

EMME

vol. 2 iss.2

bloom



1 Openers

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Volume 2, Issue 2

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Emic Updates

Emic has three new staff members this semester. We are so excited to welcome Del, Gabrielle, and Lizzy to the team!!

We recently held our first event of the semester. We spent the evening in Turlington creating black-out poetry, eating snacks, and enjoying some incredible home-made chai (courtesy of Del)! We're looking forward to holding many more events soon, so keep your eye out!

Emic is also currently recruiting for a student to help run our social media. The social media manager can choose whether they wish to participate in the class/credit format.

Contact emicmag@gmail.com or esides@ufl.edu if you're interested in applying.

UF Anthropology is offering a new field school in Gainesville this Summer A! This course will explore all different subfields of anthropology through applied lessons and collaborations with the Florida Museum, CAPHIL, and GRACE Marketplace. This is an amazing opportunity to explore different pathways in anthropology and learn some new skills! More information will be coming soon, but reach out to m.sudcharoen@ufl.edu if you want to learn more. Additionally, the Honor Thesis Slam will be held on Tuesday, April 23rd. Be there at 1pm to in TUR1208 to hear graduating Anthropology seniors share about their research!



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

When we chose *Bloom* as the theme for this issue, our initial vision lent itself to florals and a sunset palette—a venerable springtime oasis stretched across a magazine. As this issue entered production, we felt unsatisfied with this direction and decided to go back to the drawing board. We found new inspiration in TreeTender, which inspired many of the design elements you will see throughout *Bloom*.

In this issue, I wanted to do more than just speak about the Tree of Life—I wanted to find some way to show it. So, that's where *Bloom* will begin. This issue opens with the "Tree of Life (Roots)." In living plants, roots serve as anchors. They are water and nutrient sources, literally tethering the plant to the earth. In the Tree of Life, roots can symbolize the ties between the domains of life and their evolutionary origins. These roots connect every extant and extinct being on this planet back to our shared common ancestor; this is our anchor. The issue ends with the "Tree of Life (Shoots)," representing the new growth and biodiversity that will continue branching off from the Tree of Life forever.

As you zoom out and look around, you realize just how big this world is. From the smallest, tiniest prokaryote to the blue whale; from the coral at the very bottom of the ocean to the pines spattering the breadth of a mountaintop; from the moss blanketing a bog to the zipping mosquitoes that bit you at summer camp; from the vultures circling landfills to your next-door neighbor knocking on the door because he's out of flour—we are all connected. The Tree of Life is the thread that connects every living organism on this planet.

Humans make up such a small part of this planet's biodiversity, yet we hold the most power when it comes to conserving and maintaining it. It's easy to get caught in a cycle of doubt, fear, and anger when hearing about the harm that we cause through pollution and deforestation. Still, our relationship with the natural world is so special, and we want to highlight some of the beauty in those human interactions with nature. I think it is important to share why it matters that we keep fighting for this, too. We need to stay hopeful. Everyone has the power to make a change.

Thank you for continuing to support *Emic*. Let's all do our part to protect our home—for the future, and for each other.

Sacha Sides
Editor-in-Chief
Emic Magazine

Introductions



Editor-in-Chief

Sacha is a 3rd year Anthropology major at UF. He is interested in studying primate anatomy, and serves as the editor-in-chief for *Emic*. In his free time, Sacha enjoys embroidery, reading, video games, and digital art.

Page Layout/Design

Del is a 2nd year graphic design major at UF. They are interested in the role of design as a bridge between art and communication, and they are one of the graphic designers for *Emic*. In their free time, Del gardens, writes, sews, and home brews chai.



Editing/Design

Theo is an English Editing Writing and Media major at FSU. On *Emic*, they help with look development and layout. Outside of magazine duties, they can be found geeking out on cars, cooking, cartoons, or cameras.



Design and Social Media Manager

Julia is a senior at UF working her way towards a BA in digital arts and sciences. She is a part of the design team and works hard to utilize her knowledge of 2D art to make the zine look great.

