

NATURE NURTURES

ANTHOLOGY
2023



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



NATURE **NURTURES**

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2023



First published in Great Britain in 2023 by Spread the Word

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ISBN 978 1999825454
Designed by Katrina Clark

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Nature Nurtures is supported by funds awarded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports, via the Volunteering Futures Fund distributed by Arts Council England.

Spread the Word would like to thank London Wildlife Trust, Black Girls Hike and London Youth for their partnership in the Nature Nurtures project.

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Preface

When I first started my role on the Nature Nurtures project, my initial feeling was positive anticipation about the chance to work in a partnership with four amazing organisations; London Wildlife Trust, Spread the Word, London Youth and Black Girls Hike CIC. The second, even more overwhelming feeling was the excitement and awe of the opportunity to spend time with young people exploring some of the many ways creativity can be born from nature. This feeling has grown into a friendly earwig following me through every Wild Wellbeing Walk, creative writing workshop and practical conservation + crafting volunteering session since Summer '22 at Walthamstow Wetlands, Woodberry Wetlands, the Centre for Wildlife Gardening, Camley Street Natural Park and Hutchinson's Bank. 125 young people have joined us to create temporary art installations such as 'Searching for the Clitellum', fungi self-portraits, new chalk signs and stag beetle loggeries whilst wielding axes, scythes and endless enthusiasm.

London Wildlife Trust's nature reserves served as wonderful co-hosts for Spread The Word's fantastic creative workshops with Theresa Lola, Melissa Legarda, Woodrow Phoenix, Laura Barker and LiLi K Bright, who ran an open call for the Nature Nurtures Collective to enter a piece of creative work to be published and launched in May 2023. This anthology is designed to open the window to young people's perspective of our natural world and to amplify their voices. We are so proud and energised to be working with this talented group of creatives and look forward to supporting their creative endeavours and the wider collective.

I'm incredibly grateful for the nourishment that the Nature Nurtures Collective has brought me, and it's been an invaluable experience sharing that nourishment, curiosity and wonder with the people I am fortunate enough to cross paths with.

The range and depth of work in this anthology speaks for itself. So when you read this, try heading out to nature's after school club, take a moment to thank Earth's grandmothers, and don't forget to tune into Earth FM.

I hope reading this anthology nurtures your earwig.

- Charlie Nwanodi :)

Youth Volunteering Coordinator and your local socially awkward bean at London Wildlife Trust

Introduction

by **Laura Barker** and **LiLi Kathleen Bright**

One of our sessions was about mini beasts: What would happen if mini beasts were mega beasts? Using the game Cluedo (US: Clue) as our guide, we imagined mini to mega beasts in different locations (the library, the billiard room, the conservatory), and made horror, thriller and documentary film posters about encounters with giant ants and humongous woodlice.

We worked with young people to create increased awareness of the link between the creative arts and the environment. Lots of our young people already focused their work on climate emergency and biodiversity, and came to our sessions with excellent knowledge, for example, the effect grey squirrel viruses had on red squirrel immunity. It felt good to focus on fun as well in our conversations about the best biscuits to dunk into tea (rich tea for an overall thumbs down), and how to hide squirrel oral contraceptives in foodstuffs. Food and consumption was a common writing theme in submissions.

We are delighted by the level of writing from the young people who took part in this project and their innovative use of language. We absolutely loved reading the submissions (LiLi Whatsapped Laura early one Saturday morning with a voice note about how wonderful they all were). We were encouraged to find that our participants already had intimate connections to nature and thought deeply about climate change, sitting with the ambivalence of awareness of climate crisis and enjoyment of nature. There was a sense that we are part of nature, not that nature is something separate.

We'd love to see even more people exploring their connection to nature and creativity. Your voice is important — express yourself!



nurture | *verb*

To care for, cherish, protect: *as nature nurtures us, so should we nurture her.*

Changing Meanings - A Dictionary for the Anthropocene

Chrislyn Pereira

Thunder Thursday

Ilisha Thiru Purcell

Today, cloud watching reveals only the sky's swollen bosom
lactating anticipation
melding with the cloy of damp blazers.

The air is alive.

The sky cracks open like a fortune cookie -
prophesising water upon water
as shards of lightning crumble to the ground.

Books become umbrellas
as children, mouths open like parched roots,
await something they cannot name.

Water upon water upon water,
the sky does not weep but shrieks.

We only listen to the voice that is loudest,
so just wait, the earth will silence you.

