

# STONE WALL

# Katherine Paige Farrington

There is something comforting about a stone wall at the edge of a meadow. Stone walls are unassuming. They draw their gray lines across meandering landscapes, sometimes without clear logic. Corners appear but rarely conform to the regular standards of right angles. Hand-placed stones carry design choices of unknown builders. What kind of energy was exerted digging stones out of the soil and lugging them to working piles? No two walls are alike. Some are level, some high, some low; others undulate like sea serpents. If you look carefully, you can sometimes see animated forms emerge - is that a bird? Is that a wolf? Is that a snake? Is that a face? They quietly sit in wooded dales and carry time in different ways than organic matter. Stones in stone walls are never hard-edged - they are covered in green and off-white lichens and capture cool moisture beneath their undersides. Openings frame leaves and colors of the forest like air prisms. They never move. That is their strength. Yet, stone walls hold mysteries too. Why do some stone walls scale hills? To keep sheep from wandering off perhaps, or to mark a fence between neighbors. But does that really tell the whole story? Sometimes they are beautiful, sometimes unremarkable. Did you know that there are records from the 1600's with observations of over 10,000 miles of stone walls crisscrossing these lands when the first English settlers arrived? Did you know that humans walked these lands 10,000 years ago after the ice-age glaciers receded dropping erratics as they melted away? The record is written in the stones if you learn to read them. Landfills are mere babes in relation to stone walls. But if their toxins are the kind that don't break down, landfills and stone walls will grow old together, side by side.



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#### THE WASTE PILE

The waste pile is distinct from the concept of waste. Waste, in its various forms -as a news, an edjective, and a verb-reflects modal and temporal characteristics tied to the materiality of matter itself. In contrast, the waste pile draws our attention to the phenomenon of accumulation. How does this accumulation occur? Heaps of unwarted matter-at home, in the office, on the street in the factory- are transformed into waste piles through appreciative processes. Despite their differences, waste and waste piles share close physical or material interactions that range from abstract. touch to the tampible effects within a haptic field. This is evident in the texic flow at unseen pollutants, such as the leaching of heavy metals into soil and groundwater

We encounter hidden waste pries everywhere; they are buried under several feet of tapsoil, resembling earth sculptures or ancient burial grounds. interestingly, many of these concealed sites have been repurposed into recreational parks. However, despite their apparent greening, these areas

continue to harbor the persistent (bidinal energy of PCBs. heavy metals, and black pewer waters. The waste pile reveals the dark side of interconnectivity-its porous nature. Hidden underground, these piles undergo physical interactions and material degradations that often go unnoticed.

The paradox of waste heips us understand the complex relationships and exchanges. to redoubting time notigenus red production of materials and its life cycles that often ignore decomposition, decay, and death. If we consider waste piles as a form of human language, can we dive into the quality of our material relations with matter, specifically the material presence of unwanted matter?



### ERRATIC & DRIFT

Enter deep time, where enormous bodies of ice once heaved across the landscape, building, sliding, scraping, and transforming the land touched by the weight of this glacial presence, the sheer heft and scale large enough to shift Earth's orbit around the sun. The Laurentide ice sheet comprised our most recent glaciation; around 23,000 years ago it advanced across Canada, New England and south of the Great Lakes. As the glacier retreated it released water into the ocean, raising sea levels, and the subsequent release of weight on the continent caused the land to rebound. These forces combined to create the geomorphology of the shorelines we know today. The maximum advance of the Laurentide is marked by glacial drift in the form of outwash plains, kettle ponds, moraines, till, silt, gravel, and large erratic boulders were deposited in its wake. Erratics, impenetrable stone masses often as big as houses, serve as indexes of glacial path and direction, reminding us of forces and timescales much larger than ourselves.

In addition to organic matter, soil is composed of mineral components. Weathered by glaciers, wind, and water these mineral components of varying textures and sizes contribute to the structure and health of soil. Some of the most common minerals found in soil include iron, potassium, magnesium and calcium - minerals important for our own health. Our metabolic transit on Earth depends on and contributes to these shared materialities, and the cyclic nature of these systems alert us to the necessity of caring for the delicate balance of these ecologies intrinsic to human and non-human others. Soil is bound up in our lives and moves as we move, with us and within us, part of a larger planetary system.

RESILIENT SPECIES

#### **BECOMING SOIL**

party in succession in

what becomes soil? The obvious answet is matter decomposes and returns to the ground. Yes, But it is much more decoming soil, as a process." is a multi-directional ethical and aesthetic operation that capitalizes on soil's regenerative properties and dirt's latent state. It is a collective and collaborative effort supported by biological, social, and scientific approaches that emphasize the ethical-ansthetic return to home.