Editor

Lizzy is a 2nd year Anthro and Education Sciences major at UF. She's interested in exploring how museum education can promote educational equity and serves as an editor for *Emic*. She loves spending her time reading, doing research, geeking out in museums, and dancing.



Page Layout/Design

Gabrielle is a senior at the University of Florida majoring in Digital Arts and Sciences. She is interested in game design and development and is a part of the *Emic* design team. She enjoys art, musical theater, video games, and baking in her free time.



Page Layout/Design

Adriana is a senior majoring in anthropology and minoring in FYCS at the University of Florida. Her current research focuses on health equity and how power is exercised within healthcare institutions. She currently works on the *Emic* design team. Outside of *Emic*, Adriana fences epee as part of Florida Fencing and enjoys crocheting, cooking, and game nights.





fig 1. The Tree of Life

The tree of life represents the evolutionary relationships connecting all living beings. When looking at the breadth of such a complex tapestry, it makes us wonder: What does it mean to be human?

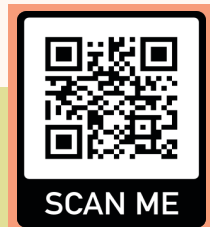
Tree Tender

Summary

Tree Tender is a multidisciplinary project that combines science and animation in a series of two short films: Tree Tender, the Original and Tree Tender II. The project is a unique collaboration between the UF Digital Worlds Institute, UF Biodiversity Institute, and the Florida Museum of Natural History in a collective effort to engage the public in science communication through art.

In both short films, the Tree of Life is a physical manifestation of the ties that bind all living organisms, including humans, on Earth. It demonstrates our interconnectedness through both phylogenetic and environmental relationships. The first film—Tree Tender, the Original—follows Gaia, a young woman who is tasked with protecting the Tree of Life and global biodiversity. Tree Tender II explores Gaia's complex emotions and her experience grappling with them while trying to fulfill such immense responsibilities. The film reinforces the message that even when it's overwhelming, we can all do something small to make big changes. We can still protect Earth's biodiversity.

Scan the QR Code to watch TreeTender 2!
For more information visit <https://www.treetender.org/>



Soltis Lab

We had the chance to speak to Dr. Pam Soltis and Dr. Doug Soltis from the Florida Museum of Natural History about their role in the creation of the Tree Tender films and their work in science communication and outreach. Their research examines the evolutionary relationships, genomics, and systematics of flowering plants. Drs. Soltis have been involved in outreach through the Florida Museum long before Tree Tender; they have also initiated other projects, such as the McCarty Woods Restoration and an interactive art installation titled One Tree, One Planet. Each project emphasizes the Tree of Life as the “family tree of all living organisms”—illustrating the ways in which humans are related to everything else on the planet. They hope that through their work in making science communicable, they can raise public consciousness on how we can (and therefore, should) play a large role in protecting Earth’s biodiversity.

Inspiration for the Tree Tender films came from the Soltis’ introduction to projection-based art as a medium for storytelling and public education. They understood the importance of scientists communicating their work—both as an ethical obligation to taxpayers and a critical component of increasing public perception of science—and sought ways in which they could effectively convey such a large and complex topic, like the Tree of Life. Recognizing the need for visuals and imagery, they contacted Naziha Mestaou, the artist and architect known for using immersive, projection-based tools to convey meaning. This led to the development of the One Tree, One Planet project, which projected interactive artwork of the Tree of Life onto buildings and monuments to

express how humans are connected to their natural landscape.

After the success of this original project and feeling emboldened by the power of art and storytelling in science communication, Drs. Soltis reached out to the animation team at the UF Digital Worlds Institute. They wanted to continue spreading this message along with a call to action to protect Earth’s biodiversity. The Digital Worlds Institute responded with enthusiasm about the idea, and the collective team began a project on turning these aims into an animated short film. Thus, Tree Tender came to fruition and was even so successful as to have a sequel: Tree Tender II. The sequel was not originally planned, but it arose from a greater need for an updated message. “And it was fun!” Dr. Pam and Dr. Doug Soltis shared. “We liked it, let’s do another one!”

