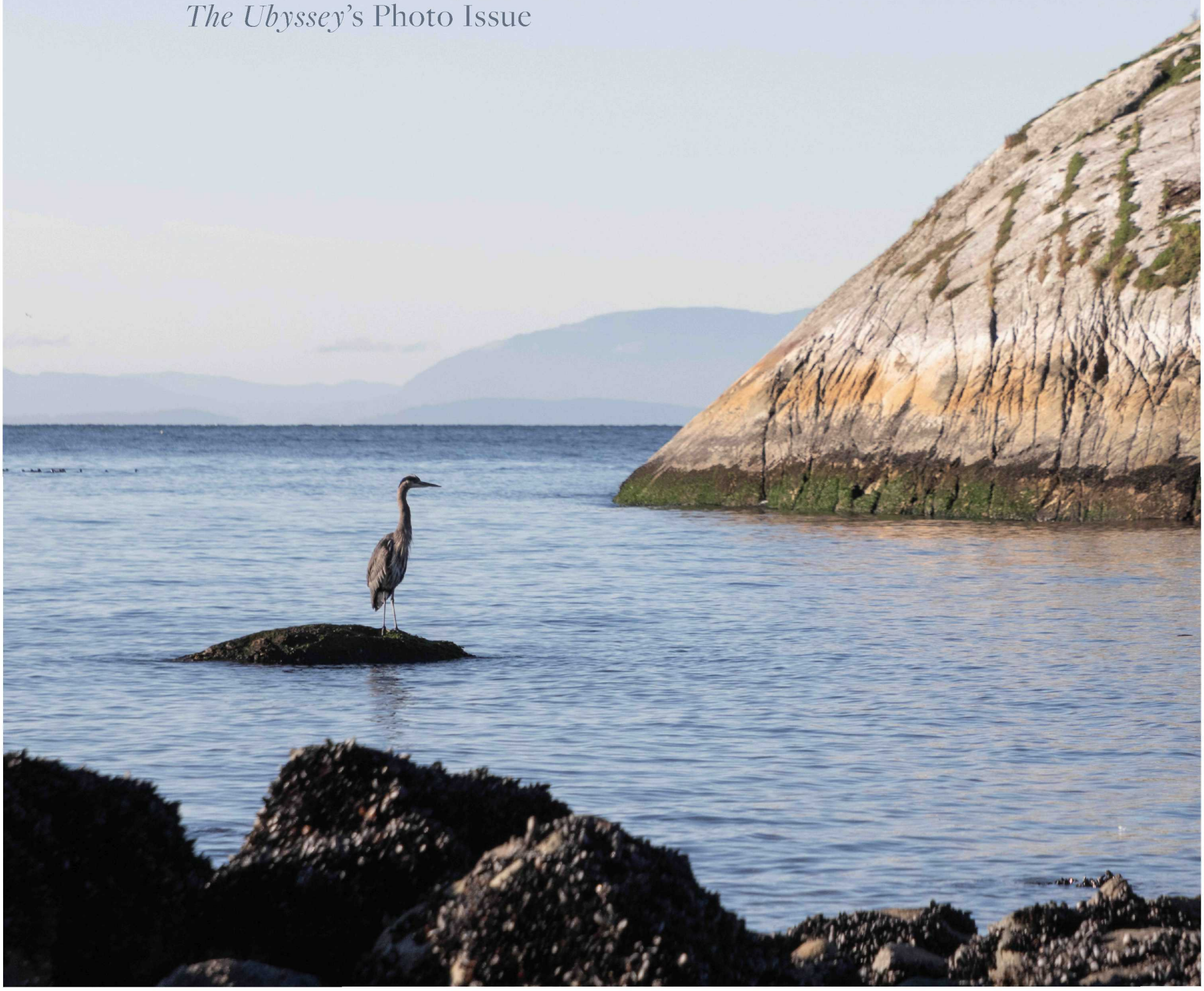
THE UBYSSEY

NOVEMBER 9, 2021 | VOLUME CIII | ISSUE IX
WAITING FOR FALL BREAK SINCE 1918

RESILIENCE

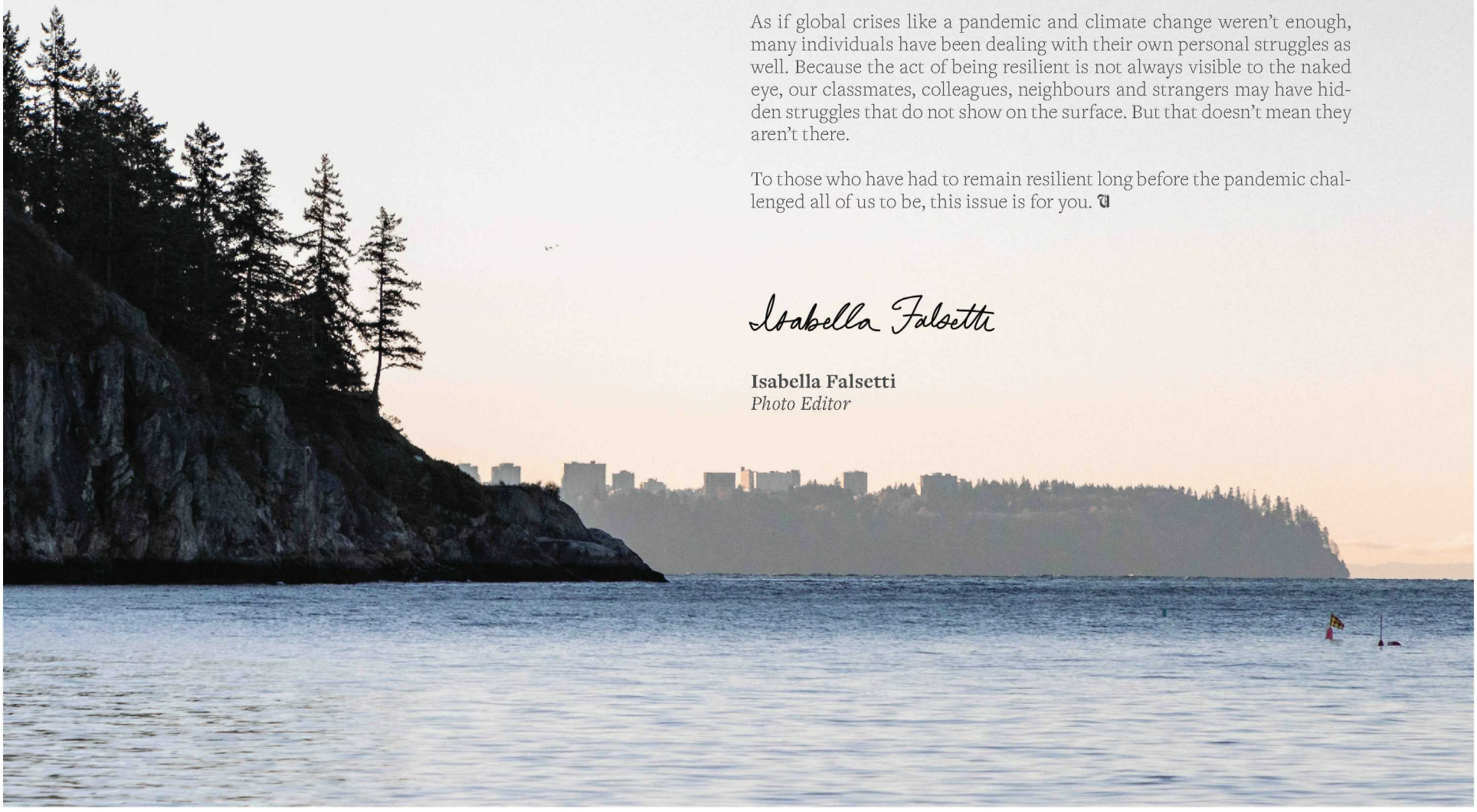
The Ubyssey's Photo Issue



resilience

[ruh·zi·lee·uhns] *noun*

the ability of people or things to feel better quickly after something unpleasant, such as shock, injury, etc.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Resilience looks different for everyone.

For some, it can be beautiful, whether channeled into a new hobby, finding comfort in loved ones or experiencing personal growth. For others, it can be grueling and cause the obstacles of everyday life to become insurmountable.

For many of us, this past year and a half has tested our resilience — often in more ways than one. Sitting through online classes and meetings, being separated from our support networks and living sequestered to our homes for months on end have certainly taken their toll.

