

The Ever-Evolving Atlas of Amy Clampitt: Mapping Two Centuries of British and American Ecopoetry

“Caught on the move—no knowing what year it was—”

– Amy Clampitt

So begins the poem “Sed de Correr,” and so began my poetry collection. It could have been any year, but it was 2014, and Professor Mary Jo Salter had just introduced the students in her ‘Four Women Poets’ class to Amy Clampitt’s *Selected Poems*. As upper-level undergraduates studying poetry, we were already familiar with the first three women on the syllabus—Emily Dickinson, Marianne Moore, and Elizabeth Bishop. Amy Clampitt, however, offered an entirely new, fresh voice that excited us, myself in particular. I found her rich vocabulary intoxicating, and I was enthralled by the ways in which she fluently incorporated such lush, ornate language into her work.¹ Equally provocative for me were Clampitt’s thematic tones, which echoed those of Dickinson, Moore, and Bishop. A self-proclaimed “poet of displacement” and ardent national and world traveller, Clampitt wrote extensively on matters of geography, place, environment, and nature. She used her experiences abroad and at home to address more nuanced themes in her writing. Indeed, much of her work explores our innate human desire to travel and its consequences, such as the ways in which different locations and landscapes affect us.

Needless to say, I was hooked. In the weeks that followed, I read anything by Clampitt that I could get my hands on, from her uncollected later works to William Spiegelman’s compilation of her correspondences: *Love, Amy: The Selected Letters of Amy Clampitt*. I also developed a burgeoning curiosity concerning certain poets who she wrote about repeatedly such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Keats.² Her fascination with their lives struck me as compelling and left me wanting to know more. Around this same time, I purchased a book of Clampitt’s prose titled *Predecessors, Et Cetera: Essays (Poets on Poetry)*. Clampitt dedicated entire chapters of this book to her esteemed predecessors from Wordsworth and T.S. Eliot to Dickinson and Robert Frost. Both the subjects of her poems and the contents of *Predecessors* guided my continued reading, and my budding collection began to grow. A Sunday morning trip to The Baltimore Book Thing sent me tottering home in the crisp November air with a stack of disheveled paperback volumes by many of these aforementioned poets.³

At the end of the semester, I wrote an analytical essay titled “The Geography of Emotion: Travel as Displacement in the Poetry of Amy Clampitt, Elizabeth Bishop, Marianne Moore, and Emily Dickinson.” One month later on a cold, overcast morning, I boarded Iberian Airlines flight 7451 and set off on my own journey. I left John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) with a

¹ Take Clampitt’s first stanza in “The Sun Underfoot the Sundews,” for instance. It is only one sentence, but already she packs it with lavish language: “An ingenuity too astonishing / to be quite fortuitous is / this bog full of sundews, sphagnum- / lined and shaped like a teacup” (1.1-4).

² In her collection *What the Light Was Like*, Clampitt dedicates an entire section to Keats called “Voyages: A Homage To John Keats,” which consists of eight poems. Similarly, in *Archaic Figure*, Clampitt writes at length of the Wordsworth and Coleridge families.

³ A cherished gem of the Charles Village neighborhood surrounding Hopkins, The Book Thing is a fully stocked bookstore where everything is free. That’s right. You read correctly—*free*. The bookstore runs on volunteers and donations, and people can come and go as they choose.

bag full of books, a round-trip ticket, and every intention of returning stateside mid-May.⁴

In Seville, Spain, I spent my afternoons in bustling outdoor cafes, where I dove into the volumes of poetry I had accumulated before my departure. My intensive reading led me to a better understanding of the depth and complexities of these poets' relationships with the natural world.⁵ Poems such as Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and Coleridge's "This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison" also made me more conscious of my own relationship with nature. Having spent much of my childhood in the mountains of Colorado, I was accustomed to immersing myself in wilderness whenever I wanted. Even in Baltimore my college friends and I could drive half an hour to Patapsco State Park, Gunpowder Falls, or the Appalachian Trail whenever we needed a change of scenery. None of this is to say that I didn't love Seville—it is a charming city, full of life, art, and history—but at the same time, by March I could sense myself growing tired of the concrete plazas, cobblestone roads, and congested buildings. Tourists plagued the streets at all hours. There was no grass. There were hardly any trees. El Parque de María Luisa was the only retreat to nature within the entire city, and even that escape did not quench my thirst. I thought of Clampitt's poem "Sed de Correr," in which she takes the abstract idea of personal displacement and illustrates its relationship to the seemingly more concrete concepts of travel and home. The poem's Spanish title, borrowed from a phrase by César Vallejo literally meaning "a thirst for running," is translated by Clampitt in the second stanza as "the urge to disjoin, the hunger / to have gone, to be going" (2.15-16). This notion strongly resonated with me, and I knew at once what I needed. I needed a break from the city. I needed to disjoin, to have gone, to be going. I needed an impromptu solo-backpacking adventure.

