Poetry for Environmental Reflection
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1. Abstract
Our goal is to encapsulate the interconnectedness between our scientific studies of the environment and use poetry to bring awareness to climate change. Through the instrument of poetry, we hope to forge a union of purpose and assist in creating new narratives and metaphors that help cope with the emotional weight of our ever-changing climate. We will reflect on our evolving relationship with the natural world by recognizing destruction, inspiring action, and utilizing Ignatian Spirituality as an avenue for hope.

In "The Art of Poetic Inquiry", Anne McCray Sullivian discusses how poetry allows the brain to comprehend complex emotions and weigh heavy choices. The capability of poetry to process knowledge can be a useful method in dealing with the burden of climate change. Poetry has the power to offer different lenses and worldviews, and it can catalyze an emotional response to a seemingly insurmountable impacts of the Anthropocene era, spread environmental awareness through provoking narratives and metaphors that help cope with the emotional weight of climate change.

2. Guided Reflection
As you follow the red arrows around Figure 1, we hope to plant a seed of awareness that grows roots of scientific knowledge and meditative reflection. We hope that growth stems into courage to acknowledge the impact humans have on the environment and allowing that emotion to blossom into creative expression. In our own reflection of these works, we found comfort in poems that confront our own emotional struggles with climate change.

3. Fate of a Deciduous Tree by Madi Palmquist
Through the wilting and colors change, grew a stubborn tree that waits for the first freeze to let the last leaf go.

No change in substance nor shift or mind, could stop the winter snow.

For the tree knows of its downfall, a losing game.

But maybe holding on to that last leaf, makes it feel like spring again.

4. Broken Necks by Carly Fournier
Imagine this overwhelming feeling.
An internal compass so meticulous yet, it does not warn me about the buildings you have put in my path.

Buildings with massive windows yet, I cannot see.
Windows, in which I cannot comprehend.

My hollow bones break as I fly full-speed-ahead into what I thought was more habitat.
But was just a reflection of that vegetation in the glass.

Imagine having evolved on this planet for sixty million years, that isn’t happening fast enough for me to even stand a chance against the humans and their big cities.

Imagine the thud students have heard as my body slams against the glass.
Imagine students placing me into a bag, in a lab, in a freezer. Imagine my body being used for science instead of breeding at my migration destination.

Thousands of deaths that could have been prevented.
But I cannot speak and tell the humans these things.

If only they knew how to listen.

5. The Butterfly by Arun Kolatkar
There is no story behind it.
It is split like a second.
It hinges around itself.

It has no future.
It is pinned down to no past.
It’s a pun on the present.

Its a little yellow butterfly.
It has taken these wretched hills under its wings.

Just a pinch of yellow,
It opens before it closes
And it closes before it opens

Where is it?

6. God's Grandeur by Gerard Hopkins
The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ozone of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

7. Sources
The-Butterfly-by-Arun-Kolatkar
- St. Francis Image: http://assets.stickpng.com/images/5bbd9f72fe7a02cf8d9f55b.png