As if global crises like a pandemic and climate change weren't enough, many individuals have been dealing with their own personal struggles as well. Because the act of being resilient is not always visible to the naked eye, our classmates, colleagues, neighbours and strangers may have hidden struggles that do not show on the surface. But that doesn't mean they aren't there.

To those who have had to remain resilient long before the pandemic challenged all of us to be, this issue is for you.

Isabella Falsetti

Isabella Falsetti
Photo Editor

THE UBYSSEY

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to acknowledge that we work, learn and operate the paper upon the occupied, traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the **xʷməθkʷəy̓əm** (Musqueam), **Sḵwx̱wú7mesh** (Squamish), **Stó:lō** and **səl̓ilwətaʔɬ/ Selilwitulh** (Tsleil-Waututh).

LEGAL

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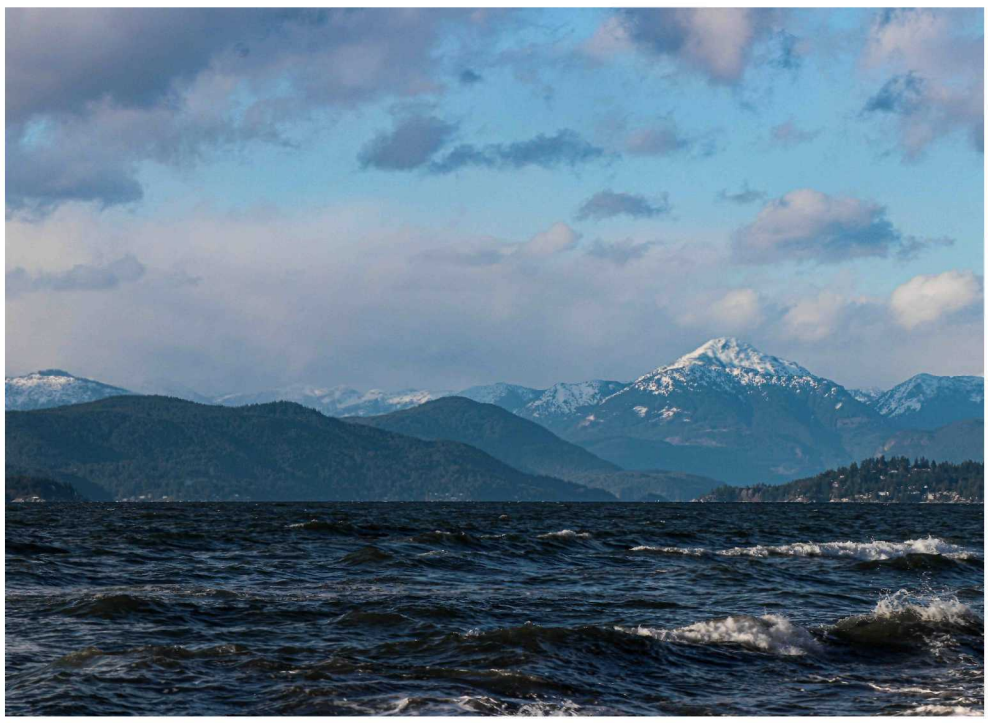
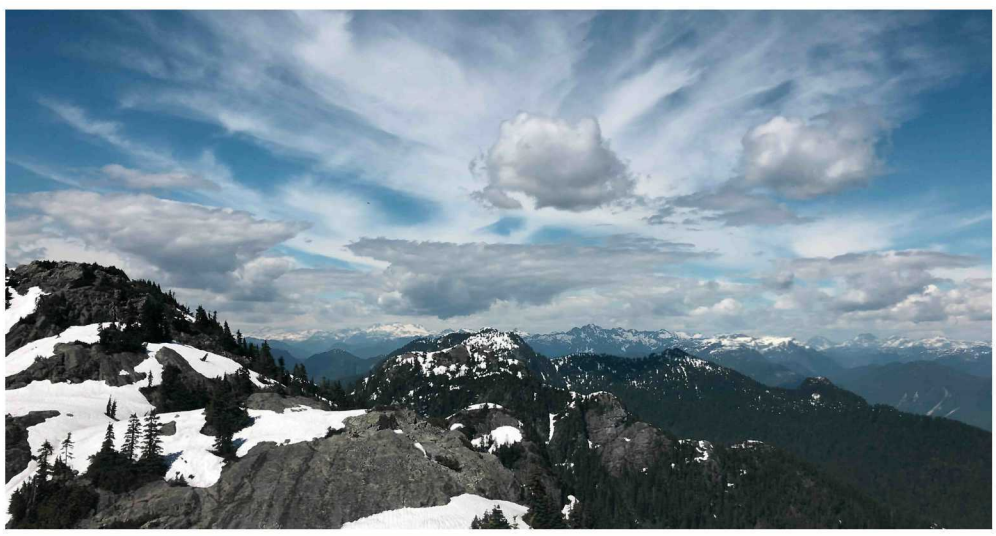
Staying present through scenes from the past

