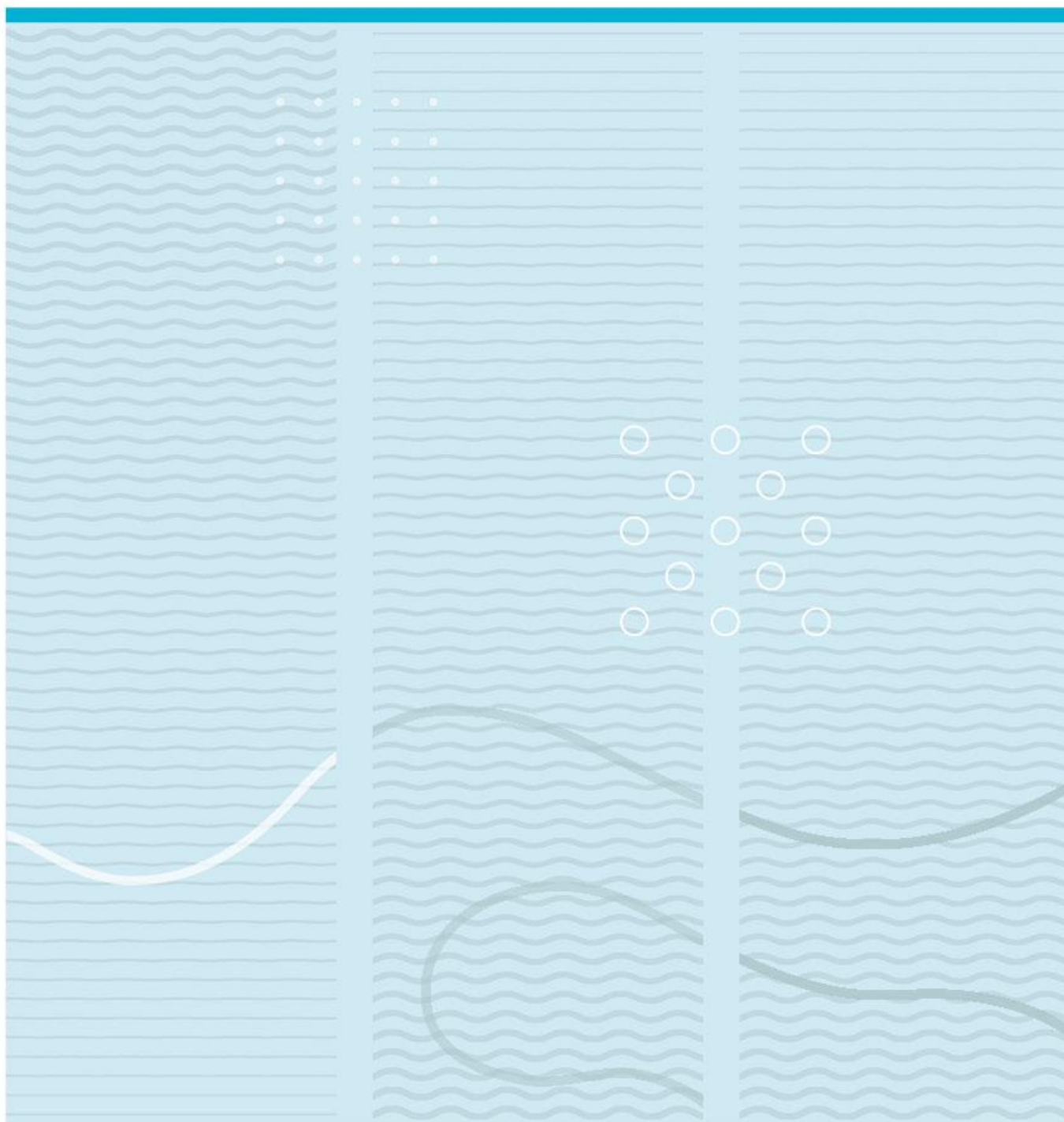


Niels Rösche

# Nature and poetry

Poetry as a method for nature connection



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This thesis is worth 30 study points

## **Abstract**

Our world seems to inhabit many people who tend to be disconnected from nature, who seem to use nature mainly as a background for their 'fast' activities, driven by adrenaline. This disconnection may be contributing to the planet's destruction as well as negatively influence people's health. This research aims to fill a gap in the subject's knowledge as it looks to explore poetry as a stimulating tool for nature connection. Poetry has been a key element of my adult life, bringing me closer to nature, helping me to ask new questions, to wonder, to find new perspectives and ultimately guiding me into forming an incredibly meaningful relationship with nature. Which is why I aimed at developing a new method that looks to use and incorporate poetry within *slow* outdoor experiences, in order to help people establish a deeper and more meaningful connection to nature. In this study, I tried this method out on five master students representing diverse sociocultural backgrounds. These students participated in two semistructured interviews as well as three workshops in which poetry was incorporated into various nature experiences. Findings from this research show significant potential, as some data suggests that listening to and writing poetry may have a positive influence on one's connection by bringing new awareness, perspectives and ideas to light. Further findings also indicate that poetry may help people create a more personal and sensitive relationship with nature. In this thesis, the full potential of using poetry as a method for improving one's nature connection, as well as the entire process behind it, are thoroughly discussed.



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## Foreword

This thesis was written for my master's degree in Nordic friluftsliv at the university of South-eastern Norway. As the subject is related to poetry and slow friluftsliv, it assumes some prior knowledge of outdoor recreation and the concept of friluftsliv. Furthermore, a number of annexes are appended to this thesis, which can be found at the back of this paper and might help the reader get a more complete idea of the research process. Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Kirsti Gurholt, for the extremely helpful guidance and feedback throughout the entire research process, as well as some of my friends, family and loved ones for their continuous support.

Bø I Telemark, Norway / 9th of May 2022

Niels Rösche

# 1 A poetic preamble

Poetry is special. Writing it allows us to paint a lively picture, it allows us to feel, to let go, to whisper, to scream, to confine our awe, heartbreak or love in a paper cell. Only for it to be set free, for it to be able to transcend the patterned lines covered in ink, by those who choose or are allowed to read. Writing poetry can be a gateway to unlocking emotions, experiences, thoughts and ones most inner feelings and self. Consequently, when put into the context of nature and friluftsliv, the subtle yet powerful art of poetry provides us with opportunities to connect deeply and personify with our surroundings. In doing so, we learn more about ourselves, the way we think, process, feel and connect. Our identity is shaped, one experience, one feeling, one thought, one letter or one word at a time, as we choose to come close or keep distance, to see or to be blind, to embrace or to let go (Rösche 2021, p. 5). This is what poetry has been and continues to be for me. It's been a tool that I've used on many of my trips into nature, to help me slow down, process feelings and emotions, relate to my surroundings and myself and most of all to create a deep and rooted bond with the diverse natural world. Since it has been such an effective instrument for me, I started wondering if it could be for other people too. That's when I found an article written by Judy Todd, in which she shares a similar experience. Todd describes how she uses nature as her muse and inspiration, which allows her mind to quiet, for everything to slow down and for her perception to alter from three dimensional to a multi-sensory and multi-dimensional experience. In this way connections to nature become apparent to her that where not before (Todd 2015, pp. 124–125). Poetry allowed her to obtain new perspectives, to learn more about herself as a human being and to connect to nature in a more meaningful way. Now during my time in both Belgium and Norway, I have observed many people around me who seemed to be disconnected to nature. They seem to use nature mainly as a backdrop for 'faster' activities or hobbies, without forming a relationship with or understanding about the surroundings they travel through, not fully realising how valuable those could be to them. If this is the case, I find this phenomenon quite saddening, for nature holds so much for all of us. Therefore, I will try in this thesis to research if poetry can be, like it was for me, a tool to help people slow down in nature and connect to it on a deeper level, in order to properly reap its benefits for the human mind, body and soul. For in my opinion poetry doesn't only offer us an opportunity to

express ourselves, it also gives us a chance to get to know ourselves, to grow as human beings and to live a healthy life.



## **2 Deteriorating nature connection and why it needs to improve**

### **2.1 Slow versus fast friluftsliv**

As already mentioned in the introduction, my research idea originates on one side from my belief in the art of poetry as a complementary tool to outdoor experiences and on the other side from a phenomenon that I have been observing in both Norway and Belgium. This phenomenon spirals around the topics of slow friluftsliv and fast friluftsliv. So, before I dive into my observations, I would like to elaborate on what relationships might exist between the two concepts. Now, the difference between those two can mostly be found in how people travel through nature and with what mindset people go into nature when practicing them. Varley and Semple (2015) define slow friluftsliv as explorations and reconnections with the natural world in which we sense, feel and invest in a place whilst moving through it slowly. In that sense slow friluftsliv highlights the (ir)rationality of uncertainty, transience, experiment-, unpredictability and the emotional content of human experience, in the context of the great outdoors (Varley and Semple 2015, p. 78). This means that slow friluftsliv leans closer to the traditional view upon friluftsliv, closer to its origin, for traditionally friluftsliv meant dwelling and roaming through nature in order to obtain a biological, aesthetic, social, spiritual and philosophical experience of closeness to a place, the landscape, and the more-than-human world (Gelter 2010, p. 3). However, like everything on our planet, the concept of friluftsliv too, has evolved. This is why we today, have the concept of fast or post-modern friluftsliv. Fast friluftsliv can be seen as a sportified, “fast and furious” version of friluftsliv. In this form of friluftsliv the essence no longer lays in the human relationships to nature, but rather in the activities. It can thus be seen as a more superficial way of friluftsliv (Gelter 2010, pp. 3–4). In today’s society fast friluftsliv is immensely popular, hip and cool (Gelter 2010, p. 17). This is because fast activities are in a sense “woven into the history and psyche of modernity” and perfectly fit the accelerating pace of our modern society (Varley and Semple 2015, p. 76). Furthermore, it's also probable to assume that social media, with its massive impact in every sector across the globe, plays a role in fast friluftsliv’s popularity. Everywhere I look or scroll, I see crazy clips, pictures, videos and stunts from both sponsored professionals and amateurs. This content ranges

from skiing to mountain biking to skating to snowboarding and so on. I'm afraid that seeing these clips, though they are unquestionably impressive, may not always have the best influence on people, and especially not on younger generations. Of course, they can be inspiring and being inspired is rarely a bad thing, yet they put the focus of being outdoors in nature on the activities, rather than highlighting the subtle beauties of nature or stimulating slow, mindful adventures. This might in a way create an image that being in nature is all about adrenaline and going fast. That that's where meaning and connection can be found and that going slow is just boring. Of course, I presume that most of these clips are not necessarily shared on social media with that mindset nor am I saying that there is no meaning or connection to be found in fast activities because there is, I'm only fearful that some viewers might obtain an unhealthy mindset about nature through the influence of social media and its infinite amount of mind-blowing videos.

