

THE HEMLOCK JOURNAL

REMINGTON REVIEW

CALL OF THE WILD

FICTION SPECIAL ISSUE

The Hemlock Journal & Remington Review
Presents

CALL OF THE WILD

Fiction Special Issue



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Remington **Review**

Call of the Wild - Fiction Special Issue

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Cover Art by Aneesah Davids

Cover Design by Divyank J.

Editing and Formatting by Shazia Parveen

Masthead:

Managing Editor: Divyank J.

Executive Editor: Shazia Parveen

Submission Manager: Samika

Readers/Reviewers: Ruchi Shah, Samika, Aditi Kaur, Sanchalika Das, Ekta Raj

Contest Judges: Divyank J., Jeena R. Papaadi

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thehemlockjournal.com

remingtonreview.wixsite.com/remingtonreview

Write to us: thehemlockjournal@gmail.com, remingtonreview@gmail.com

Editors' Note

Fiction, as an art form, sits on the intersections of lived experience and imagination. Every story bears the fingerprints of the writer's own rich internal world; the author inevitably bleeds fragments of themselves into their characters and worlds.

And so, in a sense, fiction is the most distilled version of the human experience, sans the ornamentation of name, face and place.

The theme '**Call of the Wild**' was an open-ended one, calling back to a literary classic whilst inviting writers to explore what wild and wilderness meant to them; the wide variety of submissions we received for this contest did not disappoint. This body of work explores the interfaces of storytelling between man and nature, and touches perspectives ranging from the reflective and mystical to the dark and unfathomable.

"As Managing Editor and Fiction Editor at The Hemlock Journal, reviewing these submissions has been a deeply rewarding experience. Several works stood out for their literary excellence and strong engagement with the theme, Call of the Wild.

It was enriching to encounter voices from diverse cultures and styles, each approaching the theme in a distinct way – through powerful ideas, immersive world-building, or evocative language. These works moved beyond environmental fiction, blending elements of mythology, horror, folklore, romance, and thriller.

The eight shortlisted pieces reflect all of the above qualities we were looking for, combining technical skill with a deep resonance with the theme." - **Divyank Jain (Managing Editor, The Hemlock Journal)**

Publishing, as always, is a labour of love. Selecting just a few pieces for publication was a challenging process, owing to the rich variety of submissions we received. We hope you enjoy this collection just as much as we enjoyed curating it. As you peruse these pages, we invite you to reflect on your own relationship with the wilderness, and what it truly means, in our present-day and age, to answer the call of the wild.

- The Editorial Team

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Tomorrow
Clarissa Cervantes



Climate Insights
Clarissa Cervantes



Climate Solutions
Clarissa Cervantes

Wild Girl, Uncaged

By Esther Fisher

There is an itch under my skin. Standing under the flickering fluorescent lights in aisle six of the grocery store, I have to decide between brands of beans. Absently, I scratch my arm, pushing up the gauzy sleeve. White lines trail like jet streams in the wake of my nails.

I can hear the buzz, buzz, buzzing, of the overhead lights. The electricity running to the fridges through fibrous plastic capped tunnels. The air conditioning rattles in the vents, warming by the time it comes within my orbit. The freezers cooling the ice cream would be a better relief in the high summer heat.

And for a moment, I think about it. opening the supermarket freezer door and stepping into the cool polar bear habitat. Hand on the silver handle I pull it open. Warm and cold air collide, mist and fog rolling against my bare calves and open toed shoes. The ice cream calls to me, but I don't recognize the sound anymore. It's a call that grates and crackles like melting frost.

Closing the door, the fog presses against the glass, the condensation collecting and rolling in small rivers. The cold fades, and is replaced by the thin sheen of sweat. My hands are slick against the cart handle as I make my way down the aisle.

The itch continues, crawling under my skin like maggots. They crawl up my arms and into my shoulders, sending shivers down my spine and nails along my skin.

A stranger in my own flesh, a wolf wearing someone else's skin to blend in. Sheep surround me, bleating and squeaking, pushing carts in even lines. They shuffle forward saying the same thing over and over and over again.

"Hello"

"How are you?"

"Good."

"Do you have a loyalty card?"

"No."

"Do you want to sign up for one?"

"No."

"That'll be four thirty-nine. How do you want to pay?"

"Card."

The cash register chimes, drawer sliding out even though there is no cash to consume. Consumerism, crunches like potato chips in a bag with not enough air. Crunches until it pops and we are forced to pick up the salty, bitter pieces.

It is my turn. I fix my mask and place my items on the belt. The same question come, predictable, common.

"How are you?"

The correct answer is "fine". The socially correct answer is "good."

What happens if I answer honestly?

I am not fine. I am not good. I have maggots crawling under my skin, inching their way to my vital organs and through the soft fleshy tissue. My stomach rolls and lurches with every wave of sadness and fear. I cannot stomach these chemically created, foods that do not rot outside or in my stomach. My nails are shorn to the quick, anxiety and restless energy gnawing at them.

My shoulders have compressed and hardened. Diamonds, they say, form when coal is under pressure. Diamonds,

should be a girl's best friend. But diamonds and jewels are cold and lifeless against the beating chest of my heart. My shoulders have not been compressed to diamonds. They are hardened from the ache and weight of the world. I have become Sisyphus and Atlas, constantly pushing the world before myself.

The four chambers of my heart are full. Not with blood, but with grief, longing, fear and rage. I try to keep them behind the bars of my rib cage, like the animals that they are. but they escape, every so often. Reaking havoc in my limbs, and seeping in to the timber of my voice.