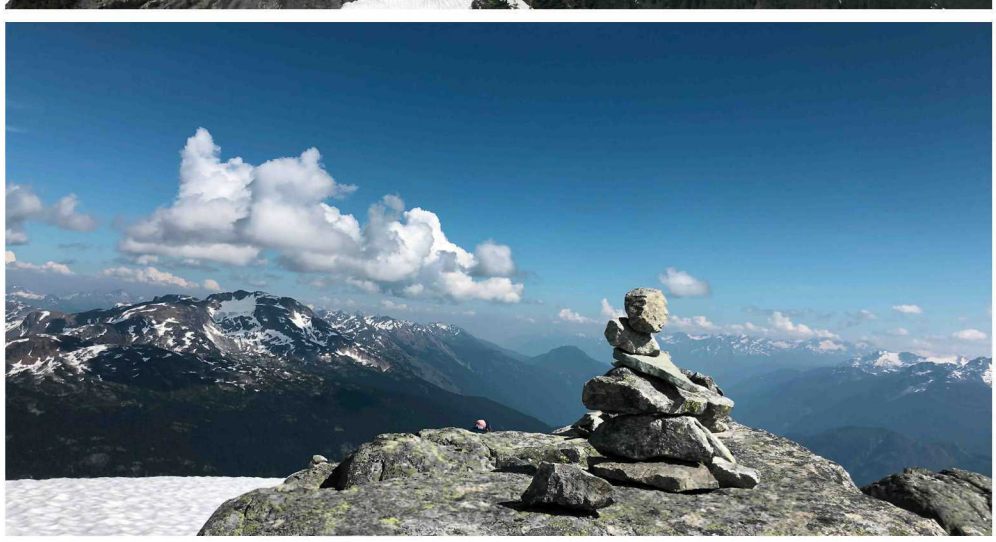
ISABELLA FALSETTI

Photography has the power to preserve not only a memory, but the feelings associated with that memories. Turning to moments captured on camera can help recreate those same feelings to cope with burnout and restlessness, and thus build up resilience to get through the day. For many people, these moments were found in nature. On the following pages are photos taken by students — both before and during the pandemic — that bring them solace in times of languishing.