The phenomenon of people having quite a superficial mindset towards nature, is something I already observed during a previous assignment in this master's studies where I studied how my perspective towards a landscape changes through doing either slow or fast friluftsliv (Rösche 2020, pp. 2–3). During the research I was shocked how many opportunities of connection I missed by simply moving through the land fast instead of slow. Furthermore, when observing people around me I noticed how most of the people there merely used nature as a tool to stay fit, exercise, or practice 'fast' activities such as mountain biking or downhill skiing, but on the other side didn't ever slow down in nature and connect to it in a deeper way.. , I felt like these 'fast' friluftsliv practitioners, with a post-modern perspective towards the concept, take many natural elements for granted and do not really realize how valuable they can be. Of course, I must add that this is not a case of either or, for I know plenty of people who are able to enjoy both types of friluftsliv and are simultaneously incredibly connected to nature. I'm merely describing how I observed a trend of people tilting more and more to the faster side of the friluftsliv spectrum without ever coming in touch with the concept of slow friluftsliv. As someone who has experienced and who appreciates both sides of the friluftsliv spectrum, I find it curious that some people, for whatever reason, fail to slow down and appreciate nature in different ways too. In my opinion nature is one of the best places to reflect, as it gives us the space to do so freely. Therefore, I wanted to

research if poetry could somehow be a tool or solution for (groups of) people that have a to some degree 'platonic' or superficial relationship with nature, in the sense that they see it more as a recreational tool for staying fit or practicing sports, rather than a living entity, that we can learn from, reflect in and connect with on more levels than just one. With this research I thus hope to open more doors for people in the outdoor community and beyond.

## **2.2 Stimulating nature connection through poetry**

As mentioned before, the wanted outcome of this research is a deep and meaningful connection to nature for all the participants. In order to achieve that, we must first of all have a framework to build on as well as have an elaborate understanding of what a meaningful connection to nature actually consists of. In the previous paragraph I described how many people seem not to be deeply connected to nature but mainly tend to use it as a background for social or physical activities. Molly Baker (2005) defines this lack of connection as 'landlessness'. Landlessness can be described as the lack of awareness for, connection to and admiration for the natural world (Baker 2005, p. 268). Whereas, having a deep and meaningful connection she defines as landfullness. Baker states that humans must obtain a personal approach of relating to the land that transcends both time and space in order for a meaningful connection to exist. Landfullness thus requires for humans to experience nature through all their senses, including the emotional, affective one. They must explore their own consciousness, awareness or experiences in and interactions with a landscape. In this way humans will be able to form lasting relationships and deep connections with landscapes as they no longer just travel through nature but rather in and with it (Baker 2005, pp. 270–271). In addition to Baker's ideas, Mikael and Asfeldt (2017) state that a decentering of humans in favor of mutual and relational engagements with the more than-human world, in combination with outdoor skill development and place stories that involve reading the land and learning from its natural and cultural history, opens new possibilities for embodied relations to natural places (Mikael and Asfeldt 2017, p. 9). In my opinion, these ideas flow perfectly together with and are very complementary to the art of poetry, as poetry can, in its own way, provide an opportunity to get new insights and perspectives (such as a decentralization of humans) on matters as well as structure

thoughts, reflections and feelings which often may seem out of touch (Hunter and Sanderson 2007, p. 212). Furthermore, poetry creates a meaningful language through which it becomes possible to conceive and perceive what, under ordinary circumstances, cannot always be conceived and perceived (Jones 1997, p. 243). Consequently, the aim of this study is to find out if poetry can be a tool to help people relate to nature in new ways, perceive nature through all their senses and decenter themselves in favor of engagements with the natural world and thereby achieve a state of landfullness or deepened nature connection.

### **2.3 Benefits of a meaningful connection to nature**

Having a strong and meaningful relationship to nature is vital for mankind (Mackay and Schmitt 2019, p. 7; Capaldi et al. 2015, pp. 8–9). Not only for their own survival but also for that of our beloved mother Earth. In other words, there are many potential benefits to it, that is in all humans' greatest interest to explore. A first benefit of an enhanced nature connection to elaborate on is the increase in both a person's mental and physical health. A recent study from the university of Exeter suggests that spending at least 120 minutes in nature every week has significant benefits for one's mental and physical health and overall wellbeing. The same study indicates that the more time is being spent in nature, the bigger the impact is on one's health and wellbeing. Specifically, it is said to help in the prevention of chronic stress and the development of diseases. Reason for that is that nature encounters have the ability to improve our resilience and increase the coping mechanisms in dealing with stressors, thus ultimately lowering our morbidity (White et al. 2019, pp. 6–7). It is logical to assume that an increased nature connection will result into more frequent visits as well as more meaningful visits into nature. Consequently, there is a coherent correlation between a meaningful connection to nature and an increased mental and physical health (Capaldi et al. 2015, pp. 8–9). Furthermore, I believe that being strongly connected to nature allows for the opportunity to inspire others in our environment. In my close social circle, I have noticed how me being passionate and inspired about nature and various friluftsliv activities, has stimulated some of my friends and family to gain an interest in similar topics. In a way, my strong relationship with nature has fueled some people in my surroundings to work on their own connection to nature by simply spending more time

there. This brings me to the last and maybe most important benefit. With an enhanced nature connection comes a profound understanding of, appreciation for and admiration for the diverse natural world. A direct correlation can be found between a meaningful, in depth connect to nature and environmentalism (Wells and Lekies 2006, p. 5). People who, when growing up, were engaged with the natural world by experiencing it regularly and in many different facets, tend to have a strong connection to nature as adults and consequently are often considered to be environmentalists, as they try to take care of our planet Earth as best as they can (Wells and Lekies 2006, p. 18). Generally, in our modern society, environmentalism stands for the restoration, preservation and improvement of the natural environment. In addition, it hopes to maintain and sustain critical earth system processes such as the climate. In more simpler terms it can be described as an ideology or movement that focuses on protecting earth's diverse flora and fauna whilst simultaneously countering pollution and nature destruction (Zelezny and Schultz 2000, pp. 370–371). Lastly, research by Mackay and Schmitt (2019) indicates that nature connection has a causal effect on pro-environmental behaviour (Mackay and Schmitt 2019, p. 7). Benefits of an enhanced nature connection are thus not limited to the connected persons, but instead may range out to the people around them as well as to the entire natural world. All of these benefits are part of the reasoning behind this research. As someone who cares deeply about our earth as well as the people on it, I find that discovering new methods to bring people closer to nature and themselves is of the utmost importance.

### **3 Methods**

My research will mostly focus on the description of thoughts, experiences, feelings and perceptions, rather than their measurement. Furthermore, my writings will be more descriptive-analytical and open/interpretive than conclusive, moralist and predictive. My writings will also put little to no emphasis on generalizations. Based on those factors I can clearly identify my research as a qualitative one (Kumar 2019, p. 76). My study can, more specifically, be classified as action research. In his book 'Research Methodology', Kumar defines action research as a philosophy-guided research design that comprises two components: action and research (Kumar 2019, pp. 332–333). In this sort of study, research is a means to create and support positive socio-cultural change (Smith and Sparkes 2017, p. 88; Kumar 2019, p. 333). It is mainly used to identify areas of concern, develop and test solutions, and experiment with new approaches (Kumar 2019, p. 333). As thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter, I identified an 'area of concern' within the outdoor community. That area being the lack of meaningful connection to nature due to many friluftsliv practitioners seeming to have a more superficial relationship and connection with nature since they seem to be using nature as a tool for 'fast' activities, without being 'landfull' and reading and learning from the land. This area of concern could and should be researched more, as they are mainly based on observations. Either way, the aim of the research is to explore poetry as a tool to help people connect on a deeper level with nature. As I sought to develop and conduct an experiment to battle the phenomenon of deteriorated nature connections and create a positive change, the term action research is argued to be applicable to my studies. Throughout the research, one research question guided the process: "How does listening to poetry in the outdoors influence friluftsliv practitioners' connection to and perspective towards nature?"

#### **3.1 Participants**

As it comes to selecting my participants for this research, I had multiple directions I could go into. As the aim of my research is to create a deeper and more meaningful connection to nature, I initially planned to find participants who maybe didn't have a strong connection with nature as that would increase my chances of getting significant results. Those results being an increased connection to and understanding of nature

and the outdoors. However, due to the situation and location I was in, as well as due to the limited timeframe of the research, this was logistically hard to achieve.

Furthermore, my thesis' topic was quite specific, meaning I would incorporate various terms into my interviews and workshops that are specifically connected to both my master studies and to the subject of friluftsliv in general. Therefore, I had to shift my plan and try to find some participants that were one, accessible and could participate in workshops, and two, had a background in friluftsliv so that they would be familiar with the jargon used throughout the entire research process. That's how I landed on a sample of master students from mixed backgrounds that participated in an outdoor adventure master program. After having done some research on their course content and literature, I realized that in their master's program they had been going through similar courses as me. Therefore I had somewhat of an idea about their friluftsliv knowledge and the information they had already gathered before participating. As well as that, I also had an idea of what elements of outdoor life they had already discussed in class, meaning that terms and ideas such as slow and fast friluftsliv would need no explaining. Not having to lecture the participants on various complicated outdoor related terms and topics would save time, which was something that I had to look at doing with the time we were given. Another reason for choosing to work with this group of students is that it would allow for the discussions during the interviews and workshops to be more detailed and in depth. However, choosing to work with the outdoor master students would also have significant downsides. That being that all would presumably have a rather strong connection with nature before starting the research, meaning severe shifts or increases in the participants' connection to nature due to the workshops was unlikely. Either way, I still deemed this group of people to be the most fitting for the research in my given situation.

Through a shared group on the student webpage Canvas, I was able to find the details of all the students within the outdoor adventure master program. This allowed me to contact them, introduce myself and my research as well as propose them to participate in the research process. In the end, five of them agreed to participate. Furthermore, each participant was guaranteed anonymity; therefore, all names are pseudonyms. In Table 3-1 you can find a summary of the research group members.

