

Desire Lines: Mapping Well-Being and Ecological Care Through Life Writing Practices

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Education

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

Abstract

This thesis maps the concept of desire lines as both a method and a metaphor for shaping well-being and ecological care. Desire lines—informal, intuitive pathways shaped by human and more-than-human movements (Ramsden, 2017)—provide a framework for mapping relational, reciprocal entanglements across ecological and experiential worlds. This study uses life writing and art-making practices to examine how personal and scholarly ways of being are reshaped through embodied, creative, and place-based engagements. Rooted in diffractive inquiry (Barad, 2007) and eco-pedagogy (Misiaszek, 2023), the research draws on multimodal life writing (Chambers et al., 2012) to investigate how memory, motion, and place map evolving ecological attunements. Guided by the question—In what ways do engaging in diffractive life writing, movement, and art-making practices open pathways for un/re-learning, expanding, and strengthening my relationship with the more-than-human worlds I inhabit and move with/in?—this study uses journaling, photography, eco-poetry, and seasonal creative practices to map the dynamic relationship between theory and lived experience. Here, more-than-human refers to the animate and inanimate presences and forces—animals, plants, weather systems, waterways, and landforms—that co-shape our worlds through mutual responsiveness and entangled relations (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 2016). This research invites new desire lines—ways of living, teaching, and writing that honour interconnectedness, cultivate ecological responsibility, and foster reciprocal relations with the more-than-human worlds we move with/in.

Acknowledgments

I begin at the trailhead with my deepest gratitude and heartfelt appreciation for my advisor and mentor, Dr. Jennifer Watt. Her gentle guidance invited me to step onto this pathway, and her belief in me, paired with her unwavering encouragement, inspired me to map this journey in this way. She trusted me to wander, even when my desire lines spiraled toward the abyss. I always found my way back because of her steady north star.

I am also grateful to Dr. Michelle Honeyford and Dr. Kathryn Riley for their wisdom, insight, and collaboration. They have strengthened this work in meaningful ways.

From the very beginning of my master's journey, my family and friends have been at my side. They have always been my greatest supporters. From joining me on Chickadee Tail hikes to participating in my practices, their love and admiration live within me and through my work.

As I travel further down the trail, I pause to reflect on the thought-provoking questions and curiosity from my family, friends, and colleagues. Sharing my ideas and explaining my practices gave me the confidence I needed to deepen my approaches and curate my art-making in ways that remain rooted in attentiveness, attunement, and reciprocity.

My mom for instilling in me a passion for movement and a deep appreciation for more-than-human worlds. Thank you for always loving me more.

Paul, my love and whole heart. Thank you for helping me envision this *living design*. Our growing yard and beautiful life we have co-created together is stronger every day.

Finally, this wayfaring would not be possible without my deep connection to Place and the presences and forces that have moved with me, helping me map my desire lines and ways of knowing. My becoming-with has evolved through the participation of these worlds, and I will continue to share the significance of these relationships as gestures of reciprocity and interconnectedness.

My parting words are an invitation: listen closely, feel deeply, and be open to the endless offerings of the more-than-human world. By engaging with my work, I hope that you, the reader, will re-shape how you care for yourself, how you care for others, and how you care for the world around you through giving, grieving, and growing together.

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Chapter 1: Desire Lines

Mapping With More-Than-Human Worlds | A Relational Inquiry

The connections I form with specific places are shaped by the stories, teachings, and moments of wonder they inspire. These places encourage awareness, spark curiosity, and deepen my relationship with more-than-human worlds, inviting a relational engagement of being and learning. As Ingold (2011) suggests, it is through “wayfaring,” through dwelling and moving with place, that relationships are shaped, not through representation but through participation (p. 148). My connections to place emerge through this kind of embodied attunement, where attentiveness and movement intermingle. These encounters align with the principles of eco-pedagogy, as discussed by Misiaszek (2023), which emphasizes the interconnectedness of humans and their environments through critical reflection, experiential engagement, and place-based inquiry. Misiaszek (2023) challenges anthropocentric ideologies that often dominate our understanding of the more-than-human, urging a perspective that recognizes the reciprocal relationships between humans and the worlds they inhabit.

Rooted in critical pedagogy and environmental education, eco-pedagogy invites us to question human-centered ways of thinking and to attend more deeply to our relationships with the living world (Misiaszek, 2023). Informed by Freirean thought, Misiaszek (2023) reminds us that learning must confront both environmental and social injustices, refusing to separate one from the other. Eco-pedagogy is not about sustaining what already exists, but about cultivating interdependence, reciprocity, and the recognition that both human and more-than-human beings carry agency and meaning (Bowers, 2020; Kimmerer, 2013). This approach envisions education as a shared responsibility, a way of living and learning that supports the well-being of the planet.

These ideas mirror my own encounters on the trail, where learning unfolds not from predetermined outcomes but from movement, curiosity, and a willingness to be changed. In these moments, education feels less like instruction and more like a practice of listening, with the body, in relation to more-than-human presences and forces, and with others who move through these shared spaces (Irwin, 2006; Ingold, 2011).

These ideas guide my research, mapping the ways life writing (Chambers et al., 2012; Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009), art-making (Haraway, 2016; Hennessy, 2022; Judson, 2018), and movement (Bennett, 2010; Haraway, 2016; Ingold, 2011) practices open pathways for relational inquiry. Whether walking or skiing the trails of Birds Hill Park, a provincial park just outside Oakbank, Manitoba, or spending time in my backyard, I am often struck by how moments of wonder emerge, sparking both ecological responsibility and a deeper sense of relational belonging.

This thesis emerges from an evolving engagement with multimodal life writing practices, which I position as both method and methodology as I map movements, tensions, and emergences that unfold through writing, walking, collecting, and creating. I now understand that humans and more-than-human presences and forces are not separate entities but continually shape one another in entangled and ongoing ways. As Barad (2007) reminds us, more-than-human beings have always already been present. It is not their emergence that is new, but our willingness to notice, to attune, and to acknowledge them, and to move towards decentering our human selves in all aspects. This understanding emerges through the relation of the body, through walking, sensing, and being with the more-than-human. Abram (1996) states, “the sensing body is not a closed and bounded entity but an open, exploratory field” (p. 68).

Perception, as described here, is reciprocal. Our bodies, the same as the land, are porous, shaped

by what we encounter and respond to. My work is rooted in this entanglement where knowledge is not extracted from these presences and forces, but emerges with them through gestures of attention, care, and co-presence.

This shift in my research emerged through an embodied and relational process of becoming-with more-than-human worlds, co-shaping how multimodal life writing practices resonate with and sustain my work. Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Leggo, and Sinner (2012), frame life writing as relational, curricular, pedagogical, and describe life writing as

a theorizing approach to educational inquiry and a method for it, a curricular and pedagogical practice; an artful and literary expression; a political and personal way of being in the world; and a philosophical and spiritual attunement in relation to this world. (p. xix)

Chambers et al. (2012) call for forms of life writing that address questions such as: What critical moments of teaching/learning have changed your life? What stories need to be told? What questions should be asked?" (p. xxi, emphasis in original). These questions charted the beginnings of my inquiry and guided my movement toward embedding eco-pedagogy within my work. Through life writing, movement, and art-making practices, I found myself drawn into creative engagements that invited me to think with place and to grapple with the tensions and possibilities of being in relation with more-than-human worlds. I came to understand reciprocity not as a fixed outcome, but as an ongoing, ethical commitment. Kimmerer (2013) speaks of offerings as a sense of reciprocity and gift. In my work, offerings become a gesture, an invitation for others to become-with, to respond with care, and to imagine pedagogy as something lived, felt, and always in motion.

These creative and contemplative practices invite me to slow down and notice, to respond to place not as backdrop, but as collaborator, as participant. Engaging in life writing, movement, and art-making practices reminds me of the entwined relationships between self, place, and the more-than-human worlds that sustain life. Drawing on Barad's (2007) theory of intra-action, I understand that my encounters are not formed through separate entities interacting, but through a mutual and entangled emergence, where subject and object are continually being reconfigured. In this view, my encounters with place are not passive observations, but dynamic engagements shaped by the sensory, affective, and intellectual rhythms of the world unfolding within and around me. More-than-human worlds do not simply exist around me; they intra-act with me, shaping my perceptions, movements, and responses (Barad, 2007). Haraway's (2016) idea of "becoming-with" complements Barad's intra-action by insisting that our lives are co-constituted with more-than-human beings in situated, ethical ways. Rather than thinking in terms of individual agency, this research dwells in the shared worlds that are constantly being reconfigured through response, care, and entanglement. Through sounds, textures, movements, and natural rhythms, more-than-human worlds move with me, co-creating experience and knowledge.

These practices do not seek to impose a fixed framework; rather, I notice how meaning takes shape through relation with place, practices, and intra-action with more-than-human worlds. Grounded in the metaphor and method of desire lines—informal, intuitive pathways shaped through repeated, embodied interactions with place (Ramsden, 2017)—this inquiry approaches research as dynamic, responsive, and relational. Desire lines deviate from prescribed structures, suggesting an orientation toward process rather than product, toward attunement rather than control. Like these lines, the thesis itself unfolds diffractively, mapping patterns of

difference and relational entanglements rather than following a fixed, linear trajectory (Spector, 2015). Diffraction is a process that bends and reconfigures, instead of reflecting like a mirror, which returns the same image. Unlike reflection, diffraction does not return to the known. It involves paying attention to the lingering complexities where differences appear and how they are significant. This process promotes meaning not in isolation, but in relation. For many educators, these unruly pathways may already seem all too real—they are found in the moment students' inquiry redirects the lesson; the moment renewal stems from a rigid plan. These are diffractive moments entangled with time, place, and practice where learning emerges through relation rather than replication. Inquiry is a pedagogical outlook and framework many, if not most, educators are comfortable working through, where curiosity propels interest and focuses on responsiveness and co-creation.

Just as desire lines emerge through the rhythms of movement and interaction with place, my life writing, movement, and art-making practices open space for embodied, sensory responses where introspection meets creative expression, and insights arise through relation. In these moments, I engage diffractively, where understanding becomes newly formed through intra-action with more-than-human worlds. A gentle shift occurs; a new way of seeing and sensing emerges, shaping my ongoing relationship with the places I co-exist within.

Figure 1

Desire lines off the Chickadee Trail at Birds Hill Park in late fall. Photographs by the author.



Life writing, movement, and art-making in this inquiry act as pathways, desire lines, for noticing, questioning, and reimagining the entangled systems that shape how life is sustained. Rather than representation or control, they move as approaches of attentiveness, mapping relations with place that invite sensory engagement and ethical response. Judson (2018) considers the arts as central to embodied eco-pedagogy. Eco-pedagogy employs the arts not merely as expressions of creativity, but as forms of moving about the world that are deeply knowing. “Movement, like emotion and imagination, is central to how we learn and live in relationship to place” (p.47). Through her lens, the arts not only become a mode of ecological participation but also practices that nurture and cultivate felt, reciprocal, interdependent relationships with the more-than-human world. Learners go far beyond the passive observer role. They engage with the land through movement and imagination and through the senses, forming

ecological sensibilities in and through the body. Thus, the arts are essential pathways into ecological understanding, an approach that frames my inquiry into life writing, place, and a creative response.

Here, art becomes a speculative practice, as Haraway (2016) might suggest, a way of staying with the trouble, embracing complexity, contradiction, and the ongoing call of response-ability. For Haraway (2016), response-ability is not simply the ability to respond, but a situated, ethical attentiveness to the entangled relationships we inhabit. It is about staying with the messiness of the world without seeking quick resolution, remaining accountable to more-than-human beings through acts of listening, witnessing, and co-becoming. In this way, art invites us to remain open to the unexpected, to be re-shaped by our relations, and to dwell within the entanglement of ecological relationships. Irwin's (2004) a/r/tographic orientation supports this view, where artistic inquiry is not about producing answers but about lingering in the in-between, where thinking, making, and becoming are entangled. Even within the deliberateness of the punctuated slashes in the name—a/r/t—attention is drawn to the in-between stances of artist, researcher, and teacher, demanding inquirers to consider how these identities are always entangled. A/r/tography values movement and process, allowing meaning to unfold through embodied engagement with the world. In this way, art becomes relational. It listens. It moves with, not over. It invites a slowing down, a dwelling-with, where knowing and unknowing are held side by side. This resonates deeply with my practices, each opening space for uncertainty, responsiveness, and co-becoming with place, as Leavy (2020) reminds us, "The arts can uniquely educate, inspire, illuminate, resist, heal, and persuade" (p. ix). This orientation aligns closely with Misiaszek's (2023) framing of art as a form of critical ecological literacy, one that emerges through sensing, reflecting, and co-creating in relation with more-than-human worlds. In my own

work, artistic inquiry becomes a way of listening-with, an embodied mode of attending to place, where meaning arises not from control but from relation. Through walking, writing, and making, I engage in ecological literacy as a living, unfolding practice, responsive to land, layered with memory, and open to the unexpected.

These practices invite attentiveness to how I move, how I respond, and how my actions are always already entangled with the more-than-human worlds I inhabit (Misiaszek, 2023). Springgay and Truman (2018) remind us that pedagogies are not abstract or solely cognitive, but lived and relational, shaped by the textures, movements, and seasonal rhythms of the environments we inhabit. Well-being, from this perspective, is not an individual state or fixed outcome, but something cultivated through ongoing attunement with more-than-human presences and forces. My own practices of well-being emerge through these everyday entanglements: with soil crumbling in my hands, with shifting light in the sky, with the slow work of growth and decay. Falkenberg's (2024) framing of well-being and well-becoming supports this orientation by defining well-being as the present-moment quality of life, which includes how we encounter health, balance, and flourishing in the here and now. Well-becoming refers to the ongoing capacity for future flourishing, growth, and resilience. Together, these concepts highlight how both current and emerging states are shaped through relational encounters with more-than-human worlds. These are not practices of escape but of staying with, of noticing, responding, and moving in ways that honour reciprocity, connection, and care. In this slow, attentive work, I am reminded to grieve what is lost, give where I can, and grow in relation.