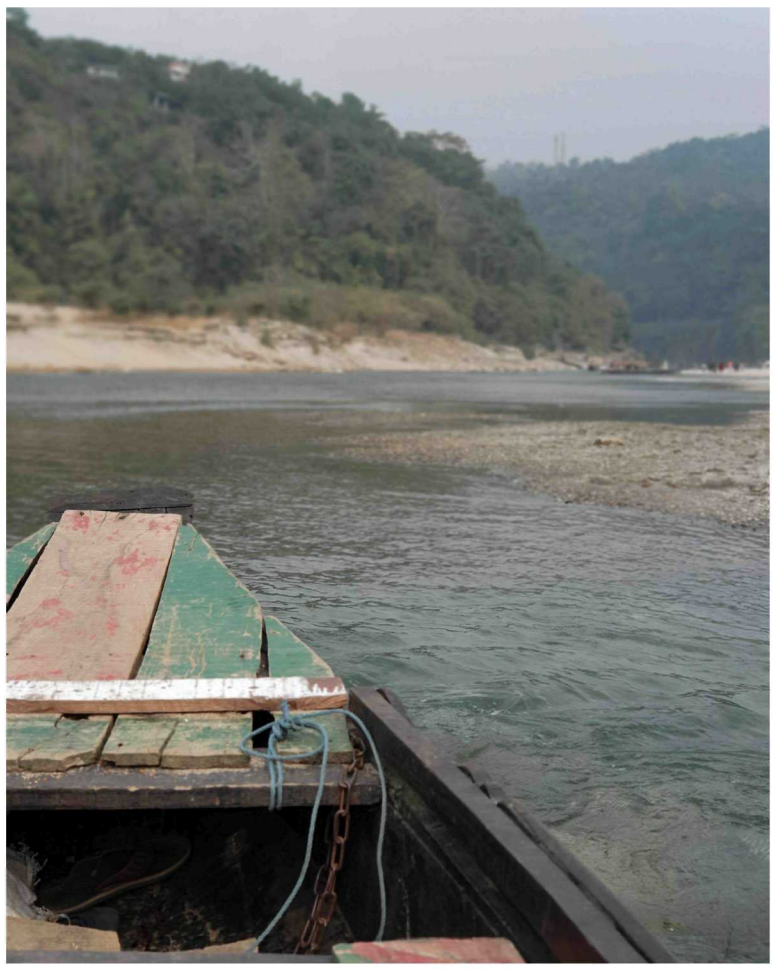


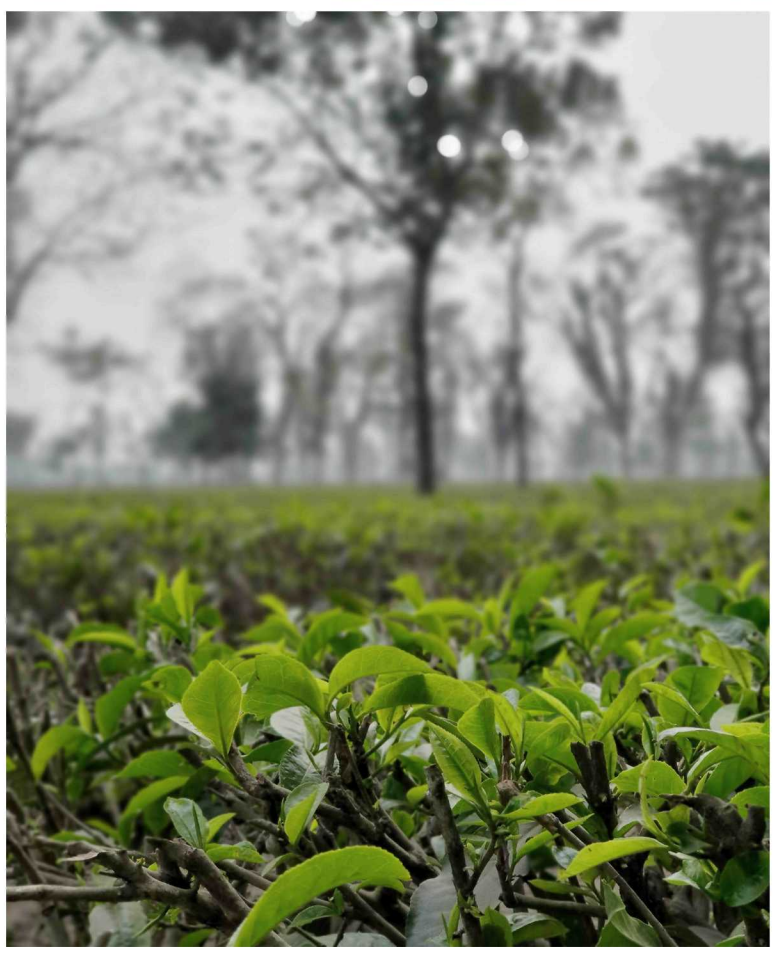
This photo I took of the mountains from Tower Beach in first year (which is also my laptop screensaver) reminded me of Vancouver while I was stuck inside my house. | ***Nathan Bawaan***