*Table 3-1 Summary of research group members*

Name	First interview	Workshops	Follow-up interview
Anika	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oscar	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lily	Yes	Yes	Yes
Beau	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aria	Yes	Yes	Yes

### **3.2 Research Design**

My research design consists of one introductory interview in which I tried to get an understanding of my participants’ connection to nature, followed by three workshops in which I introduced the participants to poetry as a tool within outdoor experiences. These workshops all focused on a different topic, those being: silence, touch and barefoot walking. During these workshops, the participants would be journaling their thoughts, reflections and experiences in a notebook. Finally, I conducted a follow-up interview, to evaluate the workshops and to research if any shifts regarding my participants’ connection to nature had occurred after the workshops. All aspects of this research will be touched upon thoroughly in the following paragraphs.

*Table 3-2 Research design model*

Interview 1	Workshop 1: Silence	Workshop 2: Touch and feeling	Workshop 3: Barefoot walking	Follow-up interview
1/03/2022 – 7/03/2022	16/03/2022	21/03/2022	25/03/2022	31/03/2022



### 3.2.1 Interviews

For the interviews I decided to opt for a semistructured format. In semistructured interviews the researcher uses a preplanned interview guide to ask a participant relatively focused but open-ended questions about a specific topic (Smith and Sparkes 2017, p. 104). Furthermore, Kumar (2019) states that a semistructured format can be very useful to explore certain topics intensively and extensively and digging deeper into specific phenomena, issues or problems (Kumar 2019, p. 363). Therefore, I deemed this structure to be the most beneficial to use in both my interviews, as I wanted to get a clear and detailed understanding of my participants' connection to nature in my first interview and a descriptive evaluation of their experiences throughout the workshops in the final interview. Both of the interview guides can be found in the annexes.

Now the questions of the interview were mainly inspired by the natured relatedness scale, created by Nisbet, Zelenski and Murphy. The natured relatedness scale, as the name might give away, is a tool that scales people's relatedness to nature. Nature relatedness too, is a construct of Nisbet, Zelenski and Murphy (2009), who define it as a new way to describe an individual's levels of connectedness with the natural world.

*The concept of Nature Relatedness encompasses one's appreciation for and understanding of our interconnectedness with all other living things on the earth. It is distinct from environmentalism in that it includes much more than activism. It is not simply a love of nature or enjoyment of only the superficially pleasing facets of nature, such as sunsets and snowflakes. It is also an understanding of the importance of all aspects of nature, even those that are not aesthetically appealing to humans (e.g., spiders and snakes) (Nisbet et al. 2009, p. 718).*

Now in order to scale this relatedness the authors developed a questionnaire that aimed to assess an individual's affective, cognitive, and physical relationship with the natural world, for those make up the majority of one's connection to nature (Nisbet et al. 2009, p. 719). Inspired by this article, I divided my interviews into three sections: the experiential, affective and cognitive section. Furthermore, how I phrased questions and what questions I asked was influenced by the questionnaires that were included in

Nisbet's, Zelenski's and Murphy's (2009) article on nature relatedness as well as by me having an idea about what courses the participants had already had in their master's. Going through similar courses myself enabled the opportunity for me to use specific terms and ask specific questions. (See annex 1 & 2)

### 3.2.2 Workshops

My fieldwork consisted of three different but slow trips into nature with my participants, in which I incorporated poetry. The point of these workshops was to use poetry as a tool to help the participants slow down in nature and to help them see the value that hides within 'slow adventures'. Therefore each trip was cloaked within a specific theme, evolving around a specific element of the outdoors that we tend to lose when travelling fast through landscapes. The themes are silence, sense of touch and walking barefoot, all of which shall be elaborated on further along in this chapter. The aim of the workshops was to touch on all previously mentioned elements. It aimed to combine poetry and slow friluftsliv, in order to on one side improve people's connection to nature and on the other side improves people's connection to themselves. In its essence the workshops were thus poetry in combination with moving slow through nature. However, in order to create a more complete experience, I opted to incorporate different activities or assignments within every workshop. In my opinion, including these exercises or activities would make the workshops less monotone and give the participants more stimuli to process and reflect on the various poems. Yet, exercises and assignments aside, poetry was still very much the main focal point.

Per workshop, I tried to select the poems carefully. The aim was to both find already existing ones and to write some myself that touched upon the themes of the workshops. However, for the barefoot workshop this was not always as easy. When looking for appropriate poems or trying to write poems of my own within that topic, I struggled to either find or write something meaningful and relevant. Therefore, I decided for that specific workshop to not force myself to write poems directly connected to the topic of walking barefoot. In my opinion, forcing myself in this situation would have severely harmed the quality of my work and consequently would have made the entire experience less fruitful for the participants. Of course, one of the

main characteristics of all the poems included, was that they should be in some sense related to nature or nature experience, or if that was maybe not the initial case, that there then was still a connection to be made to our natural world and its many features. So even though in the last workshop not all the poems were directly related to the topic, they would still be relevant for all the participants. Furthermore, in order to create a big poetic impact on the participants regarding their nature connection, I deemed it important for the poems to unlock different and maybe new perspectives. If some of the literature used in my workshops would allow the participants to see and think about nature in different ways than they maybe did before, this could potentially influence their connection to nature in the long run. Lastly, I deemed it important to include several emotions and feelings in the workshop literature. For myself, a big part of poetry in the outdoors was allowing myself, through poetry and the outdoors, to truly feel what was going on inside of me. I was able to find myself, my thoughts, feelings and emotions in the landscape and found solitude in writing that down. Seeing my happiness, sadness or melancholy mirrored in nature, always made me feel understood and accepted, and by writing that down I left nature in a sense of relief. Nature has always helped me see and realise who I am and what I need, and thereby has made me more connected than ever. So, if the workshop poems allow my participants to feel freely, to dig inside of themselves and see what's actually going on inside, or in its most simple way allow them to reflect on certain feelings and emotions in connection to the nature surrounding them, then that could evoke some fruitful influences for each member. The thought process behind selecting or writing each poem will also be discussed further along in this chapter.

### 3.2.2.1 Silence

The first workshop was cloaked in the theme of silence. Kenny Column (2011) stated the following in his book *The Power of Silence*.

*Silence is useful. Falling silent can be a means of learning about the world around us. Silence is also a space in which to cultivate peace of mind and body. It has an important place in our lives. Yet, just as it is increasingly difficult to escape artificial lighting at night, so we have accepted noise or constant sound as a price worth paying for contemporary conveniences (Column 2011, p. IX).*

So, silence is valuable, especially in a world in which that element is becoming increasingly rare. However, judging from my experiences it still exists, in small windows, in certain places, all over the world. Though in order to hear it, we have to not only physically be in the right place but we also have put ourselves in the right head space, and have to allow ourselves to hear it. Nature and especially the forest have proven to be my personal playground when it comes to silence. It's where I always find silence. Silence in my head. But also physical silence and at times nearly absolute silence, where I can't hear a thing and I wonder if I have gone deaf. An important note here is that the means of travelling in and through nature plays a big role in the experience of silence. For me personally, silence is a recurrent theme when moving through nature slowly, when just being in nature is the essence of the experience, and not the means of transport. When moving through the landscape faster, so generally within fast friluftsliv, I find silence an elusive element. Untraceable both physically and mentally due to my focus being pointed towards the activity and the pure noise that comes with speed. Speed leaves its traces on a landscape, and with traces tends to come noise.

### 3.2.2.1.1 Workshop 1: Silence

The first workshop I planned, was a campfire hike around the lakes in Breisås in Bø i Telemark, consisting of two parts. The original hike in that area is about 11 kilometers and takes about 2,5 hours. However, during the trip some shortcuts were made, bringing the distance to around 9 kilometers, though the time spent on the tour remained approximately the same due to poetic readings and activities. A map of the hike can be found in figure 3.2-1.



*Figure 3.2-1: Map of the hike*

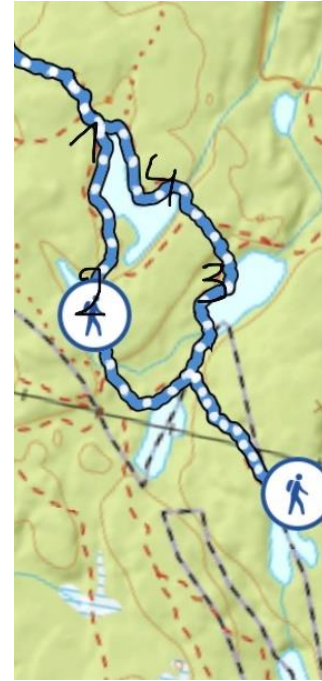
The first part of the workshop marked the transition from an urban environment to pure nature. This stretch consisted of about 45 minutes of walking further and further



away from civilization and the noise and sounds that come with it. Both physically, mentally and symbolically we moved away from noise and slowly approached silence. This part of the trip didn't contain any readings or specific activities, but the participants were given the assignment to not speak or go into conversation with each other. They were asked to focus on the sounds, or lack thereof, around them. In this part, I hoped to make them aware of the transition from urban to nature, from sound to silence. As well as that I hoped to make them realize that if they put themselves into a position in which they allow themselves to experience silence, that silence, both on the inside and outside, is not that hard to find and is incredibly powerful.

*Figure 3.2-2: First part of workshop 1*

By the end of part 1 of the workshop, we had removed ourselves from all urban elements and we found ourselves in true nature, on top of the Breisås hill with its many picturesque lakes. As we hiked around the various lakes, talking was again allowed, but it was still advised to keep paying attention to the element of sound. On the scouting of this trip I marked 4 different spots along the way. On each of these spots, I read the group a poem, evolving around silence. Some of those were written by myself, some by some of the greatest poets to have set foot on planet Earth. On the fourth and last stop, I made a small campfire and read the final poem around it. Afterwards the participants received some time to write down thoughts and reflections about the trip in their notebook, as well as potentially some poems of their own.



*Figure 3.2-3: Part 2 of workshop 1*

### 3.2.2.1.2 Workshop 1: Poems

Poem 1: When the people have gone home – Hans Børli

WHEN THE PEOPLE HAVE GONE HOME

You seek your own reflection in  
the dim mysteries around you.

Always.

You put your lonely thoughts  
in the mouth of the wind. You dream  
human meaning into  
scent and whispering air. Always  
the echo answers you in your own voice.

