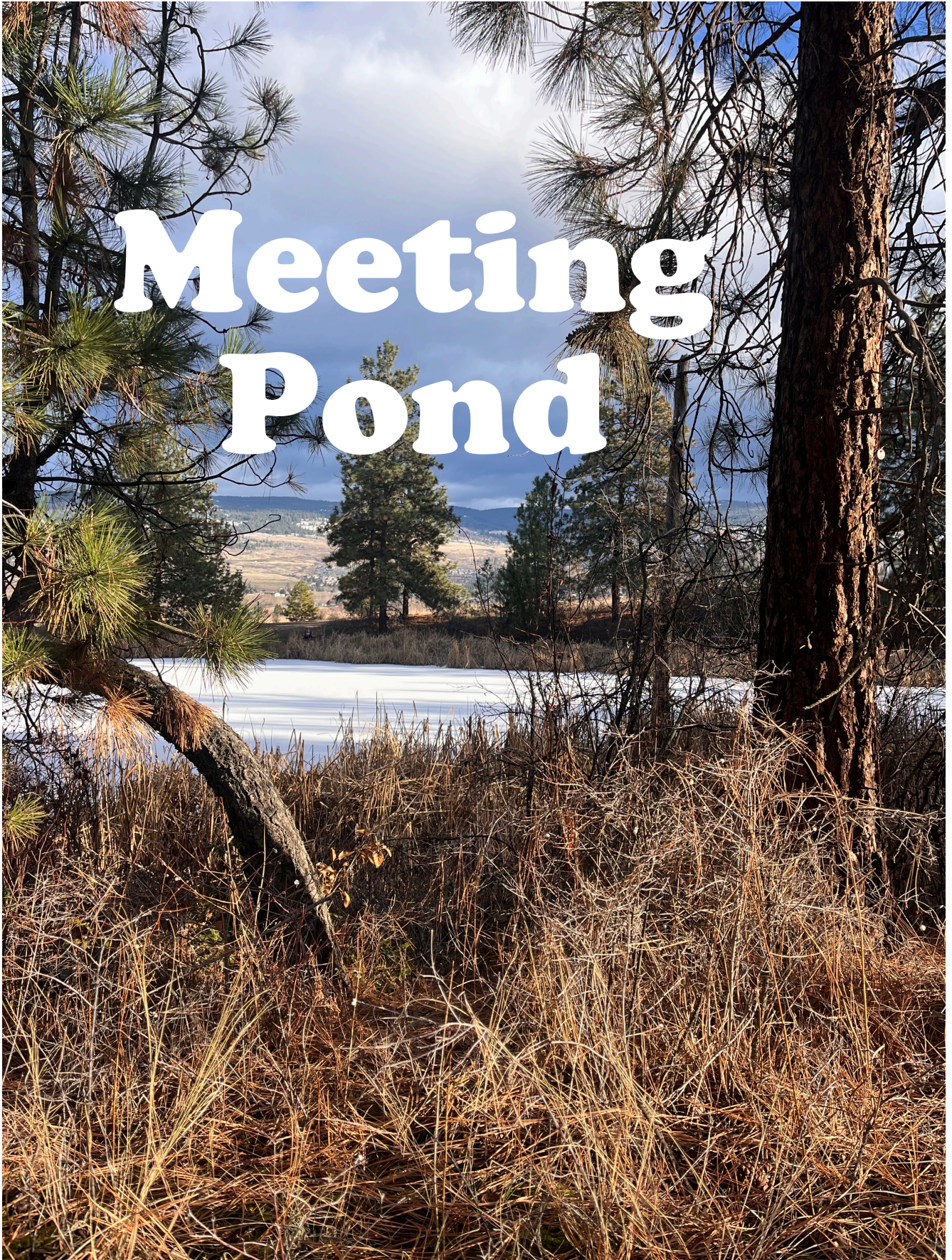




Meeting Pond

Photo by Mozelle Bertelsen

How do we come to know a place? Pond is a place many of us have already encountered during our studies at UBCO. This winter, we have been invited to spend more time here—arriving with new curiosities and practices for understanding this place differently.

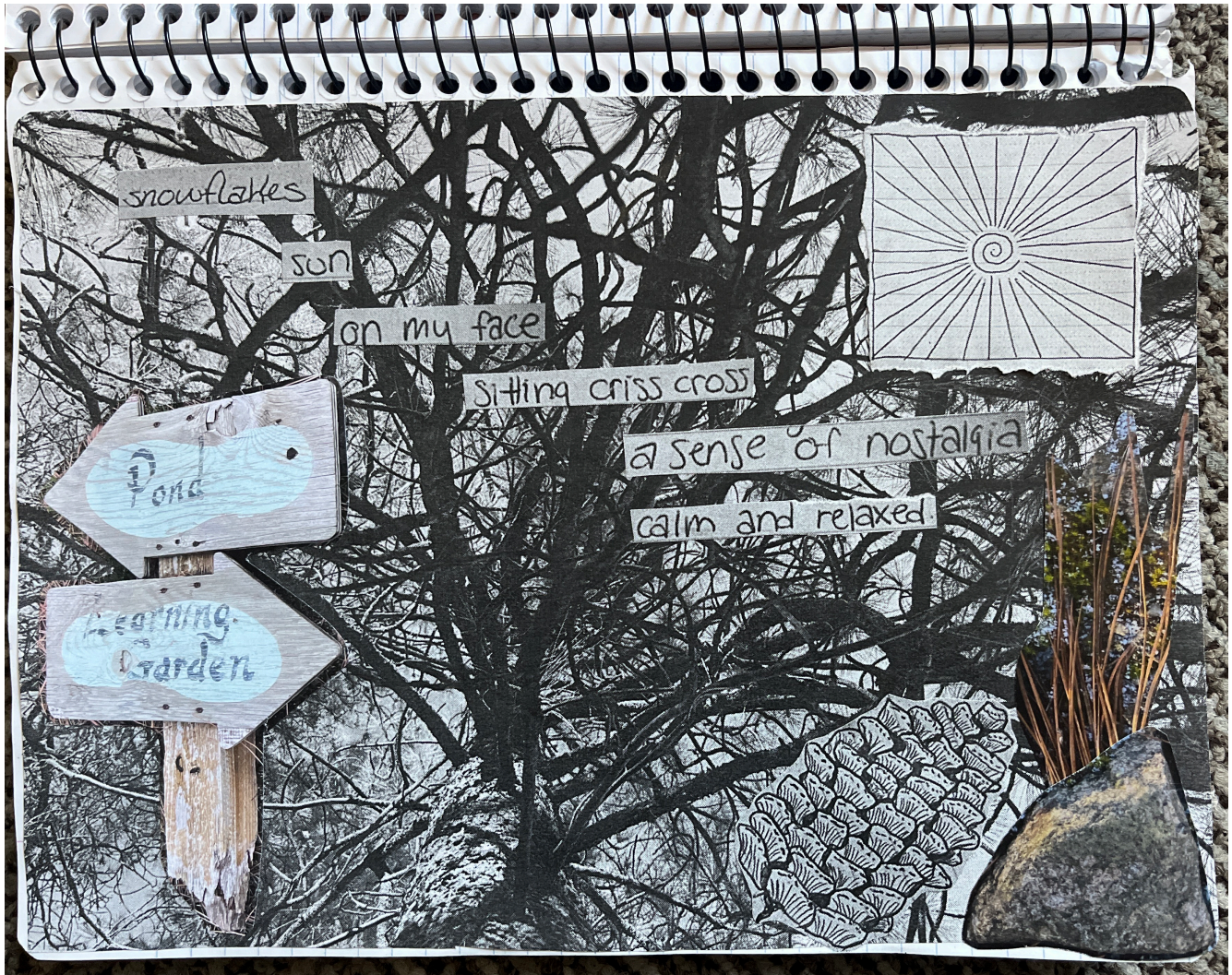
We have wondered: Do we have permission to be here? What does Pond want us to know? What power relations are at play here? What other beings, forces and processes does Pond's existence depend on? How can we listen and attune to Pond's desires and needs? Arriving at Pond, we bring our own positionalities, histories, memories and agendas. Many different stories emerge.

A research method always includes the method and the research object, but it also includes the researcher as a determining factor.

This chapbook was developed as part of *SUST/CULT 304: Place-based Methods for Interdisciplinary Research*, an undergraduate course designed as part of a project on *Access and Inclusion in Environmental Humanities Research*, funded by UBCO's ALT-2040 program. Researchers included Astrida Neimanis, Natalie Forssman, Daisy Pullman, Haeda Gaide, Emilie Ovenden and Madeline Donald. Blair Weber and Julia Jung have contributed to its implementation.

Thanks to all of the students in SUST/CULT 304 in 2024/25 and 2025/26 for meeting pond with openness and curiosity.

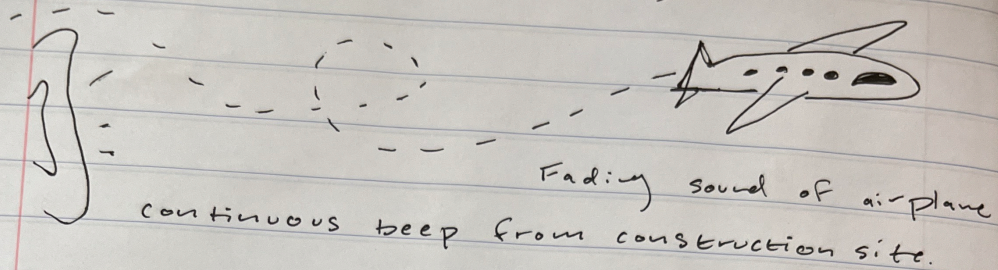
1. Listening



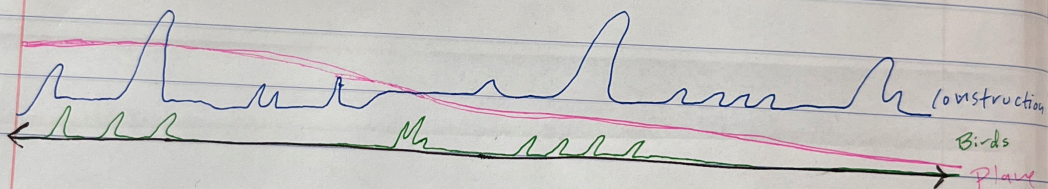
Mozelle Bertelsen

How can we listen with more than our ears? What does “listening” include?