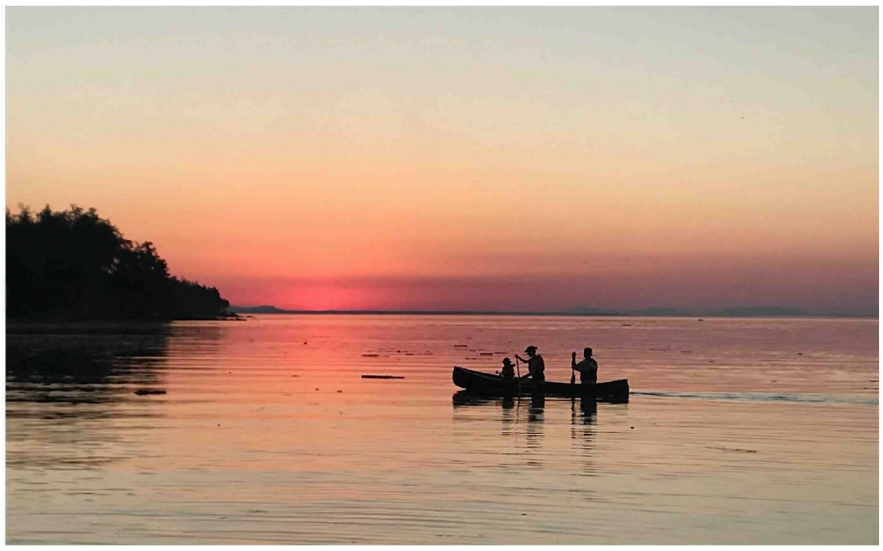


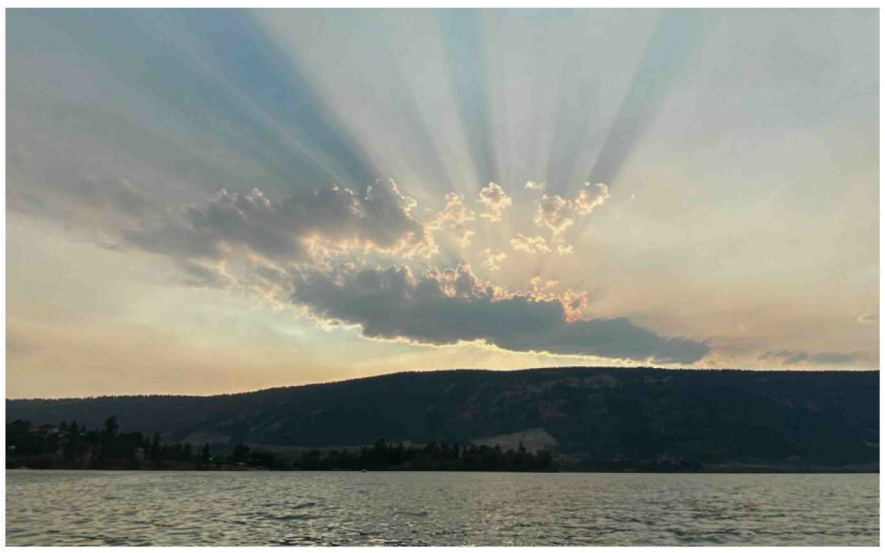
Going into the mountains brought me so much joy and peace over the last year! The first photo (*top*) was taken on Mount Seymour and the other (*bottom*) was taken on top of Locomotive Mountain in the Pemberton Valley. | ***Charlotte Alden***

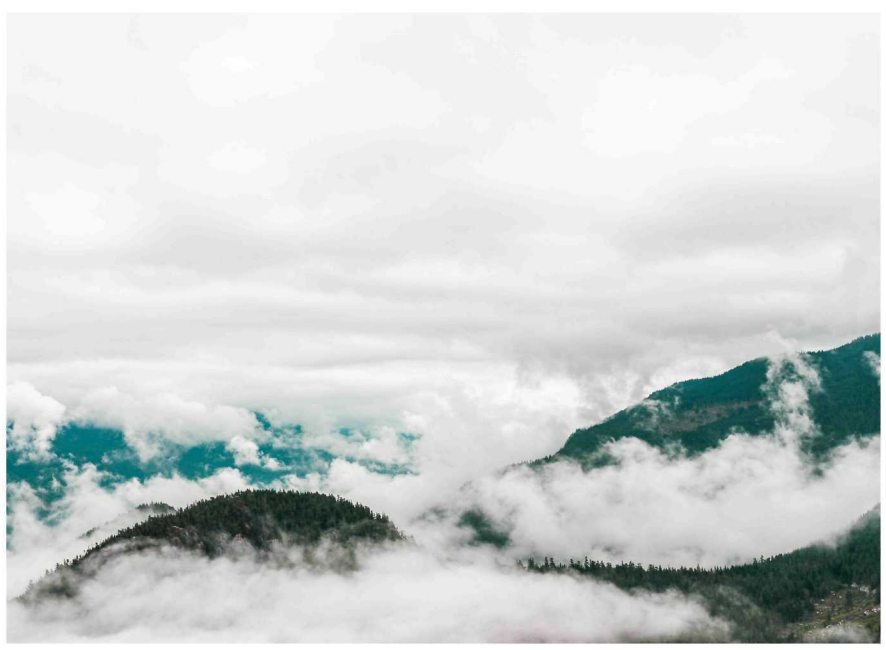




A trip to the countryside really helped me get through the past year, being stuck at home for so long. Both of the pictures were taken in Jaflong, located in the northeastern region of Bangladesh. | ***Mahin E Alam***