Through writing, mapping, walking, and making, I trace my own desire lines—those intuitive, affective movements toward well-being and connection—and invite others, especially researchers and educators, to consider their own. Life writing, movement, and art-making

become practices of seeing and sensing differently, guided by a relational orientation that reveals how relations with others might shift how we live, teach, and care (Honeyford & Watt, 2023). I am coming to understand these practices as ecological responsiveness, which connects to the concept of response diversity in socio-ecological systems (Leslie & McCabe, 2013) as well as to place-responsive pedagogy in environmental education (Mannion et al., 2013). In my research inquiry, ecological responsiveness describes multimodal forms of pedagogical and creative practices that are both pedagogically and creatively situated. These practices are grounded in encounters with time and place and more-than-human worlds, in a relational and emergent practice. This methodology contributes to a growing conversation about ecological awareness by unearthing how attentive, creative practices can cultivate reciprocity, well-being, and a shared commitment to more sustainable, relational ways of being.

Mapping Guiding Questions

The focus of this inquiry is mapped by the following guiding question:

- In what ways do engaging in diffractive life writing, movement, and art-making practices open pathways for un/re-learning, expanding, and strengthening my relationship with the more-than-human worlds I inhabit and move with/in?

This question branches into further wonderings:

- What happens, and what might I come to learn, when I cultivate intentional well-being and movement practices that foster balance and fulfillment in my personal life and teaching pedagogy, while acknowledging their interconnectedness?

- In navigating the tensions between human impact on more-than-human worlds, in what ways do well-being practices deepen my connection to/as more-than-human worlds inform my sense of ecological responsiveness?

The following chapters, as introduced below, are interwoven, each attending to distinct modes of life writing, movement, and art-making practices: eco-mapping, movement, and (re)placing. These chapters extend the commitments set forth here, a multimodal cartography of how well-being, ecological care, and relational meaning-making are shaped through more-than-human encounters. Ultimately, this project is less about arriving at fixed answers and more about dwelling with the questions—mapping the desire lines that emerge when inquiry becomes a form of ecological and personal attunement.

Eco-Mapping Practices

I engage with eco-mapping practices to situate myself in relation with place, time, and memory. While the term eco-mapping originated in social work (Hartman, 1995), it has been reworked in multiple disciplines. I defined eco-mapping in this research as an ecological, diffractive, and life writing practice—a human and more-than-human relational practice that involves walking, noticing, making, and storying place. This approach resonates with life writing, sensory ethnography (Pink, 2015), and diffractive methodologies (Barad, 2007), where mapping moves/shifts from being a representational practice to a form of ecological responsiveness. This chapter focuses on mapping positionality through seasonal shifts, culinary memory, and lived experiences. As a settler who grew up stewarding the land on my family's potato farm, I recognize how my relationship with the land and the language I now use has shifted. I reflect on my family's potato farm and the annual perogy-making ritual as sites of

ecological storytelling and relational knowledge. My backyard, now a *growing yard*, is a site of ecological care and connection—an eco-pedagogy rooted in memory, reciprocity, and more-than-human care; a living curriculum that teaches me to grieve, to give, and to grow alongside the more-than-human world around me. Finally, I return to earlier life writing and art pieces to map how language, identity, and relationality have shifted over time, revealing a living, layered process of becoming-with place.

Movement Practices

Most of my movement practices take place on the Chickadee Trail, where walking and skiing become methods—ways of thinking and being-with more-than-human presences and forces. Through journaling, fieldnotes, sound recordings, photographs, poetry, and art-making, I attend to place. In light of ongoing ecological crises, this orientation is particularly important. In the spring/summer of 2025, wildfire smoke disrupted many of my movement practices, reshaping the rhythms of my walking, breathing, sensing, and being. And yet, this disruption served as a re-minder—a call to slow down, to attune more deeply to the entangled and fragile conditions of our times. This revealed how such relational approaches to research are not only personal or pedagogical but are also deeply connected to urgent ecological and political challenges. These challenges, often called “wicked problems,” are complex, interconnected, and resistant to clear solutions, constantly evolving in ways that demand ongoing care and attention (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Movement opens pathways to relational knowing that resist control or mastery, inviting instead attentiveness, responsiveness, and co-presence as ethical ways to engage with our shared world. It is an invitation to become-with more-than-human worlds—a turn toward knowledge that is not fixed but emergent; cultivated through motion, grounded in care, and shaped by the quiet reciprocity of attention.

(Re)Placing Practices

I introduce place-bowl as a seasonal, arts-based method for (re)placing—working with, rather than taking. These methods include natural pigment-making, eco-poetry, and seasonal crafting as forms of embodied attentiveness. My art-making is becoming ephemeral—temporary, responsive, and shaped by the seasons. I am no longer directing but listening. Through the cultivation of these practices, attentiveness, attunement, and a sense of reciprocity have deepened, enriching both my relationality with presences and forces and my own well-being. They foreground a (re)positioner: engaging with place through acts of care, reciprocity, and co-becoming with more-than-human worlds.

This life writing inquiry brings eco-pedagogy and well-being into conversation, inviting educators and researchers into embodied ecological inquiry through multimodal life writing, art-making, and movement practices. As a result, my thesis contributes to the fields of language and literacy education, teacher inquiry, and eco-pedagogy by fostering slow, creative, and thoughtful research practices that prioritize attentiveness over extraction and value process as much as product. More-than-human presences and forces are honoured as co-shapers of experience and knowledge, rather than as background or resources. Reciprocity is engaged through walking-with, writing-with, and shaping-with methods that acknowledge intra-action with more-than-human worlds. Therefore, this research approach introduces relational, care-based language and methods that support becoming-with more-than-human worlds, offering alternatives to detached human-centered approaches.

Each chapter ends with an opening for the reader, a moment to linger with the ideas and let them settle into *your* rhythms of noticing. I make an explicit shift to directly address *you* as a

reader in all your interconnected positionalities, and particularly, I directly address *you* who may be reading as teacher-researchers/inquirers. These are not final thoughts, but quiet invitations to consider how such practices might shape your ways of mapping, moving, sensing, and responding with place.

Pedagogical Possibilities: Noticings, Questions, and Wonderings

As a teacher-researcher, I walk the diffractive desire lines of place, practice, and pedagogy.

As you read this thesis, I invite you to notice the relational textures of this inquiry:

- How might movement, memory, and making shift forms of knowledge building?
- What happens when inquiry dwells in/with/as sensory, situated, and seasonal practices?

I do not offer step-by-step strategies or map pathways to follow. This project unfolds through entanglement, grounded in lived experience and through the cultivation of life writing, movement, and art-making practices. As the reader, you are invited to notice the interconnectedness between your personal well-being and perhaps your teaching, to sense the subtle shifts that occur when more-than-human beings and forces are recognized as collaborators rather than backdrop, and to explore how place-based inquiry, life writing, movement, and art-making might foster ecological responsiveness.

I encourage you to carry these questions as openings, making your way forward, along desire lines:

- In what ways do you already teach, learn, and attend with the more-than-human world?

- In what ways do well-being practices already exist in your personal life and/or teaching pedagogy, and what might emerge if you attend to them?
- Through attunement, attentiveness, and reciprocity, what practices of co-becoming already exist for you, even within systems that prioritize efficiency and control?
- In what ways can life writing, movement, and art-making practices help you give, grieve, and grow?

By engaging with these questions, your attention and reflection become part of the inquiry itself, a collaborative process of noticing, questioning, and becoming-with.

Pedagogical Invitations

I invite you to step into this research not as a conscious observer, but as a participant—either as a reader and/or an educator whose desire lines are waiting to be mapped. You can:

- Walk along a familiar path and ask: What has changed since I last walked this way? Even a short twenty-minute walk after teaching, working, or moving through your daily routines can soften the edges when we permit ourselves to move slowly, to linger with the presences and forces that quietly shape the spaces we inhabit.
- Write by a tree, a window, or a park bench, and notice what more-than-human worlds make an appearance.
- Consider teaching or any practice of guidance, sharing, or learning together as a relational and place-based act: what memories, tensions, and connections emerge when one invites more-than-human presence and forces into a learning atmosphere?

This is not a call for more doing, but rather a gentle invitation into different ways of noticing and being-with. Start small. Begin again. Let attunement unfold.

As you move through this thesis, consider the following attunements as both trail markers and propositions:

- *Relationality over representation*: Knowledge is not extracted from place but emerges with it.
- *Process over product*: Slow research is not less rigorous; rather, it is rigorously different, inviting diffraction, responsiveness, and reciprocity.
- *Attentiveness as pedagogy*: Paying attention is a radical act, especially in a culture of distraction and acceleration.
- *Embodiment as inquiry*: Your body is already a site of research. What is it noticing, holding, remembering?

These attunements are not conclusive. They are ongoing. May they offer you resonance, resistance, and renewal as you consider how your own pedagogical life/practice entangles with place, movement, art-making, and more-than-human worlds.

Each of the following chapters—eco-mapping, movement, and (re)placing—offers a way of paying attention, of shaping relations with the more-than-human world through care, responsiveness, and embodied practices. They are not fixed paths, but evolving pathways shaped through time, season, and intention. I begin with eco-mapping not as a linear starting point, but as a grounding gesture—a way of situating myself within the shifting contours of place, lived memory, and relational harmony. In the following chapter, I trace how mapping becomes a practice of remembering, storytelling, and relational becoming, shaped by land, food, language, and the everyday rituals that deepen my connection with more-than-human worlds.

Chapter 2: Eco-Mapping Practices

Forward, Along Desire Lines

These practices are not about sentimentality or wandering without purpose; they are grounded in ethical engagement, critical reflection, and attention to place as co-composed through human and more-than-human relations. As you consider how eco-mapping might take shape in your own context, you might ask:

- What does it mean to map with responsibility and reciprocity?
- How might I walk, gather, or map without taking or claiming?
- Where do my own inheritances shape how I attend to place?

Embodied Memory and Relational Mapping

This chapter begins with life writing that emerges from and through my own positionality mapping practices—as a granddaughter of settlers, shaped by prairie seasons and the rhythms of tradition on my grandparents’ potato farm: spring planting, summer tending, fall harvesting, and winter’s arrival marked by an annual Remembrance Day ritual of perogy making. Guided by my grandmother’s practiced hands, I learned how to fill, fold, and pinch each one with care. Stories arose between the seams of dough—passed down through shared labour, through lineage, through the tender choreography of hands working together. These early memories were maps written in gesture, along with the more-than-human relationships that formed my earliest understandings of care and connection.

I grew up on my grandparents’ farm nestled on Treaty One Territory—the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininewuk, Dakota Oyate and Dene, and the National

Homeland of the Red River Métis. Through shared labour and family care, I developed an embodied understanding of how I connect with place. The farm was more than a livelihood; it was an education, where we forged life together by planting, harvesting, making perogies, and attending to the rhythms of the land. These formative events instilled in me a deep sense of reciprocity and belonging, even as I continue to reflect on the complex layers of privilege and settler history that shape this inheritance.

In the life writing piece below and what follows, Place and Land are intentionally capitalized. As a settler, I am un/re-learning the underpinnings of these terms. I acknowledge the tension between Place and Land, underscoring how the way we speak shapes both comprehension and moral obligation. Capitalizing Land indicates a particular site, one that is vibrantly connected to ancestry, stories, and rooted in livelihood. In this context, Land extends further than stone, soil, and river, by embracing spiritual and communal ties (Liboiron, 2021; Styres & Zinga, 2013). Lowercase land, however, frequently echoes a colonial gaze, rendering terrains into general spaces, awaiting human exploitation (Nxumalo & Cedillo, 2017). Lowercase place, too, pivots around the traveler or the site of daily life, while the upper-case Place situates an attuned, relational, and reciprocal way of becoming-with (Somerville & Green, 2015). As a settler, I remain caught in a constant spiral of un/re-learning—tracking the distinctions where language and perception entangle and striving to cultivate an attuned attentiveness to Land that is not merely present but living, interwoven, and storied. Such attentiveness reaches beyond the word, shaping how I write, map, and enact pedagogical possibilities that honour reciprocity with the more-than-human world. This guidance provides a reflective and ethical approach to teaching and living that connects me toward accountability with the worlds I inhabit (Tuck, McCoy, & McKenzie, 2014).

Figure 2

Wearing pink and waving to the camera, I was on water duty as a young girl, making sure my family stayed hydrated while harvesting potatoes. Photograph by my aunt, Donna Artimowich.

***Water Duty***

I remember feeling proud of my role on water duty during harvest. Amidst the bustling activity on the Land, this small job connected me with the family effort. We spent long days at my grandparents' potato farm, which we fondly called *outback*. During the late August harvest, pails were filled with muddy potatoes, emptied into fifty-pound burlap sacks, and hoisted onto the trailer to take home. I spent summer days, fall evenings, and weekends outback, mostly offering water to my family and feeling part of a shared rhythm.

I was seven or eight in this photograph, always tall for my age, sprinting up and down the rows to keep everyone hydrated. The Land was alive with movement: my grandparents, my parents, my brother Rob, my aunts, uncles, and cousins, all working in sync with the Land and old machinery. I can still hear my grandpa's tractor, the digger trailing behind it, rattling and rumbling across the rows. While I didn't yet have the strength to lift heavy pails or sacks, I found purpose in carrying the water jug from person to person, offering water in a shared Tupperware cup. That small act rooted me in the moment and made me feel like I belonged.

This was how I began to learn about my relationship with Land. We moved together through the field, responding to the harvest, to each other, and to the moment. Crouched over, we gathered potatoes and shimmied forward. We wore gloves, hats, dusty knees, and dirty

fingernails—our bodies knew what to do. Knowledge was passed through soft-spoken lessons that remain long after the season ended. I learned to recognize potato bugs and flick them into an old yogurt container. I learned how to fill my ice cream pail with baby potatoes. I learned never to pick the green ones or the mushy ones. I learned to walk beside the mound so the soil would stay loose for tilling. These teachings unearthed through repetition, quiet observation, and gentle correction became an embodied inheritance.