After overcoming financial and grant-funding obstacles along the way, the team premiered the second Tree Tender at the Florida Museum of Natural History on January 25, 2024. Drs. Soltis hope that viewers of both films will understand the impact that one person has on conserving the world around us. “Everything is connected, for good or for bad”—we can all make a difference.

“Together, [we] can have a big impact, and we can have hope.”



From left to right: (Dr.) Ryan Folk, (Dr.) Vaughan James, (Dr.) Robert Guralnick, Professor Darius Brown, (Dr.) Doug Soltis, (Dr.) Pam Soltis

Interview with Professor Darius Brown

Q: How many people were on the design team for the TreeTender films, and what were their roles?

A: We had a team of about six or seven faculty members. Aaron Karlson was a major part of character development and 3D animation, [and a major part] of the character Gaia. Professor O’Connor helped to build and craft a story, and bounced that story to Miss Cantrell, who specializes in storyboarding and layout design, to make sure the shots are laid out properly. Professor Seung Hyuk Jang worked on CAaLVIN, the robot, and the new AI character. Then, I would take the work that everybody’s created and crafted, and build that in Unreal Engine.

Q: What was the design process for the film?

A: At the early start of the concept [phase] and pre-production phase, [we] would be communicating with the team weekly, sometimes twice a week, saying, “Hey, what’s the story? How are we going to get this story across?” We spent a lot of time on the story. After that, we split into our roles, and I would check in with each department. I would work my rounds and make sure everybody was having a good time developing their ideas. We would then meet and share those ideas—some of them stuck, and some of them didn’t. Some of them spawned new ideas that no one was thinking of, and that cycle just kept going throughout the two-year period. Closer to the end, it was kind of just me polishing things and editing.

Q: How was it working with Unreal Engine for the film?

A: It was fantastic! I loved it. It took about a week for me to realize how natural I was at this. I learned that understanding practical tools, like real cameras in the real world—all the components, and why they work—is useful in Unreal because it also has a virtual camera and uses the same language. And it’s such a realistic tool, with great accuracy for how things operate in real life.

Q: What would you want your viewers to take away from the film?

A: I want them to take away the power of digital storytelling and the power of teamwork. As far as the story goes, hopefully they can see themselves in Gaia’s character [and] feel that responsibility and trust in themselves—that there is something they can do. Hopefully, that’s the takeaway: that people can connect with the character. [You can] understand that this character is overwhelmed, and so are you, but we can lean on each other to accomplish our goals.

Q: How did you get involved in the TreeTender project?