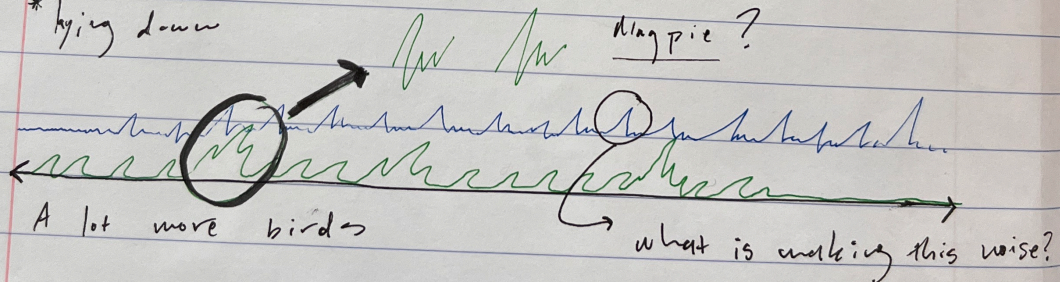
① Listening, Attuning



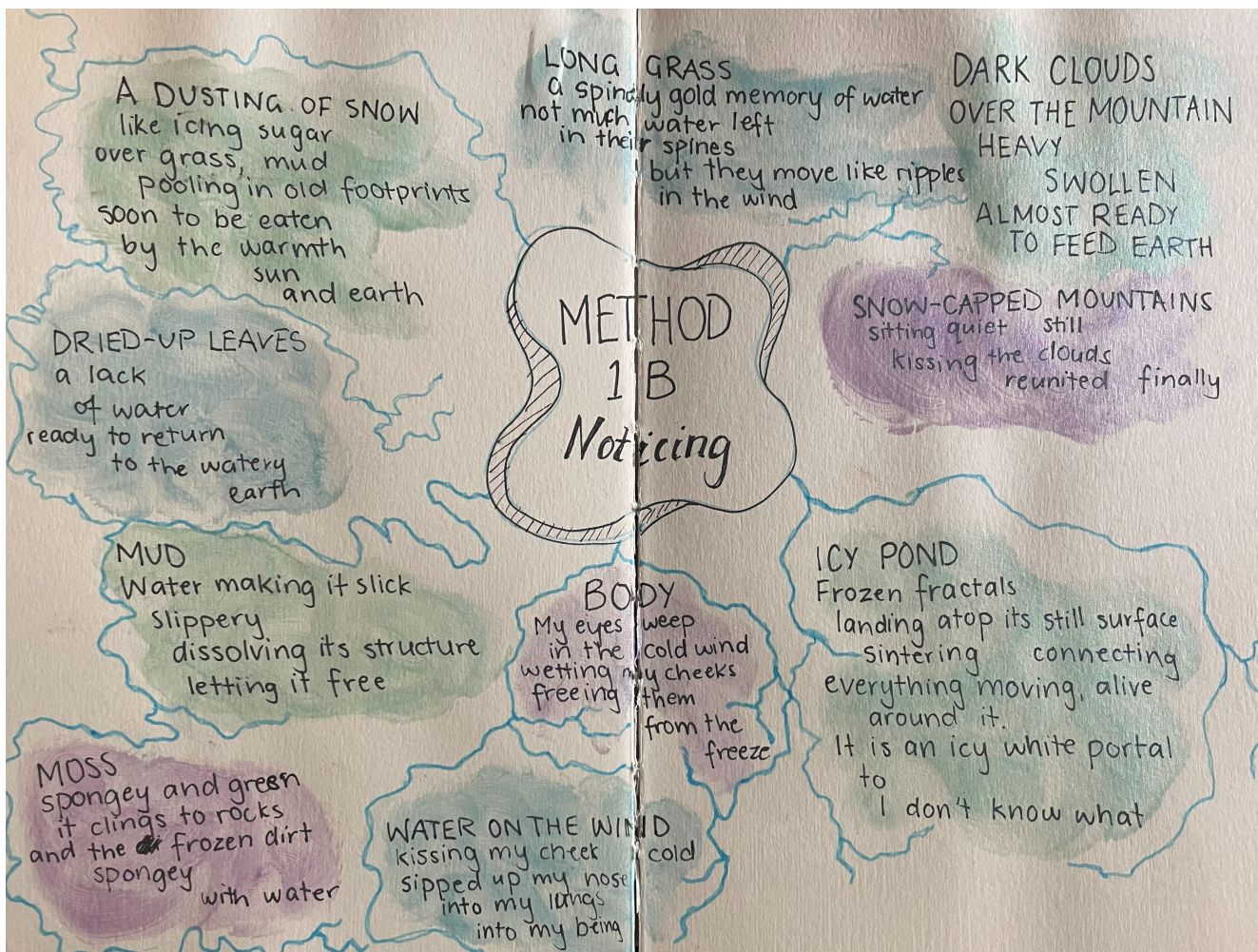
② Attempt at sound waves



③ *lying down



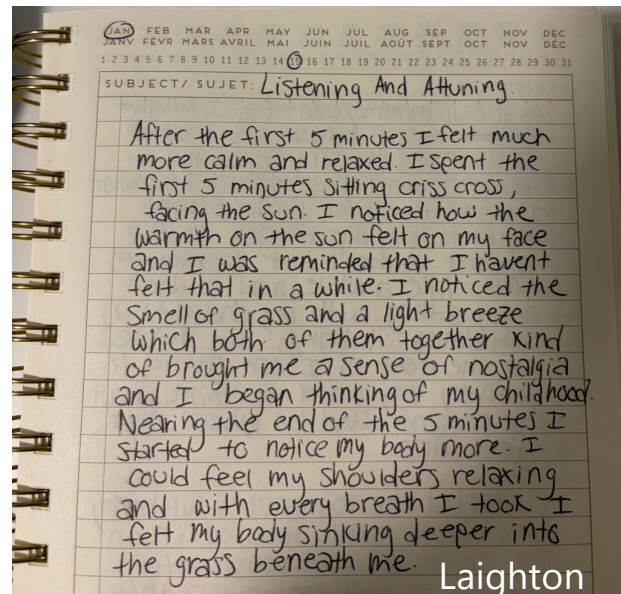
What sounds am I unable to hear?
→ underground, mycellium



Ally Shorter



I felt like the trees were reaching for each other, as though they were happy to be in each other's company. – photo & text by Maaïke Houtstra



During my time at Old Pond yesterday, I sat between a very cold stop and a bright spot where when I turned right, I was directly in the range of the sun. Alongside the construction noise and the noise of the buses, I felt that both myself and the Old Pond were in between feelings and future transformations. – Soha



Nimrat Kaur Dhaliwal

Connecting to the statements "water movements, pathways resiliency and power teach us who we are and who we can be as people," and "water will always find a way around obstructions, under and over and through," finding this small patch of water bracketed by the destruction that is construction. I felt that this patch exemplified these statements perfectly. I see resilience in its quiet humility, yet powerful presence. The water here makes itself known. It refuses to be ignored, and demands that it be worked around. - Nimrat Kaur Dhaliwal

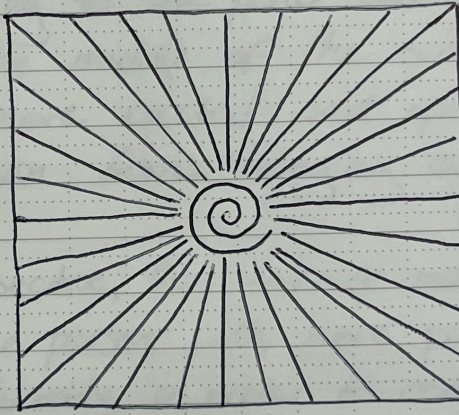


Liv Utigard

Laying in the grass, enjoying the light breeze and unseasonably warm sun, what struck me was how little I could hear what I was expecting to hear. The distant highway hum, the whir of plane engines, bustling and beeping of construction sites; any non-human sounds were like whispers in a room of yells. Struggling to hear the small fragments of birdsong and the wind rustling seed-heads next to my ears, "am I welcome here?" feels an odd question to ask. Not for any lack of life or perceived consciousness in the place, but because asking a place so subdued by human authority this question feels about as genuine as a paying customer asking the consent of the trafficked; in other words, can the subjugated actually consent to those in the positionality of the subjugator? Let alone genuinely welcome? And should my tuition (among that of many others) one day go to scraping this small meadow of its life, root systems, nutrient and carbon rich soil for something more profitable, what would my personal intentions there have mattered? There have been many woods, canyons, mesas, which I have felt either welcomed or unwelcome by; places which despite innate human presence, I believe, have not lost their power; I don't feel the same for this one.

- Jennifer Blake

the strongest thing i noticed was the sun on the inside of my eyelids. at first it was very welcoming and then it wasn't enough to counter the coldness



at my back and the sounds that i didn't mind before which had started to bother me. listening as "a relinquishment of knowing" (Kannigieser)

Jett



This was the setup that I had when practicing this method. It was a sunny but chilly day, so I had a warm coffee accompanying me while listening. - photos & text by Ria Kaeley





Gabrielle Luedke-Nichols

“What kinds of places deserve attunement and consent? would you ask a biology lab room permission the same way you would a forest? A classroom? your house? ...

