagining-with to bring alternative insights and perspectives to these encounters.

*N.B.* In the instance you encounter any litter beyond your capacity to clear (for instance, flytipping, or any hazardous materials) be mindful not to overstretch yourself. Consider documenting it and reporting to your local council or authority.

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Find out more about Rae's work at [www.raejturpin.com](http://www.raejturpin.com).



## Learning to See Pigeons

by Esme Garlake

If you live in a city where there are pigeons, you will know that these birds are treated with suspicion and hostility. This plays out in many ways. Most people tend to ignore pigeons; others shoo them away with a grimace. Young children learn that it is entertaining to chase them around the park. Pigeon bodies rot into the road, flattened by cars, or they are suspended in the netting under bridges. Pigeons walk around on feet wrapped in wire or string, or simply on stubs. Billboards and leaflets offer “Pigeon prodders to keep your patio pristine”. Spikes, nets, and poison make as many surfaces, windowsills, doorways, buildings inhospitable to pigeons. The way we treat these urban birds is an everyday example of human domination over nonhuman life, and all of the violence (implicit and explicit) that comes with it. I have a theory that if, as a society, we could learn to value - or at least recognise - the lives of pigeons, then we would be on our way to valuing nonhuman life in all of its forms.

This recipe will help you look more closely and kindly at pigeons.

You will need:

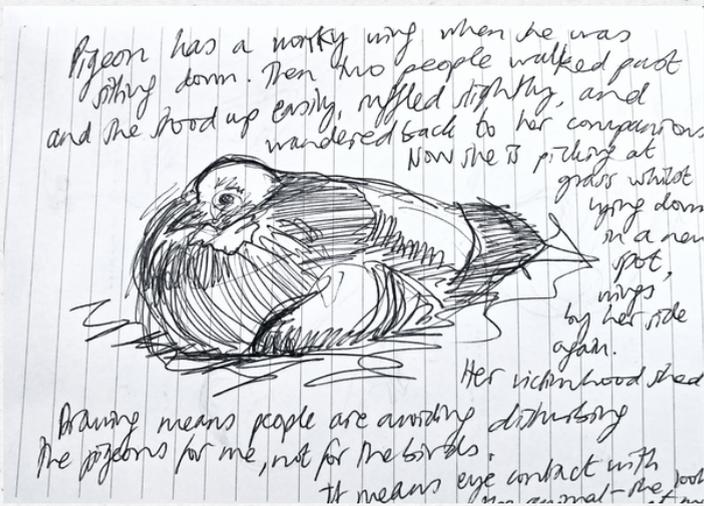
- At least 30 minutes of time
- A place to sit comfortably where there are lots of pigeons
- A notebook or sketchbook (optional)

**1 Find a location** where there are many pigeons hanging out. Sit down nearby.

**2 Choose a pigeon** you would like to observe.

**3 Appearance.** Write down, or draw, their markings. How many colours can you see? How would you describe the colours you can see? Where are the different markings on their body? Do their feathers seem to be dirty or clean, and are their feet in good condition?

**4 Behaviour.** Notice what the pigeon is doing. Are they sitting down or moving about? Are they preening their feathers? Are they eating and, if so, what are they eating? If not, what might be the cause of this? Are they making any sounds, and if so, what seems to trigger the sounds?



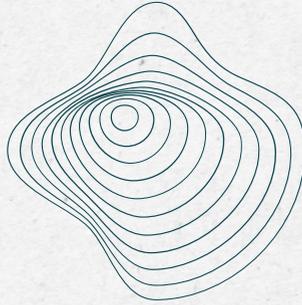
- 5 Socialising.** Are they interacting with other pigeons? Maybe they are puffing up their neck to get the attention of a potential mate? How would you describe their movements (jerking, erratic, nervous, funny)?
- 6 History.** Think about the pigeon's life story. Imagine where they hatched, and where their nest was. Their parents would have been mates for life. Take a moment to think about the challenges that they have faced (threats of foxes and pest control, frosts, diseases and cars), which has all led to them being here in front of you today.
- 7 People.** Notice the people around the group of pigeons. How do they react to the pigeons, if at all? How do the pigeons react to the people? And do people notice you watching the pigeons?
- 8 Repeat.** Try to stay and observe a few different pigeons, noticing the differences and similarities between them.

Pigeons are far more intelligent than most people realise: it has been shown that pigeons are great problem-solvers (they can learn to recognise all 26 letters of the English alphabet), and they also pass the self-awareness 'mirror test' (meaning they can see their own reflection), which only a handful of other animal species have done.

Finally, while you watch the pigeons in front of you, remember that, after you have left, these creatures will continue living their lives, trying to survive, each one with the capacity to feel warmth and comfort, or pain and fear. Remember that we share spaces together. Hopefully, from your time looking at pigeons on their own terms, you will find it easier to notice (and connect with) other forms of nonhuman life around us.

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Find out more about Esme's work at [www.medium.com/@esme.garlake](http://www.medium.com/@esme.garlake).



