

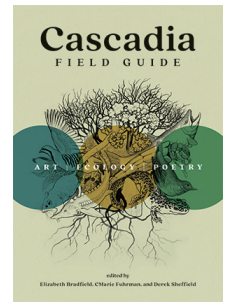
# *Cascadia Field Guide: Art, Ecology, Poetry*

Elizabeth Bradfield, CMarie Fuhrman, Derek Sheffield

ISBN: 978-1-68051-622-7

[Mountaineers Books](#), 2023

[www.cascadiaguide.com](http://www.cascadiaguide.com)



---

## **Write a Community Poem As a Letter to a Being For Elementary (K-5) Students**

*This lesson was used with a classroom of first graders... but it can easily be adapted for any age group.*

- Time required: 30-50 minutes

### **Background**

For students doing poetry units, this playful, engaging lesson will help them connect the verbal/linguistic skills they're learning with the observed details of the world around them.

There are amazing beings, wherever you are. Noticing them, learning about them, imagining their inner lives makes them more amazing. Poems let us not only name something but imagine ourselves in conversation with that "thing." The facts of the being's life are important, but so are the ways we imagine them.... together, students can write a poem for a being.

### **Procedure**

1. Share a being story and poem (or two!) from *Cascadia Field Guide* with your class. Preferably a being they know.
2. Ask students what *they* know about this being and what they learned in listening. What sparked their curiosity?
3. Ask students to think about beings around them, whether in a park or the playground. Do they see crows? Trees? Moths? Ask them what plants and animals they have seen.
4. Together, choose one of these beings to focus on. Ask students to share more details. Write these on a whiteboard. It's important to create a sense of shared knowledge.
5. Use the template below to write a collective poem. Read each line, and ask students to finish the statements. Try to hold back your editorial mind, and listen for the best opportunities your students provide. Feel free to add and improvise, but writing a poem together will be a doorway to students writing on their own:

Hello, \_\_\_\_\_  
This morning you looked like \_\_\_\_\_  
I think tonight, when I'm sleeping, you will \_\_\_\_\_  
I love your \_\_\_\_\_  
and your \_\_\_\_\_.  
You remind me of \_\_\_\_\_.

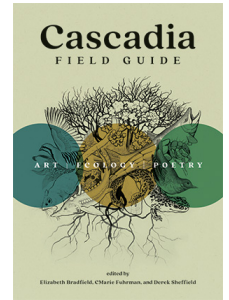
# *Cascadia Field Guide: Art, Ecology, Poetry*

Elizabeth Bradfield, CMarie Fuhrman, Derek Sheffield

ISBN: 978-1-68051-622-7

Mountaineers Books, 2023

[www.cascadiaguide.com](http://www.cascadiaguide.com)



---

Yesterday, I heard you saying \_\_\_\_\_.  
Do you dream of \_\_\_\_\_ like me?  
What do you see when you look at \_\_\_\_\_?  
What do you hear when \_\_\_\_\_?

Here's an example of a first grade class's poem in Seattle:

Hello, Banana Slug.

This morning, you looked like an old banana.  
I think, tonight, when I'm sleeping, you will climb the wall of Pathfinder [their school]  
I love that you don't have a shell.  
I love your tiny, tiny eyes.  
You remind me of an alien from outer space.  
Yesterday, I heard you say, "That's a big house!"  
Do you dream of spiders, like me?  
What do you see when you look at the thorns of blackberries?  
What do you hear in people's footsteps?

Lesson tested and offered by Elizabeth Bradfield