An Ode to My Neighbours' Tree

Ilisha Thiru Purcell

When I couldn't move further than the boundary of my body / you were there,
grounded and yet moving / eyelash-leaves trembling / limbs shaking out in
frustration at night. / Your rings could be read like a horoscope, / while the doctors
kept searching my circles and finding nothing. / Do you remember the day I lugged
my body into the faint north east sun and turned to you? / I felt the sunflower in
my ribcage lift its head, / I felt hope on my tongue free from bitterness. / I wanted
to ask my neighbours if they'd heard the sound of your leaves tumbling onto the
pavement, / pasta poured into a metal pot / or if they'd seen you smile as the first
rays of dawn knocked on your trunk like a promise. / I think of you often – / that
cross section of you from my window / rustling to me that even in stillness there
is progress, / that roots go further and farther than you think. /

A dose of reality, a glassful of hope

Ilisha Thiru Purcell

If I face it directly it is happening in the landscape of my body -
a grating down a crumbling cliff face
plastic spewing from my mouth
teeth rotting from within
acidic tears and their burn trails.

All I know is that in my home there is a shoot –
a little green growth in the kitchen
that no matter how many times I pull
still through the brick, the mortar, the glass
it grows.

Slowly, urgently, continually, it comes,
raises its head and says,
“I will not stop”

Look To The Sky (chorus)

Muayuma Yese

Slowly, Boldly.

(Harp is tuned in Eb and only A# is needed)

♩ = 100

Harp

The first system of the chorus consists of two measures. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The right hand starts with a complex chord in the first measure, followed by a half note G#4 and a half note B4 in the second measure. The left hand plays a quarter note G2, a quarter note B2, a quarter note D3, and a quarter note F#3 in the first measure, then rests in the second measure.

Harp

The second system of the chorus consists of three measures. The right hand plays a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note G#4 in the first measure. The second measure has a half note G#4 and a half note B4. The third measure has a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note G#4. The left hand rests in the first measure, then plays a quarter rest, a quarter note G2, a quarter note B2, and a quarter note D3 in the second measure, and a quarter rest, a quarter note G2, a quarter note B2, and a quarter note D3 in the third measure.