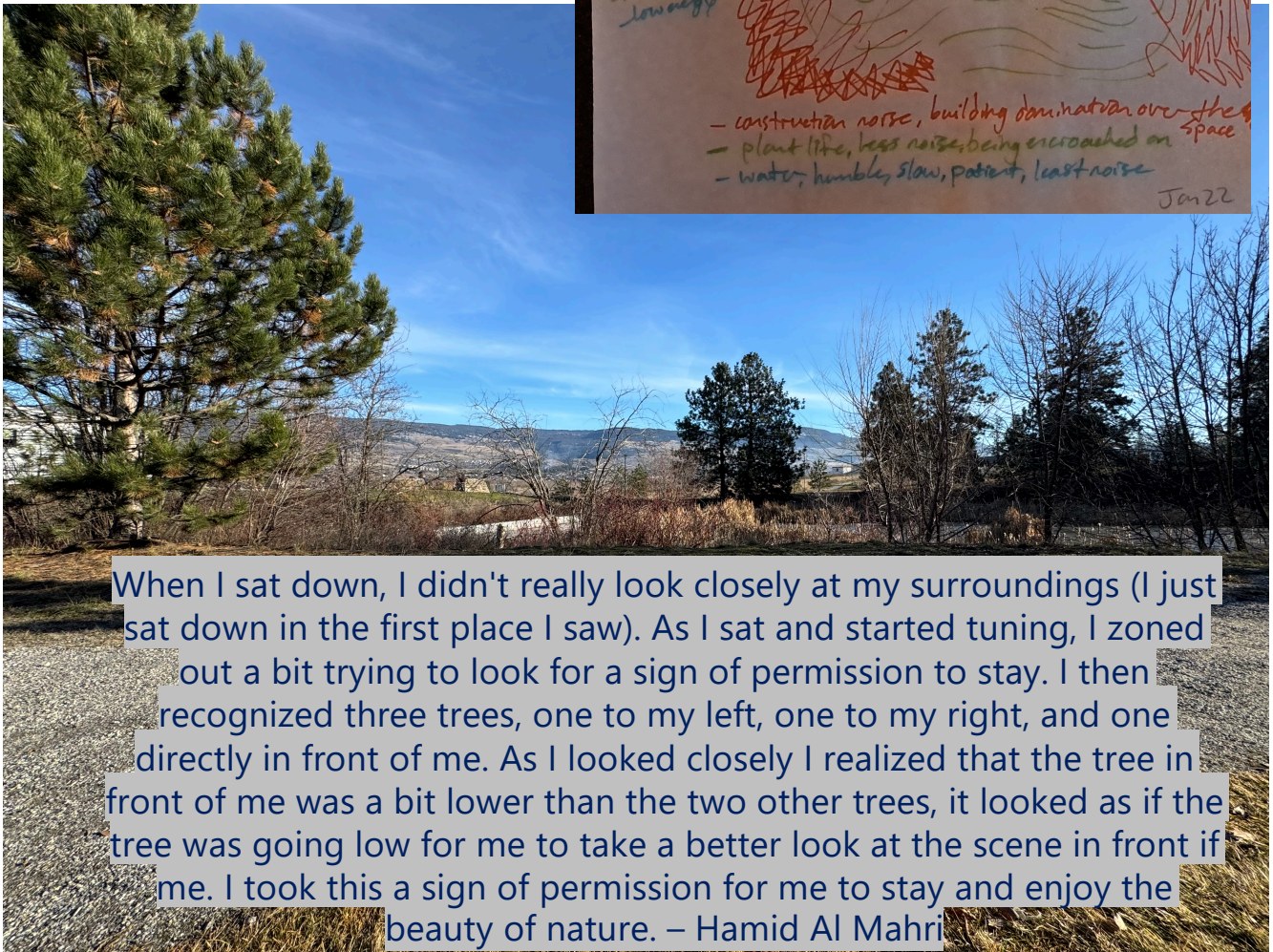
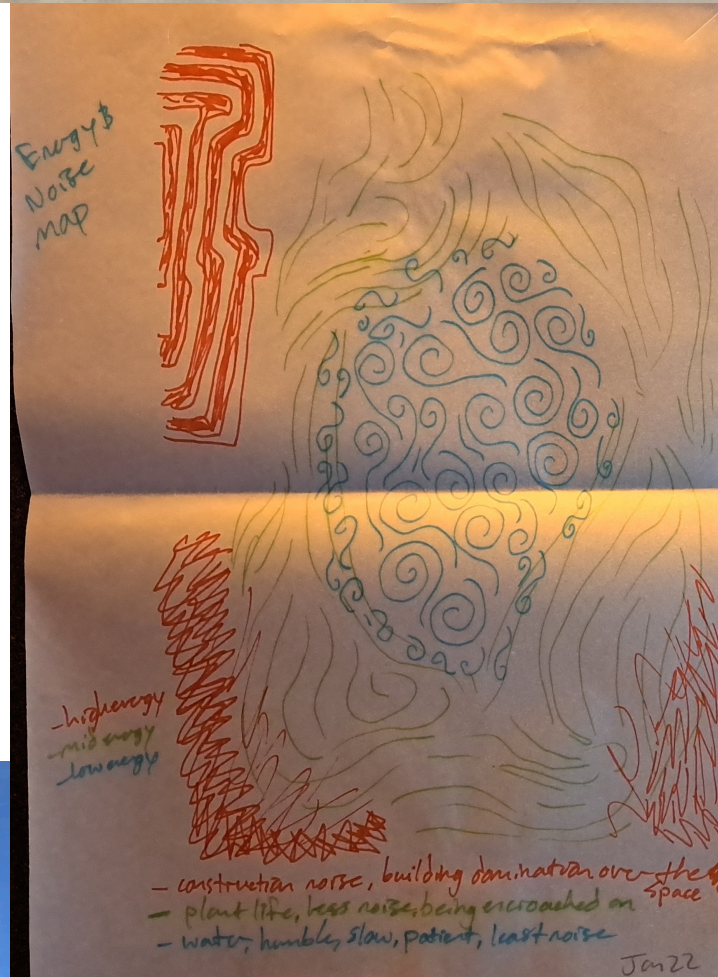
... if a single tree wants you to leave but the pond welcomes you, does the individual negate the consent of the whole?” - AJ



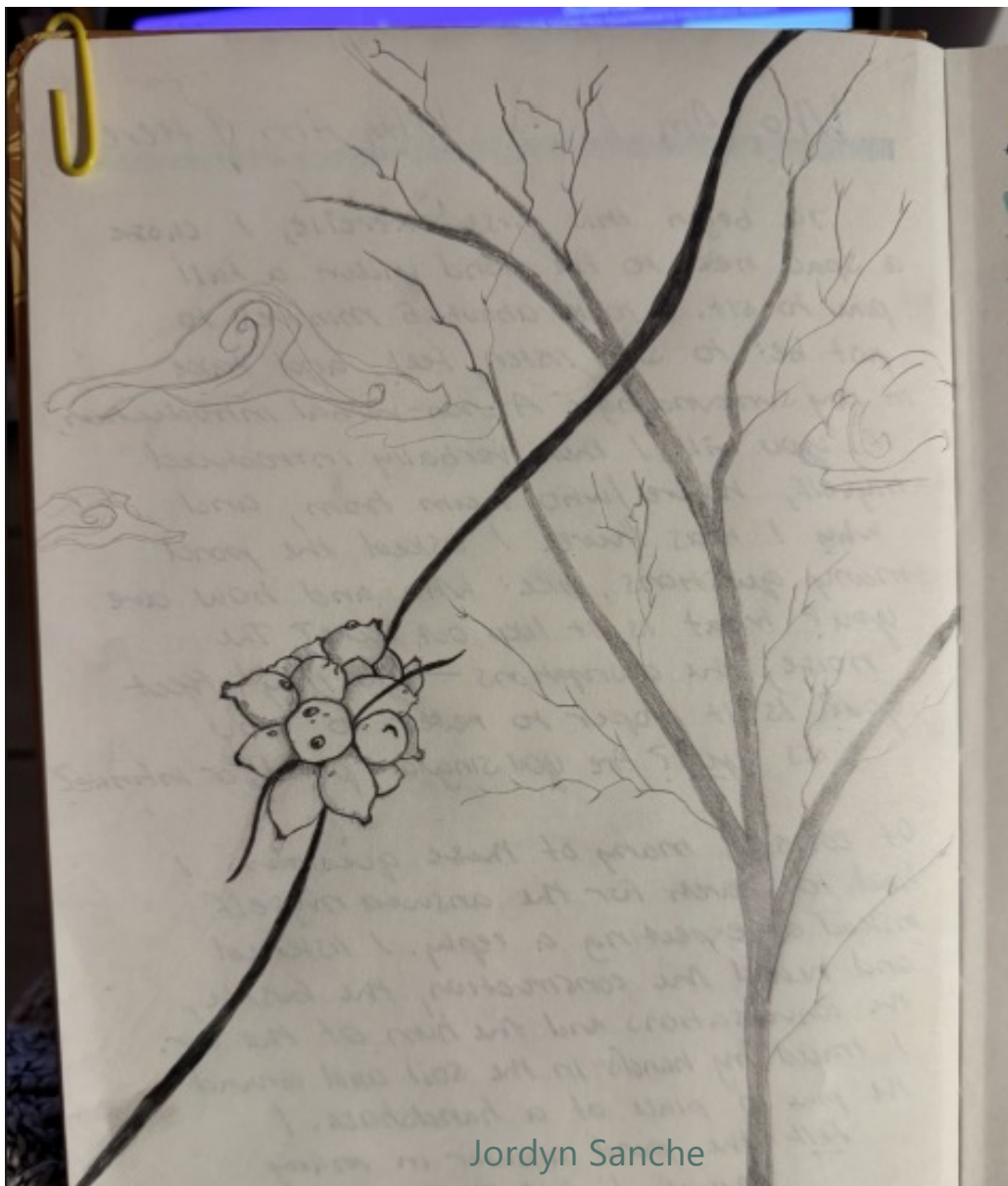
Maaïke Houtstra

- was I really asking for permission, since I had already entered the space?
 - In asking for permission did I impose the expectation for a response?
 - Luca Grossi

Map by Grae Englund
 Photo by Hamid Al Mahri

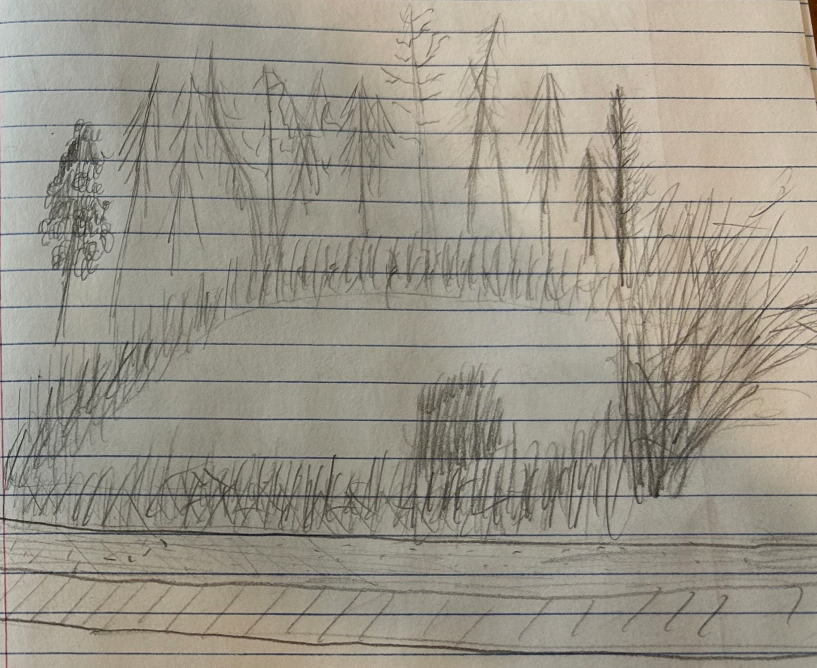


When I sat down, I didn't really look closely at my surroundings (I just sat down in the first place I saw). As I sat and started tuning, I zoned out a bit trying to look for a sign of permission to stay. I then recognized three trees, one to my left, one to my right, and one directly in front of me. As I looked closely I realized that the tree in front of me was a bit lower than the two other trees, it looked as if the tree was going low for me to take a better look at the scene in front of me. I took this a sign of permission for me to stay and enjoy the beauty of nature. – Hamid Al Mahri