I cannot sleep for the dreams that escape me. My mind is thick with smog and concrete dust, choking on poison air that my lungs think is "normal". The dreams that occupy my nocturnal wanderings bring me to a dark place. An unknown, wild place, that I have not touched in waking hours.

Voices beckon me into the darkness. They whisper things, promises, if I just stray slightly off the path. Stepp into the darkened woods and allow myself to linger among the twisted, sharp trees.

I do not go.

All of this, cannot be voiced. It should not be voiced. It is outside the box that is acceptable in the neat, block by block, cookie cutter neighbourhoods. It would not be acceptable to spew these thoughts onto the green manicured grass, the perfect roses, and white picket fences.

I smile, all of my teeth bared as I respond with the expected, "Good." The woman behind the counter does not flinch at the display, but bares her teeth back. There is little to speak of. The community interaction has become transactional.

Plastic and paper bags, rustle like brown dried leaves. I place the change on the table meta top. Clink. Clink. Clink. The sound of chains that anchor me to the society I am

contracted to live in. Consumerism and capitalism weigh me down by the rings on my fingers and the dept that rattles behind me.

Groceries in hand, the automatic doors swish open and a wave of sticky heat greets me. The parking lot is a mirage of heat and steel. Dry brush and cracked earth, placed neatly in the margins as decoration. The pavement would crack too, but it is too well put together. No, the pavement won't crack. It will melt. Sticky and black oil, like a sickness that seeps and pools deep into the ground.

Shoes crackling and sticking to the hot ground, I wait for the bus. The shelter does nothing for the heat. There is no breeze for relief, no trees for shade. My lips splits, and I swipe my tongue along the crusted skin wet with blood. The iron red paints my lips and tongue a darker shade, filling in the gaps between my teeth.

The bus comes, puffing smoke and screaming breaks. My ears ring as I pay for my ride. More cordial exchanges. The window is fogged with sweat, and condensation. If it's even possible, the bus becomes an oven, baking us all to dehydration.

Sluggish and stumbling, I make it to my door and into the cool airconditioned den. The front door closes behind me, and the itching feeling spreads with a vengeance. If the heat was keeping the skin maggots sluggish and at bay, the cold only excited them.

They crawl up my neck and under my scalp. I can't keep my fingers from raking through my hair, scratching until the soft flesh is raw. They continue

down my back to my legs, stomach and toes. The gauzy clothes I intended to keep me cool brush my skin wrong. The texture grates on my nerve endings.

In my attempt to get them off, I get tangled in the sleeves, like a fox in a trap. Whining to myself it takes a minute to detangle from my accidental imprisonment.

Bare and exposed, there is still no relief. The itching grows, burrowing into my brain. I pull at my hair, and fall to my knees. Is there nothing that will take the itching away? Nothing that will sooth the irritation and the snappishness of my jaw.

The feeling grows. My heart, its four chambers vacate. The grief, longing, fear and rage escape, like a supernova through my limbs.

The backdoor opens and I stumble out into the sun. it warms the skin of my back as I crouch on the flag stones. Artificial concrete. Man created, false nature. A mimic of the true world which is only steps away.

The itching becomes almost painful. There is something inside that is dying. Is it dying to crawl out and scream? It doesn't feel like dying. *This* doesn't feel like dying. It feels like being born. The darkness and squeezing contractions. The fear of the unknown and then taking my first breath.

Blind, there was nothing to see but white. And then slowly, everything comes into razor sharp focus.

The woods are lovely dark and deep. Dreams could never beckon me from the concrete path onto soft earth. It was the itch that finally threw me from the rut.

The blue and reds and blacks of sing birds call vibrantly on the tree branches. The girl that grew up surrounded by concrete and steel does not no what to do this far off the path. She floundered and coward into the deepest parts of self, twitching and flinching at every sound.

I was replaced by something that had always been in me, a version of myself who had taken every ray of sunshine and lit the dark for herself.

You are safe. You are free. Touch the world which you have been kept from. Which has been kept from you.

The itching stopped. The maggots vacated my skin and burrowed in the soft damp earth. How different everything is when I can touch the wilderness.

I stand and take a step. Like a newborn deer, I wobbled in the first few steps before steadying my gate.

The ground is soft, as is the breeze that caresses my skin. The trees breath with me, slow and steady. There is a lightness to my foot falls, but I am grounded in myself. The roots are new, but they grow strong. Deep, down into the earth, they anchor me to the wilderness.

I run as fast and as far as my lungs and legs will let me go. Freedom for the wilderness. I am the wild girl, uncaged and free to fly out of my concrete cage.





Fox Portrait in coloured pencils

Susan

Home With A View

By Jess Lawrence

Rumbling engines and snow tires never detracted from the graceful approach of her driveway through the densely wooded mountainside, until the eruption of the slope-rooved Victorian amongst the treetops gave way to the river-sliced wilderness beyond. Wind often stirred leaves from the bluffs to the southwest of the stately home she curated for decades. Its secrets sank behind the storm colored facade, brightened by silver on sashes and knobs. The horseshoe drive was river stone, dull as its contrast to the home's stricture. Nella glowed when a visitor remarked, "I feel like the house must invite me in."

Nothing about the deep forest, or the bluffs, deterred Nella Hargrave when she saw the home for the first time. The real estate agent was certain he'd been laden with an unsellable property. Her tour had been quiet, almost silent. Everyone he'd shown the property before had seen tiny bedrooms, few amenities, and a distance that wasn't merely physical. The master bedroom's rear balcony, stationed directly over the kitchen, had a view of exactly how solitary the location was. The western-facing vistas were haunting. Isolation seemed scored into the lattice work of the Queen Anne detailing.

