

# An Ode to Nature

Big Questions for Little Humans

Episode 12



A series that explores big questions for little humans.

We create stories and poems to inspire reflection and dialogue in classrooms and at home.

Lee-Ann Matthews & Katerin Kuki Juretic

**BIG QUESTIONS FOR LITTLE HUMANS**

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## Facilitator's Notes:

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Recently we went to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. We saw an exhibition by a contemporary artist named Nicolas Party who curated a unique multi faceted show including his own paintings, integrated with murals and pieces from the permanent collection at the gallery. The show provokes viewers to reflect on our connection to the natural world. As lovers of all things wild and free, we were captivated by it all but in particular by a small oil painting that depicted a rich, lush thumbnail of a nature scene. When we looked at it we were instantly filled with longing and nostalgia for this unfamiliar world. Something inside of us ached for the untouched landscape. It was staggering to realize that this canvas was painted hundreds of years ago. No wonder it evoked such a provocative response. This was a portrait of a pre-industrial reality, where toads and lizards and newts and snails reigned and factories, electricity and motor cars weren't yet a part of the equation.

It makes you stop and wonder about how different the world would be without as many humans and all of the things we do in modern life. The very soil in our backyards, what would that be like if we let it? An interesting experiment to consider....

Please share the painting with your little humans prior to/ while reading the following poem.

### [Otto Marseus van Schrieck - Three snakes, lizard and toad \(1663\)](#)

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## **An Ode to the Natural World by Dragon and Bunny**

A long time ago before there were buildings or cars  
Rich soil and clean water under the vast sky and stars  
Creepy crawlies and wild things  
Plants growing tall  
All shapes and colours  
Some huge and some small

Toads,

Frogs,

Fish

and Fowl

Hummingbirds tiny and the great horned owl  
Seeds bursting forth fed by sun and rain  
No pollution to stop them, no traffic, no train  
No planes in the sky  
No bikes trampling snails  
Just the earth spinning strong  
Steadfast without fail

Where lizards and spiders and beetles thrive  
Nature could flourish and be fully alive

Watch,

Look,

Stop, Smell and Hear

We must pay attention to the heron and deer

The forest floor has deep wisdom to share

Can we learn?  
Do we dare?  
Or do we even care?

**Reading Guide:** Print this document and be sure to give your little humans the colouring sheet that's included on page 5. The adult is the listener and must make sure to be free from distractions and not correct or coerce the conversation.

Take a deep breath and start with the words, "**Will you tell me...**"

- *What is nature to you? List a few things that you can think of that you appreciate or admire that are not made in a factory or bought from a store.*
- *Now imagine how different those things would be if there were no cars, buildings or pollution. How does this look?*
- *Is there something that you can do to let nature flourish (a potted plant, a bird feeder, or other aspect of nature in your life)*
- *Use the space below to create a world where nature is uninterrupted. Remember to use your imagination and create a realm that is wild and free. This can be both good and bad so have fun!*



# Ode to Nature Colouring Page

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