What I loved most was water duty. It gave me a chance to pause with my family, to break the rhythm of labour and reconnect. Despite the hard work, there was always laughter, time to play, and the joy of being together.

We didn't call ourselves stewards, but we cared deeply for the Land, for each other, and for the work that brought us together. At family gatherings, our farm-to-table spread was more than a meal—it reflected our shared labour and connection to Place. My grandpa began each meal with a prayer, expressing gratitude for a good growing season or harvest. In dry years, we asked for rain; in wet years, we hoped for warmth to dry the fields. In my family, Land and food were deeply connected, and food was always a gesture of love. It was how we expressed care, and how the Land became part of our shared story.

Now, many years later, as I look at the photograph, I see more than a child playing helper. I see the early roots of how I learned to pay attention. Reciprocity was taught through participation, not words. Even in the small task of water duty, there was care and connection—imprints that shape how I understand relationships, responsibility, and belonging.

That early role, filling cups and ice cream pails, staying out of the way yet close enough to feel included, was how I first began to understand Place as shaped through rhythm, participation, and care. These were not concepts learned in a classroom, but embodied understandings formed through repetition, movement, and attention. They became some of the most formative lessons in how I have come to know relationality.

Through this inquiry, I now know that Place is never neutral. It holds memory, meaning, and history. It is shaped by those who walk and work on it, marked by both the stories told and those left unspoken. While I cherish my childhood harvest days—the belonging, the rhythm, the warmth of family—I also remain aware that my connection to this Place is entangled in a longer, layered story. Beneath our footsteps are histories that extend beyond memory, woven with cultivation, displacement, and silencing. I am un/re-learning how to listen to these layers with responsibility, with humility, and with the kind of attention that honours both what is remembered and what has been left unsaid.

Mapping Memory Through Food and Place

After the potatoes were picked, hauled home, sent to market, or stored in my grandparents' root cellar, another kind of work began; quieter but just as serious. Perogy making was its own kind of production, unfolding in my grandmother's small kitchen around the corner table with bench seating, the surface lined with tea towels and dusted with flour. The dough was mixed by hand, rolled out, and cut with care, while the filling—potato and cheddar, mashed smooth—was spooned and folded into shape. Each perogy was pinched closed with practiced fingers, lined up on the floured towels, then boiled in batches and set out to cool.

We gathered around that table, light chatter and busy hands, settling into the rhythm of repetition. My grandma made the dough, always on her feet until someone finally told her to sit down. Even then, her hands didn't rest. She filled, folded, and pinched with practiced ease, turning each one into the perfect perogy. What we didn't eat right away was bagged and frozen, saved mostly for our meatless Christmas Eve meal.

There are no photographs of these days, only the deep muscle memory of making, of hands moving together, of flour everywhere and filling under fingernails, of the quiet rhythm of care. Where the field had been filled with movement and machinery, this space was slow, warm, and attentive, offering another kind of mapping that shaped how I came to understand tradition, labour, and belonging.

These annual culinary rituals became more than seasonal tasks; they became pedagogies of place, kinship, and care (Springgay & Truman, 2018). Unknowingly, they taught me that knowledge is held in the hands, shared through gesture, and sustained through repetition (Ingold, 2011). Beyond any formal instruction, I learned by doing, by watching, by being with. This is

where my understanding of eco-pedagogy begins, not in abstract theories, but in the textured practices of everyday life. Perogy-making offered a slow, embodied method of learning, one that mapped intergenerational lessons, culinary engagement, and a deeply felt relationship between Land, food, and family. These memories have become mapped reflections that now inform how I approach more-than-human worlds: with attentiveness to rhythm, reciprocity, and relationality. Just as each perogy held the touch of the maker, each piece of life writing and art-making become practices, shaped by place, and a desire to honour what I already know (Barad, 2007).

I feel a deep connection to my Ukrainian heritage. Both sets of my grandparents were of Ukrainian descent, and my great-grandparents were immigrants who came to this Land with dreams of building something new, carrying with them traditions meant to sustain their families for generations. Yet, this new beginning unfolded unknowingly on stolen Indigenous Land, a truth I continue to sit with and carry as part of my own story. Throughout my childhood, these traditions were part of everyday life. I attended Ukrainian immersion school until grade six, took part in Ukrainian dancing until I was seventeen, eventually performing the Hopak with the senior group at festivals around Western Canada and annual recitals at Winnipeg's Playhouse Theatre. These were more than cultural activities; they were ways of belonging, of embodying stories and values passed down through language, music, and movement.

Our family customs were rooted in food, language, faith, and a deep, reciprocal, yet complicated, relationship with the Land. My grandparents were farmers and gatherers who understood the seasonal rhythms of planting, harvesting, and preserving. They prayed with gratitude for the gifts of the Land. They taught us to do the same, tending to the soil with care through practices such as leaving fields fallow, rotating crops, and nourishing the earth with natural fertilizers—acts of reciprocity rooted in respect and renewal. I grew up outdoors,

surrounded by the fields and gardens my family tended to. *Outback*, as we called my grandparents' farm, was where I spent my summers. Those memories are etched into my understanding of Land as more than landscape: it was a gathering space, a provider, a teacher, a more-than-human world.

Looking back, I now recognize that my family's connection to the Land—while respectful and reciprocal in many ways—did not include an awareness of the deeper histories held within it. We did not speak of the Indigenous nations whose stewardship preceded ours, or of the treaties and responsibilities that came with living here. It has taken time, discomfort, and critical reflection to begin acknowledging what I did not know. My gratitude for this Land must now be accompanied by a willingness to learn from those who have long held relational knowledge of it. As Freeman (2015) notes, a land-centered approach requires more than appreciation—it calls for active engagement, reciprocity, and a commitment to balance.

Freeman's (2015) work with Indigenous communities offers a powerful reminder that place-based knowledge is not simply inherited; it is cultivated through relationship. She writes that

Knowing the land and the cultural history is significant in establishing a sense of place and knowing; it provides a connection to the past and *grounding* with the present. It also defines for the individual who they are, where they come from and what their purpose is. (Freeman, 2015, p. 56)

I carry this teaching with care, holding space for both my own rootedness and the responsibility to deepen my understanding of whose Land I walk upon and how my presence is situated within longer, ongoing histories.

I am proud of my Ukrainian ancestry and the ways it shaped my relationship with Land, labour, and family. At the same time, I am coming to understand that my connection to this Land—while meaningful—is entangled with settler colonial histories. My approach to eco-pedagogy is informed by this complexity: a desire to honour where I come from while remaining open to re-learning, listening, and moving differently. Eco-mapping, for me, is not about charting what is already known, but walking with questions, across cultures, across time, and toward a more relational understanding of Place.

For much of my life, I used the possessive *mine* to describe meaningful locations: *my* backyard, *my* garden, *my* place—each claimed through memory, labour, and lineage. I now recognize this way of speaking as shaped by settler-colonial ways of knowing, a framework that treats land as property to be owned, managed, or inherited. Tuck and McKenzie (2015) challenge the idea that land is simply a neutral backdrop. Instead, they say Land plays an active, dynamic role in our lives; it holds memory, agency, and relational meaning. It is with the Land, not on the Land, that our lives unfold. They urge to decolonize place by attending to its layered histories, colonial entanglements, and more-than-human relations. And so, my language is shifting alongside these understandings. I no longer see place as something to possess, but as something to be in relation with, a shared space shaped by layered histories and more-than-human presences and forces.

What I used to call mine, I recognize now as both a stolen space and a shared space, shaped by the memory of generations, and the daily movement of more-than-human worlds. This shift in language and understanding reflects the deep interconnections between human and ecological histories, each contributing to the Land's identity as a Place of shared, relational care, not as a passive backdrop or resource, but as a living presence shaped with and by more-than-

human beings (Springgay & Truman, 2018; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). This shift is more than linguistic; it signifies a deeper movement toward responsibility and reciprocity (Kimmerer, 2013). Place is never truly ours; it is always already occupied, already inhabited, already storied (Barad, 2007). My role is not to possess land, but to listen, to dwell, and to steward in ways that honour these entanglements. This shift in language leads to a shift in practice—an embodied way of being that moves from ownership toward relational care. One way this takes root in my life is through the act of planting trees in remembrance. This ritual, passed down from my mom, is an offering of continuity, grounded in the belief that the Land holds memories (Kimmerer, 2013). A tree planted for a loved one is never just symbolic; it is a living gesture of grief, care, and hope.

Mapping a Growing Yard

In my backyard, now a *growing yard*, I carry this practice forward. Each tree is a marker of time and connection, a quiet story that deepens my relationship with Place. It reflects an ongoing commitment to stewarding rather than claiming, to living in relationship with the Land rather than apart from it.

This rooted practice aligns with what Springgay and Truman (2018) describe as pedagogies of place—knowledge passed not through formal instruction but through embodied traditions and relational gestures. To grieve, to give, and to grow are not separate acts, but entangled processes of living with loss and love. In my backyard, these gestures take root through trees planted in memory, each one holding a story, a presence, a continuing relationship. What follows is a life writing piece that traces how this eco-pedagogy of remembrance unfolds in my growing yard.

Figure 3

My Growing Yard: A place of remembrance and care—Hudson's tree, Amy through the seasons, and my grandparents, always side-by-side—each rooted in memory, grief, love, and shared belonging. Photographs by the author.



My Growing Yard

My mom was 21 when she lost her older brother, Doug, who was only 27. Though I never met him, I've heard he was a remarkable man, a fighter pilot for the Royal Canadian Air Force. As the only son in a family of five girls, I can't imagine the tremendous loss they felt when they received the news of his plane crash in Germany. Recently, my mom shared, at the time, they mostly grieved in silence.

Grief is not unfamiliar to my family. We've lost too many loved ones too soon. After losing her brother, my mom began planting trees in memory, letting roots take hold where words often could not. It became a quiet act of honouring, of holding space. This tradition, simple and steady, is one she passed onto me and one I continue to uphold today.

We plant trees in their honour, allowing them to continue growing and giving us a place to nurture and visit them. Over time, this ritual has grown with me, taking root in new ways. It led me to co-shape my one-acre yard in West St. Paul with beautiful trees and shrubs in memory of the loved ones I've lost.

The first tree my husband and I planted was for our friend Amy. It's been over a decade, and her absence still hits hard. Amy died in a car accident—sudden, brutal, unfair. I was in my early 30s, and nothing made sense after that. She was sharp, fearless, and called it like she saw it. The big sister I never had. We planted a walnut tree for her; tough on the outside, but what's inside matters most. It felt right. She was like that: strong, solid, full of life. When the wind moves through its branches, I don't get sentimental; I remember her laugh, her honesty, the way she made everything real. She's still here, somehow, in the roots and the rustle of the leaves of her walnut tree. It doesn't make her loss easier. But the tree stands its ground—mighty, steady, beaming, just like Amy. And that quiet remembrance, rooted and reaching, is what I carry forward.

My brother and I planted Ninebark shrubs in the front yard for our grandparents. We placed them side by side, just as we remembered them—always together. The vibrant colours of their changing leaves and their stunning form pay tribute to the people who instilled in us strong family values, taught us about our Ukrainian heritage, and cherished every opportunity to bring family together.

Then there's Hudson, the stately linden tree with heart-shaped leaves that turn a brilliant orange in the fall, just like him. Our sweet gentleman. We lost our first fur baby at the age of 18. He was adopted at two, and we loved him deeply. Losing him shattered our hearts. Planting his tree by the river, his favourite spot in our yard, was an easy decision.

I don't view these trees as a graveyard. Rather, they form a growing yard filled with memories of loved ones who continue to grow with and around me. My growing yard brings a quiet comfort, gently mapping the memories and moments we shared.

Rooted Memories of Grief and Care

Planting trees in remembrance of loved ones reflects a deeply embodied form of eco-pedagogy where learning, grief, and growth are rooted in lived experience and ecological relationship. As Misiaszek (2023) suggests, eco-pedagogy calls for attention to the relational entanglements of memory, place, and ecological care. It invites educators and learners to recognize how histories of colonization, environmental exploitation, and cultural displacement are intertwined, while also imagining pedagogical approaches rooted in reciprocity, healing, and collective responsibility. Similarly, Springgay and Truman (2018) emphasize that walking and land-based practices can open ethical engagements with Place, inviting us to think with, rather

than about, the world around us. Ethical engagements are not grounded in extraction or observation from a distance but emerge through embodied encounters that honour the more-than-human world as co-composers of knowledge, movement, and meaning. The act of planting becomes both ritual and pedagogy, what Kimmerer (2024) might describe as a practice of reciprocity, a way of honouring the Land while being shaped by it in return. My growing yard is more than a memorial; it is an ongoing, relational space rooted in care, continuity, and co-flourishing with more-than-human worlds. The trees, once fragile saplings, have been supported with stakes, watered through dry spells, and gently cleared of fallen leaves during autumn. In return, they offer shade that cools the yard, oxygen that fills my lungs, and nourishment for the soil through their decaying leaves. Their branches shelter birds, squirrels, and insects, creating small ecosystems of movement and sound. This mutual tending, a quiet exchange of breath, shelter, and sustenance, marks our relationship as one of everyday reciprocity. As I continue these rituals of remembrance, I find myself drawn not only to what takes root but to what fades—those quiet, ephemeral moments that leave weathered traces and map the passing of time through what dissolves, shifts, and cannot be held.

Making-With What Remains

This ongoing responsiveness with the Land—through the planting of trees in remembrance—has opened me to other forms of relational making. As my hands continue to meet the soil, a shift is occurring. I am learning that not all offerings need to be permanent to be meaningful. What once took root in the ground now takes shape across its surface, briefly, gently. In the quiet moments between planting and watching things grow, I find myself drawn to art that dissolves. Arrangements that speak and then scatter.