The paperwork spread across granite countertops. As he filled in his pieces, Nella walked across the space again. An embedded sink in the island sat across from the wrought iron style seats. Nella loved that the kitchen was separate from the rest of the house. In summer, cooking would be tolerable. To the west, where the bluffs broke into forest's edge, a pair of intricate french doors opened onto a stone

patio. Nella grinned when she saw the garden to the northwest. If she was careful, she could expand it without losing any canopy coverage. It was perfect.

Real estate wasn't her companion's passion. That was clear from his harried expression. When he looked up from the ink and duplicates, her eyes were waiting for him. "Uh," he fumbled for a moment. "Okay, how much do you want to offer?"

"What's it listed at, exactly?" There had been conflicting information online. She wasn't in the habit of wasting money.

He rustled the papers until he found the updated listing. "Huh," he said mostly to himself. "They lowered it again." Then, when he remembered she was in the room, "Oh, yeah, it includes everything. The house, the water access, the 22 acres."

Shock fell across her face. There was land. She was expecting the house, and maybe a few acres. There had been concerns in the back of her mind about space for the garden, and the safety procedures she'd have to put in place. That all melted away.

He continued. "The acres run from the highway across the river. It's private. The land agreement with the neighbors puts the fence upkeep on them, and in return they can use the riverway. Restricted hours, only during the weekend." He glanced up at her newly regained composure. "The river is the

center of the plot. The house is on the first half of the acreage.”

That was how she got the estate. Under her curation, Nella brought the shell of a home into the breathing present. Her solitude embraced the decaying house she made her living home.

Mo Schreber remembered just how much Nella’s voice sounded like her mother’s when she called. As they caught up, he recalled the girl with curls chasing after rabbits in the bushes while her siblings fought. The Hargraves were good people, and he missed them. Nella had always kept him close, sending him graduation invitations and birthday cards.

When she told him that she’d bought a house in the woods, Mo wasn’t surprised. Hearing her talk about a garden caught him off guard. As she outlined what she wanted to do, he agreed to see the garden’s potential. Regret and unpaid dues swirled in his head on the drive until the home shocked them silent.

One full acre had been leveled, hidden behind the huge manor. Out the back door, a stone walkway led to the waiting canvas. Mo approached, amused by the small flags stuck into the ground. His smirk grew as he read each name. He laughed when he reached the center of the plot.

“I guess you’ve been planning, Little Nell,” he chuckled. He dug the tips of his fingers into the dark earth, tracing patterns in the fresh till. “We can do it. Do you want already established plants, or do you want to grow them yourself?” Mo stood, brushing the dirt from his hands. Checking local soil quality was a habit he would never lose. When Mo stopped inspecting his fingernails, her face revived his rueful laugh. “I forgot, sweetheart. Yes, I’ll find you ones already hearty enough for this place.”

He looked again at her tentative plots. “We’ll have to move a few things. I’ll help with the walkways, and we’ll get you a watering schedule that’s easy to handle.” He caught his lower lip between his teeth in contemplation. Then, quietly, “It’ll be ready when you are.”

Nella didn’t mistake the sadness in his voice for reproach. Both of them knew the day would come. When she’d called him, the old man had made peace with a favor being cashed. One Mo knew he couldn’t refuse. And, if he was honest with himself, he might not refuse it even if he could. The wind kicked up some of the loose soil. Tendrils of it swirled by the bargain they’d struck.

Mo stayed with her for two weeks while they worked. Raised beds, stone walkways, guiding in trucks and pointing to the orange flags clearly marked for every plant - they were a two person crew transforming a landscape.

As he settled the final plate into the last full box, Mo sighed. “Well, it’s done now.” He wiped a small bead of sweat from his brow. “By end of summer next year, you’ll have them all in full bloom.” He pointed at the vines on the far wall. “I don’t know how they’ll fare, especially in winter on this bluff. But we’ve done our best, my girl. It’ll be a riot of color for you, and quite the sight from your rooms.” He glanced up at the house. Mo hadn’t missed the shine of the window facing the garden from the second floor. A calloused hand gripped her shoulder, hugging her into his solid frame. “It’s done, sweetheart.”

Early morning in late summer was a heady thing on the bluff. Tiny bell shaped flowers shone with dew around the edges of the garden. They acted as sentinels, surrounded by taller stalks of lavender Nella had insisted upon. She ran her fingers carefully over the stems of the angel's trumpets. The sweet yellow of their petals caught the sunlight, the condensation of the morning falling from them.

Under the yew tree, the patches neatly named with things like doll's eyes and mountain laurels unfurled their own beautiful offers. Slowly, the hem of her long dress swept past the jimson weed, and the showy oleander. She paused carefully with the white hellebore, checking its delicate blossoms.

When she reached the center of the winding path, she beamed. The indigo larkspur and ivory death camas were hearty. Angry orange pips adorned her rosary peas. The ridges of ecru-to-plum digitalis, rising like small mountains from their patch, eased her shoulders. Foxglove always reminded her of her mother.

From the woven basket she carried, Nella took the freshly sharpened shears. Stalks of checkered lily fell into her basket, their petals dappled. Next to them, she also lowered a few carefully selected pieces of hemlock. A wash of white started her collection.