I saw connections most with the line, "recognize water as a sacred entity and relative that connects all life." When walking around the pond, I noticed lots of little water paths and drainage routes leading from all over the place to the center of the pond, like arms outreached, connecting to everything in the landscape. This prompted me to think about how water connects things, like the line in the water declaration. I then thought beyond the pond and how water makes up nearly everything organic on the planet, and how it is a key building block to us existing and our surroundings existing. Water is the one thing that all life has in common in a way connecting us all. This, to me, highlighted the sacred nature of water and its special presence in the creation of our world. – Jordan

January 8th 2026: The Pond

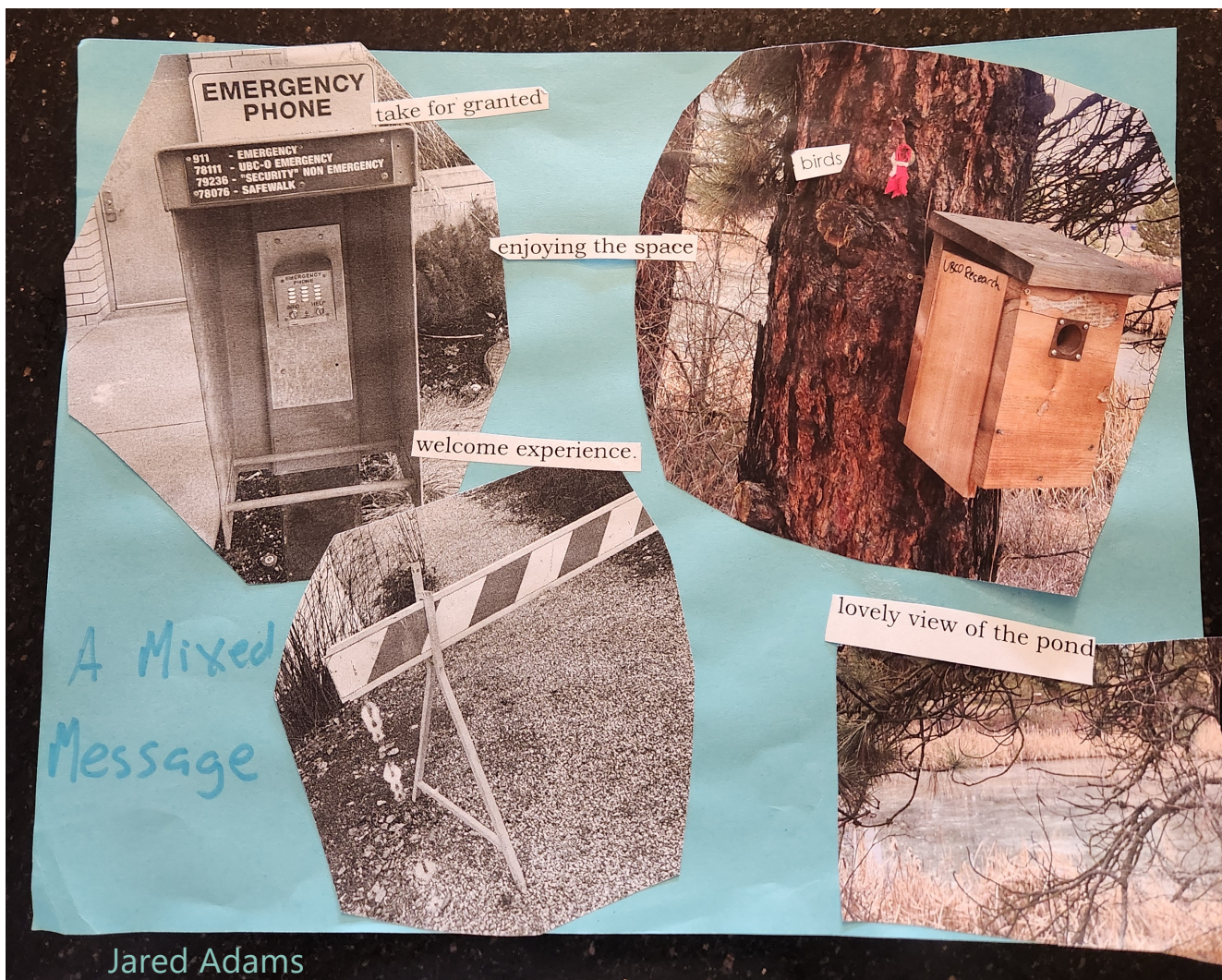


To me the pond behind EME seems like a display. It is the most natural place on campus, yet, it feels fake. Small details like the pipes leading into the pond or the

Noah Gordon

I found after I identified that connection, I felt closer to the pond. It made me realize how importance relation is to care.

Not to say that one should need to have a personal connection to something to want to protect it, or at the very least not harm it. Empathy should take care of that small piece. However, by inciting old memories, I felt more passion towards the pond. Building upon the natural instinct to want to protect the environment has now allowed me explore what possible relations I could have towards this space beyond knowing it should be protected for its importance as an ecosystem. - Maggy Woelfing



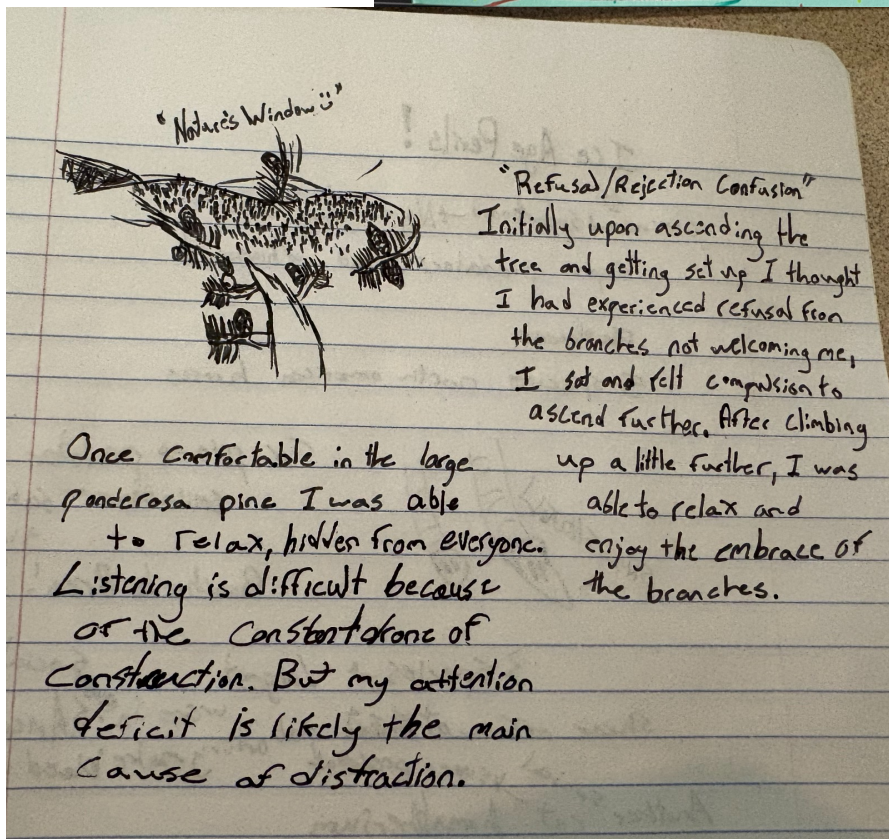
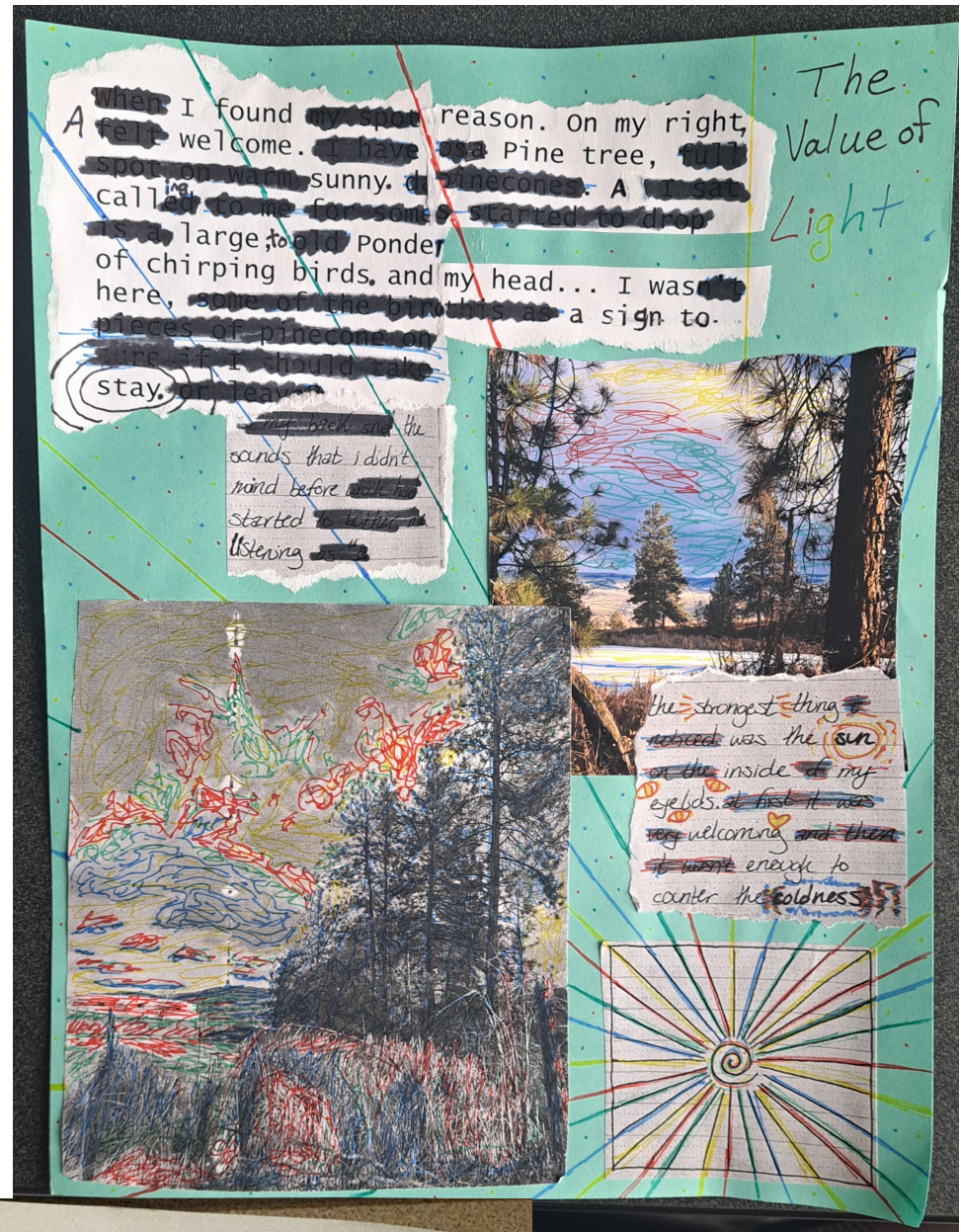