After several late nights of research, I booked a Ryanair.com flight from Seville to Gatwick, a shuttle from Gatwick to London, and a train from London Euston to Penrith North Lakes. From the station in Penrith, I hopped on a bus bound for the small town of Keswick, which lies at the heart of the English Lake District. Where better to venture than the very place I had read so much about? The place that had inspired so many of the poets I loved from Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats to Clampitt herself?

Upon my arrival in Keswick, I met the Palmer family, with whom I had corresponded on Couchsurfing.com.⁶ I was a bit nervous, but the family was delightful and welcomed me into their home like an old friend. They lived in a lovely Georgian manor atop a hill two minutes from the Keswick town center (there was no picture of the house on Couchsurfing.com, so I was relieved to see it actually existed); they were all vegetarians like myself; and one of the daughters was in my year at the London School of Economics (LSE) and knew a friend of mine studying there. Talk about serendipitous! Could I have possibly gotten any luckier? I decided on the spot to stay with them for the entire week instead of backpacking somewhere new every day. That way I could really get to know Keswick and its surrounding landscapes. At supper that evening,

⁴ I didn't return till the end of August.

⁵ As a 'Global Environmental Change and Sustainability' minor (aka tree-hugger), I was excited to make some sort of connection, however minute, between my two fields of study back at Hopkins.

⁶ Committed to the concept of "budget travel," (and seeing as the only youth hostel in Keswick was fully booked during the week of my trip), I stumbled upon a website one evening during my research called Couchsurfing.com. Essentially, through this site, a tourist or traveller can message a local and stay 'on the couch' of that person for a night or two free of charge. Ok. I know what you're thinking, but it was promoted as an innovative way to meet new people from different backgrounds, so in the spirit of my spontaneous trip, I decided to give it a go.

my love of poetry came up, specifically my interest in the Lake Poets. The mother asked me if I knew that their house was called Greta Hall; I shook my head, unsure how this related to my reading. She smiled: “Greta Hall was the residence of English romantic poets Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.” My jaw dropped. Seriously? Was I dreaming? Could this kind of coincidence even happen outside a film? I didn’t want to go to bed that night for fear of waking up back home, and I fell asleep praying that I would still be in Keswick the next morning.

Well, I was. And at breakfast the mother overwhelmed me with another generous act of kindness. She brought me a thin, hardcover book called *Poetry of Lakeland: A Colour Souvenir in Verse*. “It’s from our Guest Library,” she said. “You should keep it.” For the next five days, I poured over that book; I went on as many walks around the lakes as possible; and I wrote down everything in my journal each night before bed. By the week’s end, I realized that my solo-backpacking trip had brought me more clarity and vigor than any of my other experiences abroad thus far. That thrill of impulse, of taking life into your own hands, the element of surprise—I loved all of that. It was poetry in its purest form: “The spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,” as Wordsworth had said. I left Keswick with my new book and a heavy heart. More than anything, I wanted to go back.

So I did. At the end of finals in June, rather than return to the States, I cancelled my flight to New York, packed my bags, and moved to the Lake District. With the help of the Palmers, I found work for the summer. In exchange for room and board, I would help out on a farm and work with horses. My free time, I decided, would be spent in solitary study of the English romantics and the American transcendentalists. My new hosts, the Lowther family, lived in a large estate on the River Lowther just outside Penrith.⁷ I spent my mornings working on the farm, and in the evenings I rode my bike to Lowther Castle, where I sat under the trees and read. One afternoon, I went to town on an errand and came across the Wordsworth Bookshop and Coffeehouse. I stopped in for tea and ended up purchasing a small anthology titled *Favourite Poems of England*. Two days later, I returned to look around and left with another compilation: *The Lake Poets*. On weekends I made pilgrimages to all the places mentioned in my books. I travelled to Cockermouth, where Wordsworth was born, then to Dove Cottage in Grasmere, where he wrote the best of his work. I climbed Skiddaw and Helvellyn, two famous fells that all of the Lake Poets seemed to reference at one point or another.⁸