Nella grinned as she passed the jessamine vines that had survived winter after all. Again she knelt, this time trimming the wolfsbane. They lay next to the lilies. Their white flowers edged with blue made her thoughts wander far from her current task. Oceans of deep secrets, ice almost too brightly white to bear as the clouded sky loomed grey over her hooded face, just a rim of blue at the far edge of the horizon. Or the hidden lake amidst mountains, snow locked and solitary.

Each snip from the blue and white azalea bush brought her wafts of history. Running

with brothers through family orchards. Shouting at kittens to beware snakes coiled around the roots of the huge bushes. Windows wide to let pies cool, the scent of those azaleas tangled in the lilacs and perfuming the home with aching peace. The tufts of flowers settled neatly in their place.

Last on her list, waiting, were the tiny purple flowers she'd watched from her window with pride and care. In reverence, she tugged taut the stems and sliced. As the belladonna fell beside its kin in the basket, its colors seemed to mute all the others. The nightshade looked to be her only cutting, she'd taken so much of it. In satisfaction, Nella stood at the gates of her garden for a moment. A gust of cool air reminded her to hurry, soon her guests would arrive. Secrets filled her countenance as she walked back to the house with her prizes.

The rock and moss of the outdoor patio was lit with hanging bulbs as everyone began to arrive at dusk. Nella met her siblings and their guests out front. She knew how to throw a party. They were dying to see what a year had done to the remote shanty. Ever the host, she paraded them through the house. Her sisters ooohed over the interior. Sula had hidden a gasp when she saw the soaking tub and its view. Even the golden standard, Ian, had to grudgingly admit he wouldn't mind staying in her guest room.

"Not tonight," she reminded him. With the perfect transition in hand, Nella guided everyone past her close-gated garden. On its opposite side, neatly set up in the woods on a flat, clear forest floor, were tents. "Go ahead,

look inside!”

When the guests peeked inside, surprise rang out. Heaters, full beds with beautiful bedding, and thoughtful details filled each dedicated space. Even Renee (hypochondriac) had a mini fridge waiting for medications that absolutely had to be a particular temperature.

She pointed to the cameras around the edge of the camp site. “Before you ask,” Nella said. “I’ve had trail cameras up. My neighbors and I have seen nothing in these woods for weeks, and we’ll be eating at the house. So there are no bears, or elk, or moose, or anything dangerous.” She glanced at Renee. “No raccoons, either,” she said with a wink. “I think it’s about time for dinner.” Back she led the group to the house, and delight filled their voices when they saw what waited.

A long table was set. Gorgeous centerpieces of blues, and whites, and purples. The plates had name cards in calligraphy. Cozy blankets waited on comfortably padded chairs. Each conversation set huddled around small braziers to light as chill filled the darkened air. Laughter danced across the trees as each place was taken. Plates were passed around as Nella brought out classic comfort foods. Each smelled like nostalgia, offered as a little peace in a hectic world.

Conversation eased as dinner ended, and Nella lit the fires as she served the boxes. S’mores components were loaded in the decorated brown containers. Marshmallows she’d made, with a variety of chocolates, and several choices besides the classic graham crackers: all were neatly packed in gift packages she deposited at the paired chairs. Nella offered skewers that, when sniffed, were scented with vanilla and cinnamon. Another thoughtful detail, someone said.

It was brother Blake who had whispered to Nella, “Didn’t you tell me once that lily of the valley are deadly?” He’d been looking at the

flowers with such care. His date, whose name seemed ephemeral, had gushed over the azaleas.

Nella had widened her eyes, saying she hadn’t recalled. “They can be,” she admitted, “but only if ingested. Growing them, and putting them on display, is not to be feared.” One of her fingertips lightly traced the bells dropping toward the tablecloth, to reassure him that she survived any danger he imagined from them.

Ian was less trusting of the flowers. He’d quickly accepted the chance to move away from the table, mumbling under his breath, “I swear that’s hemlock.” Renee hushed her brother, calling it Queen Anne’s lace.

“Like the house,” Nella had offered, helpful. “The detailing is called gingerbread, not lace.” There was a muffled chuckle from someone who didn’t want to catch Ian’s withering glare. Whoever had laughed ended up successfully hiding their amusement.

They all roasted the marshmallows and chatted. Each of them devoured treat after treat. Even Sula, vegan sister and superior, ate her own generous share of sweet puffy dessert. She was the first to convulse. Nella watched her sleek ebony hair, dyed less than two weeks before, fall across her gasping lips. The froth was unbecoming, it was true, but there wasn’t much to be done about that.

Blake looked resigned. “You finally,” he began. Rasping throttled the rest, as he gripped and tore the blanket in his fingers. There was less terror in the pose rictus froze him in, which didn’t surprise her. Nella had always known that Blake would understand.

Ian was dramatic. He'd shoved poor Renee, who had more likely died of a heart attack than the poison if her instant silence and frozen remnants were anything to go by. Tripping over his sister's corpse, the middle aged CEO of something tried desperately to talk to his tormentor. Unfortunately for Ian, words wouldn't come. Blindness and falling determined his last moments. His right hand stopped its spasming less than an inch from Nella's delicate lace shoe.

The sun had fully set before s'mores had been distributed. By midnight, all were still, and stone dead. Each of them, she noted, had more or less frozen into the exact position she'd expected. The host inspected each of the dead to ensure they were not suffering.

A quiet chuckle escaped her lips. "Really, Nella?" she said aloud. "Worried about their suffering? Why give what was never given to you?" With a quick survey of those around her, she answered herself. "Because I refuse to follow their example."