When I found my spot near the Old Pond, I felt welcome. I have frequently sat in this spot on warm sunny days; it has always called to me for some reason. On my right is a large, old Ponderosa Pine tree, full of chirping birds and pinecones. As I sat here, some of the birds started to drop pieces of pinecone on my head... I wasn't sure if I should take this as a sign to stay or leave?

While I sat here, I thought a lot about whether the pond and the living beings around it knew I was here, If I was part of the system or just an observer. This led me to think a lot about humans and our environment, and how we view ourselves as something "other", rather than being part of it. But do we deserve to be part of it? Or are we a disruption to the steady state of systems and places like the Old Pond?

Listening to the wind and the birds, feeling the shifting dried pine needles below where I sat, and feeling the pinecone pieces drop on my head and the warm sun on my face, I really tried to come to a conclusions about whether I belong here or not. I'm still unsure, and I think I will need to keep coming back to this place to see if I do.

– Tamsyn King

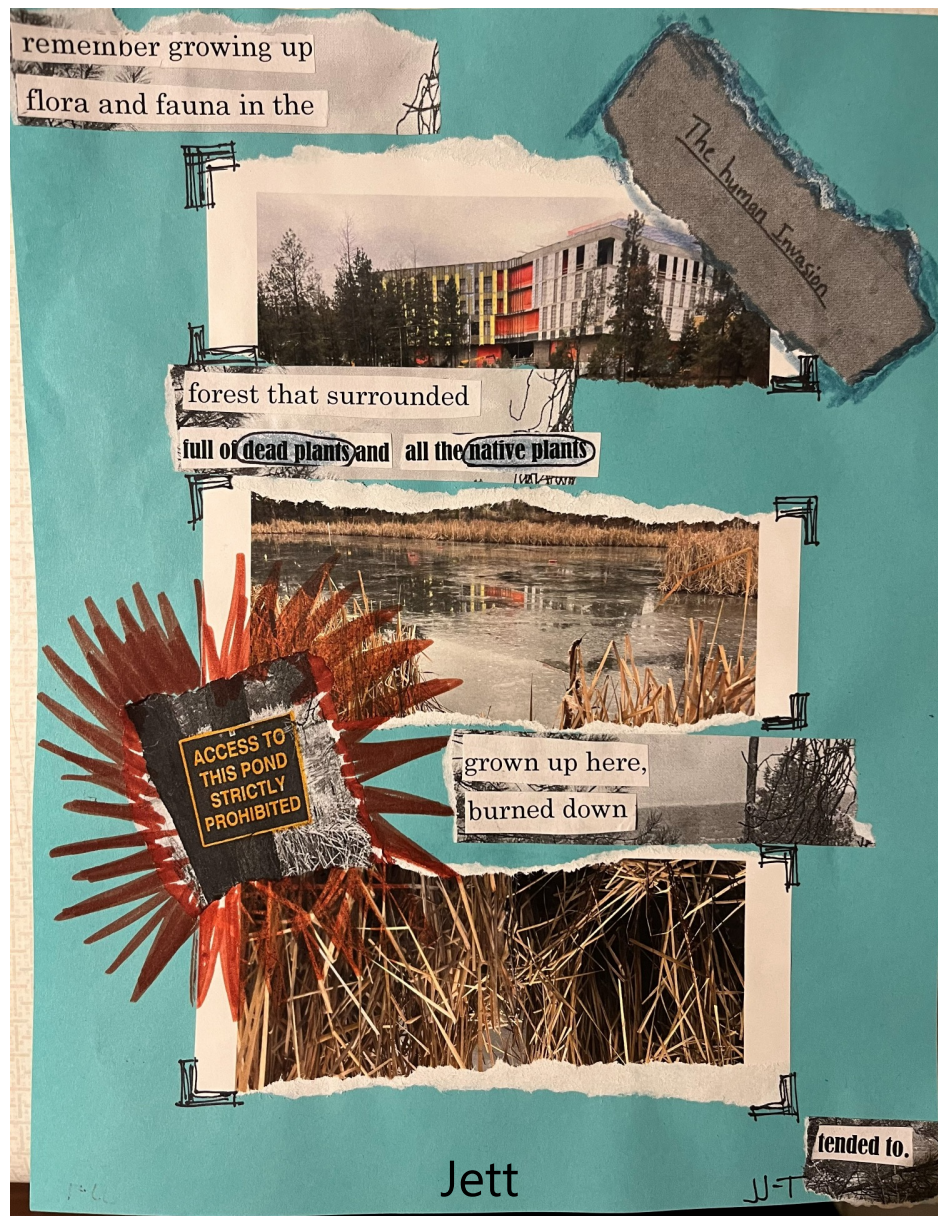


[illegible]

How does mapping a place build relationship and understanding to it? What can be mapped? What can't be?

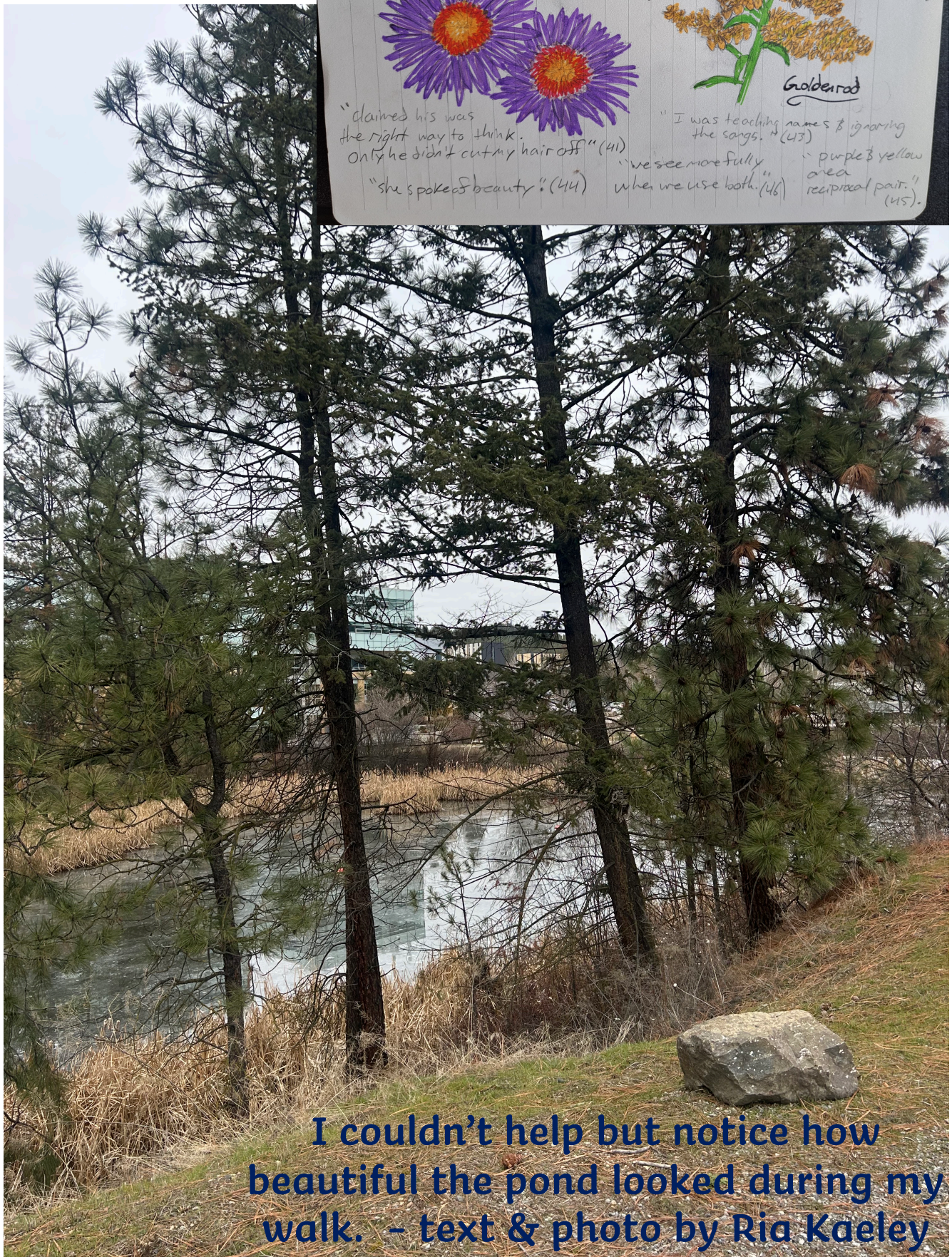
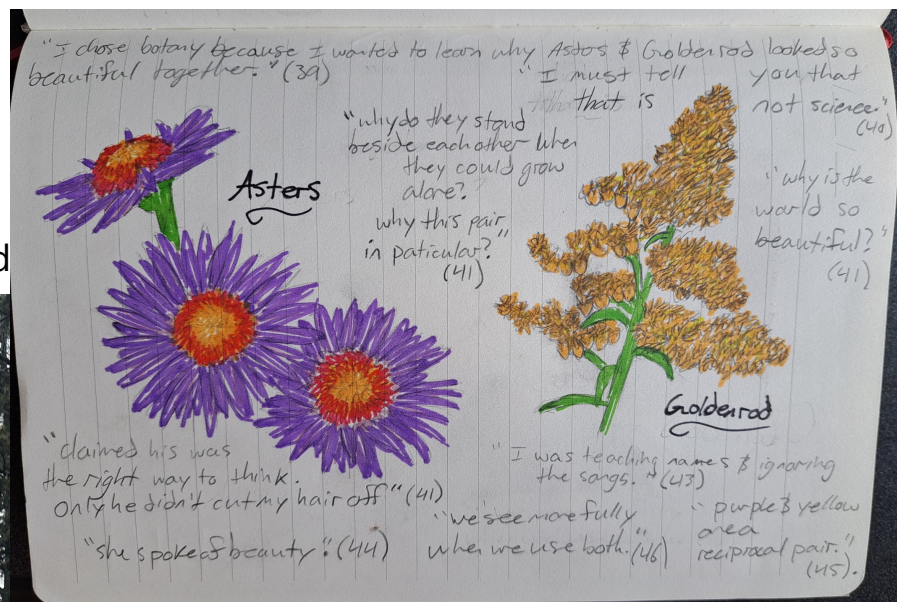
How do we map our memories?