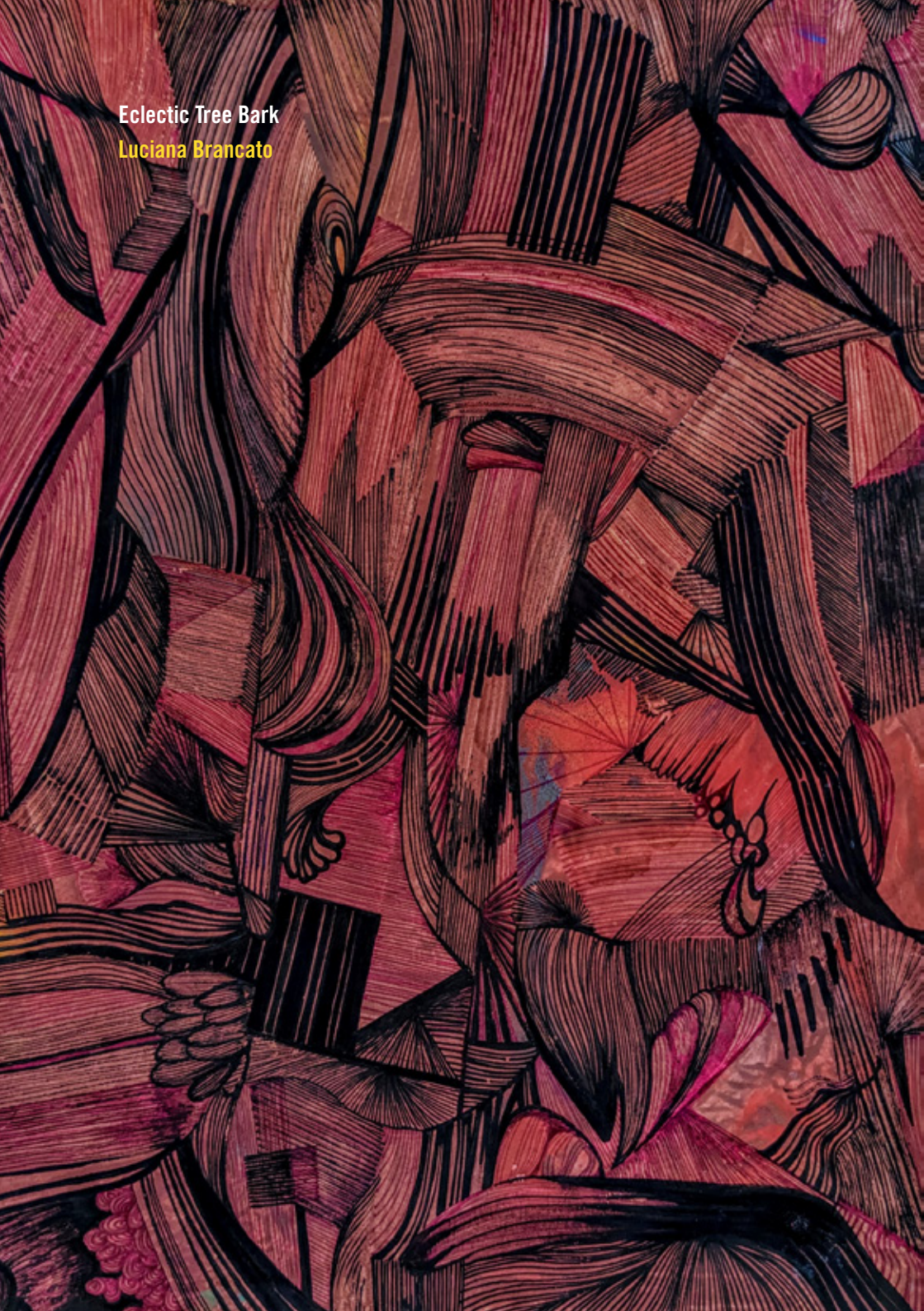
Harp

The third system of the chorus consists of three measures. The right hand starts with a complex chord in the first measure, followed by a half note G#4 and a half note B4 in the second measure, and a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note G#4 in the third measure. The left hand plays a quarter note G2, a quarter note B2, a quarter note D3, and a quarter note F#3 in the first measure, then rests in the second and third measures.

Harp

The fourth system of the chorus consists of three measures. The right hand plays a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note G#4 in the first measure, a half note G#4 and a half note B4 in the second measure, and a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note G#4 in the third measure. The left hand plays a quarter rest, a quarter note G2, a quarter note B2, and a quarter note D3 in the first measure, a quarter rest, a quarter note G2, a quarter note B2, and a quarter note D3 in the second measure, and a quarter rest, a quarter note G2, a quarter note B2, and a quarter note D3 in the third measure.

Eclectic Tree Bark
Luciana Brancato



An aerial photograph of a coastal region. The top half of the image shows a blue body of water with white foam from waves breaking. Below the water, a road with a white center line runs horizontally across the middle. To the right of the road, there are several buildings with reddish-brown roofs. The bottom half of the image shows a dark, rocky coastline with some green vegetation. The overall scene is a mix of natural and built environments.

New Species?
Luciana Brancato

Autumn Days
Caroline McHardy



My Orange Friend

Caroline McHardy

Like a painting with reflections of the night I wait by the window,
Your eyes flicker like a twin candle flame,
I imagine your fur magnificent amber when touched by the sun's morning rays.

For now a ghostly shadow entwined with the darkness,
White Tip I call you, the tip of your tail dipped in a painters palette of white it seems,
Barking, you then cry out, and I know you are near.

There you are, sneaking up to the window,
Looking up as if a friendly hello,
You sit on the patio, and then curl up on the table attuned to the orchestra of the night.

Till time calls you back to your home of the wild,
Your silhouette dancing amongst the trees,
Imagining you return to the bent over willow tree.

Yet you come back for just one look, and then vanish,
My orange friend,
Until tomorrow.

Sly Fox
Paris Sharples



Basil, Strawberries and Sea Salt

Elena Gkrintzou

My dad always told me that memories are heavily connected to one's sense of smell. While growing up, I have found a lot of the facts he shared with me to be false or inaccurate, but when it comes to this one, I have always known it is true without ever having to look it up. When I was younger the food that we ate was dependent on the season. We ate strawberries only for a brief period of time starting from the last days of spring up to the beginning of the summer. Whenever I found strawberries in the grocery bags, I knew that summer was just around the corner. We had a large wooden bowl that we would fill with strawberries and sugar and put it in the fridge overnight to macerate them. The whole of our kitchen would smell like strawberries and spring. I knew it was summer, when the food that my parents cooked started smelling and tasting like basil. To me the smell and taste of summer will always be tethered to basil. Whenever I smell it, I can almost feel the sun burning my face, like it did on lazy Sunday mornings during August. However, the smell to which my body and my mind are most responsive to and the one that fills me with memories more than any other, is the one of sea salt.

Despite viewing the world mostly through logical and rational lenses, the sea would always be my soft spot. To me she is alive. In fact, she is a symbol of life. This might sound absurd at first, but if I describe the way in which I have experienced her, I think you will view her in the same way as me. To me, the sea is forgiving and understanding. She does not judge you for crouching your body over a desk all day, or for shrinking yourself from time to time until you find the courage to put one leg in front of the other and face your desires without fear. She touches every part of your body without commenting on how you have exhausted it, on how you are not taking care of it.

She puts salt on your wounds and although she momentarily hurts you, she discreetly heals them without expecting your gratitude or devotion in return. And

your mind, which you have been trying to sooth because it is driving you crazy with all its worries, falls silent and remembers what it means to peacefully exist. You can bring to the surface all of your traits which are considered feminine. All those traits that you have to hide and cover in order to protect, because they are diminished and attacked on the shore. You get to wear them proudly on your skin, soaking them to the salt water to revive them because they can only breath through water, air suffocates them.

