

Dear Better Readers,

As a kid, what power do I have? I can't vote. I'm too young to go out into the world and have a job which will directly help to make the world a better place, every single day. What can I do, when I see society so disconnected with nature, our life support system? How can I, as a teenager, open their eyes and their hearts?

How on earth can I do something BIG as an autistic introvert? I can write! I can use my knowledge, my experiences as a young naturalist totally fascinated by all living things! So that's what I did. Starting at age 12 and for over three years, I wrote about nature: the wonder, the intricacies. I wrote and people listened. People from every corner of the earth. They asked for more and more...to understand. To see the world, in its now diminished state, through a child's eye. To reconnect. Blogs became a book. So bright and yellow and beautiful. My heart, head and hopes are on each page. Some pages were harder than others, being autistic can be really hard, being bullied can become catastrophic, but there's always nature. So, always, hope. Seeing and feeling our place in the world connects us with every organism. My deepest hope is that in some way, my book can be the bridge that brings us back. That lures us to really, deeply, fall in love with the living world and every species on it. Lots of people on the other side of the world have read my book and they have cried, laughed...felt heard and yes, they are seeing the world through a different lens.

I really hope, that you will, too. So does my Great Uncle Jim and Auntie Karyl, because they want to see my book on their side of the world. Where so many Irish people made their home and their lives. Maybe they'd like a little piece of my side of the world on their bookshelves. In their libraries.

I have no real expectations, except that the world is cared for and respected and loved. I think Australians need a lot of love right now, because you have witnessed such horrific loss of nature, of life. I hope my book might help in some small way, to give a little hope.

Dara McAnulty (just turned 16)

