

**Writing the Land:  
Windblown I**

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## Foreword

At its heart, conservation is an act of grace, an act of saving the more-than-just-human world. It is a human act, one that we are called to for any number of reasons, be it concern for self-preservation, a sense of responsibility, or a love of the warp and weft in the tapestry of life. While conservation strategies cannot succeed unless grounded in the realities of ecology and genetics, few, if any, conservationists dedicate their lives to its practice simply out of scientific curiosity. This is perhaps why we imagine conservation to take place across “landscapes,” a concept that evokes deeper emotional imagery than “ecosystems” or “biomes.” Envisioning landscapes evokes imagery that encompasses the life found there as well human engagement with it.

Conservation on the scale of landscapes takes many forms. Here in the United States, the forms that comes quickly to mind are the iconic parks and wilderness areas owned in the public trust and managed by government agencies at the federal or state levels – as examples, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Bob Marshall Wilderness, and Adirondack Park. But as large as such ecological reserves are, even collectively they are insufficient to achieve the full scope of what is needed to ensure the integrity of the natural world throughout the country. Gaps in protection abound.

Fortunately, conservation practice does not rely solely on public ownership and management of lands and waters. Conservation on private lands, most notably here by land trusts, is critical in creating a more comprehensive approach to promoting long-term ecological integrity. The ability of land trusts to focus on small but ecologically important lands and waters, work with landowners to achieve diverse but complementary goals, and create natural areas embedded within regions more heavily modified by human transformation, makes them an indispensable part of the conservation tool kit.

And it is also within land trusts that we can see, by the words and actions of those involved with them, love of the more-than-just-human world. Call it by any name you like – environmental ethics, nature appreciation, biophilia – those involved with land trusts evince a deep respect for what

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they hope their work will conserve. And that respect, that love, easily expands beyond each person's internal environment, their innermost thoughts and feelings. It readily emerges into what they share with others in conversation and in writing.

While the connection between land conservation and poetry may at first seem incongruous, it is anything but. The poetry of Robinson Jeffers, Gary Snyder, and Mary Oliver among many others exemplify the enduring strength of such a connection, linking what is seen and experienced amidst the natural world – what is felt in our bones as we engage with the lives and landscapes of others not like ourselves – with an understanding of its inherent value. The poetry found here in this volume takes this connection one step further, linking this understanding to specific places. Places that are loved for what they are, full of grace.

*---Stephen C. Trombulak, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus of Biology and Environmental Studies  
Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT  
30 July 2022*



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# JEFFERSON LAND TRUST

Washington

Jefferson Land Trust is a private, non-profit, community-driven conservation organization in Jefferson County, located on the stunning Olympic Peninsula in Washington State. We work with the community to preserve the iconic open space, working lands and habitat of this special place.

In Jefferson County, our livelihoods and way of life depend on the health of our water, forests and farmland. We all have a stake in this land, which is why Jefferson Land Trust works to bring people with diverse perspectives together to collaborate and find creative solutions and common ground.

From protecting habitat for wildlife, to facilitating the generational transfer of land, to supporting our agriculture, we work with landowners, farmers, government agencies, the timber industry, the Navy, local schools, scientists, artists, volunteers, and many more community groups and community members on a range of projects for the benefit of all those who live in and visit this special region — now and into the future.

-Valley View Forest—Kelli Russell Agodon

## Valley View Forest

In the 65-acre Valley View Forest, western red cedar and Douglas fir combine with bigleaf maple, sword fern, and huckleberry to create a thriving, dynamic landscape. The lush understory provides critical habitat for local wildlife, including coyote, Columbia black-tailed deer, and bobcat; and the forest offers refuge to a variety of birds. Tributaries that feed the west fork of Chimacum Creek flow through the forest on their way to the vibrant agricultural valley floor below, where Jefferson Land Trust has worked with many local landowners and a host of partners to protect farmland and creek-side properties, as well as to restore habitat for endangered salmon. Human visitors enjoy public trails here.