Becoming soil, as a journey, holds a profound significance. It is not just the nostalgic return to a familiar physical place, as with Homer's Odysseus. Instead, it emphasizes how matter, space and time undergo transformative changes not from the individual hero's perspective but as a multichrectional collective shift into the unknown. Becoming soil emphasizes the importance of being aware and intentional in our interactions with the physical world and awakens the spinitual and intangible dimension of soil's mysteries to shape new values

#### HIDDEN ARCHITECTURE

**GHOST CROSSING** 

Landfills and brownfields are hidden architectures within our everyday landscapes. These infrastructures remain out of sight and out of mind. yet they are among the most vulnerable to climate change. These sites are particularly susceptible to severe weather. The Brimbal Avenue solar field exemplifies these underground infrastructures. To understand what happens beneath the surface, we must imagine what lies undertoot. This site raises the questions why are these infrastructures hulden from dur sight, budgets, and desires? Are these the ghosts of overcensumption haunting us?

The working hypothesis of a landfill as a meterologia centers on the structural function of hidden architectures. The structural violence of muck (pollution and waste) organizes shell peculiarly within the waste pile. This pile is formed, layer by layer, as trash, refuse, and waste are repeatedly duraped and covered by thim layers of other materials including crushed glass, gravel, and a thin layer of healthy topsoil to cap it. This

reparkzation of matter creates alvertical order. enabling a praxis for critiguing incomplete side remediation methods. Waste piles highlight the degenerative process of toxic material accumulation. transitioning from temporal accumulation to spatial excess, where the sed becomes both a site and a condition. It is at the waste pile that Soil Culture enverges as an avesthetic practice

#### WALKING

Reciprocity and relationship form the heart of ecological thinking, and walking suggests a tender connection to the ecologies we pass through Networks of pisthways trace the landscape as a living exchange; at the same time, the land guides our steps, we read the ground with our feet. Investigating this complicated relational body and interdependence we mote the south shifts and connections between the foot and the godunat beneath it. Compaction, friction, displacement, and is kicked up, erolled its stops, moved by waters, buoyed by wind. Sinall soil bacteria transitive and moculate new mineral sites, bits of grasses and small stones calch a ride as dur feet move across the land. As we move as too the earth is moving वनी कारफार्मने एक

Walking with attention to those subtleties reveals a chatcy with the band Considering the agency of the writi and due entanglement wohus it particle petion forms a central part of our understanding, townhing on experionces of dealers, yearning, hunging, and how Watking affords a three engineerings. with place, allowing access to information through second porceases like . sweering, historiang, or boundary, thus encourspansing how was assessed in our survivormitings in ways that of terms elevise language. Working the involution serves as an invitation to argend to the possible of our first on the facial she shirt of the martin betweenth on and to consider the apparently of soil as a pre-Choice Siving entry that matance life for hummany and much humanny aller

REGENERATION

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During summer, the tandfill transforms into a lush habitat. Tall grasses, prairie flowers, and sumso trees create a tapestry of color and texture around the solar field. Solar panels create shaded microclimates for more verdant growth. This furtheress also brings many new beings to the landfill Japanese beeties, ticks, and person ivy populate the daytime landscope; at night deer and recovers visit the shrinking vernal pools to drink Japanorei beettee and ticks have benefited from climate change and

estimat (regreentation. Porcen ivy also nervice as a removaler that not all material steps actions are bestign to the Anthropocesse, pointer by is finantishing day to increased levels of CO\*, which enhances its growth and bancity This reflects here harmon driven charges to the atmosphere can influence stars and meets physiclogy and behavior, often in ways that complicate Our interactions with the more there is man, highlighting its chattenane of contration and the prostended ecological discostions that can follow

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Walking across the surface of the Earth our feet touch the grasses and solls that compose the upper crust of the plenet, brushing against small organisms and beings that create oxygen, decomposed matter, and breathe with us in the shared process of creating atmospheres and vital ecologies. Pairsing in our wandering, we might bringine what live wheterfoot laborer from view. The wante plie as mountain is inverted melow on a grand vost extracted from within the earth that receives our wants and increas it out of might Like a torrils or a melorisequed resonantiand, this physicalized mereory of capitalist consumption appears on a phont that haunts the everyday sin marved toises perterioring the investments at requise intervals. Group monat these within any takes backree a "manical arrange" for the ward, and bath appearing everywhere in the landscape, specialing from the ground like phase trime Landfills, or "course de asserticies" in ligerment.

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