You want to be like her, transforming from playful waves on the shore, to a calm and wise power on a still summer night, touched only by a warm breeze, to a fearless and untamed storm. And although she has given you too much you ask for a bit of her wilderness, a bit of her momentum. But she listens to your second thoughts vibrating through your body and she does not give it to you. Because she knows it is not her power that you need but rather the space and the stubbornness to find your own. Instead, she connects you with your body and reminds you it is not fragile, that intense emotions will not break it, just like she has not been cut in half by you and all the life she has embraced within her. Your skin smells like sea salt and life. Your voice tastes like sea salt and life. Only an entity which is alive can have the power to smell and taste like life.

Seen on Serenity Walks

Haneen Thani



In Decline
Sadatu Futa

a sparrow housed
in the young of Dimo's palms
flutters its wings;

not the readying pace to soar in blue,
but the well of shadows
vapid of the skies expanse.

she knows,
carrying the weight of wisdom,
in the tenderness of girlhood,
the murder of institutional crow
blackening the sky.

she reads,
in the sparrow's sullen motion
the sweat of one's feather
after miles journeying unknowingly
towards habitats dusted
and devoured.

After School Club

Sadatu Futa

Like a great tree;
allow your feet to dance in soil,
your arms flow in the sky.
move your feet
stretch your hands high
reach the peaks of every branch.
sway into the skies
into the clouds
into the heavens.
Trees are dancers,
awaiting your struts;
Now let your body be.
Listen closely to the drumming,
your blood is nectar
flowing within.
your roots
entangled in the soil
with ancient trees.

Big Brother Bird

Jamie Bosson

Oh Big Brother Bird,
well, haven't you heard.
The world is on fire,
it's getting pretty dire.
While those on top can't help but shop,
Mother Nature feels the strain.
While we line our pockets,
Mother Nature's pain rockets.
They say they're trying their best,
but they only have eyes for the west.
Sitting on their thrones,
with no care for our home.
I'm sorry Big Brother Bird,
for we have failed our earth.



Kingfisher
Moonie Evans

Hidden Gem

Kimberley Van Tonder

Eyes closed, let's take it back to that time
Feel, take it all in
A newly found secret, hidden in plain sight

Just up the street from where we had our gin and tonic
Drowning our sorrows, steps away from being rapt with wonder
Little did we know what awaited us,
A small piece of wilderness, immersed in awe
Senses awaken, fresh rosemary, robins singing, leaves changing, furry fungi,
a taste for new adventures

Suddenly the city felt warm and welcoming
When by the canal, two swans fell in love
Everything must be saved
With this breeze on my hands and neck
I continue to explore, knowing the trees have more stories to tell
As the sun set, I went home fulfilled

Earth.FM

Brenn Phimi

Have you ever heard our mother's pulse?
Those steady beats from her molten heart
Echo outwards across the universe
And arrange into this humble planet's song

Can you feel the energy connecting us all?
Forever flowing so far and wide
Indestructible bonds between every being
Are what set the tempo in the fiesta of life

Somehow with all the words made by man
It's easy to forget there's no need to say a thing
If you want to feel in touch with the world
A little time is the antenna needed to tune in

How often do you really savour the moment?

Getting cosy with Mother Nature

Saharla Gibson



Meeting nature and meeting friends

Saharla Gibson



The day I ate the sun

Rachel Jung

chest-deep in cold water
the colour of vegetable oil, my body submerged,
cut through by the green
rippling ribbon of waves
washing goosebumps up my arms.

a giantess, I walk miles into the sea,
pull in a breath of salt from the
lightning-struck sky and plunge
underwater like an oystercatcher;
the brine makes my teeth buzz.

across the ceiling of my submarine chapel
the shapes of clouds blossom and bleed
pools the pink of birthday champagne
and the wet gold sun catches my eye –

a ripe summer grape, harvest of Bacchus,
it shimmers, gives a quivering wink –
in one sweep it's in my hand,
in one gulp it's down my throat.

my belly burns with the heat of millennia,
the throbbing ache of pounding tides
that turned bones to fossils,
turned fossils to sand.

and the sun glows red through my skin
like a lightbulb wrapped in paper,
my chest its new chrysalis.
the thought of what I've done
sits cloaked in gold behind my ribs
ebbing until it fades and I'm cold again.

Glory Lives

Lauryn Grant

For my grandmothers

In the garden of my childhood home
My grandmother planted laurels
It might have been before I was born or maybe just after
Laurus nobilis for victory, honour, achievement and my name
But rooted here for protection

We may shy away from what has been divinely gifted
But nature has no need for modesty
Pride does not equate to arrogance
Glory lives
Even in hidden green havens in concrete deserts

There were hardy or hummingbird fuchsias
One seeming to flower more than the others
Bursting with promise of potential fulfilled
Reminiscent of birds from another home
A piece of rural Jamaica in North London

Wild mint growing between cracks in the path
Our neighbour's altın çilek creeping over the fence
Sunlight refracting off dew taking its rest on the lawn
My window overlooking hopeful phases of growth

There are some things that time steals from us
One day I'll show the world my heart

Contemplation

Ryan Lee



A simple walk
Ryan Lee



home

Oliver Yu Hurst

This poem embodies a mixture of emotion, environmental science, ecology, art, and storytelling. It is informed by both my academic background in Geography and Critical Political Ecology and personal experiences of dwelling on Earth, our dynamic 'home'. I recommend, if you're able to, to read the poem aloud, at a steady pace, and be as creative as you like in your own imaginations.

home

IMAGINE

you're a cute orange clownfish
or Nemo from that iconic
movie released 20 years ago...