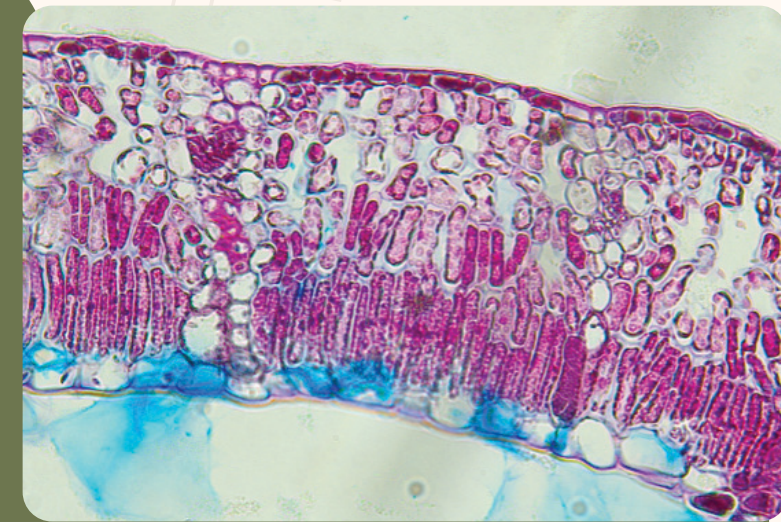
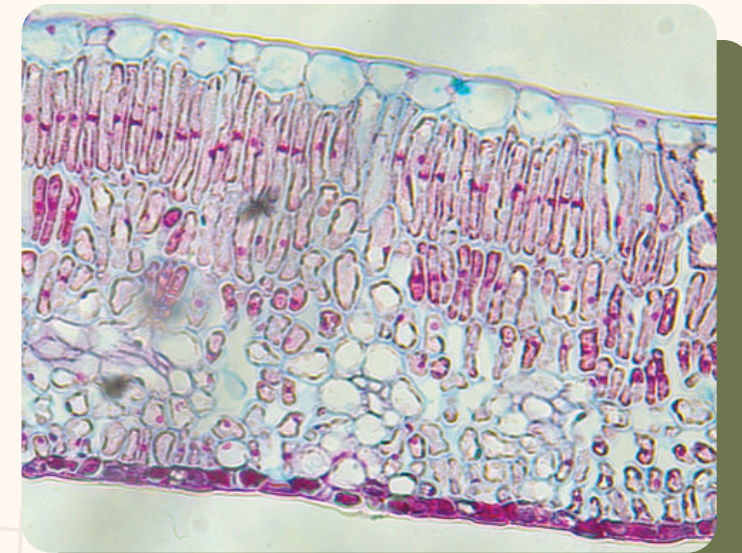
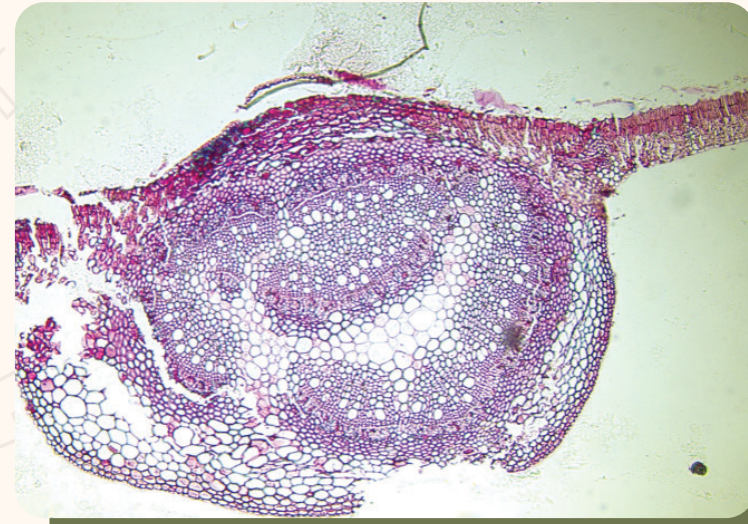
Well, my story is unique and different from that of all the other instructors. They were hired from the beginning because their skill set aligned with a 3D animated film. I’m more video production-based, so I kind of came in just to research B-roll to put in the film. I was [only] going to be working on it for a day or two. So, I did my job, and then they really liked the B-roll! I had to inquire and research a lot with the client [during] that period, and they asked for some motion graphics, so I worked on that. And they really liked it. That ended up turning into me not really being on a team, [but] joining the meetings, running the meetings, and then, like, 60% of the film ended up being my motion graphics and storytelling.

Q: When you were working on this film, what was one of the biggest hurdles that you or the team faced?

A: The biggest hurdle, other than the technical change from Unreal Engine, is that trust factor. I think having that new tool can sometimes shake up the trust between the team, [especially] when you’re asked to do new things. New things might mean changing roles from what we had in TreeTender 1. I think there was a lot of shifting as some people got new responsibilities, [and other] people lost the responsibilities that they may have been emotionally attached to. Once we got over that hump, we just started enjoying the process of moving through. My personal challenge was the passing of my brother. Being able to come to work every day, trying to stay motivated, and just trying to dedicate the film to him. Trying to keep that out of everybody else’s workload, and [the] anxieties that were there, too.

