

# Middle Voice

By E.J. McAdams



## PREFACE

*Nature loves to hide.*  
--Heraclitus

When I read Marthe Reed's "somewhere inbetween: Speaking-Through Contiguity" in *Counter-Deseccration: A Glossary for Writing Within the Anthropocene*, I wondered if we should abandon the use of the problematic word "Nature" which is the focus of Reed's critique, or if there was a "somewhere inbetween" that would allow access to a de-reified "Nature."

I began writing sentences about "Nature" that troubled the number and voice of the verbs. I used plural verb forms, instead of the grammatically correct singular, to emphasize that "Nature" is also natures. I imagined a need for a kind of "middle voice" between active and passive, which didn't exist in English, and went looking for its possibility nonetheless, eventually finding a list of verbs that are syntactically active but often semantically passive.

This chapbook is an attempt to write a voice that blurs subject and object, that articulates how Nature/s act/s on us and we act on Nature/s simultaneously, in the hope that it might prefigure a collective, cooperative future.

## 1. The verb "be" with adjectives

Nature be

Nature be was

Nature be is

Nature be will be

Nature be large

Nature be small

Nature be medium

Nature be just right

Nature be heavy

Nature be light

Nature be neither light nor heavy

Nature be not right

Nature be red

Nature be green

Nature be yellow

Nature be blue

Nature be brown  
Nature be black  
Nature be white  
Nature be just wrong

Nature be smelly  
Nature be *somewhere in-between*  
Nature be kind  
Nature be mean

Nature be providential  
Nature be romantic  
Nature be utilitarian  
Nature be ecological

Nature be natural (a term that people use – like “God” – to talk both about their power and the material that they consider necessary for achieving this power)

## 2. Those where the grammatical subject is semantically a Patient

Nature burn as if paper in single lines at edges like tree fractalizations in algorithms on simulators modeling climate change

Nature fall way worse than Eden or any imaginings because people here are more real than words you know

Nature drop from your vocabulary and importance like some extinction

Nature sink under some terminal terminology terrorizing coastal zone littorally

Nature sunk shipwise in culture nohows – no house in ecology's home ec

Nature float onward everafter in the word-pond, orange and bright, alerting one to behemoth essentialism hooked underneath diving for its life

Nature flow between necessity wolf and freedom wolf

Nature slip somehow on natural (naturally) organic banana peel

Nature slide between belonging to itself and not belonging, a border corridor

Nature shake back and forth from the leafless limbs of the old regrets to the sprightly green of the new “no regrets strategy”

Nature stumble into the emptiness of its meaning after centuries of analysis

Nature succumb to lungs as definition of an edge that is inside and outside – a mucousy transfer point of exchange

Nature boil in greenhouse gas (k)not of our own making

Nature dry trying out intensive extractive capitalism explorations on global scale, and like a child, needing rescuing now

Nature sway to El Nino-Southern Oscillation over decadal timescales nearing tipping point certain in its uncertainty

Nature wave – Hello? Good bye?

Nature lie (involuntarily)

Nature lie down

Nature bend around its own lies humans keep saying are true to their detriment

Nature cooks well in late-stage capitalism stock

Nature melt like melted cheese delicious and hard to resist gooey yummy gloppy mess

Nature sprout in sirens' belted siren-song

Nature freeze conceptually like a planetary body while orbiting around human conceptual framework fretting

Nature evaporate into gas face

Nature solidify in illiterate perfection seen from the perspective of future logic

Nature darken into opacity, a negation of divinity and an affirmation of viscerality

Nature rot mythically, polite dialogue become monologue become vlog become log become  
O become G

Nature wither in sensuous attention of God and other philosophers

Nature collapse in colonial disorder



Nature break to cure our pessimism, the nightmare of myriad consciousnesses un/consciously consuming futures

Nature increase as exclamation point at end of expression of regret

Nature germinate almost always in absent encounter with other

Nature die in harvest/less/ness

Nature suffocate as universe of crows – with each eye a star and each beak a black hole

Nature crack in the egg of voluptuous narcissism

Nature split *somewhere inbetween*

Nature disappear in an effusion – sun peeking over dawn horizon while birds chorus on a commercial break

Nature disperse promiscuously like a bee of gossip its face in the ass of every blooming red flower

Nature explode in an effort to remain stranger to the collective sense of betrayal

### 3. Predicates of existing and happening

Nature exist less as equivocation than a complicated form of subtle apology

Nature happen in response to anyone who has a greater unconscious longing for death

Nature occur as the unbearable boredom of pirates who plundered the world with no diversion in sight

Nature arise

Nature ensue from homesickness one feels while still at home

Nature vanish more recently as grieving related to the loss of a healthy place and thriving ecosystem

Nature turn up as disenfranchised grief or anticipatory grief or ambiguous grief or grief grief

#### 4. Non-voluntary verbs of appearance, sound, smell, etc.

Nature shine in unproven phenomena remaining difficult to test in lab but easy to arm-chair interpret in the media

Nature sparkle in glitter which is just shiny microplastic reflecting sunlight as it shunts out the CSO after the party is over

Nature clink in the tip jar emptied of resource extraction change toward renewables

Nature snap like peas, -Chat, -Fish, guitar strings, judgements, safety ropes

Nature snap in toos

Nature pop

Nature pop pop pop pop pop

Nature pop like an earth-shaped balloon or decomposition gas surfacing up through the muck of a swamp

Nature smell (bad)

Nature stink at different scales

Nature stink like a crappy thought experiment dumped in a mathematical formula

5. Aspectual predicates:

Nature begin in DNA nucleotide poem – GAT/TAG/ATTA/CAT/GAGA/GAG/ACT

Nature start in English in 1266 as one more emancipatory project approximately 50 years after Magna Carta

Nature continue as hybrid assemblage or collective which people and nature form together as people-nature or nature-people or in the words of the French Zadists: *We are not defending nature, we are nature defending itself.*

Nature continue as pharmacopeia translationally promising new treatments for trauma emerging from multifactorial stress at level of physiological parameters, epigenetic modulators, neurobiological candidate markers and environmental factors

Nature evolve as material and mother co-equal

Nature stop from remembering there is no origin or ending point with peer-reviewed optimal measurement methods and models

Nature end never fast enough

6. Duratives:

Nature last *somewhere inbetween* definition and germination of new forms, bird and egg-clutch

Nature remain inescapably political

Nature stay like unwanted guest, lingering odor, doubts, monotheisms

Nature survive in the unnatural, in a question "Nature" can't answer



CODA (The Reciprocal Reflexive)

Nature and we kiss





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