But what do you think the forest sings  
afterwards,  
when you have gone home?

Why, then the hour has come  
for voices bare as iron.

A silence rises,  
stands with lifted brow  
and chants to the stars  
Cambrian lays  
that human lips have never touched.

Deep in the forests,  
in city squares and in  
shining halls  
a silence sits laughing soundlessly.  
Waits  
until the people have gone home.

Then it rises and speaks,  
speaks with stony tongue  
language that's so arrogant  
it has no word for  
man.

I deemed this poem by Hans Børli especially relevant and fruitful to open the first workshop. It allows for the reader, or in this case listeners, to acquire a new perspective towards silence and for new thoughts to arise about how the element of silence in the outdoors is affected by the presence or absence of mankind.

Stop 2: If you've listened close to silence – Erin Hanson

If you've listened close to silence  
I'm sure that you have heard  
The gentle constant ringing  
In the space between two words  
When you really pay attention  
You find it's not just in your head  
But instead is whispers of the words  
The world has left unsaid  
It's "I love you" left unspoken  
And a mother's last goodbye  
That she never had the chance to say  
As she watched her daughter die  
It's forgiveness never given  
And a "sorry" left too late  
That would have saved a best friends' life  
If they'd known it could not wait  
It's a phrase that could have helped them  
And it's secrets that could heal  
It's words from those too scared to say  
The truth of how they feel  
But you have an advantage  
For you're still alive to speak  
Words that could save a life  
Or give strength to someone weak  
So may you never leave unspoken  
Words to whole world ought to hear  
Before they just become the ringing  
In another person's ear

Through reading this poem I hoped the participants would realise how many dimensions there are to the element of silence. There is a social, a mindful and a physical dimension to it, and its impact on our lives can be monumental. The aim of this poem was to make the participants realise how massive and complex silence and its impact can be.



Poem 3: Silence – Edgar Allen Poe (1833)

SILENCE

There is a silence where hath been no sound,  
There is a silence where no sound may be,  
In the cold grave — under the deep, deep sea,  
Or in wide desert where no life is found,  
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;  
No voice is hush'd — no life treads silently,  
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,  
That never spoke — over the idle ground  
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls  
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,  
Though the dun fox, or wild hyena, calls,  
And owls, that flit continually between,  
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,  
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

I selected this poem of Edgar Allen Poe for the beautifully subtle and soft way it describes different kind of silences connected to different natural landscapes. As this workshop would take place in a forest, I figured it interesting for the participants to align their reflections of silence with those of Edgar Allen Poe. How the presence of certain sounds in the forest, can still be acknowledged and felt as silence.

Poem 4: From the city I came – Niels Rösche

FROM THE CITY I CAME

Deafening, ear-piercing  
this silence surrounding me.  
Artificial almost.  
Heart rattles claustrophobically  
as if it's getting cornered  
by this provoking peacefulness.  
I'm thrown off  
physically, mentally.  
Don't know what to think,  
what to do,  
with all this space.  
I had learned about the concept of silence.  
Been to silent rooms in the city and  
experienced it artificially.  
Yet now,  
I am out here in the wilderness  
surrounded by authentic silence  
and it's making me anxious.  
I expected differently.  
Am I allowed to think freely here?  
To feel freely?  
Because I am.  
This silence brings honesty  
to my body and soul  
and it as frightening as it is beautiful.

The idea behind the final poem of the workshop was to approach silence from a possible futuristic approach. Many people growing up in bigger cities are not familiar with the element of silence and its impact on one's mind and body. Therefore, it can for some be frightening or confronting to hear silence and to experience how powerful it can be. By listening to it I hoped the participants would be reminded of the strength of silence and would acquire newfound appreciation for it.

### 3.2.2.2 *Touch*

Similarly to the element of silence, the element of touch, the element of physically feeling the world around you, feeling its powers and effects on your skin, on your physical appearance, can be an incredibly valuable asset if one wants to connect to nature in a more meaningful way and reap its benefits. However, again, this element tends to get lost when travelling through a landscape in a fast way as we simply don't give ourselves the time and opportunity to get in touch with and feel what is around us. The sense of touch is one of humans' most important senses, although at times it is greatly underappreciated and its importance is overlooked (Franco et al. 2017, p. 8). The importance is hidden in the fact that our sense of touch is fundamental for us humans to create meaningful relationships to our environment (Paterson 2009, p. 766). Next to that, through research, it was found that the simple act of touch can reduce stress levels as measured by heart rate and blood pressure, which in its own right can be linked to an increase in both mental and physical health (Gallace and Spence 2010, p. 249). Furthermore, from case studies in forest schools, which are schools where children are encouraged to play and learn in the outdoors and use all their senses, including touch, to form a connection with and get an understanding of their surroundings, O'Brien and Murray derived that touch can be a mechanism through which children can improve their connection to nature and obtain its health benefits (O'Brien and Murray 2007, pp. 262–263; Nilsson et al. 2011). However, when it comes to the sense of touch in nature experiences, not much specific research or literature exists. It is believed that gardeners through physically touching the soil, experience both enjoyment and stress reduction, yet when it comes to feeling the wind or rain on our skin, touching leaves, grass or moss, little to no research has been done on its influences on nature connection (Townsend 2006, p. 119; Franco et al. 2017, p. 10). Therefore, the second workshop will host several poems and activities regarding the sense of touch in a natural setting, in an attempt to dive deeper into this aspect of nature connection, for in my opinion touch can play an important role in creating a strong and meaningful relationship with the natural world.

### 3.2.2.2.1 Workshop 2: Touch

Workshop 2 was again a hike, however this time I opted for a more alpine accented hike and the walking would be combined with *forest bathing*. Forest bathing is a way of reconnecting to the land through various mindful activities that can involve touch (Hansen et al. 2017, p. 1). The hike is about 4 km one way and takes about 1,5 hours. The trail took us from the forest to the rocky top of Bryggefjell, located in Bø I Telemark. Similar to workshop 1, there would be 4 stops along the way. At every stop, one poem was read within the topic of touch and feeling. However, in between the various stops, the participants would either have to do a certain exercise/activity or they received an assignment.

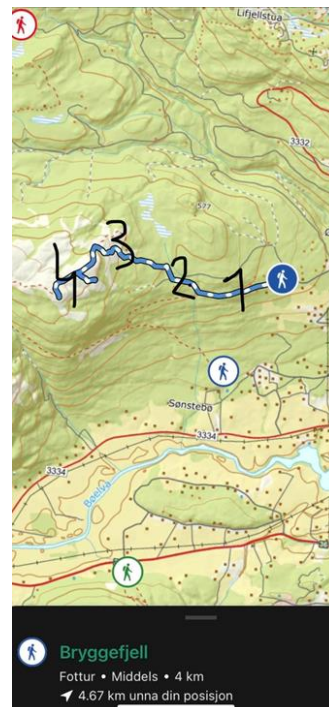


Figure 3.2-4: Map of workshop 2

The workshop started at the parking lot. From there we walked 10 minutes into the forest where the first stop was located. On the way to stop 1 the participants were encouraged to touch whatever they may find interesting in their surroundings and to reflect about that. This way they immediately got in the mindset of letting themselves be guided by their sense of touch whilst being in nature and focusing on how their skin impacts their experience.

After reading the first poem, the participants were informed about the first activity which took place on the way between stop 1 and 2. In this activity the participants paired up. One person had to close their eyes whilst the other lead them through the forest. After about five minutes, the roles changed. This activity aimed to unlock the full spectrum, all the different dimensions of touch. The blinded person would be mainly connected to their surroundings through touch. The ground, the trees, the dirt and the rock. As well as that, there would be the space to feel on different levels. The sun, the wind or the rain on the skin. After the activity we continued walking to stop 2.

After reading poem 2, the next activity was explained. The participants were to spread out and find a natural object of their choice (branch, rock, sand, leaf, etc.). In their notebook they then had to try to describe as detailed as possible how the item felt when in contact with their skin. All the different elements as to the shape and texture had to be elaborately described. Afterwards, they put the exact item in their pocket and took it along to stop 4. Furthermore, on their way to stop 4 they had to collect several more objects similar to the original one.

After reading poem 3, the next activity was explained. On the way to stop 4, there were a couple of boulders that were very comfortable to climb on, even without climbing equipment. The aim of the activity was for the participants to get up the boulders, whilst actively thinking about the feeling of the rock on their hands. The aim here was to understand that not all rocks feel the same, some are softer than others, warmer than others, sharper than others. For safety reasons I took a crash pad to make sure everything happened safely.

Stop 4 was the final stop. After having read the final poem, I explained the final activity. All the participants put the item they took from activity 2, as well as the 'fake ones' they collected along the way, in a bag. Each participant then read out the description of their item to the others. Afterwards, with their eyes closed, they had to take all the items out of the bag until they had found the original one that they described in their notebooks. When this was done, participants were allowed to have a go at each other's items.

### 3.2.2.2 Workshop 2: poems

Poem 1: Hans Børli – Heime hos jorda (1984)

#### At Home with the Earth

I rested one early summer morning  
on my back in the grass of an outfield.  
The June sky above me  
was profoundly bright and deserted.  
It felt like floating in the blue  
like a figurehead of a lost ship.  
I saw swaying, green grass  
growing through the low moon.  
And my eyes grew dim from joy until  
a pinecone on the ground  
gnawed between my shoulder blades  
and made me move a bit.

With the opening poem for the second workshop, I wanted to create a certain atmosphere. I hoped it would point the participants' focus to how our experiences outdoors can often be connected to our sense of touch and feeling. Whether that is the warmth of the sun on our skin, the softness of the grass that we lay on, or a pinecone gnawing in between our shoulder blades that makes us uncomfortable. We perceive the world around us not only through our eyes, nose and ears, but also through our skin.

Poem 2: Touch of the universe – Niels Rösche

#### Oh sun

The tiny hairs on my arms curl up with joy under your touch  
Every millimetre of bare skin welcomes your warmth, with gratitude.  
I feel your heat in my core, there you stay.

#### Oh rain

Your drops gently rumble on the green leaves around me.  
The sound echoes and rebounds in the forest.  
There's a sense of endlessness  
In my eyes.  
In my ears.  
And as you start falling on my bare body  
I feel relieved.  
As if I was but burned flesh.  
Many might consider you to be Earth's unwanted shower.

But I thank you.  
For your cold drops cleanse not only my skin  
But my mind too.  
You fall down on me and I can start over.