## **Sound Walk Event: Entanglements**

by Annie Goliath

I delivered the first of these sound walk events in partnership with the arts organisation Arts on Prescription in Alexandra Park, Hastings. The ecological concerns underpinning these events were explored through an engagement with ecopsychology, which outlines the emotional bond between humans and nature and the capacity for immersion in nature to improve our wellbeing and generate a more reciprocal relationship with the more-than-human world. I began the sound walk event with an open discussion about the participants' perceptions about nature and more specifically plants. It was a lively discussion which created a sense of togetherness in the group. Next, the participants took part in interactive exercises in pairs during which they were instructed to decide who would be the guide and the partner. The partner was then instructed to close their eyes and the guide was instructed to lead them to a specific point, including moving the partners' bodies and heads to the exact position that the guide envisioned. Then the guide instructed the partner to open their eyes for 20 seconds. This was repeated for 3 minutes after which the pairs swapped roles and repeated the activity. In this way, the participants engaged with their senses of sight and hearing. The next interactive exercise involved the same process; however, along

with positioning the partners' bodies and head, the guides were also instructed to place their partners' hands on the point that they envisioned. The partner was then instructed to feel the different textures around the area that their hand was placed for 30 seconds while keeping their eyes shut, to engage with their senses of touch and smell. These interactive exercises were aimed at creating an immersive experience – through engaging with the different senses – in an active rather than a passive way. This process is related to somatic ecology which connects the human relationship to the human body and to the environmental crisis. This was followed by a group mindfulness breathing exercise after the participants had formed a circle around an ancient redwood tree.



## Sound Walk

We then walked to an area in Alexandra Park where the participants were led through the tree route while listening to the sound walk played piece through speakers and they were asked to be silent and to actively engage with their senses. The 21-minute sound walk responded to seven trees along this route. In collaboration with the composer Black Astronaut, we applied a form of 'entangled listening' to plants by recording the inner sounds of these trees and next musical elements were added. Listening in its entangled form is a listening which stretches a radical openness towards interconnections and 'listening with'. I then developed the voice-over of the character Anna Woods by researching the histories of each tree, excluded in colonial botany's renaming and categorisation of these plants in Victorian times. The voice-over resurrected these forgotten histories and the associated indigenous ecological practices by singing interactive segments in response to each tree, juxtaposed against a semi-autobiographical narrative arc, spoken by the voice-over artist Beth Organ. These resurrected histories aimed to question colonial botanics and capitalism's hierarchical structures and exclusion of indigenous histories and knowledge in a decolonial approach. The voice-over was also developed through an engagement with critical plant studies and philosophy of mind (specifically plant consciousness), to offer a joyful re-engagement with nature where plants are seen as possessing agency, memory, kin recognition, intelligence, and perhaps the ability to possess consciousness.

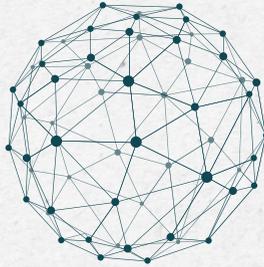
## Reflective Activities

We then walked back to the Art in the Park venue where I used elements of socially engaged practice as the participants were asked to produce co-created mixed media artworks that reflected on the experience of the event. Together, the methods used in this sound walk event aimed to challenge modern human's exploitative behaviour towards nature – which is a strong underlying factor contributing to climate change – and attempted to radically reimagine the relationship between humans and the more-than-human world.




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Find out more about Annie's work at [www.anniegoliath.com](http://www.anniegoliath.com).



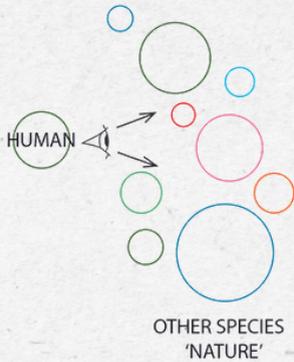
## Talking with the Expansive: An Autistic Connectivity

by Inga Hamilton

The communication lines necessary for multispecies belonging might be difficult for some to identify in shared urban landscapes. There are those of us who hear Tree's distress calls as he chokes beneath the pavement, or River imploring us to clear her throat, but others may struggle. Here, I share the connections visible to me as an Autistic and how they might help people re-situate themselves daily amid a concrete landscape.

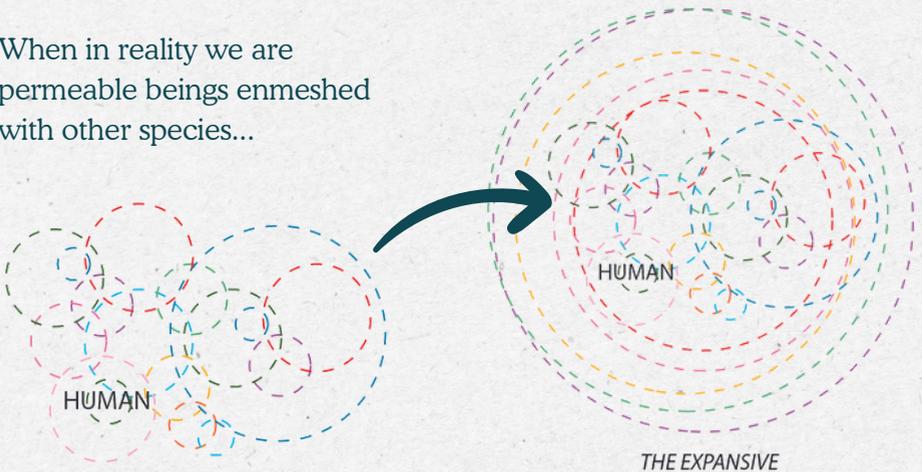
### 1 Language cleanse:

First, let's abandon the word 'nature' – something colonialists like(d) to measure, enslave and annihilate as an infinite resource. They place(d) 'nature' outside of cities, or in separated spaces such as parks, only visited by those with the means. Worse still, 'nature' encroaching indoors or inside us was to be sanitised or eradicated. Instead let's direct a view where we are part of every pulsing, growing and decaying entity in all shared spaces and rename it *The Expansive*.



Convention has us viewing 'nature' whilst separate

When in reality we are permeable beings enmeshed with other species...



... and all part of The Expansive.

These diagrams show the visible connections I experience and offer a way of conveying human interconnectedness in *The Expansive's* complex, yet vulnerable system. They might be explored through drawing chalk lines between entities such as humans, lichens and dandelions in a shopping precinct or indoors through the ripples of pebbles dropped in water.

## 2 Integration:

Some participants might struggle to imagine *The Expansive* on an all-encompassing scale, so begin with them focusing on the bacteria inside their gut. Ask them to stretch it out to include the visible landscape including sky; then every single multitudinous species; and out to the furthest reaches of this solar system and beyond to the edges of what we don't know ... Boom! Now they are grasping *The Expansive* and how my Autistic self feels situated.

By transitioning away from the word 'nature' to '*The Expansive*' we embody urban landscapes and entities therein. It might be Spider in the corner of a room or Cloud scudding above our heads. Moss growing on a drainpipe or Mould on a windowsill. Recognising this co-habitation fosters respect and co-guardianship. Communicating directly with these co-inhabitants opens a dialogue of belonging and nurture. To do this we might hold a *Listening*.

## 3 Listening:

Guide participants to each choose a different entity then start with a polite invite, such as, "I respectfully welcome Spider to communicate with me. I am listening." Encourage participants to really LISTEN. Listen with the hearing inside their ears. Listen for images projected inside their head. Listen for a knowing in their solar plexus. Properly LISTEN until every cell of their body is listening.

Do they hear/see/sense anything from Spider? Good. Suggest they answer Spider and have a conversation in any way they can. They might send images, feelings or sounds from anywhere in their body, or talk out loud with Spider. Encourage them to relax and do what feels right for them and Spider.

What they are experiencing is Intuitive Interspecies Communication (IIC) (Barrett et al., 2021). Humans have been communicating with plants, landscapes, animals and more for millennia. But by framing urban entities such Fox, Larva, Pigeon, Moss, or Weather a nuisance, we shut out their voices. Yet if we were *Listening* within these connections daily, our shared spaces would become more inclusively harmonious.

It's possible that you, a practitioner of multispecies belonging, haven't gone as far as communicating with Larva in a fruit. But I can recommend it as an enriching experience. Living as we are, amid the consequences of denial, my Autistic view provides an open line with *The Expansive*.

Now, I'm away to find a chatty Moss.

References:

Barrett, M. J., Hinz, V., Wijngaarden, V. and Lovrod, M. (2021) 'Speaking with other animals through intuitive interspecies communication: towards cognitive and interspecies justice'

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Find out more about Inga's work at [www.ingahamilton.com](http://www.ingahamilton.com).



**Birdsound: A Recipe for Multispecies Belonging**

by Dhruvi Shah

Open the window, go outside  
Sit at your desk, take a bike ride.  
But what's key in this multispecies way  
Is to listen out for the birds with you today.

It doesn't matter what you hear sing  
You might hear a cuckoo or a starling  
You may be in vulture town  
Or be surrounded by birds red and brown.

But here's what you are expected to do  
For you are among friends lifelong and true.  
Listen to the birds whom you might not sight  
But instead be inspired and write, write, write:

Here's my short bird-watching start  
It doesn't have to be perfect;  
It just needs to come from the heart:

Poem: Magpie

Oh Mr Magpie  
A black and white sight  
But wait, look up close  
There's green and purple and light.  
You hop and you jump from grass to wall  
Chattering away - who will you call?  
Your head bobs up and down  
Darting into the grass so green  
Worms, spiders - you're like a machine.  
You spot a pair and chak-chak away.  
What plans do you have later today?

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Find out more about Dhruiti's work at [www.dhritishah.com](http://www.dhritishah.com).

## acknowledgements

To all the practitioners who have taken interest in this project, taken the time to share their practices in this zine, and moreover, who continue to do the important work they do, thank you.

Thank you to the nonhumans who have inspired and collaborated in these recipes in various ways.

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And of course, nothing happens in isolation. To the many other collaborators whose various convergences make this work possible - non-human and otherwise - thank you.

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