Nella carried each one through the now open garden gates. On the ground beyond were the full set of tents she'd walked the family to before dinner. In exacting detail, she lay each of them on their beds. Even dear Sula was tucked gently into her tatami mat, which had won Nella genuine praise for recalling when Sula's haughty gaze inspected the likely-inferior accommodations.

"Wow, Nell," she'd conceded. "You actually got it right."

"Yes," she said to the cooling flesh on the mat. "I suppose I finally did."

It had been easier to carry the bodies than it had been to carry the meat. The weight hadn't bothered Nella so much as the stench. One by one, her siblings were carefully covered with weeks old carrion. Gardening had helped her prepare to haul her family. Using the wheelbarrow would have helped, but she was

grateful she hadn't needed it. A genuine laugh had found her when she realized that Sula in particular had skunk draped over her well-crafted chest.

After checking one last time that she had done everything she had planned, Nella collected the last of the food from outside and turned off the exterior lighting before going up to her rooms. She soaked, listening to instrumental music as the hot jets eased aches out of her muscles. Once her fingers pruned, and the water had done the most it would do, she toweled off and slipped on her favorite pajamas. The weight of her comforter swallowed her, and Nella eased into a deep sleep.

Waking and ambling to the kitchen, her laptop's hinges protested the intrusion at her island seat. Nella silently agreed as she stretched for her coffee. Both of them needed to warm up, she supposed. Her waffles were heating in the toaster oven, their vanilla scent inviting her distraction from the task at hand.

Nella watched the footage as a mother and two large cubs had arrived at the tents. In their chaotic battle for scraps, the youths had battered and bashed the trail cameras, smelling whatever remnants of death she had smeared on their casings.

The equipment she'd purchased was destroyed. One had been completely obliterated - no one could save its footage. She tried, and one look clarified its uselessness. Teeth, saliva, and other muck had breached its storage center.

The other two feeds were believably spliced to show the family touring the camp, and then some intermittent

footage of the bears tearing into the tents. The bears had done her an unexpected second favor as well. Ian and Renee had been the last attacked. No doubt Ian would have finished the other two bottles of whiskey. Renee had been rattling her bottle of muscle relaxers like a maraca during dinner, openly speculating if she had enough to get through breakfast in the morning.

Mother Bear had treated all of the tents as though they were invaders, and her offspring had joined her. Nella supposed it was good practice, knowing that they wouldn't get injured. Their ransacking destroyed the camp entirely. The shards of the world left after the death of her parents were infinitely better

without her siblings polluting them.

Sunrise filtered into the kitchen in her home. Her waffles had just finished crisping, the toaster oven making its signature ding. She carefully buttered each of them, stacking the lighter one atop the more toasted. With a curse, she shifted them apart again and filled the hollows in syrup. Restacked and lightly salted, Nella's first slice and bite were exactly what she'd been craving. A smile crossed her lips. She ate slowly, with relish. Every bite, like every breath, came easier in the new daylight.





Wild Wild

Josie



SpeculativeBotany

Josie



3 Photographs
Sohini Banerjee



Picnic at the Beginning of Time
(Acrylics on Paper, 2026)

Aru Shukla

This piece is about rest, a quiet pause at the very beginning, before everything settles into place. It leans into a sense of true wilderness, unshaped and free. While working on this painting, I chose a messier, less controlled route, allowing things to happen without overthinking them.



Dandelions
(Watercolor on Paper, 2025)

Aru Shukla

This piece is an exploration of translucence and light, built through the careful layering of watercolor to preserve the fragile luminosity of dandelions. Each layer was applied slowly and deliberately, allowing light to pass through and animate the form from within.



Terrain
(Watercolor on Paper, 2025)

Aru Shukla

This piece presents a cross-section of the human epidermis and dermis. I have taken considerable artistic liberties in this representation, choosing to depict skin not as a biological surface, but as a landscape, one shaped by undulation of rolling hills and their valleys, waves and rivers, ponds, bogs, and marshes.

Contributors

FICTION

Amita Basu

Amita Basu's fiction appears in 90+ venues including The Penn Review and The Bombay Literary Magazine. Her debut, *At Play and Other Stories* (Bridge House), released in 2025. She's won the Ruskin Bond Literary Award and the Letter Review Prize. She lives in Auroville and works in climate action.

Theresa Wong

Theresa Wong is a climate change specialist who has lived and worked in Europe, Asia and North America. She is published in *Brick*, the literary journal. She has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and was recently longlisted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. She currently resides in Singapore.

B.C. Vidal Jr.

B.C. Vidal Jr. hails from the Philippines. He moved to the US in 2006, where he now lives in North Carolina with his wife and two kids. When not working, he pursues his other passion (next only to literature) for fishing.

Alan Talevi

Alan Talevi was born in Buenos Aires in 1980. He holds a PhD in Natural Sciences and a degree in Creative Writing. He has published three short story collections and a novel. He is one of the founders of the Argentine publishing house *Salta el Pez*.

Norman Thomson

Norman Thomson lives in Ontario, writes micros for exploration, reads medieval themed whodunits for pleasure and riffs blues and Beatles on his Hohner harmonica for entertainment.

Bhumika Sanjeev

At 19, Bhumika Sanjeev is already a poet and writer from Bengaluru with a growing trail of publications and the Utkarsh Poetry Fellowship by the Bangalore Poetry Festival to show for it. When not scribbling in notebooks, Bhumika can be found people-watching, drifting into improbable daydreams, or getting lost in stories that refuse to stay ordinary.