SWIMMING

in your vibrant habitat
in the Great Barrier
Reef along the coast of
Northeast Australia...

Clownfish are
confident and sociable
animals who can even
smell the difference
between friend and foe

Habitats are like the
scientific word for
home. They're as
precious as homes are
for people

So,
What's this got to do
with climate change?

Since the Industrial
Revolution over 200
years ago, carbon
dioxide concentrations
have rocketed from
fossil fuel combustion

Thanks to this, oceans
are now 30% more
acidic

IMAGINE

rising acidity of water means
you're struggling to navigate
the way back home

LOSING

your superpower of
smelling the difference
between friend and foe

Clownfish are one of several species being affected by climate change. Animals are not powerless or passive to change, yet many are vulnerable to extinction

Animals have feelings, deserve to survive and flourish as humans should be able to

So,

What should we not do?

IMAGINE
justifying pollution or biodiversity loss by planting trees or protecting other species elsewhere

I
wouldn't justify destroying my friend's house with construction of another, so why should we do this to Nature?

Environmental offsetting often epitomizes 'malmitigation' and 'maladaptation'

Several forest carbon offsets like in California have already gone up in flames due to extreme weather

Trees also take decades to grow

So,

The time for 'offsetting' was more like 30 years ago!

OF COURSE
planting trees is great...when it is done in the right place

And yes, maintaining biodiverse plantations in the long run is easier said than done

But it goes without saying,
adapting to and mitigating
climate change must never
harm human or morethan-
human well-being

I've outlined some
methods for us to say
goodbye, but wanted to
end my message on a high

Continue reading for
actions that we all can, and
many are already doing,
for rejuvenating our home

EDUCATION

Mother Earth is our ultimate teacher

Be adventurous like Nemo!
walk on Earth's skin bare-footed

Contact your local conservation charity!

Privileged with access to a garden?
Accommodate different habitats – make
a pond, say NO to plastic grass, leave
some areas wild, build a bug hotel

Libraries and the Internet hold
exciting resources on mitigating,
adapting, and sustainably
regenerating Nature...

From permaculture, multispecies
justice, degrowth, well-being,
circular and spiral economy...

To silvopasture, ecological
democracy, agroforestry, queer
ecology, and biocivilisation...

To Indigenous Knowledge, Earth
Spirituality, Jurisprudence, and
Decolonisation...

IMAGINE

the latter paving pathways for
more harmonious, reciprocal,
and resilient futures for all – what
could be a greater benefit?

TOGETHER

we can make 2023 and beyond
the era for all of Earth's species,
beings, and ecosystems

A place where we can all call
home

City Birds of Prey
Apeksha Bhakta



Walthamstow Polaroids





Towers (part 1)

William Wright



Towers (part 2)

William Wright

Great heights from low plains, towers reflected in
themselves, illuminated by a morning sheen

flinging itself across the vast water at great speed, as
damselflies are being plucked by the last of summer's swifts

swooping from the shadowed edge of a chimney, for the
first time and for the last, in these shimmering months.

Dry heat sweeps through scythed meadows, exhaling
damp from the sheltered dewy ground

toads scramble towards the pure water's edge, flitting
with dancing laces of honeywort

flashes of orange and blue, piercing the green at a speed
that cannot be kept up with in the heaviness of day.

All within a second, a blink, the turn of a head and life
has punctured through a rising haze

then stillness, a quiet, breath sinking beneath a canopy,
a mirror found within a shadow

a reflection presented in all knowing and all seeing
brick and mortar, diverging from the heartbeat of the landscape -
but belonging all the same.

Scenes moulded through necessity, giving way to
freedoms, giving way to air

that though is weighty today, will lift from the reeds and
usher in seasons unseen from urban sprawl,

but these towers, these sentinels will feel the blister of
the sun's rays and the bite of winter's frost, as keenly as the branch's ends.

emBODYment of nature

Olivia Augustin



Connections

Olivia Augustin

What is your nature, what is your earth?

For me it can be the spiritual connections

The natural remedies that have been birthed.

You know the remedies, the remedies, the old school remedies,

The ones passed from your grandparents used to get rid of toxins.

From an apple a day keeps a doctor away, to tiger balm or homemade coconut oil on the crown of the head before you lay.

The botany of plants and the roles they play.

Drinking aloe vera and applying it to the skin which acts as an antioxidant

What wonderful properties you can get in such a small plant, or bitters as an antiseptic and more.

The constant cycle of plant replenishment

And the properties which are self-evident

This for me is my nature, it is my earth.

