

Volta: Earth Day Theme Writing Prompts

- Take 10-15 minutes to walk outside, making a list of all the things you see, hear, taste (maybe?), touch and smell. Use the words you have written down as a vocabulary list: how many of those words can you use in a 10-15 line poem? Can these words express an emotional state without ever mentioning that emotion by name?
- Write a poem from the perspective of something in our natural world. What concerns does that thing have? What gives it pleasure? Does anything scare the thing, or make it laugh, or make it cry? How does the thing go about its regular day, and how is its day the same or different than your own? If this thing could tell you (or the wider world something), what would it say?
- Think about types of life that are underappreciated by most humans. Write a poem that celebrates one or more things that people don't currently see as special or beautiful. Use all of your senses to help your readers see this life in a new way. Try to use simile and metaphor to create new connections that might help people better understand and appreciate this life.
- Research an environmentalist who has made major contributions to our planet, and then write an epistle, a poem in the form of a letter, to that environmentalist. Praise them for work they have accomplished, ask for their opinions on a current environmental issue, or share your ideas on protecting the earth. (Another option: write a letter to the planet, asking it whatever questions you might have about its long life!)
- Write a poem about the most beautiful setting you have seen in your life. After you have finished your first draft, pick one or two lines that could serve as jumping off points for something you think about a lot in your life today. Add in a line or two at each of these places that asks a question you have been thinking about, or expresses an idea you have been thinking about.
- Write a narrative (story) poem about a plant taking over the world, or a man turning into a mushroom, or...be creative, gross, funny. Be over the top, or pretend like what is happening in your story is no big deal.
- Write a poem where each line is dedicated to a new fact you have learned about nature. These can range from anything such as the average weight of an asteroid, which plants and animals are invasive, or what new plant or animal went extinct or was discovered today.
- Wendell Berry ends his poem "The Peace of Wild Things": "I rest in the grace of the world, and am free." What is the grace of the world to you? Write about the grace of the world as it relates to nature with a poem titled, "The Grace of the World."

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.