I found it very interesting to see texts and maps in a UBCO context from over 10 years ago. On one of the maps, the place in which we now know as the Old Pond was labelled "ephemeral pond." This was a new term to me, so I Googled it and found that they are "temporary, shallow wetlands that fill with water during spring rains or snowmelt and typically dry up by summer or fall." - Ria Kaeley



I wonder if the pond would appreciate an apology? – Mathias

Drawing by Grae England



I couldn't help but notice how beautiful the pond looked during my walk. - text & photo by Ria Kaeley

What species are in & around the pond? And what may have been removed when it was built? – Tesi

Birds

- Mallards
- Wood Ducks
- Blue-winged Teals
- Canada Geese
- American coots
- Ruddy ducks
- Great horned owls
- Cooper + Red-tailed Hawks

Amphibians + Reptiles

- Western Painted turtle
- Great basin spadefoot Toads
- Pacific tree frog

Plants

- cattails
- Bulrushes
- Native grasses

Insects

- Dragon flies
- Damselflies
- Back Swimmers
- Midges
- May Flies

mix of
native and invasive

If the pond was
man-made. Did they
choose to plant the
invasive one?

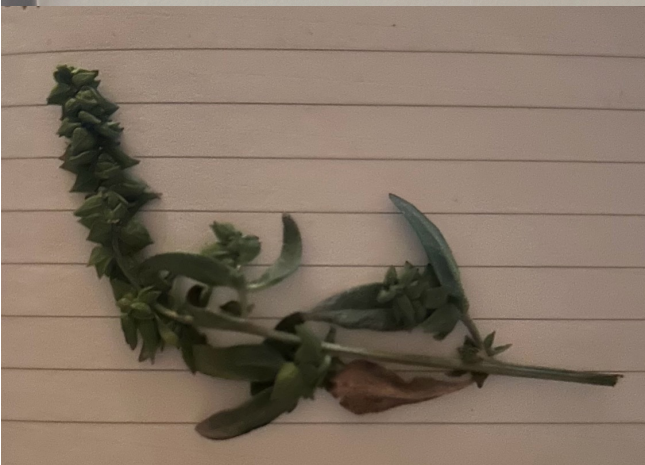
Invasives

- Sulphur cinquefoil
- Spotted Knapweed
- Giant hogweed

Native species

- Arrowleaf Balsamroot
- Nodding onion
- Blanket flower
- Ponderosa pine
- Douglas maple

Tesi



Red

Orange

Title: Red Protect

Main Question

Is pond protect

Red

Orange

Is cattail protect

Red

Orange

Is Toad protect

Red

Orange

Main Question

Red

Jared Adams

Everything exists from water; the flora and fauna are here due to the biome this pond creates. all the beauty of this pond exists because the water allowed it to. It is resilient in spite of the pollution that surrounds it. remnants of this pond will exist long after we are gone but how will it change due to human activity? What is our responsibility in protecting and preserving it?

- Issy Jackson

Everywhere

my search for

water at the pond;

Everything exists from water,

the clouds,

the biome

the flora and fauna

leaves & berries

winter

cold

trees

flowing water beneath.

the ground,

myself.

"A disconcerting walk"
OMBÚ ANCE

= SUN / LIGHT
... = NOISE
M = STAIRS
— = EASY TO WALK
W = HARD TO WALK

Would noticing
water change
this?

memory

understanding

responsibility

exists because the water allowed it to.

Kayla Majerech

Water is in every minute natural object around us, we just need the vision to see it and its importance. - Vraj

history acts,
creates aware-ness
water flows, gathering.
land connects to pond
campus is drainage.
barely connects.
water flows into water.
- Nimrat Kaur Dhaliwal

February 5th, 2026

Every time I hear birds calling
I think about walking around the
duck pond with my dad in Wihapey.

Soft gravel underfoot
made me think of taking walks
with my grandma

The pond

The very imposing dead
tree, while not necessarily
meaningful to me,
made me think of
the old totem pole at
my old school

The wooded areas reminded
me of the hikes my dad
and I would go on

Land sounds of
machinery brought me
back to construction work
during summers

What does this reveal about the pond's "density?"

Though I may have believed / assumed these interactions to be one sided (infrastructures on birds) there are many ways that the birds behaviours, both between one another and individually, impact the site and the pond itself. Though human presence has a lot of influence on the birds behaviours, as the different species have on one another as well, they are resilient. I do find the cycles of violence I see (rat poison → birds → droppings → soil & water →) to be disheartening. The human tendency to "wipe out" the inconvenient other being unwillingly perpetrated by more-than-human beings is upsetting.

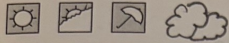
Jordyn Sanche

But something that brought me back to the land was, of all things, poop. I veered off the path and amongst all the pinecones and pine needles and sticks, and I found some animal droppings. They were small and rounded - most likely deer poop. At first, it reminded me of when I had a pet bunny as a kid, as they have similar shaped droppings. I then thoughts about how the place held the memory of the animal's presence through its droppings and how the droppings are the trace the animal left upon the place. Now, it is littered among the leaf litter and decomposing pine needles.

They are all in a state of decomposition, like
geopoetics. - Ally Shorter

Sarah

♥ This haiku incorporates all touched words ♥



Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa Su

Poem Practices

Memo No. _____

Date 03/ 02/2026

This polytechnique

"According to" women who

Saying this and that...

Finding action through gender

Questions and methods

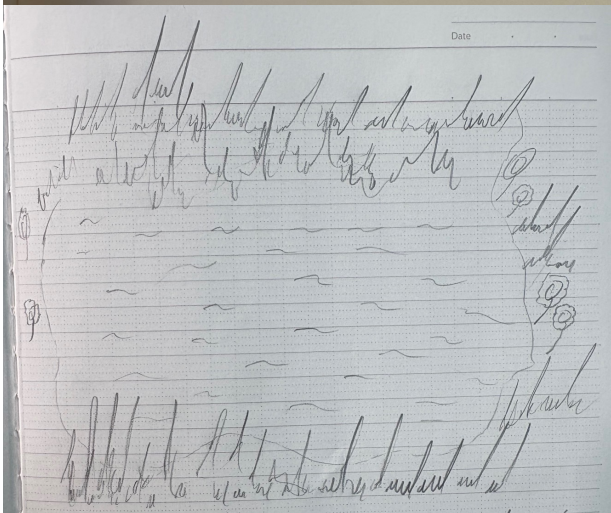
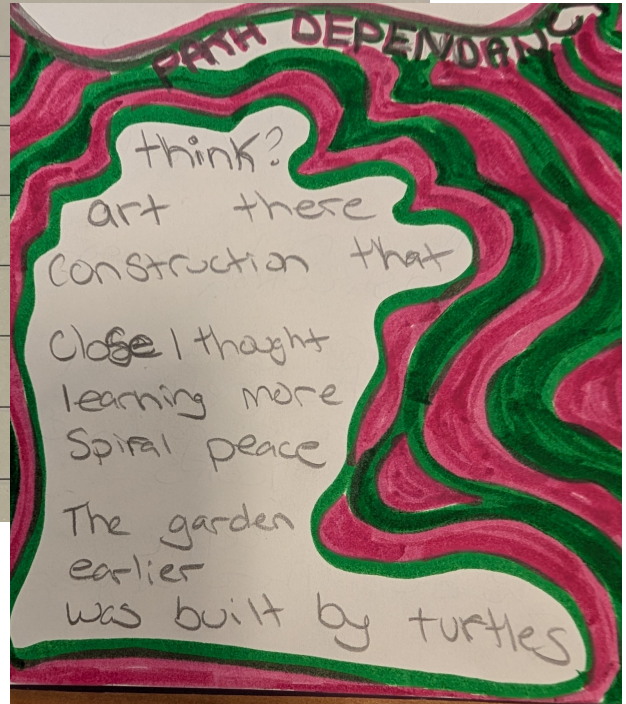
Google "Kelanna" and ask

"How did this happen?"