It is here, on the grass of my own backyard, that I began to make with what was already there—fallen leaves, decaying blossoms, moss, and cones—not as resources, but as companions. This is a becoming-with, a humble practice of placing rather than taking, of listening rather than directing. My language is no longer confined to words alone; it unfolds through gesture, through relational noticing, through an ephemeral art piece shaped by reverence in the making and release in the letting go.

Figure 4

Ephemeral art piece



An Ephemeral Offering

I kneel in the grass—last season’s thatch still rough beneath my knees, a patchwork of decay and persistence collected around my yard. In my hands: what has already fallen. What no longer clings. I do not take. I gather only what the more-than-human world offers freely—what has already let go, already willing to be shared.

Dried, decaying hydrangea blooms, shriveled like whisper pink lace—delicate remanence of the brilliant blooms they once were. Oak leaves, papery and weather-worn. Moss still clinging to life—green against brown, soft against brittle. A fallen stem, some cones, pine needles galore. These are not scraps. These are gestures. Stories. Participants.

I begin with no plan. Only presence.

Each piece finds its place through feeling, not force. I spiral out—not just in form but in attention. I am learning to arrange not for aesthetic, but for attunement. A noticing. A noticing again. My language is changing—from naming to listening, from describing to dwelling.

This is not art to be preserved. This is care made visible, for a moment.

And already, the wind is lifting it. A petal blossom dances off. A leaf turns in the breeze. The moss remains rooted for now. I do not mourn the scattering. I let it teach me.

What I once gathered and stored away—pressed into pages or kept in plastic bags—I now return. I am no longer a taker, but a repositioner. A placer. A participant in the cycle. Each remnant, once held in my palm, is now returned to feed what comes next. Their breaking down is a form of becoming. Renewal comes not through possession, but through offering.

This is what it means to become-with.

Not to claim. Not to contain. But to co-compose—briefly, gently—with what is already in motion.

And so, I rise and walk away. Not from what I've made, but toward what it continues to become—scattered, seeded, shared.

This act of ephemeral art-making became more than expression—it emerged as a methodological orientation. The ground beneath my hands offered both material and message, inviting a slow, responsive inquiry rooted in co-composition with more-than-human worlds. What was once art now unfolds as method: a practice of sensing, shaping, and attending in relation. From this place of openness and attunement, the next ephemeral art piece emerged.

Mapping an Ephemeral Art Practice

The next ephemeral art piece unfolded slowly, through layered and weathered place-based engagements. The method was not linear but responsive, shaped by sensory noticing, seasonal offerings, and the movements of more-than-human presences and forces. I left a piece of artwork gathered and marked with seasonal materials outdoors and documented how it *weathered* over several days. Ants crawled through it gently repositioning petals; the wind lifted blades of grass and shifted dried flowers; the rain softened the bright roundness of the dandelion sun, blurred the black birds, and dulled the edges of the grassland. What I found was not a fixed

form, but a living composition in flux—weathered, faded, and folded back into the Land. This is weathering art, co-composed with more-than-human presences and elemental forces. I wondered if this process would “ruin” the artwork, if it would still hold meaning once presences and forces had their way with it. I wondered how inviting this co-composition in would shift my understanding of resisting permanence through the documentation of ephemeral art-making. The following phases map how I approached this practice: not as a fixed sequence but as a shifting process of reciprocity, carried by the rhythms and unpredictability of time and place.

Figure 5

Weathering Art Day 1. Photographs by the author.

Another ephemeral art piece, created on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, using natural pigments gathered from around my yard: dandelions for the sun, charcoal for the birds, plum blossoms beneath the sun, grass for the ground, and decaying crabapples that made the sun shine – not with pigment, but with a translucent blush of juice from within. I (re)placed the pressed flowers I had collected last summer so they could help shape what comes next. I documented the shifting image throughout the evening and over the course of several days.



Gathering (Walking, Collecting, Listening)

The process began with a walk. Not a walk with an outcome, but one led by noticing colour, texture, decay, and vitality. Fallen plum blossoms, dandelions, and other natural materials were gathered not for their aesthetic value alone, but because they offered themselves in that

moment: windblown, discarded, ripe. The act of collecting was careful and respectful, acknowledging what could be taken and what should remain.

Placing (Co-Composing with Care)

The arrangement took shape outdoors, on paper placed directly onto the ground. This gesture mattered: more-than-human presences and forces were not only a backdrop but active participants, shaping the materials through their contours, heat, moisture, and insects. Composition became a quiet dialogue, with each placement responding to what came before it. Rather than control, there was negotiation between structure and spontaneity, between intention and the tug of wind and showers of rain.

Mark-making (Using Fruit, Pollen, and Decay as Pigments)

Inspired by the process described by Hennessy (2022), natural pigments were explored not through extraction but through presence. The wetness of decaying crabapples, the yellow stain of dandelion pollen, the smudge of charcoal from scorched wood—each left its mark through direct contact. Pressing, dabbing, tearing, and dripping became tools. Hands became brushes, fruit became ink, and weather became collaborators.

Observing (Letting Time In)

With the piece left outside, time took over. Materials dried, curled, bled, faded, and shifted. Observation became part of the method—returning again and again to witness the transformation. Notes were taken. Photographs were captured, not to preserve a finished work but to honour the shifts, the impermanence, the slow weathering and softening.

Documenting (Photographs as Traces)

What remains now is not the artwork itself, but its traces. The photographs serve as fragments of process, evidence of the collaboration between human intention and more-than-human agency. These visual documents are not representations of a “final” piece but echoes of a momentary becoming.

Figure 6

Weathering Art over several days. Photographs by the author.

Watching my ephemeral art piece *weather* over several days allowed me to engage in slow, durational observation. Through this attunement, I was able to capture how the piece shifted, dissolved, and re-formed in response to time and environment.



Thursday, May 15, 7:18 a.m.



Thursday, May 15, 9:46 p.m.



Friday, May 16, 6:56 a.m.

Mapping-With: Relational, Ephemeral, Situated

What this method revealed to me is that ephemeral art practices are less about materials and more about relations. The artwork is shaped by time, touch, weather, and the quiet participation of more-than-human presences and forces. Method becomes a kind of mapping, not of space, but of process. Not fixed, but fluid. Rooted in reciprocity, care, and co-becoming.

A *Weathering Practice*

I had no plan; I was only led by feeling. Drawn to the soft blush plum petals fallen to the ground, dandelions open and reaching. I gathered them softly. I don't need all of them, just the ones in transition, the ones already coming undone. And there's a pace to my gathering. My hands were slow, with no sense of urgency, but rather guided by curiosity and care. It was getting windier as I walked, and I let that influence my choices as well. This wasn't about gathering everything. It was about listening.

When I felt the gathering to be finished, I placed the paper on the ground. I wanted to avoid sitting at a table or any clean surface. I was looking for the ground to inscribe itself into the paper in its own way. A breeze had picked up, so I placed rocks on the corners of the paper, and the day's sun had heated the ground. I started marking with my gathered materials—plum blossoms, dandelion heads, crabapple husks, charcoal pieces from the firepit, grass tips torn from the top. My fingers turned yellow with pollen, fingertips made tacky by fruit. I didn't wipe them clean.

I wasn't planning so much as reacting. A composition, yes, but not a composition under my control. A handful of blooms were swept away by the wind. An ant ran across the page and disappeared under a petal. I didn't move it. This was never meant to last. That was the point. The point was the instant of being with it, the pause it asked for, the breath it required my body to take.

And then the rain came.

The gathered materials began to seep and stain. The crabapples bled, yellow pollen pressed into fibre, petals softened into pulp. It started to change as I watched. I took pictures, understanding the work itself was temporary. The documentation wasn't to keep but to remember—an echo of a process marked by time and touch and weather.

I left the page outside for an evening, and then for days. And when I came back each time, the sun had baked the pulp into texture. Colours had dulled, shifted. Then came a new sort of beauty, a quieter one this time. I took another photo. I couldn't stop thinking about the thought of producing something that didn't have to last.

In the end, art was created with touch, with relation, with de-composition. The most important part was not the result, but the process of caring for, laying down, waiting, and releasing. The art was not apart from the Land or the weather. They had created it with wind and rain and sunlight, with rot and residue. I wasn't the artist alone. I was another participant.

The photos I made contain the memory of this becoming. They reveal how the petals curled, how the pollen collected in small puffs of yellow, how the rotten crabapple flesh bled into

the paper like a gentle bruising. But the photos cannot hold the air that passed, the warm sun, the rain shower, the quiet that spread over as the work re-formed. That lives in the making.

This was about ethereal art. This was about weathering. This was about what happens when we make with, not for. On letting art be something that fades, that changes, that comes back in fragments. An act of caring, not owning.

And in that, I felt a response of becoming-with.

From Memory to Motion

It has taken time for my language to soften, become more refined, and more responsive, as I remain open to un/re-learning. From the potato fields of my childhood *outback* to the textured rituals of perogy-making, from the care-giving of my *growing yard* to the temporal beauty of ephemeral art, I've begun to understand mapping not as a tool for direction, but as a way of noticing—of grieving, giving, and growing with the more-than-human world. These practices remind me that co-becoming lives not in grand gestures, but in the small, repeated acts of relational care. My eco-mapping is shaped by memory and movement, decay and renewal, and the interconnected relation of everyday life. The paths I chart shift with the seasons, weather, and the more-than-human beings and forces that accompany me. As Honeyford et al. (2025) suggest, creative, place-based practices such as movement, making, or ephemeral forms have the potential to foster spaces of hope that dissolve rigid pedagogies and allow for the emergence of new, affective relations. My mapping detours from fixed or predetermined routes. Instead, it responds to an invitation of uncertainty and co-creation: pausing to notice animal tracks, marking the ground with fallen botanicals, or letting an art piece weather in the rain. Through these ephemeral forms, these practices remain responsive, allowing mapping to become a hopeful, relational space where possibilities are shaped through attention, reciprocity, and change. As I

step forward into movement, I do so not to cover ground, but to sense more deeply, to respond with greater attentiveness, and to continue the ongoing process of becoming-with.

Pedagogical Possibilities: Noticings, Questions, and Wonderings

As I pause here, before stepping into movement practices, I want to linger with you, the reader, in this space of eco-mapping. This chapter has unfolded as a layered invitation: to remember, to notice, to (re)map our relationships with Place through gesture, memory, and more-than-human companionship. But mapping, as I have come to learn, is not a fixed task. It is full of tensions, limitations, and openings.

In sharing these eco-mapping practices, I am aware that they emerge from my own positionality, shaped by settler ancestry, privilege, and the significant places in my life. What I offer here is partial, situated, and always incomplete (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). These practices do not, and cannot, account for the many ways place might be mapped by others, especially those whose relationships with Land are shaped by displacement, dispossession, or erasure (Freeman, 2015; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). I continue to ask myself: Whose stories are centred? Whose histories remain quiet beneath my feet, or forcefully or systematically silenced? Where do my gestures risk becoming extractive, appropriative, or disruptive, even in their care? As Kimmerer (2013) reminds us, care must be accompanied by reciprocity, by a willingness to listen and be shaped in return.

Questions That Might Help Carry You Forward

As you reflect on the practices shared here, these invitations to map relationally might prompt you to ask:

DESIRE LINES

- How do I come to know Place in my own life? How has Place come to know me through gestures, traditions, or silences?
- What do I notice about my language shifting, from ownership toward relationality?
Where does it resist this shift?
- What more-than-human relationships shape my daily rhythms? How might I attend to them differently?
- How do I hold space for what fades, scatters, or resists removal in my own engagements with Place?
- What tensions do I feel as I try to map or make-with, rather than take or claim?

Pedagogical Invitation

If you are drawn to take up eco-mapping in your own way, I invite you to open yourself to the rhythms and textures around you that connect to the more-than-human presences who have always already been, and who will enhance your becoming-with.

- Begin where you are. Look, listen, and feel into the places that shape you: your yard, a nearby park, a garden, a field, a riverbank. What gestures of care already live there? What might be invited?
- Notice the small. The fleeting. The overlooked. Allow materials to guide you, rather than seeking to direct them.
- Let your work remain unfinished, ephemeral, or partial. Trust that the act of noticing is itself a pedagogical gesture.
- Hold questions close. Mapping relationally means wandering with uncertainty and discomfort.

The slides that follow are not meant to be passively read, but felt, explored, and engaged with. They are designed as an extension of the thesis—recursive in structure, reflective in tone, and intentionally user-friendly. Through embedded multimodal forms, the reader is invited into a layered experience that blends scholarly inquiry with sensory depth. This design approach honours the relational nature of the work, encouraging movement between text, image, and sound, and allowing the inquiry to be encountered as both an academic and embodied journey.

Pedagogical Possibilities



This chapter has unfolded as a layered invitation: to remember, to notice, to (re)map your relationships with Place through gesture, memory, and more-than-human companionship.

As Kimmerer (2013) states, "Cultures of gratitude must also be cultures of reciprocity. Each person, human or no, is bound to every other in a reciprocal relationship. Just as all beings have a duty to me, I have a duty to them... An integral part of a human's education is to know these duties and how to perform them" (p. 190).

Questions That Might Help Carry You Forward

REFLECTIVE INQUIRY

- How do I come to know place in my own life?
- Through what gestures, traditions, or silences?
- Where do I notice my language shifting, from ownership toward relationality?
- Where does it resist this shift?



PERSONAL CONNECTION

- What more-than-human relationships shape my daily rhythms?
- How might I attend to them differently?



BOTANIC ENGAGEMENT

- How do I hold space for what fades, scatters, or resists removal in my own engagements with place?
- What tensions do I feel as I try to map or make-with, rather than take or claim?



Pedagogical Invitation

If you are drawn to eco-mapping, let yourself open to the quiet rhythms and textures that surround you, to the more-than-human presences who have always been here, waiting to move with you in your becoming-with.