Laura Trapletti

Laura Trapletti is from the United States but currently living in Germany. She has her BA in History with a minor in English Literature. While her passion is creative writing, her day job is corporate. She has previously published poetry in *Balancing Acts 2: Women Poets of Maine*.

Julia Esther Jacob

Julia Esther Jacob is a writer and poet drawn to stories that shape the human condition. Her work is forthcoming in *Usawa Literary Review* and a 2026 short fiction anthology. Alongside writing, she volunteers for charities that focus on the welfare of street animals, children's education, and mental health programs.

Esther Fisher

Esther Fisher is a graduate of York University with a BA in English and Creative Writing. She loves ballroom dancing, tiaras, and travelling to the far flung corners of the world. She has been published with *Forget-Me-not Press*, *Poetry Undressed*, *Humana Obscura*, and *Firefly Magazine*. *Resurrection* is her first novel. She lives in Toronto.

Jess Lawrence

Jess Lawrence is an author/editor currently based in Northeast Ohio. Her poetry has most recently been featured in *Azaoro Lit* and *Rawhead Journals*, her non fiction has been performed at the *Cleveland Humanities Festival*, and her experimental fiction has been published in *Odes to Infrastructure*. Her work of academic non fiction is forthcoming.

József-Sándor Török

József-Sándor Török holds a BA in Philology and an MA in American Studies. His short fiction has been nominated for the 2026 Pushcart Prize. His work has appeared in *Blood Tree Literature*, *The Hemlock Journal*, and *Poems, Tales & Other English Words*, with another story forthcoming in Spring 2026. He is currently working on his debut novel.

Victoria Galmarini

Victoria Galmarini is a writer shaped by movement, memory, and the mountains of Patagonia. A lifelong creator, she honed her voice in literary workshops and continues exploring human connection and reinvention while crafting her fourth novel from the wild landscapes she now calls home.

Smita Das Jain

Smita Das Jain is an author of five books and an award-winning short story writer whose works have appeared in leading national and international journals and anthologies, including Tint Journal, Auroras and Blossoms, Parcham, Tell Me Your Story, Muse India, Kitaab, Red Rose Thorn Journal, Wordweavers, Twist & Twain, Unleash Press and Writefluence. A certified creative writing specialist and executive-cum-life coach, Smita writes daily to share stories that resonate and inspire reflection. She lives in Gurugram, India, with her husband and daughter. She can be reached at @smitadjain on Instagram and @smita.dasjain on Facebook.

Srijita Chakraborty

Srijita Chakraborty is a banker with interests expanding beyond numbers and graphs. She is a writer, a tarot reader, an astrologer; perhaps in the future, more will be added to the list. Her first proper exposure to the industry was through a journalism workshop. Since then, she has chosen writing as her breath.

Abhiram Chaturvedi

Abhiram Chaturvedi is a 14-year-old author who began writing at seven. A prolific reader of thriller, fantasy, and sci-fi, he has published multiple books starting at age nine, gained media recognition, spoken at several literary festivals, won a Young Writers' Award, and has been featured in three local newspapers.

Ananya Mahapatra

Ananya Mahapatra is a psychiatrist from New Delhi and a writer. Her short stories have been published in The Best Asian Short Stories Collection by Kitaab International Singapore (2018), USAWA Literary Magazine (India), Quillmark Literary Magazine (India), Bristol Short Story prize anthology (2022). She was shortlisted for the Deodar Literary Prize for consecutive years of 2023 and 2024. Recently, her short story was published in the Deodar Literary Prize Anthology 2024. She was also longlisted for the Fractured Lit Flash Fiction prize 2025. She is currently working on a collection of short stories around the lives and longings of the people of New Delhi.

Martha Hipley

Martha Hipley is a writer and filmmaker from Baltimore, Maryland who lives and works in Mexico City. Her stories have been published in Maudlin House, VOLUME 0, and ARTWIFE, among others. When not writing, she enjoys training as a triathlete and boxer.

Héctor Ordóñez Monribot

Héctor Ordóñez Monribot is a Mexican journalist and writer focused on narrative nonfiction, society and technology. His work explores the borderlands between testimony and landscape, with a particular interest in Chiapas and the political imagination of the Mexican southeast. He also works in content strategy and editorial workflows.

Debi (Debarati) Mukherjee

Debi's work explores identity, resilience, and relationships through fiction, essays, and poetry. Her published works include: Essays, A Meditation on the Politics of Bodily Autonomy (Usawa Magazine, 2025) and Her Narrow Plate (Kitaab, 2026), short story, A Woman, A Heron (FemAsia, 2025), and poetry Boy and the Puddle (Hours of the Sun, 2024).

Zara Maharani Khalisha Ariana

For Zara, writing is a sanctuary of literary communication, and she has eventually compiled over fifteen unpublished manuscripts. Besides, she has a faculty of science and math, with prestigious international Olympiad awards. In 2024-2025, Zara's proficiency has been proven by achieving the highest score at multiple international English contests.

Sarah Das Gupta

Sarah Das Gupta is a disabled writer from Cambridge, UK, who began writing at the age of 80 after a disabling accident. Her work has been published in over 25 countries and has appeared in numerous anthologies and magazines. She has recently been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net, and the Dwarf Stars Award.

Kate Brooks

Kate Brooks's writing has been longlisted for the Room Magazine Fiction Contest, the CBC Short Story Prize, and shortlisted for the Malahat Review Fiction Award and Metatron Press' Prize for Rising Authors. Her debut chapbook, Ficus, was published digitally through Metatron Press and she has a book forthcoming with Folly Press.