Oh evening breeze dancing towards me from the lake  
Your soft edges caress my skin.  
I shiver, happily.  
You remind me and I  
I reminisce of the old.  
Old lovers, and friends.  
Whose touch I might never feel again but you.  
You remind me.

The aim of this second poem was to try and widen the participants' perspective regarding the sense of touch. Becoming connected to a landscape or nature through touch doesn't always have to be generated by us humans actively touching and feeling the world around us, it can just as much be established by passively feeling different natural sensations on our skin.

Poem 3: Touched by nature – Niels Rösche

I have been touched by nature.

White pulver,  
So innocently soft,  
has made me freeze from the inside.  
It's cold crept in through every hole and crack and gap in my expensive clothing.  
My skin  
my most precious piece of equipment  
shivered then  
screamed and then  
surrendered silently.  
White pulver has made me freeze,  
softly.  
Then spring came.

My feet have bounced around on the moist earth of the spring forest.  
The dark and wet grains of sand massaging my feet every step of the way,  
no inch of skin left clean.  
Weirdly warm, the mud mattered  
for ever so slightly I sank  
as my feet were sucked into the world's soil.  
It made me feel grounded.

Sharp stone edges have taught me a lot.  
I never expected them so wise.  
My fragile fingertips ripped and bled underneath their touch.  
My flesh spread across the wall like a prehistoric painting.  
So I realised that sometimes I had to leave pieces of myself behind  
in order to climb higher,  
climb further,  
in life.

What a metaphor this thing called nature  
and I have been touched by it.

In this third poem I tried to verbalize how nature sometimes teaches us lessons that we can take with us throughout life. This specific poem describes lessons I learned by touching various natural elements with my bare skin. In my opinion, realising that nature is our biggest teacher in life can have a positive influence on one's nature connection.



Poem 4: Eclipse – Niels Rösche

Amid the universal endlessness  
two protagonists dance a dangerous part.

Moon

oh pale and perennial you are  
in your eternal pirouette  
Your freckled surface reflects  
the starry darkness surrounding you  
At times your edges turn hollow and inky  
yet heavenly you remain in state of tenebrosity  
and luminosity

Sun

oh burning being of longing  
precious yet pernicious you are  
in your sole position  
At night your thirst ruthlessly rises  
ever ravaging you remain  
in proximity  
to the one you so desire  
as she is turned into ashes  
by your presence  
Your ever-existent warmth fuels  
suffocation  
The simple touch of her  
would bring arctic peace to your fiery existence  
yet her absence  
leaves your flaming rays in agony

Waves of sound rattle in the vast yonder

An atmospheric melody  
carried by the witnessing stars  
introducing the epilogue  
of this cyclic perpetuity

At last

the everlasting dance of separation  
climaxes as  
his burning fingers  
caress her revealing surface  
of sentimental veneer  
He'd fit into her skin  
if he could

A monotonous stillness and silence  
slumbers  
as the eternal fire in the creases  
of his lips  
is quenched  
After a kiss  
of sun and moon  
as if it were  
A true eclipse.

Prologue  
Amid the universal endlessness  
Two protagonists dance apart.

Of course, our sense of touch goes beyond the natural world. In our daily, social life it is of the utmost importance when forming connections to certain objects or to other people. In my opinion nothing compares to the feeling of your skin touching that of a loved one. This poem is a metaphor for a romantic relationship in which two people always seem to miss each other and never quite get the chance to make it work. At times they get close, at times they are well and truly separated. I found myself in a similar situation to this. Therefore, this poem is a prime example of how we humans can strangely find ourselves in our natural surroundings as I got the inspiration for this poem whilst observing both a fiery red sun and a full moon in the evening sky at the same time. What I felt inside of me was in a way reflected in the natural world. The main aim of incorporating this poem was to make the participants aware that if they were willing to pay attention, nature always has ways to show us how we truly feel inside. For me personally, writing those observations down has always been a way of processing my thoughts and emotions, I hoped to share that method with my participants.

### 3.2.2.3 Workshop 3: Walking barefoot

For the third and final workshop I selected the theme 'walking barefoot', for it is another method that has deepened my connection to nature during some of my slow nature experiences. Walking barefoot is strongly connected to the second workshop that evolved around the sense of touch and is another element of nature experiences that can be neither incorporated nor appreciated when moving fast through a landscape. However, I did not only find inspiration for this theme through my own experiences, but also through specific literature. During one of my courses in this master's I came across some literature of the anthropologist Tim Ingold, who is probably my biggest inspiration for selecting this topic. In his article 'Culture on the ground' Ingold tries to perceive the world through the feet. Reading about how he tried to figure out why we walk like we walk, why we think like we think or in general why the world is like it is, through the anatomy, sensitivity and impact of our feet, made me start thinking and reflecting as well. Ingold states that we are not used to walking barefoot anymore, but that it holds many benefits for our mobility and movement, as well as for our ability to sense the world around us as we are more in touch with our surroundings (Ingold 2004, p. 330-336).

*It is almost a truism to say that we perceive not with the eyes, the ears or the surface of the skin, but with the whole body. Nevertheless, ever since Plato and Aristotle the western tradition has consistently ranked the senses of vision and hearing over the contact sense of touch. I shall not go into the relative standing of vision and hearing, since this is a lengthy and complex story in itself. But my first and most obvious point is that a more literally grounded approach to perception should help to restore touch to its proper place in the balance of the senses. For it is surely through our feet, in contact with the ground (albeit mediated by footwear), that we are most fundamentally and continually 'in touch' with our surroundings (Ingold 2004, p. 330).*

Furthermore, recent research from Rickard and White actually indicates that walking barefoot in natural settings leads to a higher degree of both nature connectedness and psychological restoration than walking through the same landscapes with shoes on

(Rickard and White 2021, p. 985). With that in mind, I tried to create a workshop for my participants that combined the aspects of poetry and walking barefoot in order to create a lot of food for thought and make them more connected to nature.

### 3.2.2.3.1 Workshop design

Workshop 3 was conducted in the Erikstein forest and bouldering field in Bø I Telemark. I took the participants on a 30-minute hike, walking barefoot. The trail holds house to a diverse landscape with many different natural elements such as grasses, moss, sand, mud, rocks, streams, snow, ice and many more. Along the way there are again 4 different stops where I will perform poetic readings. Throughout the walk, the main aim for the participants was to pay attention to how they perceive being in the outdoors through their feet. This, in combination with the poetry will hopefully allow for new perspectives and thoughts to arise. There will be no activities included apart from a little bit of barefoot climbing at the last spot. This will hopefully point out some contrast to the climbing done in workshop 3, as now the participants will have to learn to trust their feet. For safety reasons I will take a crashpad to maintain safety.

### 3.2.2.3.2 Workshop 3: Poems

Poem 1: The barefoot world – Niels Rösche

Feel the earth beneath your feet.  
For it is where present and past moments meet.  
The dirt and the sand and rocks and the peat  
have been trodden by hooves of a history fleet.

A trail often trekked and a path sorely beat.  
From cold northern wastes to the island of Crete.  
Ancient happenings folded and woven to pleat.  
Barefoot you walk on the Old World's seat.

The opening poem of the third workshop aimed to introduce various thoughts and perspectives on the topic of walking barefoot. I hoped to make the participants conscious of what they were doing and stimulate their brains to think through their feet.

Poem 2: Life under the tree – Niels Rösche

Trees stand tall  
Amid an oasis of green.  
Life roars continuously  
And perpetually  
underneath them.  
Holding house  
To days of light  
Of soothingly floating  
butterflies  
And buzzing bees/ tickling ants  
Days on which life becomes  
Joyfully fuzzy.  
Automatic and unhesitant  
Like rippling water making its way through the measured meadows  
Shamefully  
The vast and complex branches  
Hold house  
To days of darkness too  
For life prevails without light.  
Days of  
Havoc and heaviness  
Of dark reminiscence  
Days on which clouds occupy the  
Sky  
And like selfish narcissistic gods  
Keep the sun for themselves.  
Life is scarce then and doubt is many  
Love is well-camouflaged as days grow uncanny  
Yet trees stand tall,  
Amid an oasis of green.

This poem is a metaphor as it compares the forest life with the unstable human mind. At times the mind tends to turn dark, yet the light is never far away. The purpose of this poem was again to make the participants aware that nature can be a big inspiration as it comes to processing thoughts and emotions. One can learn a lot about him/herself by being in nature and taking the time to perceive in all kinds of ways what is around them.

Poem 3: The annual awakening – Niels Rösche

I love watching you when you're asleep  
The decreasing pace of your breathing  
and the gentle silence that comes with it  
brings peace to my chaotic mind.  
Your white skin is spread across the surface.  
It's as if you're dying, so calm is the look of you,  
but I can sense your brave heart beating slowly  
underneath that white layer of skin.

When your eyes hesitantly start opening, after having  
broken the thin layer of ice around your lids,  
my admiration for you continues.  
You step up into the delicate sun,  
melting away that freezing white epidermis of yours,  
instantly giving life to everyone and everything around you.  
The determination in your eyes is enigmatic  
as you keep growing into your most lively and most beautiful form.

At the end of your long day, when you're at ease  
with what you have accomplished, you finally lay down in the setting sun.  
Whilst I adoringly stare at you, I feel the wind  
gently blowing over your wavy curves,  
and I realise that you are my home,  
no matter if you are awake or asleep.

Similar to poem 2, this poem aims to make the participants aware of how nature can help their self-identification process. This poem was inspired by the transition from winter to spring that I observed on a trip in the Norwegian mountains. Witnessing this romantic process filled me with very warm feelings as I started to realise that my love for nature was present at all time. This made me reminisce on the concept of falling in love and finding home within a person.

#### Poem 4: Erin Hanson – Every heart's a hurricane

Every heart's a hurricane,  
Each soul a starlit sea,  
Every mind's a meteor  
Unbound by gravity.  
And everybody's wishing  
They could learn to tame their tides,  
When nothing more than nature  
Is what's echoing inside.

Every life's a lightning bolt,  
Yet everyone's told no;  
Bite back all your thunder  
And don't let the wild things show.  
Every heart's a hurricane,  
Everyone's a world within,  
Every life too short for loathing  
Any storms beneath your skin.