Our long-term vision for Valley View Forest is to combine it with the larger, adjacent Chimacum Ridge Forest when we purchase those 853 acres in 2023. Eventually, Valley View Forest will serve as the entrance to a vibrant working community forest with recreation and education opportunities. We seek to manage the forest in a way that provides long-term economic, cultural, and social benefits, and supports a rich diversity of species, and we are involving the wider community in decision-making and planning.



All Valley View Forest photos by Tim Lawson





Gateway to Valley View  
by Kelli Russell Agodon

As you arrive, thank the blankets  
of moss, the bedroom of fallen leaves,  
the smallest creatures who see big leaf maples  
as rooftops to their homes. As you arrive,

let the Douglas fir remove any heavy coats  
patched with sorrow, turn off the newscasts  
repeating in your mind.

The forest speaks to you  
in whispers of branches, of wingspan  
and feathers the color of sky.

Open the door to the sunlight that rains  
lightdrops, to the mist that holds your hand.

Before you leave, clean the fog  
from your fingernails and sweep the wind  
off the trail. Before you leave, speak

to the snowberries and ask  
their proper name—*Symphoricarpos*, they whisper  
as you wash the soil from your skin,

wipe the dew from your eyes. Before you leave,  
follow the fern pathway back to your life  
and thank the daybirds for always remembering  
there are so many songs of joy.



# INLAND NORTHWEST LAND CONSERVANCY

Washington

## **Our mission**

To conserve, care for, and connect with lands and waters essential to life in the Inland Northwest.

## **Our vision**

We envision a future of interconnected natural habitats throughout the Inland Northwest, supporting thriving populations of native plants and wildlife, respected, and enjoyed by all who call this region home.

## **Serving Eastern Washington and North Idaho since 1991**

- Coeur d'Alene River—Kim Barnes and Robert Wrigley
- Palisades Park—DJ Lee
- Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve—Maiah A Merino

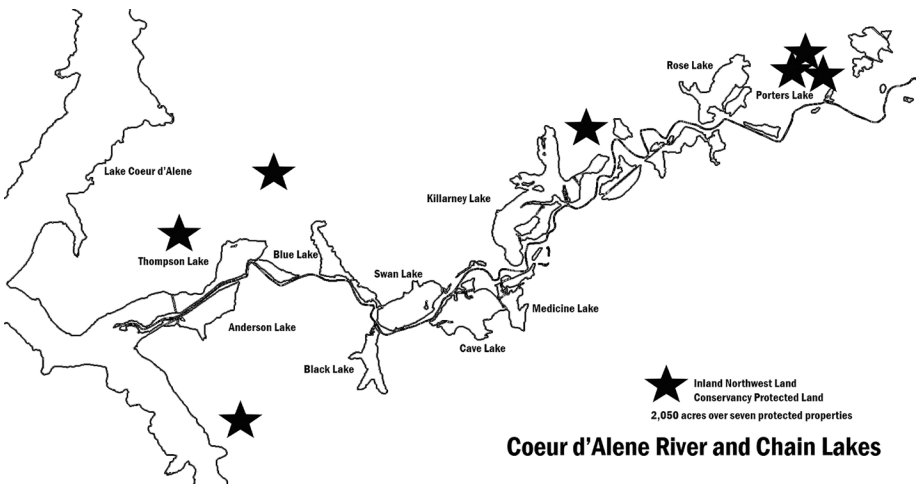
## Coeur d'Alene River

*The Coeur d'Alene river corridor stirs me. Birdwatchers have taken me under their wing and shown me the great marshes and meadows, home to enormous flocks of birds making their ancient way to northern nesting grounds. Recently I learned that tens of thousands of them travel through at night! The Cornell Lab's "Birdcast" uses patterns and radar to predict and count them. Right now, some of my favorites that are passing through nightly are the Swainson's Thrush, Western Tanager, and Spotted Sandpiper by the thousands.*

*For 20 years I've also explored old homesteads, lands the Conservancy watches over along the river and around the lake. There's magic in an apple from a gnarled, long-abandoned tree. Or a pear. Or old lilac bushes or locust trees, planted centuries ago by the cabin door.*

