



“Nature as Teacher”

Of all the great works that we can experience, nature is the most absolute and enduring. We can witness it change through the seasons. We can see it in the mountains, the oceans, the deserts, and the forest. We can watch the changes of the moon each night, and the relationship between the moon and the stars.

There is never a shortage of awe and inspiration to be found outdoors. If we dedicated our lives solely to noticing changes in natural light and shadow as the hours pass, we would constantly discover something new.

We don't have to understand nature to appreciate it. This is true of all things. Simply be aware of moments when your breath gets taken away by something of great beauty.

It may be witnessing a single-line formation of birds snaking through the half-lit evening sky, or standing awed at the foot of a giant redwood tree that's thousands of years old. There's so much wisdom in nature that when we notice it, it awakens possibility within us. It is through communing with nature that we move closer to our own nature.

If you're picking colors based on a Pantone book, you're limited to a certain number of choices. If you step out in nature, the palette is infinite. Each rock has such variation of color within it, we could never find a can of paint to mimic the exact same shade.

Nature transcends our tendencies to label and classify, to reduce and limit. The natural world is unfathomably more rich, interwoven, and complicated than we are taught, and so much more mysterious and beautiful.

Deepening our connection to nature will serve our spirit, and what serves our spirit invariably serves our artistic output.

The closer we can get to the natural world, the sooner we start to realize we are not separate. And that when we create, we are not just expressing our unique individuality, but our seamless connection to an infinite oneness.

Rubin, Rick. “Nature as Teacher.” In *The Creative Act: A Way of Being*, 51–52. New York: Penguin Press, 2023.



Tani Bunchō, *Gazing at a Waterfall* (detail), 1790, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44 5/16 × 20 1/8 in (112.5 × 51.1 cm). Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund (1972.16).