The aim of the final poem of the workshops was to mainly be relatable to all. We humans, all have a wild side and are one with nature. In nature that sometimes shows, for it is our original home. I selected this as the last poem because I hoped it would leave the participants with a positive feeling. Furthermore, it would highlight the closeness between us humans and nature and how important a strong connection between those can be.

### 3.3 Analysis

The first phase of my analysis started before any of the workshops took place. Reason for that was that I needed to have an understanding of my participants' connection to nature prior to the workshops. This way I could detect areas of opportunity for each participant to improve their relationship with nature during the three workshops. As you might have gathered from the previous chapter, the first interview also served exactly that purpose. In the analysis of the five 'opening' interview transcripts, I thus focused on each participant's personal relationship with nature, looking for signs of disconnection or areas to improve on. In this process I used Nisbet's and Zelenski's article on nature relatedness as a framework, to get an objective understanding of each participant's level of connection as well as their general perspectives on nature, nature

conservation and nature experiences. In addition to that I used the first interview to shortly analyse the participants' prior familiarity with the art of poetry. I figured that their prior understanding or appreciation for poetry could impact both my role in general and approach to the poetry during the workshops. A small example of that is if participants were not that familiar with poetry, I would consequently have to spend more time introducing the poems.

The second phase of my analysis commenced after having conducted the entire research, meaning that both the workshops and the follow-up interview had been completed. Here I focused on analysing the participants' notebooks, in which they wrote down thoughts, reflections and ideas gathered throughout the workshops, as well as on trips outside of the workshops. In combination with the notebooks, I also thoroughly went through transcripts of the follow-up interviews. In this collected data I hoped to find signs of an enhanced connection to nature that could be pointed towards the influence of poetry in the outdoors. In regards of the level of nature connection, I compared some of the answers given in the first interview with those given in the follow-up one to see if any shifts had taken place. In addition to that I looked at finding descriptions of thoughts, reflections and experiences in the materials that hinted at poetry being a positive influence for creating a more meaningful bond with nature. Any signs of change or progression were thoroughly analysed in context of the research topic. In the first place the analysis thus focused on finding elements in the data in connection to (answering) the research question. Furthermore, I paid attention within the analysis that I clearly separated the influence of poetry specifically from other influential factors. During the workshops many factors, unrelated to poetry, could also influence my participants' connection and perspectives to nature. Therefore, I paid strong attention to separating those influences and solely focused on the influences of poetry. So, in conclusion, in order to try and answer my research question, I analysed the participants' reflections and experiences in their notebooks as well as the interview transcripts.



### **3.4 Role of the researcher**

Another aspect I have to shortly address is my own role throughout the research process. As someone who is extremely passionate about both poetry and nature, it is safe to say that I have had quite a big influence on the entire research process, even in places that I had maybe not anticipated. A first thing I have to mention here is that this research was for the biggest part inspired by and based on personal experiences. Due to the lack of literature or previous research within this field, I have had to use my own experiences with using poetry in nature and its effects on both my connection to nature as well as my mental health and well-being, as a background and framework. This also means that the entire method of using poetry as a tool for improving one's nature connection was developed by me, though I have used other literature to strengthen the ideas behind the method. A second aspect is the poetry itself. As you have probably gathered by now, I have written a big part of the poetry used in the workshops, myself. Reason for that is that I felt that a very sensible personal touch was needed within the workshops. I have experienced before that reading my own poems to others, at times, can make poetry more accessible for all. Even for those who struggle to appreciate it. In that way, something that is personal can potentially bridge a gap and make the entire experience more valuable. However, by adding these personal touches throughout the workshops I might have unexpectedly hurt the objectivity of the research slightly. For it is possible that my enthusiasm that I showed towards poetry throughout the workshops, may have influenced some of the participants' answers in the follow-up interview. Furthermore, I cannot consider myself a fully unbiased researcher, as I'm researching my own method and its influences on one's connection to nature. Of course, within the collection of my data and within its analysis I have aimed to be absolutely unbiased and objective, yet due to my position in and my enthusiasm towards this field of research it is possible that a misinterpretation of the collected data may have slipped through the net.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations and implications**

A final aspect I have to touch upon within this chapter is ethics. As needed, I have paid great attention to ethics throughout the entire research process. This means that first of all, each participant has been informed about the research being conducted and has

given their written consent. Furthermore, all the participants have voluntarily participated in the study, this decision was solely made by them and by no means did I force them into participation. Thirdly, I have tried to make sure throughout the entire process that no harm, both physically and mentally would be bestowed upon the participants. Going as far as taking extra precautions to guarantee their safety throughout the workshops. Lastly, we have a couple of aspects that are connected to each other, those being anonymity and confidentiality. Within the writing of my thesis, I have strived to keep the anonymity of the participants to the best of my abilities, changing their names and other personal information that may bring their anonymity in danger. Furthermore, any identifying information was only made accessible to the supervisor, other than her and me, nobody else had access to it. Based upon these factors, I hope to have made clear that the entire research process was conducted according to the ethical regulations.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 First interview

For the first part of this chapter, I will be focusing on the results of the first interview and how my findings in those transcripts influenced the rest of the study.

The analysis of the first interviews indicated that all of my participants were strongly connected to and had a deep and meaningful relationship with nature, bar one, Oscar. Before I dive into explaining why I consider Oscar to not be as strongly connected to nature as the others, I want to elaborate on and back up the claims that the other participants were already strongly connected to the natural world. The four participants I'm talking about are called Anika, Beau, Lily and Aria. Though all of them come from different backgrounds, I found a lot of similarities in their answers. An example of that is the question: How often do you go into nature? I asked this question to get a more complete understanding of how my participants experience nature. As you might expect, four out of five answered that they went into nature every day. Of course someone's connection to nature cannot only be determined by the amount of time they spend there. Therefore, to get a clear understanding, I had to thoroughly analyse every aspect of their bond with the outdoors, including their perspectives and habits. That's where nature relatedness comes into play. In order for a meaningful connection to exist, individuals must be affectively, cognitively and experientially connected to the outdoors (Nisbet et al. 2009, p. 715). By analysing the interview transcripts with nature relatedness as a context, I was able to get a proper view on each participant's level of connection and in what area of their connection might still be some room for improvement. When it comes to the experiential part, the answers of Anika, Aria, Lily and Beau showed that they, in that sense, all have a strong bond with the outdoors. This is not only indicated by the amount of time they spent outdoors, but also by what they do when they are in nature, with what reason they go into nature and to what degree they enjoy being outdoors even in bad weather conditions. An example of that can be found below.

*I think going out into nature every day helps me get my head free, relax a bit and make me feel less stressed. Yeah. Especially after workdays, then I just want to get out there and move a bit. Mm. And I*

*notice when I'm staying inside all day long, I get a bit crazy. Then I have this feeling... Okay. I really need to go out now. But then again sometimes the focus is not on my mental health, but rather on the activity that I'm doing outdoors. For instance, if I'm doing an activity like sea kayaking or climbing or ski touring, however when I'm just going out for a walk, the walking aspect is not as important.*

#### Anika on why she goes into nature

However, even though these four participants were all connected to nature within the field of experience, I discovered an area that could be improved upon during the workshops for Beau. Beau indicated in this part of the interview that he preferred fast friluftsliv over slow friluftsliv, because that was simply how he was used to traveling through nature. I recognized this as an opportunity to make Beau more aware of the benefits and value of moving slow in nature during the workshops.

If we then move on to the affective part of our participants' connection to nature, we notice even more similarities between Anika, Aria, Beau and Lily. In the interview all of them elaborately describe how nature is a part of who they are as a human being, how it's engraved in their identity. Furthermore, all of them considered humans to be a part of nature, as well as indicated that they actively go into nature for their health. Lastly, all of them were of the opinion, and this I found quite interesting, that their connection to nature could be in one way or another improved. Though interesting, I also found this quite logical. It's not unusual when you are passionate about something or really connected to something that you want to keep improving at it or become more connected. More so then if you have little to no connection to it. Furthermore, there is always room for improvement. This is how Aria described it.

*I definitely think my connection can be improved, I mean, there is always room for improvement. Um. I would like to get to know more about different species and the area and just like... I think it would really improve my relationship with nature if I knew the plants. So which ones to eat and which ones to avoid and which ones have maybe medical benefits, something like that.*

Lastly, I want to go over the cognitive aspect of my participants' nature connection. As previously mentioned, based on the first interviews I considered these four to already have a meaningful bond with nature prior to the workshops, which means that in this last part of the interview, all of them were again able to indicate that they had a profound love and care for and understanding of the natural environment. All of them named nature conservation as one of the top priorities in today's world. Furthermore, they shared the belief that as an individual they can make a difference when it comes to the conservation of our planet. These four participants look at nature and life in a pretty similar way, showing a great understanding of, care for and interest in nature as well as being able to grasp upon its potential importance and value in every human's life. Though their relationship with nature could already be considered to be meaningful, there were still opportunities for me to improve that through showing them new perspectives.

Now, back to Oscar, whose answers to the interview suggested that he did not possess the same level of connection as the other participants did. From his interview can be concluded that both within the experiential and the affective aspect of nature connection, there were opportunities to create a more meaningful bond. Oscar's answers differed a lot of the times to the answers of the others. Though it would be wrong to assume that his relationship with nature had to no degree developed, it was clearly not as meaningful as that of the others. Oscar indicated himself that nature was not really part of his identity.

*I actually would not say that (that nature is a part of who I am), because I come from a city environment. And I'm not really... I wouldn't say that, like, my relationship with nature is really a strong thing or a strong component of my life. It's important, of course, but I think there are stronger components that define me.*

Oscar on nature and his identity

Other elements that backed this statement up were the fact that he 'just' went out into nature once or twice a week, rarely enjoyed being outdoors in bad weather conditions and didn't consider nature to be something that defined him. Of course, his connection

to nature was to no degree superficial, but after the first analysis, I felt like I had the most opportunities to achieve a shift in nature connection through the workshops with Oscar.

## **4.2 Workshops and the follow-up interview**

In this final part of the chapter, I will be presenting my findings from the analysis of the post-workshop interviews, intertwined with the findings from the analysis of the workshop notebooks. Based on these findings I will try to formulate an answer on my research question.