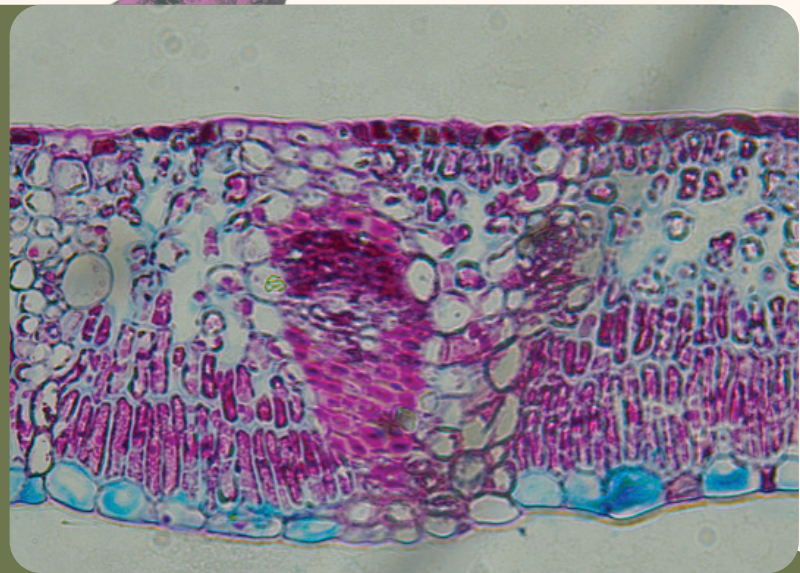
Q: Will there be a TreeTender 3?

A: Well, TreeTender 3 has definitely been a catchphrase since the premiere. I would love for there to be another film. I think students enjoyed it and [also] enjoyed being a part of making it. We all want it to happen, but there’s a lot of behind-the-scenes work and logistics to make that happen—budget, time, and getting grant money. If anything is possible for TreeTender 3, then it could be an interactive film, since we’re already in the game engine. We would want people to have more say in their story and in the world of biodiversity. [With] the technology explosion, [the direction] the market is seemingly going in with VR, and the fact that we already built it in a game engine, it’s kind of like, “Why not?” So, the best way to put it is that if there is a TreeTender 3, it will be an experience.



Looking at Leaf Layers

Penelope Planet

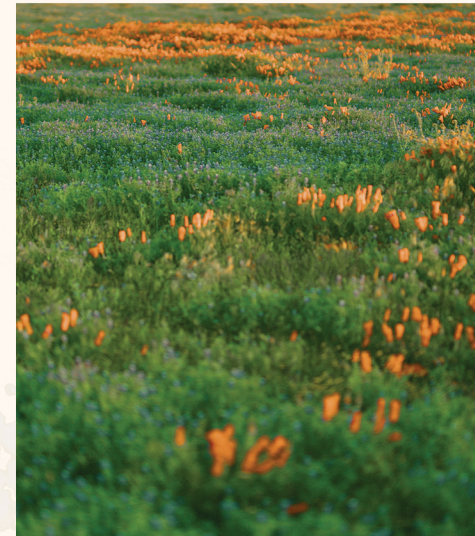




Farmhouse

Day Halter

I miss you the way a mill dog misses its mother:
like a faraway sound, like a distant star, like a
tangle of loss without any word to describe itself,
any word even for its conception, nothing but a
cool absence of breath in the night, noticeable
only by one, tail tucked between his legs, mouth
open to catch the last of the scent.



Fragility

Amanda DeRosa

Small, dotted flowers
mixed with potted dirt
Green grass swaying
only relaying sun,
untouched yet retouched
engaging oncomers.
They, painted perfectly by fairies
and canaries,
Their eggs fall, abandoned
and berries lay beside
the softly dewed sidewalk.

Gainesville, FL

Farmers Markets

Haile Farmers Market

🕒 Saturdays 8:30 am to 12:00 pm

📍 5213 SW 91st Terrace, Gainesville, FL



Grove Street Farmers Market

🕒 Mondays 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

📍 Cypress&Grove Brewery/Bike Path, 1001 NW 4th St, Gainesville, FL



Moo Market

🕒 1st Sunday of the Month 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm

📍 Critter Creek Farm Sanctuary, 12626 NW Co Rd 231, Gainesville, FL



PLUCKED PLUCKED PLUCKED PLUCKED PLUCKED

By Didi Elkhayat

What if it was you? What if it was only you?

Plucked explores the human form and self-destruction under the pressure of expectations. This piece seeks to encapsulate the disfigurement and loss of self in attempts to hold up impossible standards placed on you by others and the action of turning those feelings inward while searching for something to blame for your failures. The use of feathers strives to be reminiscent of a fallen angel figure, with black talons and plucked wings. It begs the question: was your fall from grace unavoidable for someone like you?