The Weeping Willow

Katie Porter

You lay beneath me, taking solitude in my shade
Life is stagnant, and I await those blissful summer days
In the sweltering heat, gasping berries ooze and burst
Flowers are grotesque in their flamboyant fertility

You wander aimlessly to me.

Yet you know I weep,
Reaching longingly for the cool trickling steam - not just on these summer days.
But the touch is faint and fleeting
I remain unfulfilled.

What am I if not beauty and sadness simultaneously?

So I self-soothe -
Touch myself and whisper gently in the breeze
I make a promise
to shed, to renew, to try again next summer

Lonely Londoner

Aasha Farah

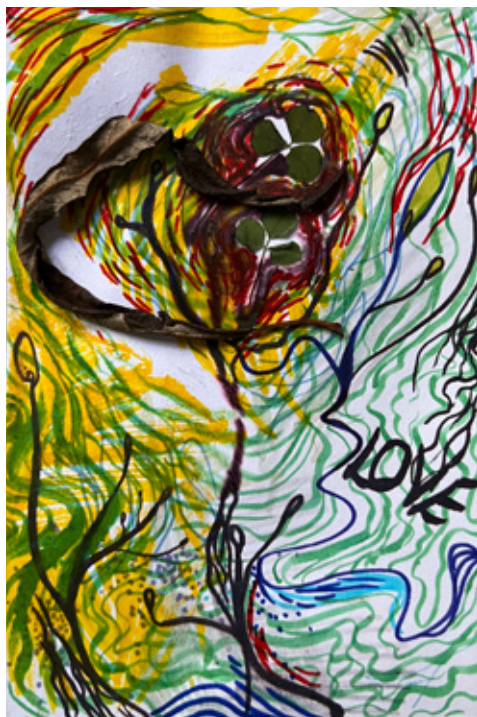


Hampstead Heath
Finley Kamen





Workshop material



"A burglary of magpies"



Shiny objects, shiny objects, where art thou? A ring, a bottle cap, a piece of foil; anything shiny makes me scream "wow!" Like a thief in the night, dressed up in black midnight fur from almost head to toe, my feet go pitter patter and my eyes glint in the moonlight (or sun), I snatch up a shiny object and hide it amongst my nest like a pro.

CROWS CIRCLE SCENES OF CRIMES

VIOLENT SPECIES

BLACK MIDNIGHT FEATHERS

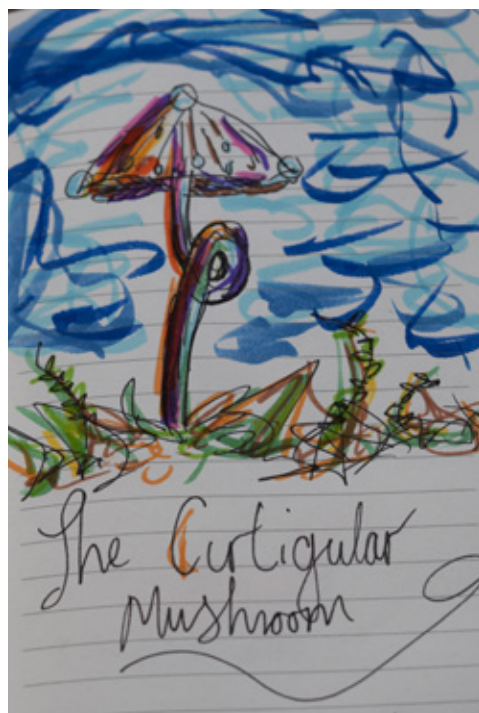
WHY IS A GROUP OF CROWS CALLED A MURDER?

BLOOD BATH

GOthic LITERATURE

MACBETH: "Night's black agents"

OMEN (BAD) FOR DEATH





About the contributors

Aasha Farah is Somali-British and enjoys the peace and solitude nature provides her in such a busy city like London. Her interests also include literature, music and travel.

Apeksha Bhakta is a British-Indian who enjoys learning about the natural world and finds inspiration from nature which is reflected in her creative pieces.

Brenn Phimi is a black, non-binary poet born and raised in North East London. Their work is heavily influenced by the natural which they've adored since early childhood, crossed with the complex array of human emotions and interactions that make up our lives.

Caroline McHardy is a Photographer and writer based in Bromley, Kent. Her photographs and poetry reflect the natural world around her and adventures exploring in local woodlands. She studied BA Hons photography at the University of the Creative Arts in Rochester.

Chrislyn Pereira is a Malaysian creative based in London. Her work currently centres on the serendipity of observation and its use as a proxy for socio-environmental commentary.

Elena Gkrintzou is Greek and enjoys nature and writing. She is inspired by femininity, the relationship between the body and the mind, human nature and Greek mythology.

Finley Kamen is a part-Burmese, part-English, recent graduate of Birkbeck College, having studied climate change. He is a self-taught photographer and musician. His intention in both is to move people by using subject, contrast, tone and harmony. Based in London, he has had work commissioned for environmental- and social-justice platform Ours To Save.

