When discussing my plans to go to architecture school, a friend gave me this advice:

design for the birds.

I believe she meant it both literally and metaphorically. Millions of birds are killed every year when they interact with our built environment, after architects and designs fail to consider the implications of their designs on our avian neighbours.

I also think of this statement as a reminder to design for less visible and minority groups, especially ones who cannot advocate for themselves. This includes marginalized humans, non-human animals, and our shared home - the natural environment.

To me, designing for the birds means that we consider who is impacted by the loss of the land we cover in buildings. It means we consider what materials we use, what impacts their manufacturing process and transport has on the world. It means we look at whether trees can root beside our homes and choose to landscape with rocks to create habitat for toads.

It also means considering which humans are architects and which groups are underrespresented. It means working for equity in the profession, supporting our peers in minority groups and encouraging all kids to consider architecture as a career.