Vibrant Africa



The Harn Museum of Art came to life on Thursday, February 8th during its celebration of Black History Month. Vibrant Africa, a Museum Nights event, welcomed dancers, musicians, and spoken word artists into the museum in a series of performances and artistic presentations interspersed throughout the galleries. Museum guests had the opportunity to witness musical performances by Kenneth Metzler, Rachel McCallum, Wester Joseph, and the UF Agbedi-Ensemble as well as spoken word performances by Evan Pemba and Rutendo Denise Mutsamwira. The Harn's Museum University Student Educators (MUSEs) also curated hands-on activities and a passport-based checklist for guests to engage with their own creativity, which was inspired by African art on display in the museum. For information about future Museum Nights events, check out <https://harn.ufl.edu/museum-nights/>.



The Enigma in the Coffee Shop

This experimental ethnography explores what it means to be human in different environments through a series of observations gathered in a natural and urban environment.

On a Sunday morning at 7:00 am, I find myself trudging to the Opus Coffee shop located in the Innovation District. The shop is barren when I arrive, allowing me to snag a seat at a high-top table at which I anticipate spending the next five hours feigning academic prowess against a backdrop of espresso machines and Lana's alluring vocal fry. After several attempts to plow through a less-than-fascinating article for class, I succumb to my favorite past-time: people watching. Or, in more technical terms, anthropological ethnography. Or, in simpler terms, just people watching.

I feel devious is my attempt to infiltrate the sanctity that I categorize as college coffee shop culture. As I observe those around me, I smirk gleefully, an imposter furiously typing away at her dimmed laptop screen about the motions, mannerisms, and actions I observe. Yet the dramatic irony of this narrator-character dichotomy I create is that I am blissfully aware that I hold the power to construct your innermost thoughts into words on a page for others to consume, while you remain naïve in your isolated, concealed disposition. This is perhaps the

very nature of coffee shop culture. Together in forced proximity. Alone in a whirlwind of hydro flasks, iPads, laptops, and twenty-word latte orders. United and severed by an urban landscape.

If you've ever been in the Opus Coffee shop in the Innovation District at 11:00 am on a Sunday morning, you'll know that in Hour 4 of my observations I see a person walk into the coffee shop, carrying a frumpy black backpack and a garbage bag from which they remove a series of paper packets and magazines. You'll know that when they walk in, they walk directly towards the back of the shop to plug their phone charger and a white wireless headphone case into an outlet near the restroom. And you'll know that their head is adorned with a large, colorful balloon hat. I call this person my balloon-hat friend.

They take a seat at a round table where a student is furiously pouring over Study Edge notes. The student looks up, annoyance smeared across their face as they proceed to hastily pack their things and leave the building. A family dressed in expensive-looking shoes and clothing can't stop staring. An employee walks by, musters a tight smile, and abandons this façade as

soon as they reach the service counter. My friend in the balloon hat seems unphased. In my observations, I find myself dumbfounded by people's uncanny bafflement with the unorthodox, yet I cannot say that I reacted any differently last year on the Sunday at 11:00 am when my balloon-hat friend first entered my life.

In the year and a half that I've known of this beautiful enigma of a human being, I've never mustered the courage to say hello. I've written sonnets about this person's life within my caffeine-infused brain, a masterful odyssey of social inequalities, systemic barriers, and the triumph of optimism in the face of it all. Yet I am bound by the cold, harsh landscape in which I reside, a space built to inspire meaningful connection that we as a collective culture have

diluted to a simple arrangement of chairs and tables. I just exist in this person's presence, cold as the cement floor on bare feet, indifferent as the colorless walls around me. I can't say for certain that I'll ever say hello to my balloon-hat friend. Perhaps in the outdoor world where I'm surrounded by the serenity of nature, inspired by the warmth of a friendly passerby along a winding walking trail, filled with a sunbeam permeating my epidermis. Outside, I know I can escape the restrictions of whatever social constructs dictate my behavior within the coffee shop, and a friendship could bloom in parallel to the morning flowers turning their faces towards the sky.

