

**Abstract: Imagining is perceiving**

The *nature* in nature writing is more than inspiration and subject; it is the source. Human creativity stems from our connection to landscape and our relationship with the natural world. Of course, we *are* nature, too, just one small part of a series of connected ecosystems.

Contrary to what we would like to believe, creativity is not personal genius but the ability to tap into something larger than ourselves, to allow the wild wind of nature to blow through us. Language, imagination and story all originate in the earth, a mind-body awareness shaped by our local terrain and the other beings we share it with.

The tools for writing – vocabulary, specificity, imagery – come from nature, too. In the language of landscape, it is imagery, those intuitive word-pictures that convey so much more than the literal, that hold the power. Images allow room for emotions, room for that mind-body knowing, room for the unknown – and room for the reader. To think like a forest, Eduardo Kohn says, is to think in images.

We like to say that seeing is believing but to imagine is to *perceive* – to use all our senses to understand the interconnected relationships of a place, its past, present, and tomorrow. When we write (draw/paint/photograph/sing/play) nature, we rewild ourselves; we connect, we care, we are at home. And we can (re-) imagine a future other than the one we are currently rushing towards.