*There is a sinister silence too, in the hidden sediments in the floodplains. Sediments laced with a legacy of Silver Valley mining waste, heavy metals like arsenic and lead, flushed into floodplains during spring floods, within reach of the tundra swans feeding with their long necks. But the Conservancy and the Restoration Partnership have found the areas most easily brought back to life so that swans and other creatures can again feed safely and carry on their age-old migrations.*

—Chris DeForest, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy Senior Conservationist





## Sweet Words

—*in memory of Neva Hatfield Baker, 1894-1988\**

by Kim Barnes

Cross country pen pals romance wary  
Old maid train bum two years married  
Gunnysack refrigerator spring cold water  
Log camp wood sink bear in the cellar  
Grizzly Creek windstorm trees roaring down  
Tunnel twister bomb blast run honey now  
Water in the donkey engine dry to the bone  
Piano on the railcar time to call my own  
First birth second birth two babes dead  
Three more chicken pox not so bad  
Bacon in my daughter's throat bacon in my hand  
Ten dollar dance fight dreaming big band  
Flood stage wall high piano made of mud  
Bullet in the neighbor's chest killer red with blood  
Long years nursing home five plots gone  
River run wind song on my way home

*\*Words and images from Bert and Marie Russell's interview with Neva Hatfield Baker, November 6, 1974, included in North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River, Oral History Series, Book No. 3, pp 1-8. Harrison, Idaho: Lacon Publishers, 1984.*

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# THE NATURE CONSERVANCY



## Kansas

The Nature Conservancy works to create a world where people and nature thrive. Our mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In the Flint Hills of Kansas, we're protecting the world's last significant expanse of tallgrass prairie, working with ranchers to implement conservation stewardship, and preventing it from conversion.

Once sprawling from central Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, the tallgrass prairie has been plowed under, developed, or overrun with invasive plants and trees. Less than 4% remains, most of which is found in eastern Kansas and northern Oklahoma. Here remains nearly four million acres of deep-rooted grasses that nurture some of the greatest biological diversity in the world.

The Nature Conservancy safeguards 120,000 acres of tallgrass prairie in the Flint Hills. Approximately half of that is at nature preserves owned by The Nature Conservancy Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve (in Chase County, Kansas) and the Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve (in Osage County, Oklahoma) welcome visitors to explore the prairie by hiking, birdwatching, and viewing the bison herds. The other half is protected through conservation easements on privately-owned land. These voluntary but permanent easements strategically connect our nature preserves to create passageways for wildlife throughout the landscape. Learn more at [nature.org/flinthills](http://nature.org/flinthills)

**Flint Hills**

Jackrabbit

by Denise Low

The Flint Hills stretch to infinity—an abstract word meeting you here on this hill. The motion in grass

might be wind but no, the jagged path shows where a bony jackrabbit flees. They fear people.

This autumn afternoon disappears as sun rouges the west or maybe it continues in another dimension.

Listen. Your breath ripples the bluestem grass. Your eyes see beyond the creek leading sky to darkness.

Past and future merge at the horizon and last forever. You travel this kingdom with Coronado, before he left

Quivera, before he wrote about land “so vast I did not find the limit anywhere I went.”

Some days thunderheads explode in the skies with lightning bolts so loud the ground shakes. Rainbows follow.

Millions of stars speckle the night. All people who once lived here surround us. Red-tail hawks keep watch.



Photo: Jackrabbit © Frank Klein/TNC Photo Contest 2019

everywhere. We walk around  
a decaying tree hosting  
patches of jelly and bracket  
fungi. My companion  
earth lover and teacher  
points to a dying tree.

"If I were a porcupine I'd be all  
over that nook"  
she says, stepping over the  
waterfall beneath.  
"You have to let go of any ego  
walking with kids."  
Mushroom Matt knows more at  
7 years  
old than her at 27.

I spy a tiny, lone,  
red umbrella  
mushroom. We gasp in awe, smiles  
wide as skyworld.  
When I return let's walk  
in silence  
remember these new fungi friends  
vow to listen  
more deeply to them and  
their land.