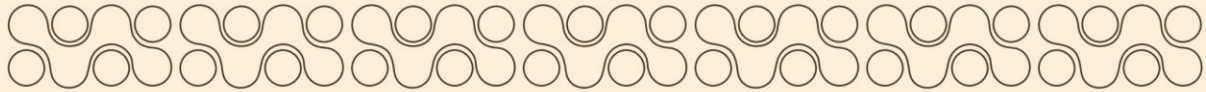
GESTURES OF ENGAGEMENT



HANDS AS TOOLS



MORE-THAN-HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS



Forward, Along Desire Lines

GENTLE MOVEMENTS

Engage with your surroundings through slow walking, igniting your senses, and noticing more-than-human presences and forces around you.



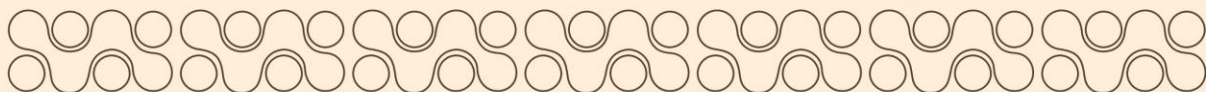
SENSING ATTENTIVELY

Enact your sense of awareness as you explore your surroundings, deepening your connection to more-than-human worlds.



REFLECTIVE PRACTICES

Utilize guided prompts to enhance your understanding of ethical engagements as co-composed by humans and more-than-human relations.



Chapter 3: Movement Practices

Forward, Along Desire Lines

In this chapter, walking, moving, and sensing practices become a cartography of responsiveness, ways of engaging with Place that are both embodied and ethically situated. These practices invite not only attunement but action: to move with awareness, to map with care, and to sense with accountability. In stepping forward, we move from memory to motion, from rootedness to rhythm, deepening the ongoing practice of becoming-with.

I invite you to choose a path, familiar or new, and to walk it slowly. Pause often. Take note of what captures your attention: a scent, a sound, a shadow, a shift in temperature. You might wish to journal after your walk or take a sound/video recording, or photograph during it. Let this walk be a practice in presence, in reciprocity, in relation. You do not need to name every tree or track every step. You need only to listen. Let your walk be a conversation, even if it unfolds in silence. Consider what the trail or sidewalk, or garden path offers you, and what you offer in return.

- What does movement look like in your own context?
- Where do your feet carry you each day, and what do you notice, or overlook, along the way?
- In what ways might you attend more fully to the sounds, textures, or rhythms of your surroundings?
- What might happen when we walk slowly, pause, or reverse in Places?

Mapping Through Movement

Movement becomes a way of mapping, not through fixed coordinates but through lived encounters that unfold in relation. As I move with more-than-human presences and forces along the Chickadee Trail, mapping begins to feel less like an individual act and more like a shared gesture. It is shaped by intra-action, where my body is not separate from these entities but deeply entangled with them (Barad, 2007). I am acutely aware of the ways we co-mingle and co-habitate, each movement adding to a shared rhythm of belonging (Sinner & Irwin, 2022).

Desire lines appear as instinctual responses, shaped by the needs, impulses, and presences of both human and more-than-human worlds. These lines do not simply stretch neatly from one point to another. They emerge through movement and memory, weather and terrain, as gestures of relational connection. They are not laid out in advance but take shape through ongoing encounters, forming through the movements and responses of beings in relation with Place. As Ingold (2011) reminds us, to move is not to pass over a surface, but to become with it, to live along lines rather than through fixed coordinates. Desire lines, then, are mappings of attentiveness, of bodies attuned to Place. As Bennett (2010) suggests, they reflect an entangled vitality—life responding to life.

This understanding of desire lines as emergent, relational pathways resonates with what Hennessy (2022) describes as acts of resistance and meaning-making. Rather than adhering to imposed spatial structures, these lines chart the improvisations and harmonization already present in more-than-human worlds, reminding us that Place is always being reshaped by these movements. In this way, desire lines invite us to reconsider how we map, plan, and move within Place, aligning ourselves with its existing rhythms and ways of knowing.

Moving with Place means listening, following subtle cues, and becoming attuned to shifting rhythms. The snow holds impressions of hoof and paw prints. Branches bend in response to wind and weight. My own footsteps fall into sync with what has come before. These traces guide me, inviting me into a co-created encounter with Place. As Ingold (2011) suggests, movement is not a matter of transport across space but a form of wayfaring, where paths emerge in the act of moving. Pink (2015) notes that movement is a sensory and embodied process through which Place is continually made and remade, each step an unfolding of relation.

Just as desire lines form through repeated movement, my own documentation through art-making, photos, videos, soundscapes, and poetry has helped map these layered encounters. Together, these practices form an ecological archive, reflecting the shared shaping of Place. Mapping in this sense is not about arrival, nor about fixing moments in space and time. It is about being present. It unfolds through responsiveness, reciprocity, and harmonization that occurs when I slow down and pay attention. As Ulmer (2017) reminds us, the mapping can be an ongoing, relational process where meaning is shaped through embodied engagement with Place, and not through predetermined coordinates or endpoints. Thus, maps are not so much products but rather dynamic records of relationships that change as encounters shift and deepen. Similarly, Judson (2010) highlights the need to develop a sense of place and notes that attentive actions cultivate ecological understanding, as well as an emotional connection to Place. From this perspective, mapping becomes a form of listening, an active participation in the stories and the rhythms already unfolding in more-than-human worlds. Each movement is a mark of relation, shaped through the interplay of body, place, and the passage of seasons. As Massey (2005) reminds us, space is not a static container, but a constellation of relations—always under construction, always becoming. Desire lines chart more than terrain; they trace the improvisation

of encounters and the gestures of being-with. In this way, desire lines reflect what Tsing (2015) names as “the arts of noticing” (p. 37), moments that emerge from the entanglements of human and more-than-human survival. I have come to understand mapping not as a tool for direction, but as a way of noticing, grieving, giving, and growing with more-than-human worlds.

Geo-Storying the Poplar Canopy: A Place of Return

To geo-story is not simply to observe, but to participate. It is to move through Place with openness, responsiveness, and care. Haraway (2016) describes geo-storying as the practice of creating narratives that connect us to specific sites through embodied, multisensory experiences. In my life writing inquiry (Chambers et al, 2012), as I have walked, written, recorded, and returned, I recognize that these stories are not mine alone. They arise from attention to entanglements. In this way, geo-storying is making-with, an ongoing intra-action that unfolds between body, Place, and more-than-human presences and forces.

These moments of storying through journaling, sound/video recording, and photography are not just modes of documenting; they are practices of honouring. In line with Triggs and Irwin (2019), these digital and art-making forms create an ecological archive. They are gestures of care that invite stillness, listening, and belonging. Rather than extracting from Place, I approach making-with as an invitation to linger, to witness, and to attune with the more-than-human world. Haraway’s (2016) invitation to remain with the trouble invites us always to notice the ongoing, situated, and entangled tasks of living and knowing alongside more-than-human worlds. Although she never explicitly uses the term ecological archive, her writing quietly gestures toward how we might hold and tend to the traces of connectedness, materials, memories, and multisensory encounters that refuse to settle into straight lines and instead insist

on the layered complexity of a particular place and moment. My practices of archiving grow from this invitation: seasonal photo documentation of my growing yard and the poplar canopy, ephemeral art-making, creating place-bowls (see chapter 4), a field guide of my growing yard, and a botanical capsule where leaves from significant trees and shrubs are dried and stored in a vessel of jewelry (see chapter 4). Each of these practices becomes more than a record; they are relational sites where matter, memory, and meaning intra-act. Together, they form an ecological archive that is both scholarly and sensory, a diffractive record of knowledge in motion, shaped by the shifting rhythms of the Land and my reciprocal engagements with it.

My creative practices align with Fredriksen and Groth's (2023) view of art as collaborative and ecological, reorienting making from isolated self-expression to an ongoing entanglement with materials, locations, and more-than-human beings. For them, art emerges through attuned relationships of care between human and more-than-human participants so that crafting, gathering, and tending become continuous acts of stewardship, reciprocity, and mutual respect. This approach encourages me to view my photo sequencing, ephemeral art-making, place-bowls, and botanical capsules as unfinished documentations and unfolding gestures that mingle and pulse within an interconnected field of ecological relations. Making-with, whether through writing, walking, or art-making, are forms of what Ingold (2013) describes as "thinking through making" (p. 6), an understanding that arises while the act unfolds, as hands, senses, and materials respond to one another. I take this practice not as a way of finalizing, fixing, or preserving materials, but as the very opposite, an attunement that Bennett (2010) calls sensing the "vibrancy" in matter. In this alignment, the liveliness of more-than-human worlds invites response, reciprocity, and care. Together, these perspectives enhance my understanding of

creative work as an intra-active relationship, one that is continually shaped by the living, shifting contexts in which it takes place.

Multimodal forms of geo-storying allow me to map my encounters with more-than-human worlds, acknowledging the shared co-creation of Place. These forms are not just tools for capturing data; they are my attempt to honour the voices of more-than-human worlds, ensuring their stories are heard and respected (Triggs & Irwin, 2019). Just as desire lines emerge from repeated use, so too does my connection to Place deepen with each encounter, each sensory engagement, and each story I tell and re-tell. Ultimately, my approach to geo-storying strives to honour the intra-action between people, places, and more-than-human worlds. Through this attentiveness, reciprocity is felt in the care of becoming-with.

Figure 7

More-than-human presences on The Chickadee Trail act as witnesses and companions to the practice of geo-storying. Photographs by the author.



These forms of belonging, memory, and renewal draw me deeper into practice. What began as moments of listening and noticing along the Chickadee Trail evolved into a way of making-with, a way of telling stories that arise from its textures, its whispers, its movements. This is where geo-storying as life writing emerges.

My favourite section of the Chickadee Trail is framed by towering poplar trees, lining the pathway like a living canopy shaped by time and season. Each visit, whether on foot or skis, invites a slower rhythm, a deep breath, and an appreciation of the familiar yet ever-changing scenery. Over the years, I have charted this section, gathering moments of attunement, moments of entanglement, moments of embodied becoming-with. Using multimodal forms of geo-storying, I have mapped its textures, attending to its shifts and variations. These collected multimodal forms have become more than records; they are chartings of relation, gestures of belonging shaped by the more-than-human world.

In late spring of 2025, Manitoba entered an unforgiving wildfire season that blazed through boreal forests and prairie fields, and the province declared a state of emergency. By early June, the seriousness of the flames led the province to close every provincial park, cutting off trails, campsites, and backcountry access from public use. The closures layered onto a widespread evacuation order, as flames neared towns, and families left behind gardens, trees, valuables, and keepsakes, deepening the sense of vulnerability that spanned the human and more-than-human worlds. My movement practices were halted, and this pause magnified these ecological ruptures. Smoke drifted across the province as a heavy curtain and became a constant throughout the summer months. Smoke advisories became a constant grim reminder of how all breathing bodies, human and more-than-human alike, were breathing dangerous air. The ecological toll was immense and ongoing, marked by scorched habitats, displaced wildlife, and

altered waterways. This disturbance, both physical and sensory, highlighted the fragility and resilience of the more-than-human worlds with which we move through, revealing how climate instability not only unsettles ecosystems but also the relational patterns that sustain us all.

Although Birds Hill Park was never touched by fire, its closure marked a pause, as hiking trails around the province were shut down, allowing responders time to focus on the wildfires burning further north. That temporary absence offered space for reflection. I found myself wondering if the more-than-human beings along the trail noticed the absence. Did they register the stillness of the path, the sudden silence of human presence? Did the animals tread more freely, the birds sing without pause? Did they prefer the quiet, or do they, too, carry some recognition, even appreciation, of our being-with them? In the wake of the fire, the Chickadee Trail remained quiet, waiting, alive in memory.

The fire's presence still lingers, thick smoke drifting south, skies tinged with amber haze. I mourn for the human and more-than-human lives displaced by the flames elsewhere, for habitats scarred, for movement disrupted. The fires carve their own desire lines across distant landscapes, wild and immense; a force to be reckoned with.

After approximately one month, I returned among the familiar swaying poplar trees with a changed awareness. The trail is as it was, and yet something has shifted; its textures, its silences, the way light slips through the poplar canopy. These details seem to hold more tightly to time. These are not simply features of Place, but invitations toward presence.

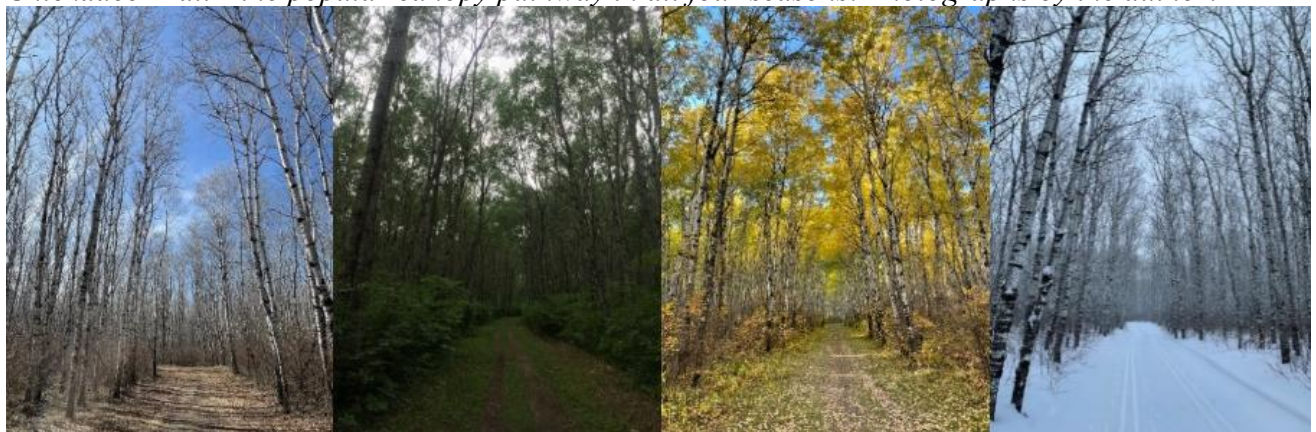
Each photograph, video, sound recording, and journal entry I once made has become a kind of cartography, a layered map of movement and memory. Even in the absence, the trail remained present, mapped through recollection, longing, and story. These mappings remind me that belonging is not only shaped through access, but through relation.