December looks different

This is the Old Pond

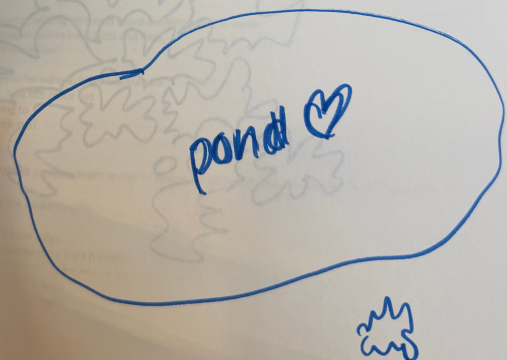
Alyx
O'Neill



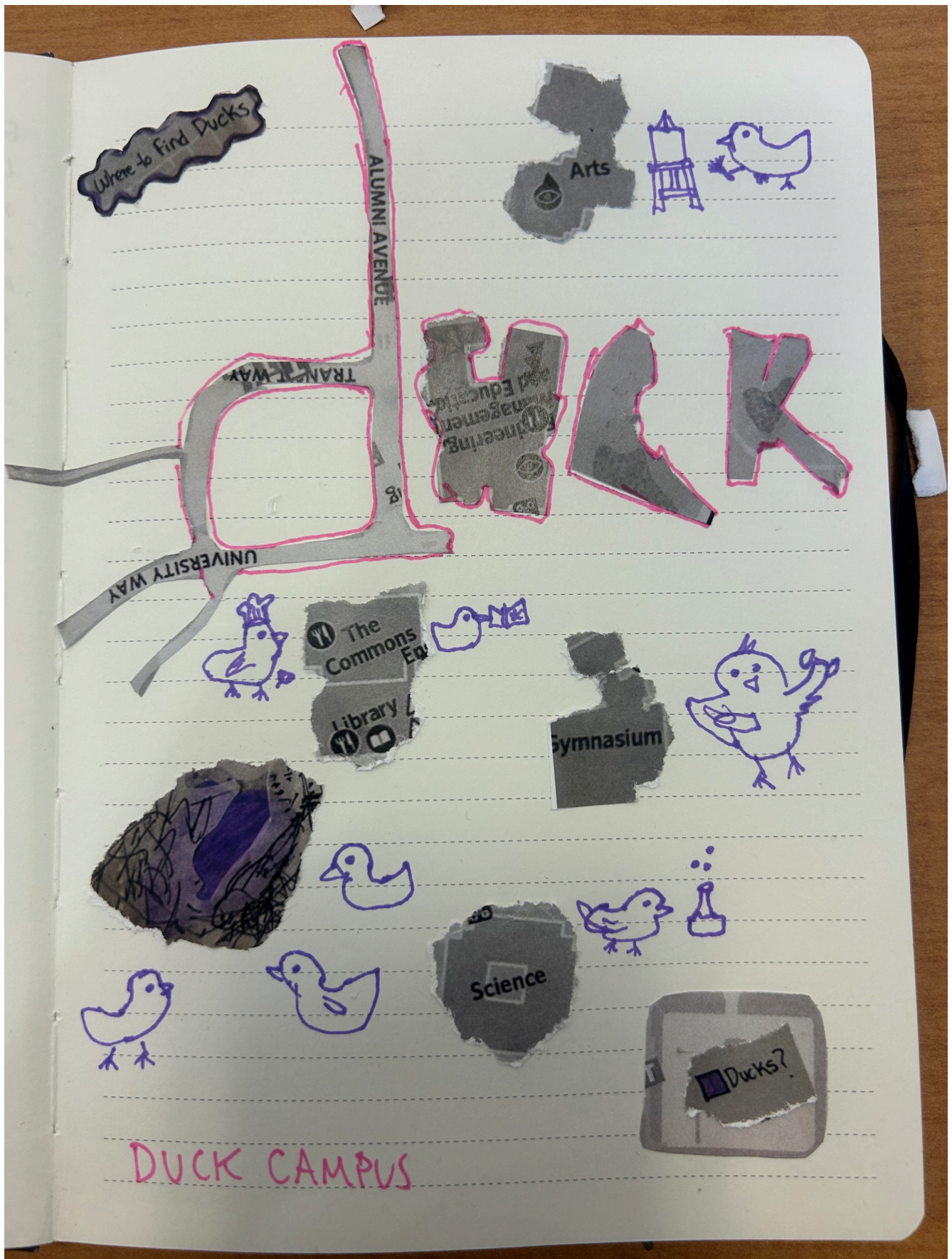
Jeronimo Bahamon

hardy, pathways, map, wanted,
mapping, can, vibes, way, pond
movement, how, tells, UBCO

How can pond vibes
mapping tells movement pathways
wanted hardy maps UBCO



Olivia Bromley



Ria Kaeley

thicker given

ne to be?

the pond?

ond?

a pond, would

sh be?

dangerous

need another
or it?

on that

involvement
lanning?

e pond?

old a fountain

the pond?

re does it go?

hold?

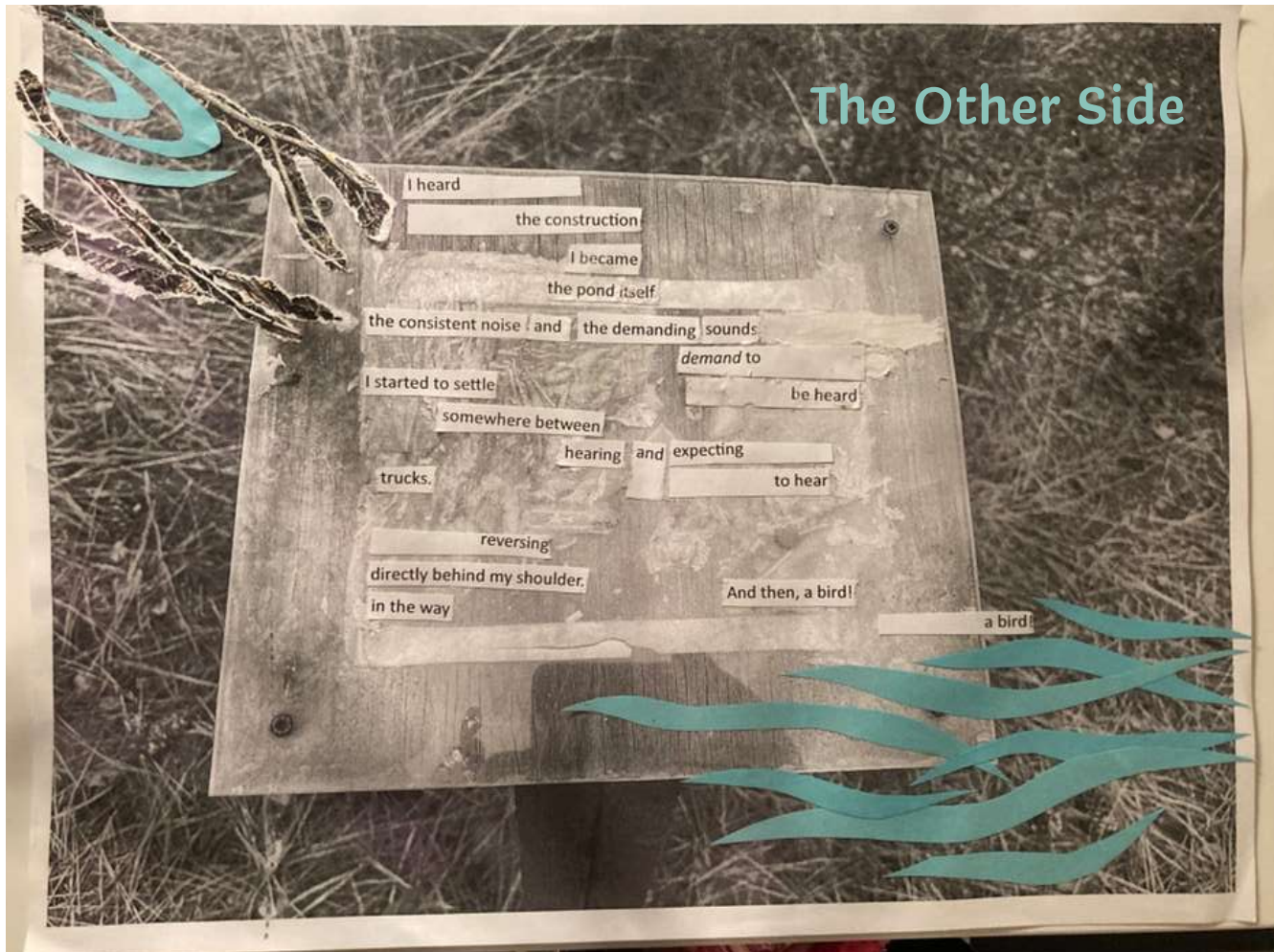
y constant

- how
- how did those trees end up there?
- where did the rocks come from?
- how old are they?
- what about the metal? where?
- what's it made of?

Why am I here?



3. Storying



Zoe Sibthorp

**What stories does this place tell? How can I
change those stories up?**

What stories do I want to tell?

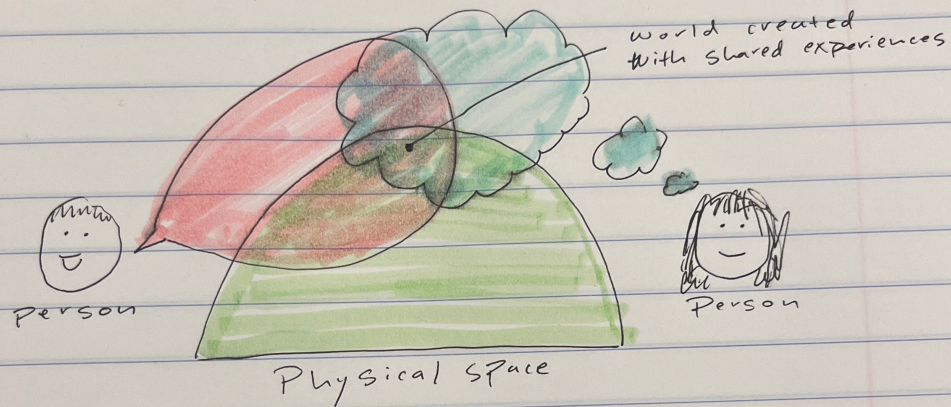
**What collective stories emerge from our
experiences with Pond?**

Last Thursday, the present members of Group 5 (myself, Liv, Maddy, Khaliun and Kajah) identified various "stakeholders" at the pond, and connected them to the four syilx Food Chiefs, as mentioned in the method. We were particularly drawn to the category of ROCK, and started to wonder what classified as a rock at Pond.



Technically, the Earth is a "rock", but we don't often think about all the land beneath us is just a rock. We were interested in the different perspectives on Rock that we could capture by taking pictures of the different things and beings we considered to be Rocks at Pond. We decided that we would assemble these photos into one large photo (not necessarily a collage) so that we could visualize what our different perspectives of Rock would be at Pond.

When you share with others you expand cognitive location.



Lola Macherey



Electric Fluids by Jake Yule

You can't plug a cable to a faucet
nor a hose to a laptop.
Yet, these things still let flow
electric fluids

What then, of the plumber, the electrician, and me?
We, pieces of this circuit
flowing round
flowing up
flowing across

Space matters, and matter shoots
from space, charging space,
mind, soul, body—whole

A new node to the network
among the gravel, stones, cement
metal, wood, water, and
electric fluids

Rustling branches remind me of
this community

Does Mr. Squirrel greet Mrs. Stone,
while she tends to her garden
and him to his business?

Querying glistening quartz,
The trickster to Champlain and 100,000 children.
So, we assign this value to "Canadian diamonds"
but we say our crown jewels lie deeper, still

Still, I find much deeper
electric fluids
conducting themselves across space and time

Irrelevant to markets,
relevant everywhere else.

Once we committed to our fungus chief, we started thinking about what fungus represents and the perspectives it opens up for us. We discussed the themes of fungus like information/storage/history, communication, reuse and recycling, mystery, and how systems can both connect things and exclude them at the same time.