I love book collecting for the same reasons I love spur-of-the-moment travel—you never really know what comes next, what the next book will bring, or where the next train will take you. Not long after my return to America in August, I was wandering around the poetry section of Barnes & Noble in Dallas when a title at the top of the shelf drew my attention: *The Ecopoetry Anthology*. I had never heard that term ‘ecopoetry’ before, but it sounded right up my alley. Could ecopoetry be what I thought it was? Could I perhaps have been exploring and studying, even writing, ecopoetry all along without knowing it? And could I have just unearthed an *even stronger* connection between my two fields of study? I opened the book and sat down right there

⁷ It wasn’t until the following October, long after my return to the States, that I discovered another mind-boggling coincidence. In Clampitt’s poem “Rydal Mount,” she actually mentions the Lowthers, “who all but / owned Penrith” (3.13-14). It would seem they still do.

⁸ Even Clampitt makes reference to Skiddaw and Helvellyn in “The Elgin Marbles,” one of her poems from *What the Light Was Like* that pays homage to Keats.

in the aisle. The term ‘ecopoetry,’ as I learned that day, was coined in the 1990s. Since then, there has been much talk among scholars regarding what should be considered ecopoetry and what should not. Personally, I agree with the inclusive definition of ecopoetry offered by Ann Fisher-Wirth and Laura-Gray Street, the coeditors of *The Ecopoetry Anthology*. Whereas some scholars wish to make more specific distinctions, Fisher-Wirth and Street argue for three subsets of ecopoetry: nature poetry, environmental poetry, and ecological poetry. Ed Roberson, one of the contemporary poets who I eventually encountered thanks to the anthology, captures the essence of ecopoetry: “[It] occurs when an individual’s sense of the larger Earth enters into the world of human knowledge. The main understanding that results from this encounter is the Eco-poetic: that the world’s desires do *not* run the Earth, but the Earth *does* run the world.”

Thus, in addition to bringing together so many of my beloved poets from the nineteenth century to now, the discovery of ‘ecopoetry’ unlocked yet another avenue of advancement for my collection. In recent months, I have acquired two books that I believe are particularly indicative of the collection’s future. The first is a book of ‘ecocriticism’ by Scott Hess called *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship: The Roots of Environmentalism in Nineteenth-Century Culture*. The second book, my most recent acquisition, explores ecocriticism through the work of three women poets. One particular name in its title immediately caught my eye. Written by Robert Boschman, the book is called *In the Way of Nature: Ecology and Westward Expansion in the Poetry of Anne Bradstreet, Elizabeth Bishop & Amy Clampitt*.

So there you go. We’re back to Clampitt. In some ways my collection seems to come full circle with Boschman’s work, but in other ways I know it will continue to evolve tangentially forever. As I move forward, I anticipate reading and collecting more books on this critical side of ecopoetry.⁹

⁹ Though of course, as I learned in England, *anything* can happen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. **Appelbaum, Stanley, ed. *English Romantic Poetry: An Anthology*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1996.**

I discovered this little anthology by chance at The Book Thing. It includes the poems and brief biographies of English Romantics William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, and John Keats. I've found that it nicely compliments the three anthologies I brought back from England.

2. **_____ . *Robert Frost: The Road Not Taken and Other Poems*. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1993.**

Robert Frost is considered a very important historical American nature poet. So much of his work could fall into the categories of nature poems or ecopoetry, but obviously not everything can be anthologized. The specific poems selected from the above volume for *The Ecopoetry Anthology* include "An Old Man's Winter Night," "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things," "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Design," "The Most of It," "Directive," and "Spring Pools." Out of all of these, "Spring Pools" is my favorite example of Frost's ecopoetry because of its assertive, reproachful tone: "Let them think twice before they use their powers / To blot out and drink up and sweep away / These flowery waters and these watery flowers / From snow that melted only yesterday" (2.9-12).

3. **Bate, Jonathan. *The Song of the Earth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.**

This text, which was recommended to me by Professor Andrew Motion for a class I have just begun called 'Poetry and the Environment,' discusses the crucial role of literature in humanity's present and future, specifically the necessity of poetry to combat the current environmental crises. Bate explores the increasing human disconnect to nature and posits how poetry has the power to reground us in the natural world. Indeed, poetry brings us closer in touch with our senses—so might it be the way to save our planet? Throughout his critique, Bate analyzes excerpts from the poetry of Wordsworth, Elizabeth Bishop, Marianne Moore, W.H. Auden, Keats, and Coleridge.

