

## Earth Day

*dedicated to the Swampscott Conservancy, 4/22/19*

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Swampscott Poet Laureate

Earth Day again,  
and another day of losing ground  
as seas rise and earth falls.  
For, as long as we feel the need to hold  
one single day for somebody...  
someone like Mothers, someone like Women,  
someone like the Earth...  
surely it means our hearts don't yet  
hold sufficient sense of daily honor.  
And yet, so many do love,  
so many do work  
so many do see  
that we are of earth and earth is of us.  
May we rise together humbly.

I start with loving the particular,  
perhaps earth's too big to love at once.  
So here in Swampscott, my rocky shore,  
I've learned to love the woods, the sea,  
the littoral places in between.  
Here, the cold water to freeze my feet,  
the granite sand, air so fresh and wet  
that I stand right on the ocean's edge  
and breathe in cool salt, like life itself.

Here, I've spent my adult life  
with lilac and hydrangea,  
with dandelion and marshy sedge,  
grassy paths through hedge and maple.  
Here the Herring Gull and Black-Back  
fly above my roof, the Hawks

and Sparrows congregate in my yard.  
Here, I've watched a lone coyote  
trot down my street on midnight business,  
and wild turkeys process  
through parking lots and busy roads.

Here, the stripers run,  
the flounders flounder ,  
and sculpins skim their pouty beards of fins  
along the scummy seabeds.  
Here, algae blooms and sends ripe smells  
to mix with beach rose and plum.  
Here, the salt and fresh waters  
live their separate lives, and then  
meet in brackish worlds of wetland  
where herons hunt solitary,  
knee-deep and foggy with mystery.

I learned once that sea turtles  
cry salt tears  
as a way to expel the ocean's salt.  
This crying is needed for their health,  
and yet they so love the salty sea  
that they weep to have to force it away.  
I pray that our own Mother Earth  
can hold and love her creatures still  
and will not need to weep us out,  
out from her body so she may live.

And so, may we all grow to know  
that Earth is our child, our old one, our mother  
that we are her and she is we,  
on Earth Day and on every other.