I now walk with deeper gratitude for the Place, for the pause, and for all that the more-than-human presences and forces continue to offer in their own quiet rhythms of stillness and motion. Kimmerer (2013) emphasizes the importance of reciprocity in our interactions with the more-than-human worlds, where acts of creation can serve as a form of gratitude and care for what the Land offers. Similarly, Haraway (2016) calls for practices that celebrate the entanglement of all life forms and asserts that art can serve as a bridge for encountering ecological crises and remapping our role in the world. These creative practices move beyond a human-centric perspective, recognizing the agency and wisdom of more-than-human worlds.

I'm learning that belonging is not bound by access alone but shaped through the slow and subtle reciprocity of being-with. It takes form in the gestures of noticing, in the tender acts of walking, listening, and returning. These small movements, often quiet, often overlooked, become a way of tending to relationships, of honouring the lives and patterns that shape this Place alongside my own. In this ongoing practice, I come to understand that gratitude, too, is a form of relation, a way of dwelling not just in Place, but with it.

Figure 8

Chickadee Trail—the popular canopy pathway in all four seasons. Photographs by the author.



The Poplar Canopy

The anticipation of reaching the poplar canopy pathway is felt from season to season. This section of the Chickadee Trail remains constant as a site of return, a familiar pulse beneath my hiking shoes and shifting skies.

In spring, the bare trees are etched against a clear blue sky, their pale limbs stretching upwards into the promise of renewal.

Summer drapes a thick veil of green over the path, blurring its edges and muffling my footsteps. Here, the world is lush and secretive, alive with the symphony of birdsong, the hum of insects, and the occasional rustle of small beings in the underbrush.

Come autumn, the golden leaves spill like sparks onto the trail, creating a colourful mosaic. The air cools, and every breath tastes of the earth's long exhalation.

The grip of winter; the path dampened by a hushed, snow-covered blanket. The poplars bare, black-and-white stripes etched against the white surround, and I glide on my skis into the whispered rhythm.

Each time I walk or glide through this section, my pace softens. My breathing deepens. I notice more: the movement of the poplar trees overhead, the sound of the wind, the faint shifting of dancing shadows. The trail remembers. It carries traces of every step and sound, every witness, every quiet witness to its belonging.

Here, movement is more than passing through. It is an act of listening, a becoming-with. The trail and I move together. We trade moments of belonging, moments where breath, movement, and sound entwine. It is not a solitary act, but a shared one, shaped by the textures, rhythms, and presences that animate this Place.

But now the trail rests beyond my reach. The wildfire burns far to the north, reshaping forests and consuming stories. The flames have drawn their own lines across the Land, forcing people from their homes and leaving families to wonder when, or if, return will be possible. The pulsating loss drifts on the wind. The smell of smoke and haze in the sky are constant reminders of the immense force of the flame's torched touch. I grieve for those who have experienced unimaginable loss.

I also wonder about human absence as park trails are currently closed. Do the more-than-human inhabitants notice that humans no longer walk the trails? Do they miss the sound of our steps, or do they flourish in the quiet? Do they sense our absence as loss, or as release? The trails rest now, carrying questions I can only ask from afar.

And yet, even as the trails rest from human steps, it lives on. It lives through my photos, in the sound recordings captured mid-walk, in the fragments of poetry jotted down in my phone notes. These practices tie me to this Place. They whisper that belonging doesn't end when access

is lost. They invite me to return, if only in remembrance, and to carry this trail within as I patiently wait to return.

In this way, I walk still. I walk with the whispers of the trails that no longer exist, with the echoes of its more-than-human presences and forces. Together, we continue to shape and re-shape belonging, in breath, in memory, in the quiet knowing that these Places, and all their forms of life, will find their way back. This is the resiliency of more-than-human worlds. Renewal is restored, and growth is possible, giving way back to what has been lost.

Quietness also opens space as an invitation for us humans to face the weight of our actions, the way our presence, tampering, consumption, and negligence lead to this kind of destruction. Witnessing these closures, damaged ecosystems, and immense displacement requires us to view this devastation and feel the pull toward different, kinder paths. Belonging is not entitlement but a reciprocal relationship requiring attentiveness, awareness, and stewardship. The resilience of the more-than-human world offers hope but also demands our commitment to act in ways that nurture rather than diminish the world we share. We must become better allies, moving not only with memory but with intention, care, and a readiness to respond.

Movement as Eco-Pedagogy

My movement practices are shaped by philosophies that regard walking as a creative and relational act. Manning (2012) describes movement as a generative force, “walking with the world” (pp. 29–30), a notion that deeply resonates with my encounters on the Chickadee Trail. It is not simply a path I move across, but a space that moves with and through me, a co-creator of story, rhythm, and relation. In this sense, walking becomes a mode of sensing, composing, and becoming. It allows for what Cixous (1994, 1997) describes as a slowness born of tenderness, a slowing down of the body and attention that is not passive, but an active, ethical relation. This slowness draws my attention to the delicate rustle of leaves, the thawing of ice into trickling water, and the faint traces of those who pass with me and those who have passed before me.

For me, slowness becomes a kind of pedagogy. It invites an ethical engagement and supports a curriculum lived in and through the body; in moments that arise from attending, noticing, and responding (Ulmer, 2017). In this way, movement becomes an eco-pedagogical act:

a form of inquiry and care that unfolds in reciprocity with Place (Misiaszek, 2023; Manning, 2012). Together, we move, make, and remember, creating pathways of belonging that tie body, Place, and more-than-human worlds into a shared, ongoing story (Ingold, 2011; Irwin, 2006).

Judson's *A Walking Curriculum* (2018) further grounds this view of movement as an embodied, relational practice that invites attentiveness, curiosity, and belonging. Walking becomes more than a way to move through space; it is a practice of cultivating connection, deepening curiosity, and attending to the threads that tie body and Place. It is an invitation for those who walk with place to feel their way into belonging, to listen with their whole bodies, and to form deep attachments rooted in attentiveness and care.

When I move through places that stir my creative spirit, I am guided by what Irwin (2006) describes as an “aesthetic sensibility” (p. 75): an embodied way of knowing rooted in wonder, surrender, and attunement. These sensibilities are vital to my life writing and movement practices, mapping connections between creative inquiry and ecological presence. In these moments, I am never truly alone. Even in silence, I move among more-than-human beings and forces who have long been present, shaping their own rhythms, leaving their own traces. As I hike the root-laced paths of the Chickadee Trail or glide across its snow-packed ski tracks, I enter into a world that exists beyond my own. Deer often appear at the trailhead, pausing to meet my gaze. Chickadees flit above, their calls stitching sound into the sky. Squirrels chatter in bursts, insects hum softly in the quiet spaces around me. Even in winter's hush, the trail remains alive; its snow marked by the careful tracks of those who do not sleep. Their presence reminds me: I am not passing through an empty path but moving with a world already in motion. They remind me that I shape this Place as it shapes me, that our movements are entangled, and that our presences, fleeting or enduring, leave impressions upon one another.

To walk is to engage in relational choreography. It is to move not only alongside but with—to be altered in the process. This chapter, then, is not only about the mechanics of movement, but about the openings it creates for mapping, listening, and attending deeply, and co-creating Place. In doing so, it honours the vital, active agency of more-than-human worlds.

These walks, these slow movements, these moments of noticing and recording, become ways of practicing what Kimmerer (2013) describes as reciprocity: small acts of gratitude and care that acknowledge what the Land offers and seek to give something in return, even if only in the form of attentiveness. Attentiveness is a living practice, not neutral noticing. When we engage it as an ethical choice, we invite the very possibility of change into ourselves. Our culture is often driven by efficiency, constant stimulation, and the incessant demand to take more; as a result, full attention remains rare. When we choose to bend back toward it, we grant ourselves the time to hear the quieter voices of more-than-human worlds. Re-connecting to attentiveness cultivates an embodied sensitivity that can alter how we move through, care for, and respond to Place. More-than-human presences along the trail are not backdrop or scenery, but co-participants in this ongoing choreography of movement and relation (Head et al., 2015). They shape my path just as I shape theirs, reminding me that attentiveness leads not only to awareness but to responsibility and relational care.

Pedagogical Possibilities: Noticings, Questions, and Wonderings

As this chapter draws to a close, I pause to consider what movement makes possible both for myself and for those who may choose to take up these practices. Movement is not neutral. It is shaped by access, ability, weather, terrain, and time. While my mapping practices unfolded through regular visits to the Chickadee Trail, not all readers will find themselves in proximity to a dedicated walking/skiing trail, nor will everyone feel safe or welcome in public or Provincial

parks. These limitations are important. They remind us that practices must be adaptable, grounded in place-specific realities, and the lived experiences of those engaging with them.

This chapter also leaves me wondering: How do we listen with our bodies? What might it mean to walk not toward a destination but into relational harmony? What are the responsibilities that emerge when we begin to feel ourselves not apart from Place, but entangled within it? These are not questions with easy answers. These are possibilities: to pause, to reflect, and to continue returning.

Questions That Might Help Carry You Forward

- How might movement become a practice of co-creation?
- What more-than-human presences might already be shaping your path?
- What does it feel like to move with, rather than through, Place?

Pedagogical Invitations

Movement invites possibilities. It does not require untouched landscapes or vast stretches of hiking trails. It might occur in city parks, in gardens, or on sidewalks. What matters is not where one walks, but how one attends to sound, to rhythm, to the shifting textures of presence and absence. Movement, in this way, becomes a site of noticing and of possibility.

With the closing of this chapter, the pedagogy of movement continues, no longer only through walking, sensing, and mapping, but through the tactile act of (re)placing. The next chapter enters into creative practices that hold the imprints of movement and memory: bowl-making, marking, and mapping as slow forms of becoming-with more-than-human presences and forces.

Pedagogical Possibilities

When practicing movement, we must consider **accessibility, adaptability**, and the unique realities of specific places. These factors shape our experiences, inviting deeper connections to **more-than-human** presences and forces in our surroundings.



Questions That Might Help Carry You Forward

Reflecting on Movement

Consider how **more-than-human** presences and forces influence your **daily movement** experiences.

- How might movement open into a practice of co-creation?
- Which more-than-human presences are already shaping the path beneath your steps?
- What arises when you move with Place, rather than merely through it?





Pedagogical Invitation

Engage deeply with nature through sensory engagement and mindful presence.



- *Walk as if listening is your only task.*
- *Slow down. Notice. Respond.*
- *Let the path change you.*
- *More-than-human presences and forces speak in sounds, scents, shadows, and shifts—are you listening?*

Golden Poplar Canopy

In late autumn 2024, I walked the Chickadee Trail with quiet attentiveness, open to the movement and sound that fills this pathway. The QR code is a short clip that captures a moment of this walk, an invitation to join me, to witness, and to listen to the trail as it unfolds.



(Re)Placing Practices

Forward, Along Desire Lines



Botanical Offerings

Working-with materials and remnants



Fluid Movement

Re-positioning rather than taking



Ecological Connections

Relational care



Illuminated Paths

Attending with presence and attunement

If movement is listening-with, (re)placing is holding-with—gathering what remains and shaping meaning in relation.

Chapter 4: (Re)Placing Practices

Forward, Along Desire Lines

This is not a departure from movement, but a turning toward what movement leaves behind: traces, echoes, and impressions that continue to resonate. These (re)placing practices do not offer conclusions, but open space for ongoing relations, spaces where pedagogy becomes material, reciprocal, and rooted in care. Openings often begin with questions:

- Who and what else lives here?
- What stories do trees, stones, and pathways carry?

These stories may start with a found item: a flower, a feather, a path that doesn't follow roads.

They may begin inside us: a breath taken, a shoulder released, a slow turn toward a new sound. If movement is a way of listening-with, then placing is a way of holding-with—of gathering, shaping, and co-composing meaning through embodied acts of care.

Making-With Place | Becoming-With Place

In my practice of (re)placing, I keep my focus on the ground beneath me instead of the horizon ahead. (Re)placing is a small, steady turn towards responsiveness, inviting other sights, feelings, and ways of being in. It is the slowing down, the deep breath, the barely felt shift from travelling a path to mingling with the path that allows relation to begin. (Re)placing invites me to linger with small, persistent questions: What is already here yet unseen? What ties are close yet unnamed? How can I receive and carry these stories while still holding them safe?

Winding along desire lines, trails marked with memory and motion, I keep finding that (re)placing goes far beyond shifting maps. It is relational, it is ethical, and it demands that I pay attention to the more-than-human as well as the hidden trails that guide how we gather, live, and

share knowledge. Above all, it is a small act of humility, a readiness to let Place, daily texture, and the quiet lessons of attentive listening leave their mark on me.

(Re)placing practices have become a focal point of my life writing. It asks me to revisit a moment, to circle around a story not so I restate what I said before, but so I recognize what I missed the first time, acknowledge the change, and write from those still-blurring edges of what I know. It fits with my research as an act of care, a way of making room for us to grow together, and a gentle nudge that reminds me that knowledge, like people, are always unfolding—never set in stone, always carried in relation.