We ended with an experiment where we all walked around with the fungus lenses in mind. We took photos of places where we thought these "seen/unseen" interactions might be happening, or where the pond hinted they could be, and turned them into a collage as a way of collecting little traces of relationships that are real but not always obvious.



PONDERosa 🕶️ by Lily



Trees as stabilizers (through their roots on the banks of Pond), caregivers and habitat makers, protectors, story holders and storytellers, and an entity that holds years of wisdom. We thought of the Trees as a grandparent or elder.



Cattails as protectors (through filtering contaminants/ metals before they reach the water), habitat providers, comforters (we felt as if they are hugging the pond), and supporters of the overall health of the pond. We placed the role of a godparent onto these plants.





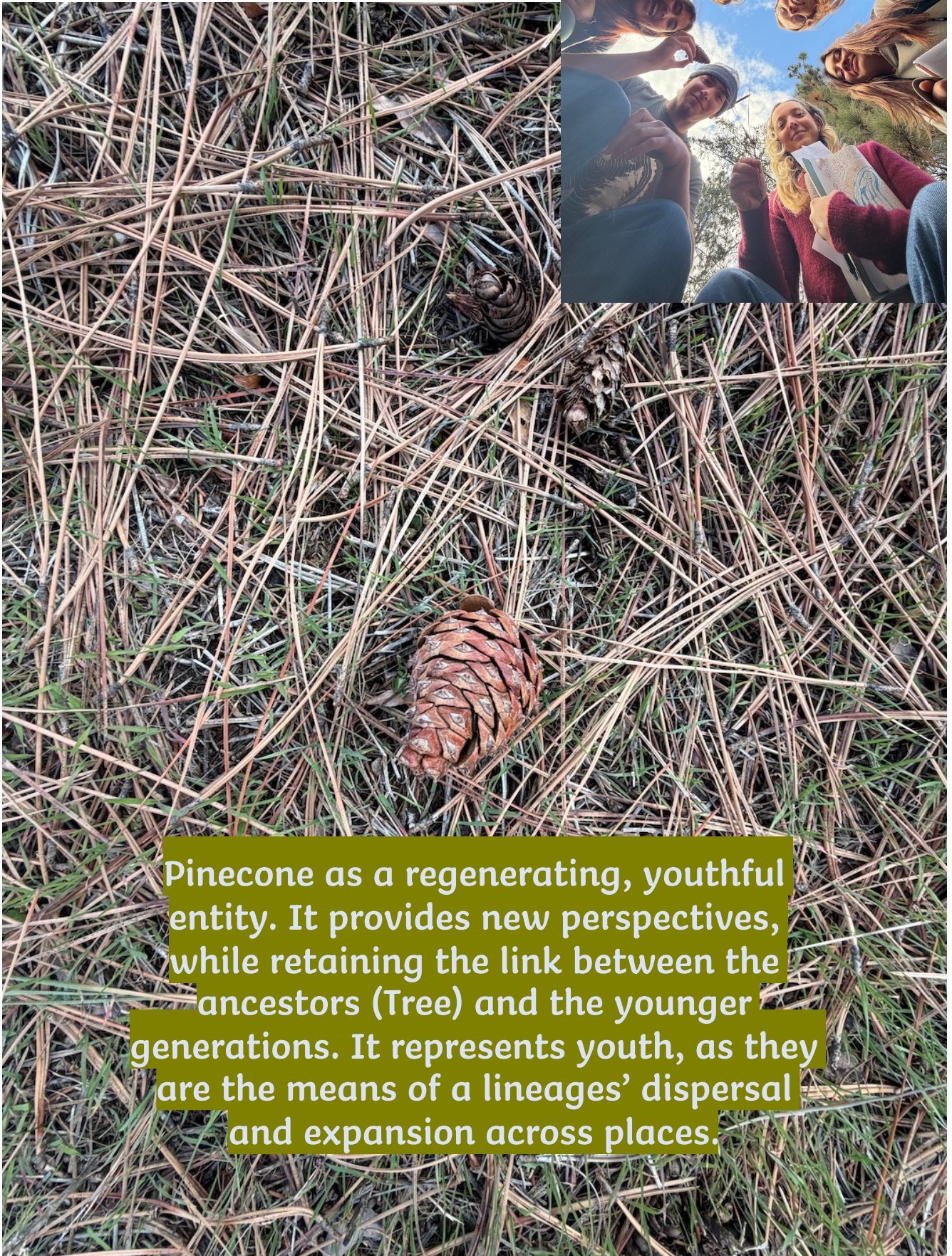
Moss is an overlooked, sensitive, and vital entity to The Pond, as it creates tiny ecosystems within its mass and provides water retention and filtration.

This entity serves as a reminder to pay attention to the 'small' components of life, and to be open (porous) to new experiences.





Mud / Dirt as a safe space
for birth, death, and
expansion/ growth to
occur. We thought of Mud
as a home or a mother, as
it nurtures and holds all
that grows around Pond.



Pinecone as a regenerating, youthful entity. It provides new perspectives, while retaining the link between the ancestors (Tree) and the younger generations. It represents youth, as they are the means of a lineages' dispersal and expansion across places.

Rocks as healthy obstacles, which provide an individual's growth and build resilience. We discussed Rocks as having stability in some substrates or places, but are simultaneously always slowly decaying. This gives a perspective of humility to Pond

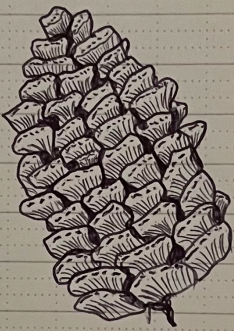


Contributors

Mozelle Bertelsen
Lola Macherey
Ally Shorter
Liv Utigard
Jennifer Blake
Jett Ria Kaeley
Maaike Houtstra
AJ
Jordyn Sanche
Grae Englund
Maggie Woelfing
Mathias
Jared Adams
Sarah
Tamsyn King
Maddy Krestanowich
Tesi
Issy Jackson
Kayla Majerech
Anonymous mapper
Alyx O'Neill
Olivia Bromley
Ian
Zoe Sibthorp
Jake Yule
Lily

Samuel Mitchell
Vraj
Nimrat Kaur Dhaliwal
Jordan
Noah Gordon
Gabrielle Luedke-Nichols
Soha
Luca Grossi
Jeronimo Bahamon
Laighton
Kajah
Ryah Ayyobi
Hamid Al Mahri

"recognize water as a
sacred entity and
relative that connects
all life"



it forms snowflakes which
rest in the crevices of frozen
pinecones. come spring, they'll
both change with each other.

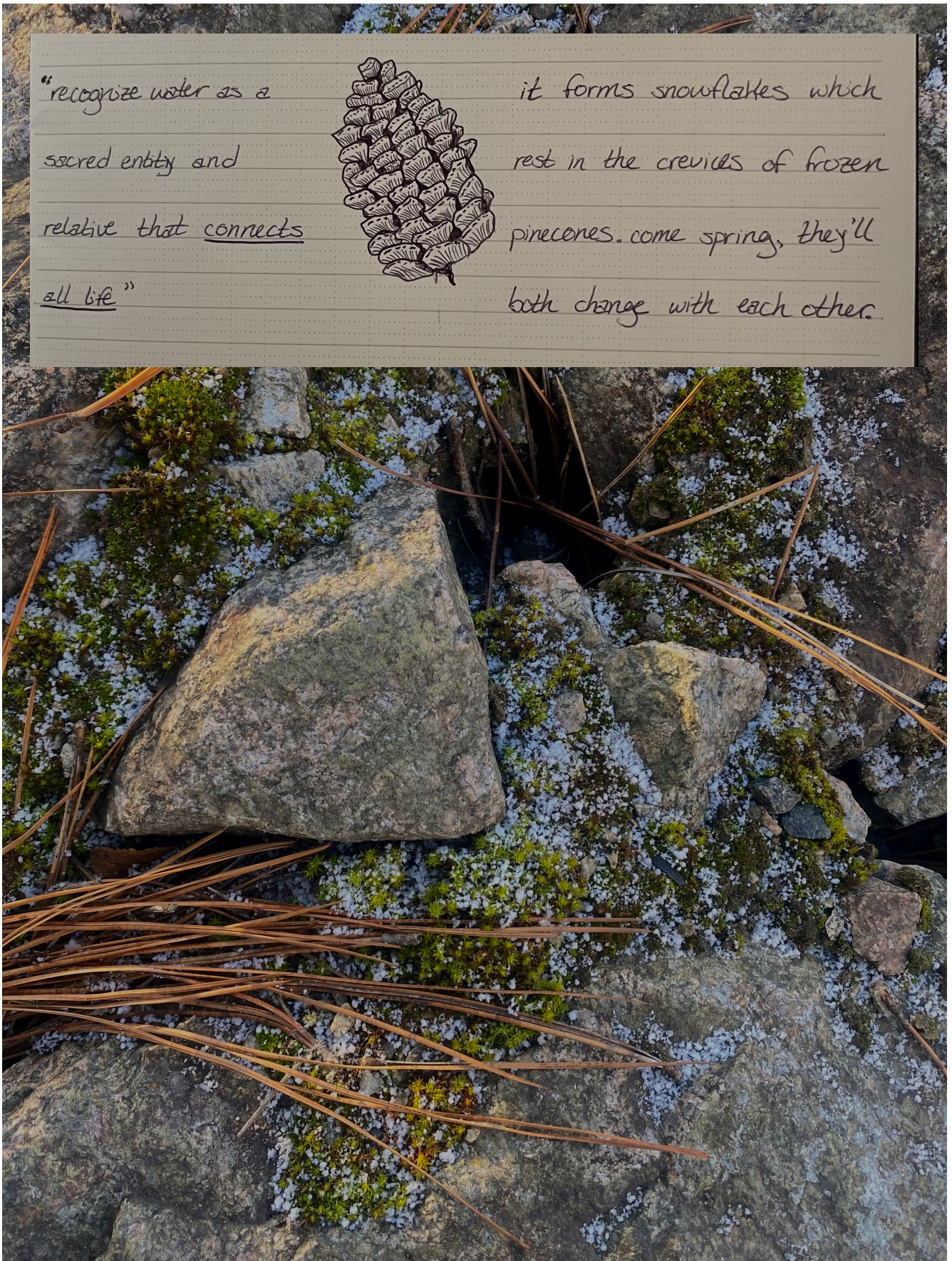


Photo by Maddy Krestanowich; drawing & words by Jett