Manuel López Ramírez

Manuel López Ramírez is a Mexican writer living in London who is interested in what it means to live as gender queer. His work has been featured in The Beloit Fiction Journal, and he was awarded West 10th's Editor's Poetry Prize in 2023. You can follow him on Instagram, @manuel_lop_w

Shruti Sareen

Shruti Sareen has a PhD in English literature from Delhi University and teaches in colleges/universities whenever she manages to find a job. Her poetry collection, A Witch Like You, appeared in 2021. She has a autofiction manuscript complete and is engaged in writing speculative fiction, love-letters, and of course, more poetry!

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

Aneesah

Aneesah is a self-taught artist working primarily in charcoal, graphite and pastels. Influenced by a lifelong connection to animals and an early interest in conservation science, her work often features trees and endangered species as symbolic reflections of survival, adaptation and growth. Her practice centres on nature-based imagery, using the natural world as a metaphor for internal resilience and emotional endurance. Originally from the Cape Flats, Aneesah is the founder of Old Sól Art Studio. With over a decade of experience as a practicing artist, her work has been featured in the Our Wild World virtual exhibition (2025), curated by the Confluence Community, and published in Compassiviste Publishing's anthology How to Save the World, Vol. 7: Uncaging the Animals.

Josie

Josie is a full-time artist devoted to exploring the delicate dialogue between nature and emotion. Her work primarily focuses on botanical forms and interesting patterns. Alongside this, she embraces abstract art that is more special and delves into deeper, more intuitive realms of feeling, where color, form, and texture weave together to tell unseen stories. Through her art and patterns, she invites moments of stillness, reflection, and connection. Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/jen28nart/>

Leonid Polotsky

Leonid Polotsky, born in Leningrad, is a Saint Petersburg–based architect and artist. He trained at the Fine Arts School, Lyceum of Arts and Restoration, under Boris Belyaev, and at the University of Architecture and Construction. His exhibitions include *Colours of Silence* (2018) and *Moments of Eternity* (2025). His work has appeared internationally and is held in private collections.

Anna LuckyLark

Anna is an illustrator from Portugal with a passion for both digital and traditional techniques. She is drawn to stories that explore belonging, nature, and transformation.

Rudra Kishor Mandal

Born and brought up in Kolkata, Rudra moved to Hyderabad to study at Sri. Venkateshwara College of Fine arts. After graduating as a Bachelor of Fine Arts they worked as a graphic designer over a period of 6 years in 3 different cities of India. They resumed creating independent artworks in the varied mediums of painting, digital graphics and art installations after moving back to Kolkata in the year 2008. They exhibit their artworks in India and abroad through physical and virtual art galleries. They have exhibited in group shows nationally and internationally with Alliance Francaise, American Center, British Council, Italian Ministry of Culture, Eurasia, Spazio Tempo Arte, AIAPI, UNESCO, Queer Asia, Amnesty International, Blackwall, SOAS University London and British Museum, KCC and ICCR in Kolkata, and India Art Fair, Delhi, The Art Society of India, Mumbai.

Tammy Schroder

Tammy Schroder is a Pacific Northwest artist whose work explores the quiet intersections between nature, memory, and human experience. Through painting and mixed media, she draws inspiration from wildlife, waterways, and the layered stories embedded in the landscapes around us. Her work often blends elements of realism and abstraction, using texture, movement, and symbolic imagery to reflect both environmental fragility and the complexities of human relationships. With more than two decades of experience in painting, murals, and public art, Schroder's work has been internationally published. Alongside her studio practice, she is engaged in art education, therapeutic art practices, and community-based creative work that encourages connection through creative expression.

Clarissa Cervantes

Clarissa Cervantes is a photographer researcher. Clarissa's photography gallery includes images from all over the world, where she finds inspiration to share her photographs with others through her creative lens, inviting the viewer to question the present, look closer, explore more the array of emotions, and follow the sunlight towards a brighter future.

Susan

Susan is a self-taught artist and illustrator whose work spans a variety of traditional media, including watercolor, pencil, pen, and pastel. Her subjects range from portraits to nature-inspired themes such as animals and flowers. She also creates digital illustrations for children's books, blending creativity and storytelling to engage young readers.

Ariunzaya Ganaa

Ariunzaya Ganaa is a Mongolian writer, artist, and literary editor based in Italy, working across literature, film, and contemporary art through experimental and interdisciplinary storytelling. Her practice moves between text, image, and performance, exploring narrative as a space where different artistic languages intersect. She has written for EasternKicks, Far East Film Festival, and MYmovies, and was featured in the April issue of Suboart Magazine, an independent Portugal-based publication dedicated to emerging contemporary artists. She completed an internship at Casa Cavazzini, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Udine, where she is currently preparing for a solo exhibition. Her work has been presented in Ulaanbaatar and Milan, and she was selected for Ulaanbaatar Art Week 2025 in collaboration with the Mongolian Contemporary Art Center and Blue Sun Contemporary Art Center. She also participated as a critic at the MINT Chinese Film Festival.

Katelyn Workman

Katelyn Workman is a visual artist based out of Williamsburg, Virginia, where she is pursuing a B.A in studio art at The College of William and Mary. When working en plein air through the observation of the landscape Katelyn finds significant freedom in its ever-changing nature. Her work is centered around engaging with observation and capturing small moments of interest that she often stumbles upon. She has a formal interest in exploring composition and color relationships as driving forces throughout the painting process.