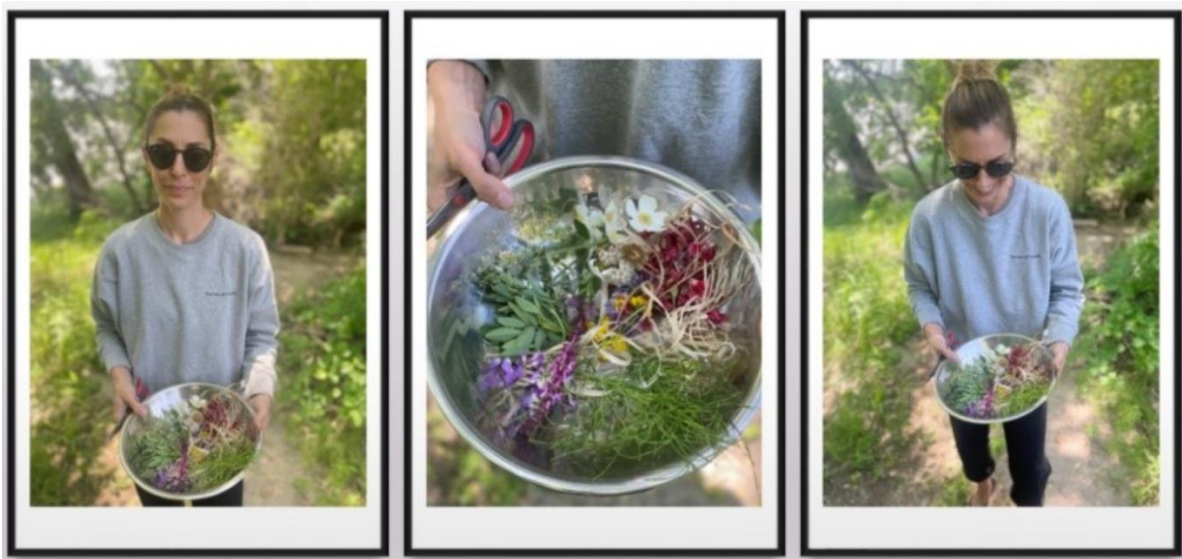
This chapter turns toward the tactile and material, toward practices that hold, carry, and reshape Place through creative engagement. My Place-bowl making is an arts-based, embodied practice that enables me to reconnect with Place in a different way. Each bowl becomes a vessel of relation, a form shaped not only by hand but by memory, movement, and more-than-human presences and forces. These creative acts emerge from a recursive understanding of eco-pedagogy, where Place is not merely a backdrop for learning but an active co-creator in the process (Misiaszek, 2023). In this way, (re)placing practices are not about resolution or product; they are about staying-with, shaping-with, and becoming-with. These bowls offer a pedagogy that moves in cycles, returning, revisiting, and remapping meaning through layered traces of lived experience. What emerges is not fixed, but fluid: a process of learning that folds time, matter, and relation into form.

My first Place-bowl came together in June 2023, gathered from what was already around me. I picked plant materials from my yard and began arranging them in a salad bowl, guided by instinct more than intention. That is where the idea of the Place-bowl first emerged. I had no plan or image of what it should become. I was drawn instead to colour, to texture, to how each piece

found its place beside the next. In that quiet process, something stirred. I began to sense how my Place could shape my voice, how making could be a way of listening, of responding, of being in relation.

Figure 9

My first Place-bowl, June 2023—the beginning stages of making-with Place. Photographs by the author.



Once my bowl was filled, I gently separated the materials, placing each into small bags to be with them more closely. I spent time holding, observing, and noticing the shape and feel of each plant, letting memory and imagination surface. Inspired by Judson’s (2018) “Metaphors” activity (p. 22), I began giving each item a name, not scientific, but felt; names that captured colour, energy, or mood. Akin to a crayon box, I labelled them: Golden Hour, Prairie Petals, Northern Lights, Earthing, and so on. These weren’t just descriptions, but invitations to be with these more-than-human materials in new ways. This naming wasn’t about ownership or categorization. It was a practice of deep noticing, a way of honouring their presence through metaphor, story, and relation.

Figure 10

Prairie crayon box created from my Place-bowl. Photograph by the author.



From this process, I composed what I came to call a Place-bowl poem (Rigey, 2023) shaped not by intention but by presence. At the time, I didn't recognize it as such, but I now understand this creative response as an act of reciprocity; a quiet listening to what the gathered materials were offering and a way of responding in return. The words came slowly, emerging from the colours, textures, and shapes I had held in my hands. In this act of making-with, the poem became more than a record; it became a gesture of relation, echoing what Kimmerer (2013) describes as a practice of gratitude and care. Through metaphor, rhythm, and reflection, the poem wove a kind of co-composition, one where the more-than-human materials and my own noticing shaped each line together.

Figure 11

Summer prairie poem inspired by my Place-bowl. Photograph by the author.



From these early art-making practices of my Place-bowl, I was inspired by Hennessey's (2022) "Ink Time" activity, a slow, tactile method of gathering natural materials from my yard and transforming them into pigment. While at the time this felt exploratory and intuitive, I now see it more clearly as a coordination: a way of making-with the more-than-human world. This process, grounded in direct engagement with Place, allowed me to witness the subtle cycles of growth, decay, and renewal that sustain these ecosystems. The act of creating paint from fallen petals, decaying leaves, and soil did more than highlight their beauty; it cultivated a deeper sense of reciprocity and relational care.

Looking back, I recognize how this practice enacted the principles of eco-pedagogy, where making becomes both response and responsibility. Kahn (2010) reminds us that eco-pedagogy exceeds mere environmental awareness; it asks us to commit politically and ethically

to ways of living that sustain and respect worlds beyond our species. He places ethical engagement at the centre, framing it as a local and open practice that moves educators and learners out of passive viewing and into actions charged with reciprocity, accountability, and care. Thus, the practice of making—whether walking, mapping, or composing—turns into a relational response and a recognition of our place within larger ecological webs. To walk, to map, to story are not merely creative acts; they are ethical moves, conditioned by the duty to notice, to honour, and to participate with the more-than-human world.

As I mixed colour into water and ground materials into form, I found myself reckoning with the ethics of my presence—of what I take, what I give back, and how creativity might honour rather than extract. Rather than centring me as the sole maker, this kind of practice invites a humility and openness to more-than-human collaboration. Irwin (2006) speaks of art as a form of relational knowing, where making becomes a space of encounter and reverence. In this way, creation becomes not only a personal act but a shared process of meaning-making and care. Haraway (2016) similarly reminds us that to live well with others—human and more-than-human alike—requires an ongoing commitment to response-ability, to staying with the trouble of our entanglements and imagining more ethical ways of being together.

Figure 12

Pigments from my Place-bowl were used to create this watercolour painting. Painting photographed by the author.



These early Place-bowl and pigment-making moments were small, quiet offerings, but they remain with me. They have become part of the larger story of my research—a story of returning, attending, and making-with. In these practices, creativity, care, and reciprocity are not separate gestures, but intertwined ways of being that shape how I now walk, write, and map Place.

Figure 13

Autumn Place-Bowl, Fall 2024. Photograph by the author.



Autumn's Inward Turn

A candle flickers beside me, accompanied by a hot cup of coffee, as I watch the sunrise over the glassy Red River. Geese gracefully float on the surface, while flocks fly overhead. I love these quiet, crisp moments.

My autumnal bowl mirrors this moment in my life. It is full of soft, delicate, fuzzy seedlings, crimson crab apples, and the soft, fading foliage of beloved shrubs and trees settling into their year-end slumber. A slow turn inward sweeps over my yard, and the same motion invites me to quiet down, be tender with myself, and treasure my own little corners without hurry.

Movement grounds me. Whether hiking a trail or wandering through my yard, I feel stress loosening its grip, and my thoughts begin to settle. Even arranging a handful of found items in a bowl for twenty quiet minutes feels like a gentle meditation. That slow rhythm eases me into the busy days of the week ahead.

I'm learning to give myself permission—to linger in spaces that spark joy, to create without purpose, to let my imagination wander. These moments, however small, are offerings. These gestures remind me that life writing does not begin on a blank page; it starts in the quiet noticings, in letting those noticings walk through me, guiding what I hold and what I make.

Life writing has become intentional for me, and I now view it as a practice of being in relation with self, time, place, and the more-than-human world. The Autumn Place-Bowl I made in Fall 2024 both served as an artifact and an invitation, anchoring my seasonal reflection and allowing my writing to unfold with a clearer purpose. It was not only shaped by the fallen leaves and wind-worn petals or the slow decay that accompanied the season's turn, but also contained stillness, observation, and care.

As I began writing, I came to understand the shifts in the ways I attend to and engage with Place, the stories it generates, and the shifts I have noticed. This became a way for me to frame a vision for my changing inquiry, one grounded in nurturing relationships, deep listening, and letting presences and forces decide what emerges. In this instance, life writing became a harmonious practice: the textures, tones, and gifts of autumn were shaped by the season, while the bowl collected these offerings and provided insight in return.

Life writing, in this way, becomes a reciprocal act, both shaped by and shaping the Places I dwell in. As Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, and Leggo (2009) write, "life writing is the pedagogical practice of composing a life in relation with others, human and more-than-human, past and present" (p. 9). It makes space for what is lived and felt to find expression on the page, while also reorienting how I listen, notice, and participate with the more-than-human world. My Place-bowl practices are material forms of what Abram (1996) calls the "more-than-human conversation"—a way of engaging with presences and forces as co-composer of meaning. Moreover, Somerville's (2008) notion of place pedagogy emphasizes the embodied, storied, and sometimes disruption of Place, calling us to dwell in ways that honour and respect the layered meaning that any one Place holds.

Rather than documenting connections with presences and forces from a distance, life writing invites entanglement. It makes space for the unpredictable, for encounters with Place that are felt and messy, and allows the more-than-human to pulsate back. (Re)placing, then, becomes not just repositioning but an ethical response where life writing is an invitation to dwell otherwise with care, attentiveness, and relational accountability.

A Storied Botanical Capsule

This is a practice of (re)placing botanicals from significant trees and shrubs throughout my growing yard as a way of honouring the quiet comfort they offer: their ever-changing ensembles, their steady growth, and their loyal belonging to this Place. These capsules hold more than dried botanicals; they carry with them the memory of seasons, the feeling of loved ones, and the silent companionship of nearby connections. Each collected botanical is part of a cherished memory and a relation sustained.

This practice is not about preserving beauty in stillness but about marking relation in motion. As I gather leaves, pine sprigs, and blossoms, I find myself drawn into a different pace of knowing, one that aligns with what Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) refers to as care time: slow, attentive, and rooted in ethical encounters. These botanicals are not specimens; they are correspondents. Their textures, colours, and seasonal shifts speak of the cycles I move with, even as I hold them in my hands. These living forms invite me to revisit a pedagogy of giving, grieving, and growing, where memory and renewal co-exist.

Ingold (2011) reminds us that to dwell is to be immersed in the materials of life, to live along the lines that the world draws. In composing with these botanicals, I move with such lines, mapping not a landscape, but a layered intimacy. The capsule becomes a site of relational

remembering; a way to story connection not only through words, but through arrangement, gesture, and the material presence of more-than-human beings.

Taylor (2017) suggests that when we pause to learn with more-than-human worlds, we begin to disrupt dominant narratives of separation and control. The botanical capsule, then, is not simply a creative act, but a pedagogical one: an opening toward humility, reciprocity, and the possibility of being taught by trees, by time, and by the quiet offerings of Place.

Figure 14

My growing yard storied through botanicals pressed onto pages of my field guide, June 2025. Photographs by the author.



From Field Guide to Canvas: Making-With Place

These Place-botanicals gathered and pressed between the pages of a field guide now find their way onto canvas; mappings of moments shaped by attention, movement, and belonging. What began as a quiet practice of noticing and honouring Place through botanical mapping has evolved into a tactile, multimodal way of making-with Place; a practice that holds its own becoming.

These (re)placing practices explore this shift from recording moments to creating with them, attending to how making can deepen relational belonging. Here, Place-bowl practices emerge as expressions of eco-pedagogy, wherein place operates not only as context but as an active participant and co-creator (Misiaszek, 2023). The bowls and canvases layered with leaves, pines, flowers, sprigs, and blossoms become more than materials; they emerge as desire lines, pathways that map connections between moments, materials, and maker. Together, they invite reflection upon the entangled pathways that link humans, Place, and more-than-human presences across moments of return and renewal.

In this sense, making is acknowledging, and acknowledging is attuning. Eco-pedagogy operates as *currere* (Pinar, 2012): a looping, recursive practice that returns, reshapes, and re-imagines itself. The gestures of pressing, placing, and preserving reveal that becoming-with is not a fixed outcome, but an ongoing contemplation, a practice of attending to and following desire lines as they surface and shift within encounters with Place. In this way, (re)placing embodies making-with as a mode of alignment, a way to deepen belonging, and an ongoing practice of responsive, reciprocal ways of becoming-with Place as a living, entangled presence.

Figure 15

Freshly cut botanicals on Canvas, June 2025. Photograph by the author.



Figure 16

Dried botanicals on Canvas, July 2025. Photograph by the author.



Pressed in Place

It started with a stroll around my yard, a gentle pull, a quiet listen, knowing where to go. I made my way from a tree to a shrub, attracted to the peaceful solace that each offered. They are not simply trees; they are companions to the seasons of my life. I collected leaves, twigs, pines, and blossoms. Each one held a tale, a reason, a memory within my heart and head.

My grandparents come to mind when I see the ninebark with its deep burgundy leaves. They deepened my roots and showed me the importance of family, and their affection continues to flourish in the blossoms. The walnut tree gives me pause as I think of Amy, recalling her steadiness in the intricate swaying leaves. For my mom and me, the lilacs were planted side-by-side so we would grow together, connected always, our lives blooming in spring fragrance. Hudson is soft-leaved and golden orange, a stately linden, full of joy and charm. And my love, Paul, is the soft pine; his grounded presence and steady rhythm make music in the everyday. His fingers know strings, but also tenderness, and I sense his warm embrace within the branches.

The collected botanicals were rested on canvas, where I pressed them gently, as if crafting an offering. Not an arrangement, but a gathering of belonging. I let them dry for a month, so they could rest in silence. Over time, colours softened, edges curled, and traces were left. What remained was a capsule of care. A decomposing artwork shaped by memory, love, and the gentle grief that stems from change.

What grows here grows with me. My intent is not to preserve what was, but honour and archive what is. Each leaf marks a moment. Each branch carries breath. These trees and shrubs are part of my becoming. They give, and I grow. I care for them, and they remind me how to care for others.

Pressed onto the canvas are the stories of those I love, the ones who have gone, and the ones who remain close. It reminds me that memory is not only something we carry; it is something we nurture, Place by Place, leaf by leaf. Soon, these dried botanicals may return to my yard from where they came. They will soften, break down, and become part of what comes next. Their decomposition will nourish new roots, new growth, as a quiet continuum. In this way, the capsule does not close. It opens. It gives back. And the cycle begins again.