But I am not outside, so I do not engage. Instead, I retreat to my laptop screen, writing this piece in an attempt to understand why my human existence is so determined by the landscape I inhabit.



Red Ruffed Lemur

The primate of this issue is the red ruffed lemur, also known as *Varecia rubra*! The red ruffed lemur is one of two species in the genus *Varecia*, alongside its grayscale counterpart, the black-and-white ruffed lemur. *Varecia* are the largest quadrupedal lemurs, and they love to spend their time climbing among the trees and grooming one another. Ruffed lemurs typically park their infants in nests while foraging, whereas most lemurs carry their young on their stomachs or backs. Additionally, red ruffed lemurs are amazing pollinators! They are the most frugivorous lemurs, and they love consuming nectar. As they feed on flowering plants, the pollen sticks to their snouts, allowing them to inadvertently pollinate their habitats as they move from plant to plant.



Daisies, Around 10/2/23

Ryn Acker

How do I write a poem about something that is already poetry?
 When the inadequacy knots up my thoughts:
 You speak in colors
 I speak in black, accented only to write "omit"
 In a red
 Duller than the darkest part of you
 Who are opening
 While I close my book whenever someone walks by,
 And I feel my stomach twisting
 From bitterness, crumpling like paper, folding in
 As you stand taller
 Weathering the breeze that makes me shiver
 And run inside.

How do I write a poem about something that is already poetry?
 When the word itself is enough to send shudders:
 The flower, the song,
 And why do I write when I feel the world beats me
 At every turn
 Reminding me soft and sweet, with the taste of a peach:
 You Could Never
 Make Anything Better Than The Wind Which Draws Smoke Through The Daisies
 Singing All Along
 ~you've got to walk, you've got to walk, you've got to walk there by yourself~
 With the sublime whisper
 Of spirits calling.

How do I write a poem about something that is already poetry?
 When I can't even see the fire that gets the smoke in my eyes,
 I just feel the tears welling up,
 See the hazy flowers distorted in water, unrelenting,
 If bothered at all,
 In their blooming.

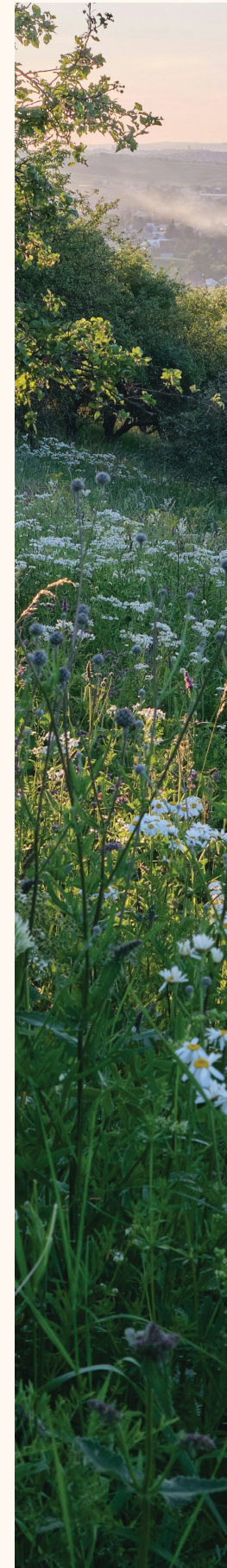




fig 2. Homo sapiens

The relationship that humans share with the world around us is so valuable—our cultural and biological evolution has long depended on it.

The agricultural revolution enabled the establishment of settled communities, giving us an environment in which families could thrive. We've learned to nurture plant life on farms and in backyard gardens, and rely on these natural resources for use in food, clothing, and essential products.

We—since the first 'handy man'—have used materials found in the world around us to create, from cobbling the first Oldowan tool to building supercomputers. We form bonds with the animals around us; we let our cats and dogs sleep in our beds, while we use whale calls to fall asleep and bird songs as alarms in the morning.

We are just one tiny corner of the grand Tree of Life, and it is that interconnectedness that makes the Tree, and us, so special.

issue 3

COSMOSIS



spring 2024