Haneen Thani is an Afro-Arab international student based in London. She enjoys capturing natural scenery, as well as creating Afrocentric art.

Ilisha Thiru Purcell is a poet from Newcastle upon Tyne. She studied English Literature at University College London and her work has appeared in Popshot, Chayn's Creative Hope exhibition and their podcast. She is a member of the collective Brown Girls Write and was featured in their first anthology Sanctuary.

Jamie Bosson is an autistic transgender man who enjoys expressing himself creatively - exploring the connections between identity, class, and climate change.

Katie Porter is an MSc Science Communication student at Imperial College. She studied Zoology for her BSc and loves exploring unique ways to tell environmental stories.

Kimberley Van Tonder has found a way of healing through poetry, that she aims to share with others. By finding a moment of stillness amongst chaos, her work demonstrates there is always light in the darkest of places.

Lauryn Grant is a multi-instrumentalist, writer and creative producer with a passion for community arts, archives and African-Caribbean history. Hailing from North London, she is an alumna of Soho Theatre's Writers' Lab and featured in 'Writing Wrongs' with Donmar Warehouse. @earthlauryn

Luciana Brancato is an artist and passionate conservationist based in South West London. Their art is created eco consciously, capturing and reflecting the beauty they find within nature.

Muayuma Yese is a self-taught Harpist, who has been teaching herself to play the harp for the past 3 years. She has been sharing her harp journey on Instagram @therapywiththeharp, her music journey has flowered into composing and Harp Therapy. Through this anthology she has composed her first melody “Look to the Sky”. Which was inspired by a Nature Nurtures workshop, where she got to reflect on her favourite aspect of nature, the sky.

Moonie Evans is an artist from East London, studying primary education at Durham University.

Oliver Yu Hurst is a Chinese-British, Nature-loving, transdisciplinary scholar and advocate for social, environmental and multispecies justice. Although new to poetry, he is very fond of words, language and stories, and the role of creativity in pursuing worlds where all forms of Nature can flourish.

Olivia Augustin is a proud St Lucian and Jamaican female, born in South London currently a student who has been a part of so many big opportunities from a member of the conference committee for the green influencers 2023, having a tour of ‘global’ to various volunteering placements. She enjoys networking and connecting with people.

Paris Sharples is an autistic woman studying Zoology. The natural world has always captivated her imagination with its beauty and mystery. She expresses her connection with Earth through gothic wildlife illustrations.

Rachel Jung is a Classics student at the University of Oxford. Alongside writing poetry, she enjoys making collages, crochet and swimming. Her work is a mix of the natural and the un-natural. It has been published in the *Animus Classics Journal*, *superfroot*, *Cobra Milk Mag* and more.

Ryan Lee is a Chinese Singaporean photographer currently based in London. Through his photography, he strives to tell stories exploring the space between humans and nature.

Sadatu Futa captures people, places and movements through her lens, and pens. Her poetry has been featured at the V&A x GUAP African Fashion Takeover, Theatre Peckham, Natural History Museum and more. She is a storyteller honouring the past, witnessing the present and reimagining the future.

Saharla Gibson is an avid learner of the world. She enjoys learning languages, new skills and travelling to explore various cultures. She's currently a student at Kingston University London studying Midwifery. In her free time she likes to hike, boulder and attend educational workshops.

William Wright is a photographer and writer based in Hackney, London. In his work, William tries to capture the world around him, with inspiration coming from the links between his rural upbringing and his now city based life. His passion for environmentalism and conservation remains a consistent theme.

Acknowledgements

Spread the Word would like to thank:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports and Arts Council England.

London Wildlife Trust for partnering and hosting us at their centres.

Black Girls Hike and London Youth for partnering with us.

The workshop tutors: Theresa Lola, Melissa Legarda, Woodrow Phoenix, Laura Barker and LiLi K. Bright.

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Aasha Farah, Apeksha Bhakta, Brenn Phimi, Caroline McHardy, Chrislyn Pereira, Elena Gkrintzou, Finley Kamen, Haneen Thani, Ilisha Thiru Purcell, Jamie Bosson, Katie Porter, Kimberley Van Tonder, Lauryn Grant, Luciana Brancato, Muayuma Yese, Moonie Evans, Oliver Yu Hurst, Olivia Augustin, Paris Sharples, Rachel Jung, Ryan Lee, Sadatu Futa, Saharla Gibson, and William Wright.

Cover photograph by Ryan Lee.

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About Nature Nurtures

Nature Nurtures is a cross-sector project led by **London Wildlife Trust** with partners **Spread the Word**, **Black Girls Hike CIC** and **London Youth**. The project aims to host a variety of exciting opportunities for young people that link natural heritage with creative arts to get more young people volunteering and taking action for nature through practical conservation and creative expression.

Nature Nurtures does this by hosting meetups for young people (aged 16-25) to allow them to join an inclusive collective of new friends, support each other's wellbeing whilst reconnecting with their sense of play, curiosity and wonder in the natural world.

