

nets(s)

m mcdonald

a preface

Lynden between (storms)  
082718

mon

lawn lakes  
like  
dry rot  
are  
not for walking yet

let two girls  
near the pond  
lift lilies  
looking for frogs

back there  
where the sign says keep out  
a buck breaking antlers  
big eyed  
leaps

leaving goldfinch  
resting  
seed stunned  
thistled

air  
swallows  
water  
weed  
the feminine  
the frogged  
abundance  
horn  
beak  
here  
we're

what won't stop  
listening

not now  
not in the midst of it

n e t(s)

Nets are everywhere - on the ground, in the sea, above us, airborne. they are the colors of the elements, metal, earth, water, fire. they catch or sieve, seize or fill, yet some, uncut, afloat or afield, wrapped or prone, remain alone, empty.

n e t (s) is an ongoing meditation and process-based project. I've been generously given the time, space and support (from the director, staff naturalist and groundskeeper) to pursue it at the Lynden Sculpture Garden.

Visitors to the Lynden Garden may encounter green, blue, string or small clear nylon nets (the latter ending in a metal and night- glowing bead spiral). The nets are from Japan and China, used there to protect garden fruit and vegetables, grow beans and cast for fish. I've placed them throughout the grounds and will place more through the seasons. If something is caught in the net, something distressed and living, please notify staff. If detritus has landed or remains tangled within, please leave undisturbed.

I am a resident of Wisconsin but often teach a semester in Japan. There, living at the western edge of Tokyo, I am not far from both farms and forest, laced with rivers and streams. There has been increasing development of this old urban area, echoing the development of my own riverside city neighborhood in Wisconsin. I have thought about change, and opportunity, as well as the conservation of small pieces of nature and water in cities, and the edges of cities. Nets catch or contain or guide in water and garden. They are good metaphors for growth and also death.

I placed the first nets, 4 of them, in late August 2018.



*A Chinese casting (fishing) net, late August 2018*



*A Chinese casting net atop a Kevin Giese urn, late August 2018*



*A Japanese bean net, late August 2018*



*A Chinese protective garden net, over a fallen Kevin Giese sculpture, late August 2018*

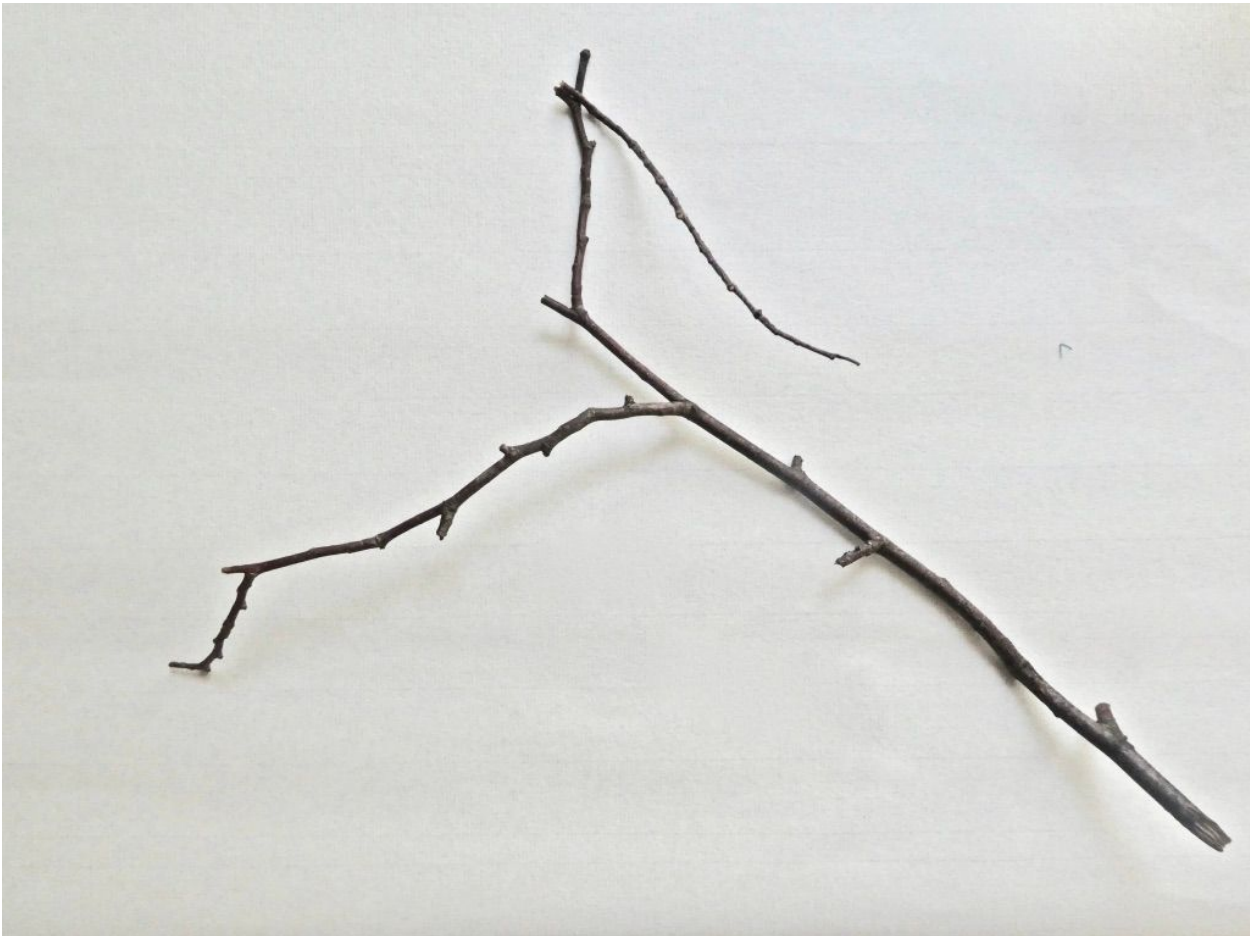
What use is your tangled hair, you fool? What use is your antelope skin?  
You are tangled inside...just making the outside pretty.

Two more nets were placed around the trunks of trees in early September 2018.



*A Chinese Casting (fishing) net, one of two placed in early September 2018*

In mid-September, before leaving for Japan, I gathered from the nets, imagining rain, wind and animals, two-legged and four, that would leave much in passing.



I found two curled leaves and a broken twig.

Yet something wondrous and unexpected had happened. The nets, though relatively debris-free, seem to have inspired their neighbors. Alongside, within, under and above the nets smaller nets, or webs, had appeared, webs far more effective than mine at gathering what floated, flew or fell into them.









On a bitterly cold February morning in 2019, I installed the third series of nets. There were six, bright blue and wrapped around the shingled trunks of evergreens. I was not happy with the placement of these nets and had little hope of gathering more than a few strong gusts of wind. I felt compelled to place them as I did, though, and so let them remain for some months.







I collected debris from the 6 autumn nets, if I could. Two were buried. A third was bent to the ground, weighted by snow, tangled.



The Dhammapada says to cultivate the company of wise people. Where do we find such persons? It is unusual to hear them shouting from mountaintops. Often they are stutterers, like Moses.

Prepare for the wise. Keep the sidewalk clear of snow, ice. Set slippers by the door, for more often than not, they will appear unannounced.



The persistence of the small when netted, to lose, remains.