**INDIAN VILLAGES  
PATHS, PONDS  
AND PLACES  
IN  
KINGS COUNTY**

Walk a mile in another's moccasins you say,  
trails of red chronicled on an aged map of Brooklyn.

Stained with footsteps of ancestors long ago,  
reduced to a line in history, noting Indian trails here.

Stained and yellow like parchment of the past,  
Seal our chapter and dust the specimen jar.

Commence perceptuality in pen and ink with noun decree,  
"Trails that exist today as major thoroughfares, like Fulton Street,  
Flatbush Avenue, and part of Atlantic Avenue"! mandating  
everlasting contribution of a thousand footsteps.

Opposing yellow parchment and red ink dictation,  
sprightly moccasins with spirit and praises to all creations.  
Ceremonies with heart and song for creators' gifts of mother  
earth, grandfather stone, grandmother moon, grandfather tree,  
they have shown us the way.

Our footprints dissolve in animation, yellowing parchment and  
red ink encased in tomb,  
Munsee children have not forgotten ancestor's gait, treading  
lightly on path, prayer on lips,  
Ceremony, teachings of heart, ancestors are lively and spry  
within spirit, stone, tree, and trail.

Manitou footsteps, my ancestors are flourishing and vital, living  
in our teachings and DNA, they are still here, we are still here,  
Ramapough Munsee Lunaape, we have not forgotten.

---by Michaeline Picaro



# FLUSHING MEADOWS CORONA PARK

## New York City

Flushing Meadows Corona Park, located in Queens, is one of the five largest parks in New York City. It was founded on the original site of the 1939/'40 and 1964/'65 World's Fairs. Today, the public can enjoy birding, hiking, strolling, picnics, boating, and sports year-round. Honored with the nickname "The World's Park" due to its location in the most diverse community in the country, the park serves as everyone's "backyard," offering free movies under the stars, outdoor fitness classes, playgrounds, athletic fields for cricket, soccer and baseball, and heritage festivals.

The Alliance for Flushing Meadows Corona Park, the park's nonprofit partner, supports NYC Parks to preserve, maintain, and improve Flushing Meadows Corona Park for the benefit and use of the surrounding communities and all New Yorkers.

As stewards, we aspire to raise awareness and engage the community by caring for the natural environment, preserving our history, and providing exceptional amenities and programming. We are committed to making the park accessible for all to enjoy, now and for future generations. Together, we make it all it can be for the public, wildlife, and the environment.

-Poets: Grisel Y. Acosta & Kimiko Hahn

-English Translators: Grisel Y. Acosta (Spanish, all poems); Chen Yihai 义海 (Chinese for Acosta's poems); Zhang Ziqing 张子清 (Chinese for Hahn's poems)

there is a nest  
*after the Unisphere Red-Tailed Hawks*  
by Grisel Y. Acosta

there is a nest  
atop a globe of shiny steel  
where a mother cares for her young  
undaunted by the man-made metal cage  
focused on the fledgling child  
who will one day leap outside  
the sphere, fly beyond  
soar high above and see  
how small it looks



hay un nido  
*después de los halcones de cola roja del Unisfera*  
escrito y traducido por Grisel Y. Acosta

hay un nido  
encima de un globo de acero brillante  
donde una madre cuida a sus crías  
impávida por la jaula de metal hecha por hombre  
enfocada en el volantón  
quien un día saltará afuera  
de la esfera, volará más allá,  
se elevará en alto para ver  
que pequeñita se ve



那里有一只鸟巢

——跟踪公园里地球仪雕塑上的红尾鹰

格里塞尔·Y. 阿科斯塔

有一只鸟巢

在那闪亮的钢铁的地球仪雕塑的顶上

一只母鹰在那里呵护她的孩子

她根本不在乎这人造的金属的笼子

专心致志地呵护她羽毛未丰的孩子

有一天这孩子会腾空而出

飞出这地球仪，飞向远方

在高空翱翔俯视大地

并发现这地球仪是那么小