### **4.2.1 Anika**

The first participant whose data I'd like to dive into is Anika. From the pre-interview arose that Anika was already strongly connected to the more-than-human world, nevertheless opportunities for an improved relationship remained, as poetry was not something she was familiar with and thus it could allow for new perspectives to arise. And exactly that happened. In the follow-up interview Anika stated that during the workshops she had come to realisation that not just nature and nature experiences can influence poetry, but that vice versa, poetry can also influence nature experience and connection. This, she explained was mainly due the various new perspectives that come with poetry. In her notebook, in the 'silence' workshop chapter, Anika wrote down various questions considering the topic that could be pointed towards the poetry read during that workshop. Questions such as: Are there different silences? Does snow "contain" sound? Has silence a weight? Is silence everything or nothing? This trend continued in her writings of workshop 2 and 3. Even though answering these questions might be hard, the sense of wonder is clearly stimulated due to the element of poetry. This sense of wonder allows for new perspectives to settle as well as for the person to get a better understanding of themselves. Furthermore, Anika pointed to the element of poetry as a factor within the workshops that has made her relationship to nature more clear and understandable. She knew that her connection to nature was meaningful she just did not know exactly why. In that case poetry helped her to bring awareness to the why-factor.

*It (my connection to nature) was meaningful, I was just not aware of it, of the meaning in particular.*

In the case of Anika, experiencing nature with an element of poetry was a positive experience. Her already strong relationship with nature was strengthened a little bit more due to new perspectives and awareness's, both about nature and her identity. Here is a final reflection from Anika's notebook after hearing a poem by Erin Hanson called 'Every heart's a hurricane'.

*All these natural elements and forces seem so natural, important and are not negotiable when experienced in the outdoors. They feel "right" and should be there, inside of us. If we consider ourselves nature too, why should we suppress showing our true colors, showing who we are, showing how we are...*

#### 4.2.2 Beau

Following on Anika, we'll dive into Beau's thoughts, experiences and reflections. Beau had a very similar level of connection to nature as Anika did, bar from the fact he slightly preferred fast friluftsliv over slow friluftsliv. Yet, when it comes to the analysis of the follow-up interview and his notebook, I found that the element of poetry did not quite have the same influence on Beau as it had on Anika. Beau indicates that he didn't necessarily feel that his connection to nature had become more meaningful over the course of the workshops, as his connection was already quite developed.

*I'm not sure, but I think it has the potential (to deepen my connection to nature). I'm not sure if it did because I think my relationship to nature is quite meaningful and kind of deep anyway, but I feel like the poetry like, as I said, that kind of moved something in me. Like it felt really interesting. And I wouldn't say that that like, completely, renewed how I view nature or anything, but I think it definitely has the potential to, especially if maybe you're coming from a different level of nature connection.*

Yet, as mentioned in the quote, he did feel like it had the potential to. In addition, Beau stated in his interview that, after the workshops, he considered poetry to be an

interesting tool to incorporate into various nature experiences, such as for instance guided nature tours, as he felt like it could help people develop their feelings about as well as build a stronger connection with the natural world. Furthermore, from analysing Beau's notebook I found that for him too, the workshops and in particular the element of poetry in those, allowed for new perspectives to arise and allowed for him to gain an awareness of feelings and emotions that he was feeling inside. These findings were found in Beau's reflections that he wrote down after listening to each poem. Examples of that can be found below.

*Connecting to the ground through my feet, which as the poem suggests is connected in itself through the roots of the trees, makes me feel more a part of the surroundings.*

*The last poem was so beautiful and inspiring, bridging the gap between human and nature. It really moved me and made me feel right about sometimes rejecting more civilized ways.*

In conclusion I found that Beau's connection to nature had not really shifted, but that, due to the workshops, he had obtained some new perspectives as well as learned something more about himself as he was able to bring words to his emotions and feelings inside of him.

*That it (poetry) really like brought out those feelings that are there anyway and brought words and feelings to it.*

Lastly, prior to the workshops Beau indicated that he preferred fast friluftsliv over the slower version, and though I had hoped to influence this, the workshops didn't succeed at changing this preference. However, Beau did state that the workshops, as was meant, showed him the value of moving slow through nature by focusing on the three different themes that are often non-existent within fast friluftsliv adventures.

### 4.2.3 Aria

Our third participant is Aria, who just like Anika and Beau had a relatively meaningful connection to nature prior to the workshops. However, in contrast to the findings in



Beau's date, Aria does state that the workshops and the poetry in those improved her connection to and relationship with nature.

*I think it (poetry and workshops) did (improve my connection to nature). (...) I would say it deepens my relationship to nature especially in the sense of opening up more for what nature is trying to show you and tell you.*

Over the course of the workshops Aria thus really started to open herself up for what nature was trying to tell her. From her reflections in her notebook emerged a similar trend. Various notebook entries showed that, due to the influence of poetry, Aria was starting to find herself within the landscape and her surroundings.

*The path represented my inner thoughts. The "battlefield" of cut trees represented the chaos in my mind and the further we walked into the forest, the calmer and clearer my thoughts became. The natural forest represented organization in something that looks chaotic but isn't. It's just the way it should be.*

Just like I have experienced myself plenty of times, Aria too, learned more about herself and gathered an understanding of what she was thinking and feeling due to the use of poetry in a natural setting. Nature can be very empathic if we allow it to be. Furthermore, Aria stated, like Anika and Beau, that the workshops made her ask new questions about her natural surroundings. These new questions then allowed for new perspectives to arise and realizations to be made. An example of that is the following notebook entry made after the silence workshop.

*I realise now that by being quiet in nature I could hear "nature voices" a lot more. Like the trees and the wind catching my attention. Not always in a way that they speak with a voice you can hear, but a voice that you can feel on an intuitive level. As if the barrier of sound is gone and the trees and the wind can directly speak to your heart and intuition.*

It's realizations like these that can improve one's connection to nature drastically. It may have not caused a drastic shift in Aria's connection to nature as it was already quite

meaningful. However, as already mentioned, her connection did improve nevertheless, as she indicates to be, on a personal level, closer to nature.

#### 4.2.4 Lily

The findings within Lily's data are similar to those of the previously discussed participants. Lily started the workshops being already quite strongly connected to the natural world, however, the workshops, like it did for the others, gave Lily new lines of thought about and new perspectives of her surroundings.

*Yeah, I think poetry effected my nature connection a little bit. I think the words made like a new feeling or connection because it was read out in nature, and I think the poems were really well chosen. I think it's a good tool to at least get a new perspective. [...] But you like, kind of view yourself from the outside in a way, with like a poem. Because when I think about nature and the outdoors, it's always like from my perspective. So, to get like a broader perspective was very interesting.*

*So yes, I would say that poetry has changed my outlook and has become more valuable. I don't know if I will use it in the future or how much it will bring me in the future, but it would be interesting to implement it.*

As is hinted in the quote above, the workshops helped Lily in a sense to decenter herself as a human, which allowed her, like Mikael and Asfeldt (2017) suggested, to create an even more meaningful connection to the landscape (Mikael and Asfeldt 2017, p. 9).

*(It has helped me to see), like this other perspective from the outside, like to think about me as one little element of the big picture of nature, to reflect on my role in the big world and to get a new perspective. Yeah. And I think that's important also in a relationship, if it's like with nature or with other people, that you get like new perspectives and poetry can be like a really good tool for that because you need some inspiration and like getting new ideas. So definitely to get a new thought process or a new way of thinking.*

In addition to that the workshops also gave Lily some insights about her own emotions and feelings in the outdoors as some of the poems would make her reflect on how she was feeling inside.

*This poem you wrote on love. I was really touched by it, actually, because it was like an embrace of some general feelings, but in like, you know, in a deep way. So yeah, that made me really, you know, reflect a little about my feelings outdoors and also just in general. It also can be really therapeutic to be outdoors. [...] but it was reflective and gave some good insights, also to myself and my own feelings.*

As already explained, this 'finding oneself in nature' allows for our bond with nature to be strengthened, for it makes us feel like we are somehow not alone as we learn how nature can help us cope with the flood of thoughts in our head. Lily describes this beautifully in one of her notebook entries in which she reflected on the contents of a poem.

*(The poem reads how) the rain is cleaning the skin and the mind. I feel that way, when I touch a tree, because I can feel calm and in that way "clean" my mind.*

In conclusion, the findings in Lily's data point towards the same thing as it did in the others' data. The poetry workshops did indeed have an influence on Lily's connection to nature, allowing for new perspectives and ideas to arise, helping herself to understand what she was feeling on the inside in connection to what she experienced in the outdoors. However, the scale of the impact was not as big as it potentially could have been, due to her already strong connection to the more-than-human world.

#### 4.2.5 Oscar

The last participant whose data I analysed was Oscar. Now, from the previous chapter you might recall that from all the participants, Oscar was in a way maybe the least connected to nature. Correspondingly I thus hoped to find that the workshops would be able to have a bigger impact on him and his connection to nature than it would maybe have for the other participants. Sadly, that did not turn out to be the case. Though again having some positive influences, the workshops did not cause the major shift that I was

hoping for. In his follow-up interview Oscar indicated that poetry was not his way of expressing things, and even though poetry had become more valuable to him over the course of the workshops, that he was still not really into it. Yet, that aside, Oscar did state that the workshops taught him new ways of travelling through nature, which made his connection to nature more meaningful, though not dramatically more.

*That's something that I take from the workshop, like, in general, like trying to interact more with nature in different ways.*

Another element that Oscar gained awareness over during the workshops was the reasoning why he felt like he needed to go into nature.

*Nature, it's something that like, calls me, I need that, you know, also as an organism, to go there and stay there because I need to surround myself with other living stuff, you know. [...] And like during one of the workshops, for example, I could understand better why I need to go there. And it's just there is no purpose like for me to go there. It's just, I need to stay there. For maybe biological reasons, I don't know but just, I need this sensation, I have this urge. But I don't have any purpose, I'm going down, like I don't want to do something, I don't want to do a certain kind of activity, I just want to stay there. That's something that I thought of during these workshops.*

In conclusion, Oscar's lack of connection to the art of poetry hindered the effects of the workshops on his relationship with nature as well as on his identity. Nevertheless, the topics discussed and activities undertaken during the workshop did still help Oscar get an understanding of how he related to nature and allow for new perspectives and reflections to arise. This is shown in the following notebook entry.