4. **Bishop, Elizabeth. *Poems*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.**

In the fall of 2014, Elizabeth Bishop was the third poet we studied in Professor Salter's 'Four Women Poets' class. Bishop is highly regarded as a contemporary American nature poet because of the ecocentric worldview expressed in so much her work. Poems from this specific collection that are often found in ecopoetry anthologies include "Brazil," "Florida," "The Map," "The Moose," "At the Fishhouses," "Arrival in Santos," "Sandpiper," and "Crusoe in England." Like many environmental writers before her, she acknowledges nature as a powerful force—far more so than man—and she is acutely aware of the natural world's indifference to the human enterprise. For example, in poems such as "The Map," "At the Fishhouses," and "Crusoe in England," Bishop explores the relationship between land and sea using oceanic imagery to emphasize nature's indifference to the existence of mankind.

5. **Boschman, Robert. *In the Way of Nature: Ecology and Westward Expansion in the Poetry of Anne Bradstreet, Elizabeth Bishop & Amy Clampitt*. New York: McFarland, 2009.**

An absolutely brilliant find! Thank you, Amazon.com for the suggestion. This is my newest addition to the collection, and I love it so far! Featuring American writers Anne Bradstreet, Elizabeth Bishop, and Amy Clampitt, Boschman's work of ecocriticism explores connections between nature and culture as well as those between travel and geography—two other interests of mine. Through close readings and analysis, Boschman provides his reader with an insightful study of the role that each poet played in the history and evolution of environmental poetry.

6. **Clampitt, Amy. *Selected Poems*. Edited by Mary Jo Salter. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.**

The inaugural collection member. Need I say more? Amy Clampitt is the glue that ties this collection together. “[Amy] was galvanized by nature,” Phoebe Hoss, Clampitt's oldest New York friend, said. In one way or another, directly or indirectly, every book in this collection relates back to Clampitt.

7. **_____. *Love, Amy: The Selected Letters of Amy Clampitt*. Edited by William Spiegelman. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.**

A wonderful accompaniment to Clampitt's *Selected Poems*, the selected letters offer great insight into Clampitt's adventurous life. The context and background they provide also help readers to better understand Clampitt's connection to the natural world. Though she ended up in New York City—not the nicest place to live if you love nature—Clampitt was born and raised on a farm in Iowa. She also spent much of her adult life on the coast of Maine, and she travelled extensively through Greece, Italy, and England. She documents and shares many of these experiences in her letters; I would consider this selection of correspondence a must-read for anyone interested in Clampitt's work and life.

8. **_____. *Predecessors, Et Cetera: Essays (Poets on Poetry)*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.**

Another great find! For anyone interested in Clampitt and her poetic influences, this book of prose essays is also a definite must. It is an especially integral piece of my collection because Clampitt dedicates entire chapters to other poets I love such as Wordsworth, Moore, Dickinson, Bishop, and Frost.

9. **Cole, William. *A Book of Nature Poems*. New York: The Viking Press, 1969.**

Hardcover. First Edition. This is actually an old library book that I discovered at The Book Thing. It still has the little borrower's card in the back with the names of people who checked it out in the early 1970s. Knowing that the American environmental revolution began in the 1960s makes me especially intrigued by this book—it was most likely an influential collection for the beginnings of nature poetry's evolution into environmental poetry and ecopoetry.

10. **Dickinson, Emily. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by R. W. Franklin. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999.**

Emily Dickinson was the first poet we studied in Professor Salter's class. Since then, she has reemerged time and again in my various anthologies. She is considered one of the early,

important American nature poets, alongside Walt Whitman. Poems such as “A Bird came down the Walk—” and “There came a Wind like a Bugle—” are frequently included in any dialogue about early American nature poems. Dickinson’s nature poetry tends to focus on the seasons and their transitions, such as her poem: “There’s a certain Slant of light, / Winter Afternoons— / That oppresses, like the Heft / Of Cathedral Tunes.” Dickinson is also mentioned throughout the poetry and prose of Amy Clampitt.

11. _____ . *Emily Dickinson: Selected Letters*. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986.

These correspondences provide readers with a critical resource for learning more about Dickinson’s character, poetic and personal, as well as how American Transcendentalism influenced her thinking. For instance, we learn that in 1850, Dickinson’s friend Benjamin Newton gave her Ralph Waldo Emerson’s first collection of poems.

12. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Edited by Brooks Atkinson. New York: Modern Library, 2000.

Since I first learned of Emerson in my high school English class, I have been fascinated by his life and works. This volume includes all of Emerson’s major speeches, essays, and poetry. My favorite essay by him is “Self-Reliance,” which I reread most recently during my summer in the Lake District. There are so many quotes and passages from this essay that I’ve underlined and/or scribbled down in my journal. I’ll share two of my favorites. The first: “In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts.” The second: “It is easy in the world to live after the world’s opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.” The latter quote I used as a springboard for an ecopoem that I wrote last semester called “Transcendental Movements.”

13. Fisher-Wirth, Ann and Laura-Gray Street, eds. *The Ecopoetry Anthology*. San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2013.

This anthology brings (almost) everything in my collection together. My one *huge* qualm with its contents is that it does not include Amy Clampitt. The anthology is split into ‘historical’ and ‘contemporary’ sections. More than 200 writers are featured in all. Included in the historical section are Whitman, Wallace Stevens, Moore, Bishop, Dickinson, T.S. Eliot, and Frost, among others. Included in the contemporary section are John Ashberry, Louise Erdrich, Robert Hass, W.S. Merwin, Louise Glück, Mary Oliver, and Ed Roberson, among others. The coeditors, Ann Fisher-Wirth and Laura-Gray Street, write of ecopoetry: “[It] enacts through language the manifold relationship between the human and the other-than-human world.” They then divide ecopoetry into three subsets: nature poetry, environmental poetry, and ecological poetry. They define nature poetry: “As shaped by romanticism and American transcendentalism, it often mediates on an encounter between the human subject and something in the other-than-human world that reveals an aspect of the meaning of life.” They define environmental poetry as being “directly engaged with active and politicized environmentalism . . . Greatly influenced by social and environmental justice movements.” They define ecological poetry more loosely. Regarding ecological poetry, Fisher-Wirth and Street write: “Of the three groupings, ecological poetry is the most willing to engage with, even play with, postmodern and poststructuralist theories associated with L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry and the avant garde.”

14. Hess, Scott. *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship: The Roots of Environmentalism in Nineteenth-Century Culture*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012.

I've found this book remarkably interesting so far. Unlike other authors writing about Wordsworth and romanticism, Hess critically examines the flaws of a supposed universal view of nature based off of Wordsworth and his poetry. He critiques the limits of using Wordsworth's 'ecology of authorship' as a model for present-day environmental writing. This book is the second newest addition to my collection, so I am still exploring it; however, I already really like the fact that it challenges some of the notions projected by other 'members' of my collection. It would be such a boring collection if all my books reflected the same opinions!

15. Hunter, Jane McMorland, ed. *Favourite Poems of England*. London: Batsford, 2014.

A lovely little volume I picked up at the William Wordsworth Bookshop in Penrith. Its selection of nature poetry includes Keats, D.H. Lawrence, Emily Brontë, Blake, Wordsworth, and Thomas Hardy. It also has the most charming, colorful vintage illustrations throughout, making it the prettiest piece of my collection.

16. Moore, Marianne. *The Poems of Marianne Moore*. Edited by Grace Schulman. New York: Penguin Classics, 2003.

Marianne Moore was the second poet that our 'Four Women Poets' class read after Dickinson. Moore's poems are often ecological in the way that they celebrate nature and express disdain for anthropomorphism. "The Fish," "A Grace," "The Paper Nautilus," and "A Octopus" are all frequently mentioned and anthologized environmental poems.

17. Sands, Ronald, comp. *Poetry of Lakeland: A Colour Souvenir in Verse*. Kendal, Cumbria: Frank Peters Publishing Ltd., 1985.

This book holds great sentimental value. It was given to me by the Palmer family at Greta Hall in Keswick. It features a wide variety of poets, including Wordsworth, H D Rawnsley, Southey, Christopher North, Edward Quillinan, Matthew Arnold, Keats, John Ruskin, Hartley Coleridge, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Walter Scott, F W Faber, and Felicia Dorothea Hemans. I appreciate it especially because of its breadth of poets, many of whom I had not heard of before.

18. Smith, Gavin D. *The Lake Poets*. Gloucestershire: Amberly Publishing, 2010.

Purchased at the Wordsworth Bookshop and Coffeehouse in Penrith, Cumbria, this collection also holds sentimental value. It features selections by six writers: William Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey, Thomas de Quincey, and Hartley Coleridge. Smith writes in his introduction that each of these Romantics embraced to the fullest "the importance of personal experience and the relationship between human life and nature," an ideology that I too have sought to embrace. The book also includes gorgeous photographs of landscapes in and around the Lake District, and Smith details how these places are associated with the various writers.

19. Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden and Civil Disobedience*. Edited by Sherman Paul. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1960.

This is an older, slightly worn copy of *Walden and Civil Disobedience* that I picked up at The Book Thing (surprise!—I’m there all the time) a few weeks before I left the States for Spain. It was one of the books I carried with me the entire time I was abroad. After finishing Emerson’s “Self-Reliance” during my summer in England, I moved on to rereading Thoreau’s “Walden.” Because I was working on a farm that summer, I read the first chapter, ‘Economy,’ in a completely different light than I had in high school. Knowing that I will always have these books—that I can read them at any point in my life and potentially come away with something I did not before—is another great joy of book collecting for me. My collection itself is ever-evolving, but so is my enjoyment of it. Different books or poems will resonate more strongly with me at different times in my life. That’s the beauty of literature.

20. Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass: The Original 1855 Edition*. Edited by Joslyn T. Pine. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 2007.

This edition of *Leaves of Grass* presents the original twelve poems featured in Whitman’s 1855 publication, including “Song of Myself,” “I Sing the Body Electric,” and “There was a Child Went Forth.” Whitman was an indispensable figure in American transcendentalism and early nature writing. His poems in *Leaves of Grass* exalt nature and are full of questions about the natural world. I reread “Song of Myself” last summer after finishing “Walden.”

21. Wordsworth, William. *The Poetry of William Wordsworth*. Edited by John W. Elliot. New York: Monarch Press, 1965.

This is a small, unassuming paperbound booklet from the sixties that I picked up one afternoon at The Book Thing. Not only does it include many of Wordsworth’s poems, but the book also offers commentary on and analysis of various lines and stanzas. One of the most interesting and pertinent sections to me is called, “The Poet’s Search For Self-Definition In Relationship With Nature.” Here Elliot writes: “Nearly all of Wordsworth’s work concerns his own personal relationship with nature and the values, or lack of values, of that relationship for what it offers the poet in way of self-definition.” This little book is one of my favorites because it turned out to be so different from what I expected—just goes to show that you should never judge a book by its cover, or lack of cover.

22. Wordsworth, Jonathan, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill, eds. *William Wordsworth The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1979.

And last, but certainly not least, this collection would not be complete without Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*, as it is referenced in many of the aforementioned books.

WISH LIST

1. Bate, Jonathan. *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. London and New York: Routledge, 1991.

I very much enjoyed Bate’s writing and analytical techniques in *The Song of the Earth*, so I think I would probably like this book by him as well. In *Romantic Ecology*, Bate links Wordsworth’s

ecological interest to the environmental debate in political history and ultimately explores the politics of poetry.

2. Buell, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005.

Buell critically examines the emerging discipline of ‘ecocriticism’ and traces the movement from its beginning in the 1970s to the present and into the future. As I mentioned at the conclusion of my essay, I am becoming more and more interested in studying the critical side of ecopoetry.

3. Felstiner, John. *Can Poetry Save the Earth?: A Field Guide to Nature Poems*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Reading the title and description of this book, I felt like it was a must for my collection! Felstiner argues that, in our current time of environment crises, poetry has the power to return humanity’s attention to nature. He includes the voices of several important poets I have been studying, such as Whitman, Dickinson, and Bishop. I think Felstiner’s point sounds similar to some of the ideas brought up by Bate in *The Song of the Earth*. Therefore, because the state of the environment is rapidly changing all the time, I would really like to examine Felstiner’s relatively updated take on this issue. (*The Song of the Earth* was first published in 2002 and *Can Poetry Save the Earth?* was first published in 2009.)

A list of Famous 20th Century American Poets. The authors listed on this page include some of the greatest poets of 20th Century. The authors listed on this page include some of the greatest poets of 20th Century. See also: Poets by Nationality | Contemporary American Poets | American Women Poets | All American Poets American Poets Born: Before 1400 | 1601-1700 | 1701-1800 | 1801-1900 | 1901-1950 | After 1951. A. Maya Angelou (18) (1928 - present). Amy Clampitt (14) (1920 - 1994). Jim Carroll (1) (1950 - present). Hayden Carruth (2) (1921 - present). Martha Collins (1) (1940 - present). Geraldine Connolly (3) (1947 - present).