Shannon Rae

Shannon Rae is a self-taught artist in her thirties who uses acrylics as her primary medium to explore and make sense of the world around her. Drawing on her love of nature and borrowing elements from folklore and mythology, her work creates immersive landscapes and imaginative worlds that offer a sense of escape.

Saptarshiraj Ghosh

Saptarshiraj Ghosh is a self-taught artist who primarily works with acrylic on canvas and watercolors. His artworks explore nuanced human emotions through landscapes and environmental storytelling. He has experience designing journal covers and managing teams for major art projects and events. His work has been published in university journals and Hashtag Kalakar, and featured across online platforms with an established audience.

Vincente Exbrayat

Vincente Exbrayat is a 34-year-old French artist who creates illustrations and paintings, drawing inspiration from her travels, symbolism, and nature. She studied fine arts at Montpellier University and completed a four-month etching course in Florence. Her work explores surreal concepts, transforming them into visual stories that resonate with and spark the viewer's imagination.

Patrick Devine

Patrick Devine is an artist based in Hawaii. When it comes to his art, he lets his ADHD direct his flow. So he delves into murals, paintings, photography, poetry, and tattooing, and right now, he is even working on producing installations.

Nalini Joshi

Nalini Joshi is a contemporary visual artist residing in Mumbai, India. She completed her Mastery program in Art from Milan Art Institute, Georgia, under the guidance of coach and artist, John Milan. Her debut show was a Solo exhibition at the Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai, India. Her art pieces are now part of private collections across the country and abroad. Nalini has been awarded the "Certificate of Artistic Merit" from Museum Pinacothèque and Luxembourg Art Prize for the years 2023 and 2024. She was also one of the finalists of the award for the year 2024. She was included as an "Emerging Artist for the year 2023" in an internationally juried list of 100 artworks on a global platform of the "Arts to Heart project".

Enzo Marra

Enzo Marra is a multimedia artist who works across painted, assembled, photographic and video works. Their final appearances intrinsically related to the elements that constitute them. Nail varnish, glitter, glued collaged finds, potentially utilised in collaboration with the more anticipated array of painted mediums. He has curated exhibitions across the UK, including a diverse array of artists including Richard Deacon, Alison Wilding and Marcus Harvey. He has also selected works for the Lido Open, Beep Painting Biennial and the Solo Award. He has been selected for the John Moores Painting Prize in 2012 and 2016, the Threadneedle Prize in 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2016, and the Creekside Open in 2013, 2015 and 2017, where he was chosen as a prize winner by Jordan Baseman in 2017. He has also been selected for the Beep Painting Biennial in 2014 and 2016, his paintings being highly commended in the 2014 exhibition.

Swati

Swati is pursuing a Master of Fine Arts from the Central University of Himachal Pradesh. Her work explores Indian narratives, especially the Dashavatara, through a contemporary perspective. Working primarily with acrylic and wool textures, she creates layered visual expressions. She is currently working on a Varaha incarnation series, exploring the relationship between humans and nature, using the narrative as a metaphor for ecological awareness and the need to reconnect with and preserve the natural world.

Brooklyn Kretschmer

Brooklyn Kretschmer is a 17-year-old Métis artist living in Alberta. Most of her artworks aim to capture the beauty of the land through acrylic painting, although she also enjoys ink works and drawing dragons.

Cally House

Cally House is a visual artist with a primary focus on the environment and its shifting relationship with human presence. Her practice reflects on changing landscapes, cycles of nature, and the quiet tension between development and the natural world. She is also the author of the self-published poetry book *Beneath the Rootline*, where her visual and literary expressions intersect.

Sohini Banerjee

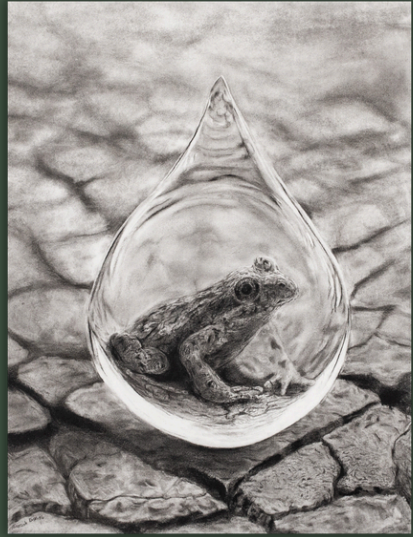
Sohini Banerjee is a versatile artist who captures the world through both the lens and the brush. Beyond her recognized photography, she explores various artistic expressions through painting in multiple media. Her work reflects a keen eye for detail and a passion for storytelling across diverse visual platforms.

Aru Shukla

Aru Shukla is a twenty-one-year-old artist and writer from Bengaluru, India. As a self-taught artist, she works with watercolor, gouache and acrylics, and is inspired by nature and everyday life. Her poems have been previously published in the Echo Review and elsewhere. She published a short collection of poems titled “On an Empty Stomach” in 2023. She is currently on an enemies-to-lovers trajectory with the color green. She loves plants with big leaves, trees with white barks and birds with strange calls.



Twenty Four best works of **Eco-fiction** from across the world



The Special Fiction Issue of **The Hemlock Journal**, in collaboration with **Remington Review**, features a captivating collection of eco-fiction, showcasing the work of **24 writers** and **21 artists** from **fifteen countries**. Each piece explores the intricate relationship between humans and nature, addressing themes such as climate change, environmental destruction, apocalypse & post-apocalypse — while ultimately emphasizing hope for the future.



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