Derek Sheffield has consistently worked toward making sustainability a systemic part of his community for the past three decades, including reducing, repurposing, recycling, and composting efforts at Wenatchee Valley College, which is where, from 2005 through 2023, he worked alongside biologist Dr. Dan Stephens to teach a contextual, interdisciplinary learning community called Northwest Nature Writing. One of the objectives of the class was to help students learn about and fall in love with their fellow beings and so understand more about what it means to be part of this bioregion we call Cascadia. Sheffield now teaches an ecoliterature course with a focus on systems thinking which is part of the college's Sustainability Guided Pathway. In 2025, Governor Bob Ferguson appointed Sheffield to become Washington State's 8th Poet Laureate, and in 2026 he became an Academy of American Poets Poet Laureate Fellow. He is also the voice of Governor Morris in the new Netflix documentary, The American Experiment, produced by Tom Hanks. Sheffield's books include Not for Luck, selected by Mark Doty for the Wheelbarrow Books Poetry Prize, Cascadia Field Guide: Art, Ecology, Poetry, winner of a 2024 Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award, Through the Second Skin, and Dear America: Letters of Hope, Habitat, Defiance and Democracy. A two-time finalist for the Washington State Book Award, his other honors include the Foreword Reviews Indies Book of the Year in Nature Writing and the James Hearst Poetry Prize judged by Li-Young Lee. When he is not editing poetry for Terrain.org or teaching English at Wenatchee Valley College, he can often be found in the woods along the eastern slopes of the Cascade Range near Leavenworth, Washington.

Yours in Words, Woods, and Wellness,
--Derek