Specifically, this project focuses on young people from Black, Asian, and minoritised ethnic heritage, young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and those who live in socio-economically disadvantaged areas of London.


Nature Nurtures is supported by funds awarded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports, via the Volunteering Futures Fund distributed by Arts Council England.

About London Wildlife Trust

London Wildlife Trust is dedicated to protecting, conserving and enhancing the capital's wildlife and wild spaces. Our vision is of a London alive with nature, where everyone can experience and enjoy wildlife. Founded in 1981, the Trust manages 37 free-to-access nature reserves across the capital and engages with London's diverse communities through practical land management, campaigning, volunteering and education in order to give London's wildlife a voice. They work with many partners to advocate for a city richer in biodiversity and ecological resilience, through policy, planning and best practice. The Trust is one of 46 Wildlife Trusts working across the UK, with the support of over 800,000 members and 40,000 volunteers, to make local areas wilder and make nature part of life, for everyone.

 www.wildlondon.org.uk

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About Spread the Word

Spread the Word is London's literature development agency, a charity and a National Portfolio client of Arts Council England. It is funded to help London's writers make their mark on the page, the screen and in the world and build strategic partnerships to foster a literature ecology which reflects the cultural diversity of contemporary Britain.

Spread the Word has a national and international reputation for initiating change-making research and developing programmes for writers that have equity and social justice at their heart. In 2020 it launched *Rethinking 'Diversity' in Publishing* by Dr Anamik Saha and Dr Sandra van Lente, Goldsmiths, University of London, in partnership with *The Bookseller* and Words of Colour. Working with CRIPTic Arts in 2022 they published the *Access to Literature* report, which presented the first national picture of the barriers deaf and disabled writers, creative producers and audiences experience in accessing the literature and publishing sectors.

Their London Writers Awards programme was cited as an example of 'what works' to improve equity, diversity and inclusion in the creative sector in the APPG for Creative Diversity's Creative Majority report¹ and their Early Career Bursaries for low income writers won the 2022 Achatas Philanthropy Prize for Individual Giving. Spread the Word's programmes also include: Nature Nurtures, CRIPTic Arts x Spread the Word Salon, Runaways and the Deptford Literature Festival.

 spreadtheword.org.uk

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¹ Wreyford, N, O'Brien, D, and Dent, T (2021). Creative Majority: An APPG for Creative Diversity report on 'What Works' to support, encourage and improve diversity, equity and inclusion in the creative sector. A report for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Creative Diversity. Accessed here: www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/projects/creative-majority

About Black Girls Hike

Black Girls Hike UK provides a safe space for Black women to explore the outdoors. Challenging the status quo, and encouraging black women to reconnect with nature, we host nationwide group hikes, outdoor activity days and training events.

Our values are focused on Building Community, Development, Education, Inclusion, Diversity.

BGH develops projects and collaborations with a wide range of organisations working across the outdoor and conservation sector to increase the participation and development of black women and diverse young people, offering opportunities to engage in the natural world. Working with the wider outdoor industry to meet the needs of its diverse community, BGH tackles the lack of inclusion and representation in green spaces both nationally and internationally.

 bghuk.com

 [@UkBgh](https://twitter.com/UkBgh)

 [@bgh_uk](https://www.instagram.com/bgh_uk)

 [@bghmcr](https://www.facebook.com/bghmcr)

About London Youth

London Youth is a charity on a mission to support the capital's youth sector to improve the lives of young people. They do this with and through their members – a network of 600 youth organisations – and at their two outdoor residential centres, Hindleap Warren and Woodrow High House.

Throughout London Youth's 135-year history, community youth organisations have provided a constant lifeline and a vital safe space outside the family and formal education, where young people can develop confidence, resilience and skills. Young people need opportunities outside school to have fun with their friends, to make a positive change in their communities and to shape the city they live in.

London Youth looks to work with all young people, focusing particularly on those who wouldn't otherwise have access to the kind of opportunities they offer.

Last year, London Youth worked with 28,100 young people through their sports development, employability, youth action and involvement, mental health, arts and outdoor education programmes. Their member network supported over 601,000 young Londoners. They delivered 133 training sessions to over 1,000 youth professionals.

London Youth's vision is that all young Londoners grow up healthy and able to express themselves, navigate a fulfilling career and make a positive contribution in their communities.

 londonyouth.org

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In the summer of 2022 London Wildlife Trust launched the Nature Nurtures collaboration with Spread the Word, Black Girls Hike CIC and London Youth. The goal of the project is to grow a community of young people aged 16-25 who share a passion for exploring nature through the lens of illustration, photography, creative writing and practical conservation.

Over twelve months 125 young people have taken part in meet ups, workshops and hikes across London Wildlife Trust sites. In this anthology we have collected the best of their work created in the workshops and through an open call.

We hope you enjoy the anthology. If you'd like to find out more about one or more of the contributors, please email:

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Supported using public funding by

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