*As humans stop speaking, everything becomes loud, yet silence remains. Here in nature what is loud is winds, birds and environmental noise. Something completely different from cars, trains and busses. It helps me to create a gap from stressful events, since here there is no conflicts, but mainly harmony.*

## 5 Discussion

If I then zoom out from every individual and look at the bigger picture in an attempt to answer my research question, there are some general findings that could do just that. I posed my research question as such: How does listening to poetry in the outdoors influence friluftsliv practitioners' perspective towards nature and nature connection? Now from the analysis of the collected data appeared that listening to poetry in the outdoors generally has a positive influence on one's connection to nature. Reason for that is that (listening to) poetry enables people to obtain new perspectives on matters, it generates new streams of thought and brings various new ideas to light. This way people find new ways to connect to their surroundings, ask different questions and generally move through nature with a renewed sense of wonder. According to Baker (2005) this sense of wonder is vital in order for people to be able to develop a meaningful relationship to the land (Baker 2005, p. 271). As stated in chapter 2, I follow Baker's thinking. Therefore it was one of the main goals to see the participants come out of the workshops feeling and being landfull, asking new questions, being aware of what's around them, having an understanding of the natural world and continuously wondering about new perspectives or ideas. Through analyzing the collected data, I discovered that this goal had been achieved. Not only did I find that all the participants wrote various reflections in which they discussed new perspectives or ideas related to the poetry or exercises, I also found that some of them, possibly due to being inspired by the element of poetry, started paying attention to the way they wrote down their reflections and experiences. Instead of just jotting down the essence of their thoughts or reflections, some participants had started to choose their words more carefully or had started giving human qualities and emotions to their surroundings, in this way creating poetry of their own.

*As soon as silence comes  
inner thoughts fill the space created.  
Later, further in the forest  
the mind will eventually stop  
and I'll finally be able to sense  
my surroundings.*

Oscar- silence workshop

*Barefoot walking.  
New senses come into play,  
senses that are usually more numb.  
The feet are curious, eager,  
finally given the chance to feel the ground.  
All they want  
is to touch every different surface ahead.*

Beau – Barefoot walking

*We are.  
Therefore,  
we are not silent.  
Therefore,  
we are not silence.  
Are we sound?*

Anika – silence

*Walking on the world's history.  
Every step I take  
is a touch on the surface of this planet Earth.  
There have been others before me.  
Other people.  
Animals.  
Raindrops.  
Snowflakes.  
Leaves.  
They touched the ground  
and were touched by the ground.  
And together they became.  
How am I becoming when being touched by the ground?  
Am I still the same?*

Anika – Walking barefoot

These are just a couple of examples of some of the participants' reflections that I thought had a poetic feeling to it. Writing thoughts, experiences, feelings and reflections down in a poetic way can, in my opinion, be very valuable, as it allows us to thoroughly process what is going on inside of our mind and body. We spend more time analyzing and reflecting on specific matters and observations in order to get a true understanding of what it is we think, feel or experience. Then finding the right words to describe exactly what it is we think, feel or experience, can be enormously satisfactory and therapeutic. I believe that when we put effort into writing something down in a bit

of a different way than usual, it gives us a big reason to revisit those specific works because the words written down allow us to accurately relive several feelings or thoughts all over again. One of the participants, Lily, very much shared this opinion as she stated the following in her follow-up interview.

*Just this, writing it down.. is really...special. I mean it takes more time because you have to like put the notebook out and think about how you want to verbalize things. But it's really nice to, to embrace things and also to look back on it later. I find it really nice to read. I love to go back into the setting, to specific moments or memories.*

In addition to participants leaving the workshops in a, to some degree, landfull state, further findings indicate that the poetry workshops taught every participant something about themselves, on a personal level. As stated, every workshop is exactly the same for every participant, no one is treated differently in any way, yet due to how everyone is able to interpret the poetry differently, everyone is able to get something personal out of it, or have their very own personal experience within the workshop. Some participants gained an understanding of who they exactly are in connection to nature, others found out why they feel so close to nature and some learned something about who they are as individuals and why they felt the way they did. These are just some examples of things that surfaced during the workshops. However, even though every participant left the workshops with a more in depth understanding about their connection to nature, various new perspectives, and thoughts, experiences and reflections that moved something inside of them, not every participant was influenced by poetry in the same way. Where for some, poetry proved an immensely effective tool to create new opportunities for nature connection, it for others, seemed to be less impactful. This is due to the reason that poetry is sometimes a bit more 'out there', ungraspable or abstract. Some people really appreciate poetry, others struggle to. I observed the same phenomenon in my research where one participant indicated that poetry was simply not something he could either find himself in or express himself through. Though being able to appreciate poetry might be something individual that differs from person to person, the workshops were still successful for every participant, including those who were not influenced by poetry as much. Though this was not

researched thoroughly, several pieces of data point towards the activities included within the workshops as the reason for that. If researched properly, this could potentially open up another field of research in the future. However, in conclusion I can thus state that my newly developed method for improved nature connection shows a lot of potential. Findings have indicated progress regarding nature connection across all participants, though those progressions might have been quite minimal for some. Furthermore, data has shown that the influences of poetry on one's nature connection can differ strongly between individuals due to their respective outlook on and appreciation for poetry. Nevertheless, the potential is there. The logical next step in the process would be to conduct this research on a bigger scale, with people whose connection to nature is less strong and meaningful. Applying this method in that context may produce a lot more valuable data. In that way I could create a more complete view on the strengths and the weaknesses of my method.



## 6 Conclusion

Poetry has since long been a passion of mine, for it has shown me both the light and darkness within myself. It has brought me joy, wonder and satisfaction. At all times it has made me feel understood and not alone. It has allowed me, taught me even, to feel sorrow, to feel pain and to accept it. Poetry has been a guide. It has shown me time and time again what is truly important in life, what really matters. It has led me into nature and made me stay there. Consequently, poetry is a big part of my nature connection, through it I have found profound depth and meaning in the outdoors and connected strongly to the natural world. This I wanted to share with others. Therefore, I developed a new method that looked to use poetry as a tool to stimulate nature connection and brought it into practice through this research. Now, findings from this study suggest that that method holds a lot of potential. More specifically this means that using poetry in a natural setting has the potential to improve one's connection to nature. As for the reason, the findings point towards the presence of new perspectives. In this study, poetry has stimulated the participants to look at nature in new ways, stimulated new thoughts, experiences and perspectives and thus thereby allowed for a more meaningful connection to develop. Furthermore, further findings indicate that poetry, like it did for me, added a personal element to the participants' connection to nature. In other words, participants really started to see and find themselves in their surroundings. All of these previously mentioned factors indicate that my method for improved nature connection indeed has potential to help people across the world. However, it won't be able to help everyone equally much. Findings suggest that, due to the element of poetry, the influences of the method are sadly not universal. The data shows that even though that the method has brought new perspectives and valuable experiences to all participants, it doesn't improve every one's connection just the same. Yet, findings still show potential and thus this method should be further researched in the future for our Earth simply needs more people to be deeply connected to nature.

*A little less mirror.  
A little more self-reflection.*

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## List of tables and charts

Table 3-1 Summary research group members 2022

Table 3-2 Research design model 2022

# Annexes

## Annex 1: Interview guide

Through this semistructured interview I hope to get an understanding of the participants' connection to nature. This interview will dive into the cognitive, experiential and affective aspects of my participants' connection to nature, in order to get a broad and objective view upon the matter.

### Experience:

- How often do you go in nature?
  - How long does your regular visit last?
- Why do you go in nature?

*If interviewee doesn't mention specific activities such as for instance climbing, skiing, biking, running,... then follow up questions follow.*

- Do you practice activities in nature?
- What kind of activities?
- Picture this. You are all alone, somewhere deep in the woods, far away from any civilization. How does that make you feel?
- Do you enjoy being outdoors, even in bad weather?
  - Mindset?
- What is the best experience you have had outdoors?
- Would you say you rather travel fast or slowly through a landscape?

### Self:

- Would you say that your relationship with nature is part of who you are?
- Do you actively go into nature for your health?
  - Mental, physical or both?
- Do you consider humans to be part of nature?
- Can your connection to nature be improved? If yes, how?
  - What can you do more or differently?
- Does or did poetry influence or affect your life in any way?

Perspective:

- What are your thoughts on the importance of the conservation of nature?
- Do you think that, regarding the state of the planet, and the conservation of nature, you as an individual can make a difference?
- Do animals, birds and plants have the same rights as humans?
  - Why? Why not?

Annex 2: follow-up interview

Through this semistructured interview I hope to evaluate the process of the poetry workshops and establish the presence of possible changes in the participants' connection to nature. Furthermore this interview aims to discover any changes or reflections that the participants may have had about themselves, due to the element of poetry. This interview will again dive into the cognitive, experiential and affective aspects of my participants' connection to nature, and will also try to establish the participant's experiences throughout the workshops with a focus on poetry.

Introduction:

Welcome back! As you know, some time has passed since the last interview. We of course had the workshops together in the meantime, so today's interview will to some degree operate as an evaluation tool for those workshops. The interview will be structured similarly to the first one, looking again at the experiential, cognitive and affective aspect of your connection to nature, but with some adaptations in order to get a clear view on the influences of the poetry workshops. Does that sound alright?

If you have any questions beforehand, you are most welcome to ask them.

Experience:

- How did you experience the workshops?
  - Can you give one piece of positive feedback for the workshops?
  - Can you give one piece of negative feedback for the workshops? What did you miss in there?
- Have the workshops changed your outlook on poetry?
- Did the workshops and in particular the poetry used in those, influence how you experience nature?
  - How often do you go in nature?
    - How long does your regular visit last?
    - Why do you go in nature?
    - What activities?
- Picture this. You are all alone, somewhere deep in the woods, far away from any civilization. How does that make you feel?
- Do you enjoy being outdoors, even in bad weather?
  - Mindset?
- What is the best experience you have had outdoors?
- Would you say you rather travel fast or slowly through a landscape?
- Is there anything else you got out of the workshops?

Self:

- Did the workshops change your relationship to nature in any way?
  - Would you say that your relationship with nature is part of who you are?
  - Do you actively go into nature for your health?
  - Do you consider humans to be part of nature?
- Can your connection to nature be improved? If yes, how?
- Have the workshops, and in particular, the element of poetry in those, taught you something about yourself?

Perspective:

- Have the workshops changed your perspective towards nature in any way?
  - Nature conservation?
  - Animal, birds and plant rights?
- After the workshops, do you think that, regarding the state of the planet, and the conservation of nature, you as an individual can make a difference?
- What are your thoughts on the use of poetry in the outdoors? Whether it is reading it, writing it or listening to it? Did you get something out of it?