From Capsule to Keepsake

I placed each dried botanical into a copper bowl, and with a wooden muddler, gently ground bits into a textured mash—flaky, powdery, sticky, and sharp at once. When the consistency felt right, I returned the mixture to a simple plastic bag, knowing I would save some

as a keepsake for another time. This small gesture becomes an intimate form of remembrance, an organic memento, tender in its simplicity.

Figure 17

The botanical-ground mixture. Photograph by the author.



The mash might one day be kept in jewelry, stored as potpourri, suspended in resin, or scattered and returned to the Land. However it is held or released, it offers a quiet way to keep those we love close.

The dried botanical capsule is a gesture of maintaining a growing yard of trees and shrubs that represent beings that are and were meaningful to me. Being called to each one and preserving an offering from their now botanical remnants is a practice to keep them that much closer. I think about keeping all botanical companions close to my heart in the form of jewelry. I think about people who may have to move and want to take memories of their plants, shrubs, and trees with them. I also think about holding time as a way of honouring the growth around me. This capsule of remembrance connects me to the more-than-human world; it represents reciprocity for the growth and companionship of the trees and shrubs that surround me, and in

the end, what is not used is (re)placed. The idea of adorning my growing yard as jewelry, worn close to my heart, turned into a piece I co-designed with a friend and will cherish forever.

Figure 18

Botanical capsule vessel necklace containing remnants of my growing yard. Photograph by the author.



This practice of creating a botanical capsule is a form of “photosynthetic mattering” (Myers et al., 2023, p. 268), a quiet invitation to attune to how plants carry memory and meaning in their slow unfolding. It acknowledges the stories we co-create with these botanicals. In gathering, grounding, and holding these botanical companions, I stay close to those who grow or have grown alongside me, marking time by scent, texture, and seasonal return. It is an act of care and presence that unfolds in rhythm with what Marder (2013) describes as “Plant-thinking—not merely thinking about plants, but thinking according to the plants—growing, spreading, branching out” (p. xvi). This is a way of thinking with and learning from the quiet persistence of plants and how they open space as active participants in memory, ethics, and storytelling. These capsules hold more than dried remnants; they cradle the weight of memory, the tenderness of

tending, and the gentle continuum between growth, decay, and new becoming. Whether kept, worn, or (re)placed, these botanicals participate in a cycle that honours what has been and what continues to take root.

Pedagogical Possibilities: Noticings, Questions, and Wonderings

The aim of this research is not to provide answers, but to expand the possibilities for noticings: subtle impressions which are often felt and sometimes ephemeral, both in movement and stillness, and in relation with other beings and forces. The pedagogical possibilities presented here are the result of sustained effort made through observation. While walking, writing, pressing, and making, I was able to discern how Places guide, how memories root in soil, and how grief and growth are intertwined processes. These possibilities are not instructions, only invitations. They have emerged as seasonal and situated practices of becoming-with Place. They are personal gestures which may encourage others to thoughtfully consider how to nurture their own (Re)Placing practices.

Through working-with and composing-with my “growing yard,” I came to understand how education can begin in a garden, how a single fallen leaf may serve as a lesson in impermanence, and how a path forged by footsteps invites contemplation beyond the confines of the classroom. These noticings reside within field guide pages and beside poems, in the elegant curve of desire lines, and dried botanical imprints. They serve as offerings to listen and respond while coexisting with more-than-human worlds.

Every opportunity presented comes with its own restrictions.

My practices are from a singular perspective and deeply rooted. They do not attempt to represent others. There are silences within this work, missing pieces, and intricacies that go

beyond what I can contain here. But within these silences are ways of inviting us to respond to gaps, to listen attentively, and to be receptive to that which may take shape when we attempt to remain close to the ground.

Questions That Might Help Carry You Forward

Not all questions are meant to be answered, only carried. Here are some that weigh on me:

- What does it mean to be *with* Land, rather than simply being *on* it?
- How might embodied, slow care emerge through daily movements, gestures, and pauses with Place?
- In what ways can we (Re)Place grief within our lives and learning atmospheres, not as something to solve or rush through, but as something to honour, to hold, and to walk with?

Although I don't have answers for all these questions, I intend to linger with each as I continue to move forward.

Pedagogical Invitations

Pedagogical invitations emerge not as directives but as openings; they nudge us to step into a deeper relationship with a Place, its memories, and the more-than-human worlds around us. The gestures are quiet and fleeting: a leaf laid down on the ground waiting to blow away, a pressed wildflower arranged on a weathered canvas, co-created by presences and forces beyond human touch.

My own (Re)Placing practices shape these invitations: gathering botanicals not to catalogue them, but to be with them; life writing not to arrive at a resolution, but to notice what arises along the way. They are rooted in practices of reciprocity, in learning that is slow, sensory, and situated.

To welcome pedagogy like this is to wonder:

- What truths emerge when we tune in and listen with more-than-human worlds?
- In what ways can our approaches to teaching, learning, and sharing knowledge become an opening rather than a checklist of outcomes?

Each gesture asks us simply to be with learning, not to tame it. These practices honour the partial story, the unfinished thought, the decomposing, making room for the kinds of knowing that can't always be measured but are deeply felt. Let these words invite you to follow your own paths of care and connection. Gather, nurture, and give back, leaf by leaf, step by step.

This work is deeply personal and contextual; it cannot claim to speak for others or for all Places. There are absent voices, unfilled gaps, and complexities that extend beyond what I can encompass here. Yet within these limitations remains an invitation to notice what is missing, to listen more deeply, and to remain open to what might emerge when we stay grounded.

Pedagogical Possibilities

(Re)Placing Practices: Making-with more-than-human

Harmonious Gathering

- Quiet listening
- Seasonal and sensory engagement
- Attentive noticing



Rooted Perspective

- Personal and situated practices of becoming-with Place
- Attuned and embodied gestures

Questions That Might Help Carry You Forward

As you deepen **your relationship** with more-than-human beings, attend to how these presences and forces are shaped through **slow care** and a pedagogy of **giving, grieving, and growing**, where memory and renewal co-exist.



Not all questions are meant to be answered, only carried.

Engaging with Place and Memory

Pedagogical Invitation

*Gather, nurture, and give back,
leaf by leaf, step by step.*

Invite Attunement

Encourage deep listening to
**the more-than-human
whispers**

Cultivate Connection

Foster relationships with
more-than-human beings

Attunement for Next Steps

Mapping Otherwise

Remain open to what might emerge when we stay grounded.

Embracing Absence

Honouring what remains **unsaid** and **unseen**.

Cultivating Openness

Listening deeply to what might **emerge**.

Engaging with Place

Rooted in context yet **aware of its limits**.

Honouring Relationality

Holding complexity with **attentive ongoing care**.

Chapter 5: Mapping Otherwise

To map otherwise is to linger with what stirs within and around; what comes softly into the corner of the eye, what remains after what is known is taken away. Listen differently to follow the whispers, vibrations, and memory instead of the lines marked by certainty. The maps that arise in such listening do not lead to fixed conclusions or final destinations, but to relations. In this sense, mapping is not a completed chart but an open invitation, a slow tuning that unfolds between companions of more-than-human presences and forces, and is held by small, persistent, everyday acts of care.

I present provocations rather than answers—only openings and invitations. I lean into the gestures of teaching with the gifts that come when life writing is woven into a practice of ecological reciprocity. Mapping otherwise asks us to move with the Land instead of over it, to feel curriculum not as content poured into waiting minds, but as a trail co-created by every step—human and more-than-human, visible and concealed. These are desire lines of a different order, mapped not by the pull of a destination, but by the pulse of relation itself. These vibrations are guided by key questions:

- What becomes possible when we move with care?
- How does well-being shift through relational pedagogy?

This approach to mapping invites us to remain with questions that refuse closure. It invites us to pay attention to the cracks where something else grows, to linger in the tension between knowing and becoming, and to consider how teaching might take its shape from decay, seasonal rhythms, and the chirp of a chickadee. As we map these lines, we learn to regard mapping not as an act of enclosing a site, but as a way of co-becoming with it.

To map otherwise is also to attend otherwise—not only in solitude but in the entanglements of daily encounters, gestures, and quiet exchanges. This attentiveness becomes an act of mapping: walking the thawing river’s edge, gathering the leaves that mark traces of loved ones, recognizing the way clouds lose and find their forms. This aligns with Manning’s (2016) idea of thought in the act, “pathfinding in the making” (p. 41). Knowing is not a possession but an event that unfolds as movement and awareness weave together. In this light, to attend-with is a relational motion. We co-think and co-witness with more-than-human presences as a way of becoming-with.

Movement is what invites this awareness. Walking with softness and openness, we loosen the grip on fixed ends and follow what softly calls: the canopy of poplar trees, the narrow desire lines that dissolve into the trees, the crunch of leaves underfoot. Springgay and Truman (2018) name these affective contours, those small, intense moments that “disorient, agitate, and provoke” (pp. 83, 138), and in their wake we find openings for wonder, for thoughtful stillness, for ways of knowing that did not yet exist. Such contours are desire lines—countless uncharted paths marked by a response from presences and forces.

Mapping otherwise is responsiveness. Not only to learners, but to Place, to seasons, to stories rooted in the Land. This stance asks us to pause before naming, to listen before inferring. Ingold (2011) reminds us that paths are trajectories of becoming, not pre-drawn lines. To teach in this way is to allow the Places we walk, the plants we press, and the winds that travel through our bodies to teach us in turn. It is a pedagogical motion—open, unfolding, alive.

Nxumalo (2016) uses the phrase “situated common worlds” to invite us to listen beyond human voices, to traveling ants, decaying blossoms, to gentle rainfall, and the pulse of the river.

More-than-human worlds are always entangled. Mapping otherwise means co-composing with these presences and forces, charting lines that curve with care, with complexity, with relation.

Therefore, eco-pedagogy is shaped by reciprocity. It is an open invitation to move-with, to follow what is becoming, to let inquiry curve toward care, and to learn with the companionship of more-than-human worlds. Life writing is both an act of looking back and an act of making-with. It turns memory into rich practices that grow from tenderness. This work enables well-being and teaching to evolve together, generating new ways of engaging that are slow, imaginative, and intentional, centered on responsiveness and on valuing process as deeply as product.

The invitation to readers and educators is simple yet carries a powerful depth: pay attention to the desire lines already around you. Slow down. Listen. Move with an intentionality rooted in wonder. You are being asked to notice the faint trails that quietly carve your daily path: the bright sparks of joy, the brief pull of resistance, the gentle weight of fatigue, the hush of renewal. Desire lines do not emerge overnight; they are pressed into Place, repeatedly, through the careful turning toward whatever feels needed yet so often unnamed.

This is not a prescribed map of how your day must unfold; it is an invitation to walk differently in the hush of an altered rhythm. Reconsider well-being not as a checklist of self-care strategies, but as a relational practice—stories that arise with your surroundings, with each question posed by a student, with the rhythm of your own breath, with the quiet gift of the present day. In this light, the work of teaching becomes an entangled movement: notice, tend, and linger long enough to be altered by what you have witnessed.

You are not separate from the more-than-human world; you are becoming-with it. The daylight that pools on your classroom floor, the snow that follows in on students' boots, the bird call that slips through a cracked window during your prep—these are the daily, almost invisible noticings. These small noticings are not secondary to the lesson; they are the curriculum, quietly waiting for us to notice they already are.

To follow your own desire lines is to resist the pull of efficiency and certainty, and instead move toward a pedagogy that is reciprocal, responsive, and alive. It is to teach not only from a Place of knowledge, but from a Place of wonder, vulnerability, and relation. In this movement, we make space for slowness. We let care guide us. We open ourselves to the possibility that teaching, too, can be a practice of co-becoming.

This research approach asks us to linger, to listen with our whole bodies, and to engage with Place, pedagogy, and well-being in ways that are relational, responsive, and attentive to the more-than-human. It gently draws our gaze toward the everyday: the paths our feet touch, the stories we carry like seeds, and the presences and forces we are co-becoming with.

Through eco-mapping, we begin to sense that Place is not merely a backdrop, but a vibrantly participating companion in our becoming. The act of mapping then shifts from mere representation to a practice of noticing and of care; it becomes a tender attending to the Land's layered memories, gifts, and subtle changes. Our maps refuse prescribed routes; instead, they arise from the quality of our encounters and the depth of our attending. They nudge us to notice the easily missed—to chart the moments of connection, reciprocity, and response as they take shape.

Through movement, a heightened sense of awareness opens pathways for the more-than-human world to present itself, to be felt—through the stir of the wind in trees, the rhythm of

breath, the hum and buzz along the trail—the fullness of presences and forces gathers, already entangled. Walking is both a practice and a tender metaphor: a slow revealing of knowledge woven in relation and shaped by the more-than-human worlds that surround. Movement slips beyond the bounds of certainty. It asks us to be awakened to the now, to bend gently with the moment, to wonder what arises when we remove fixed endpoints and instead map the quiet, living rhythms of Place.

Through (Re)Placing, we learn that belonging is not a destination; it is endlessly remade in the hush between an arrival and a departure, in the small gestures that mirror back, and in the courage to linger among unanswerable questions. (Re)Placing turns away from the lure of a finished product and toward the ephemeral; of listening to where we stand and to how our being entangles with others. It invites us to honour the co-composition with more-than-human that shape the next, gentler, possible way of co-creating.

In following our own desire lines, we begin to understand mapping not as charting Place, but as listening-with, moving-with, making-with, and becoming-with. Each practice—eco-mapping, movement, and (Re)Placing—curves into a pedagogy that does not seek arrival, rather attentiveness, attunement, and reciprocity. What emerges is not a final destination, but an ongoing invitation: to notice, to tend, to be changed by the more-than-human worlds we move with and in. Together, these paths map the desire lines of curiosity that refuse closure, that choose to stay open to the kind of movement that is ethical, to the kind of change that is mutual, and to the continual practice of becoming-with.

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