Top left: Earlier this year, I found an old point-and-shoot film camera hiding in the bottom of my mom's drawer. This is a shot of rainy Chinatown from my first roll of film that reminds me of the charm that can be found in everyday scenes.

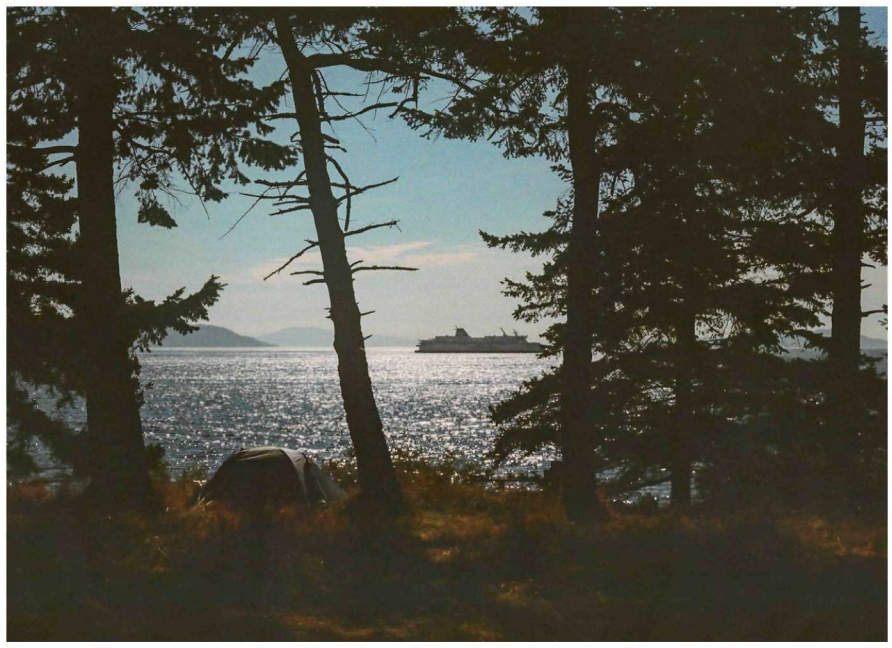
Bottom left: A picture of one of the hikes I did over the summer — rolling clouds, crisp air, blankets of green and a sense of freedom found in nature. | ***Melissa Li***

Top right: This photo is a real gem, taken just off the shore of Hornby Island, BC. This was my first time leaving Vancouver since the start of the pandemic, so I was feeling quite nervous about the trip. This stunning shot is something I like to look back on when I can't see past the dark moments in life. It's definitely the type of photo to make me feel hopeful about the future, and serves as a reminder to count the blessings around me.

Bottom right: I took this photo at Lake Country, BC this past summer. I was feeling a bit drained and impatient with my inability to enjoy things in the moment... until I took this photo. The way the sun shone through the clouds really took my breath away and got me out of my head. When I look back on this photo, I think of the word 'now' because that's all I felt in that moment. | ***Polina Petlitsyna***

Left: I miss home. I miss my baby sister and our dogs. I miss the farm and the open space. But at the very least, I get to see these little moments of joy and fun even if I'm too far away to enjoy them with my family.

Right: That was our last family trip before COVID-19 hit. It was the trip that my parents decided to have a little wedding celebration, even though they've been together for over 15 years. Living half a world away, I miss them dearly. | ***Lua Presidio***



To me, these photos have charted isolation to varying degrees, whether it's the imagery of the horizon evoking both vast loneliness and its transcendence, inevitable daybreak after a long night or the convergence of many smaller subjects into an isolated whole. When you're separated from people, the elements of the world become subjects and characters upon which you'll project your own emotional circumstances. I hoped to capture that natural internality with these photos. | ***Thomas McLeod***

SANKOFA

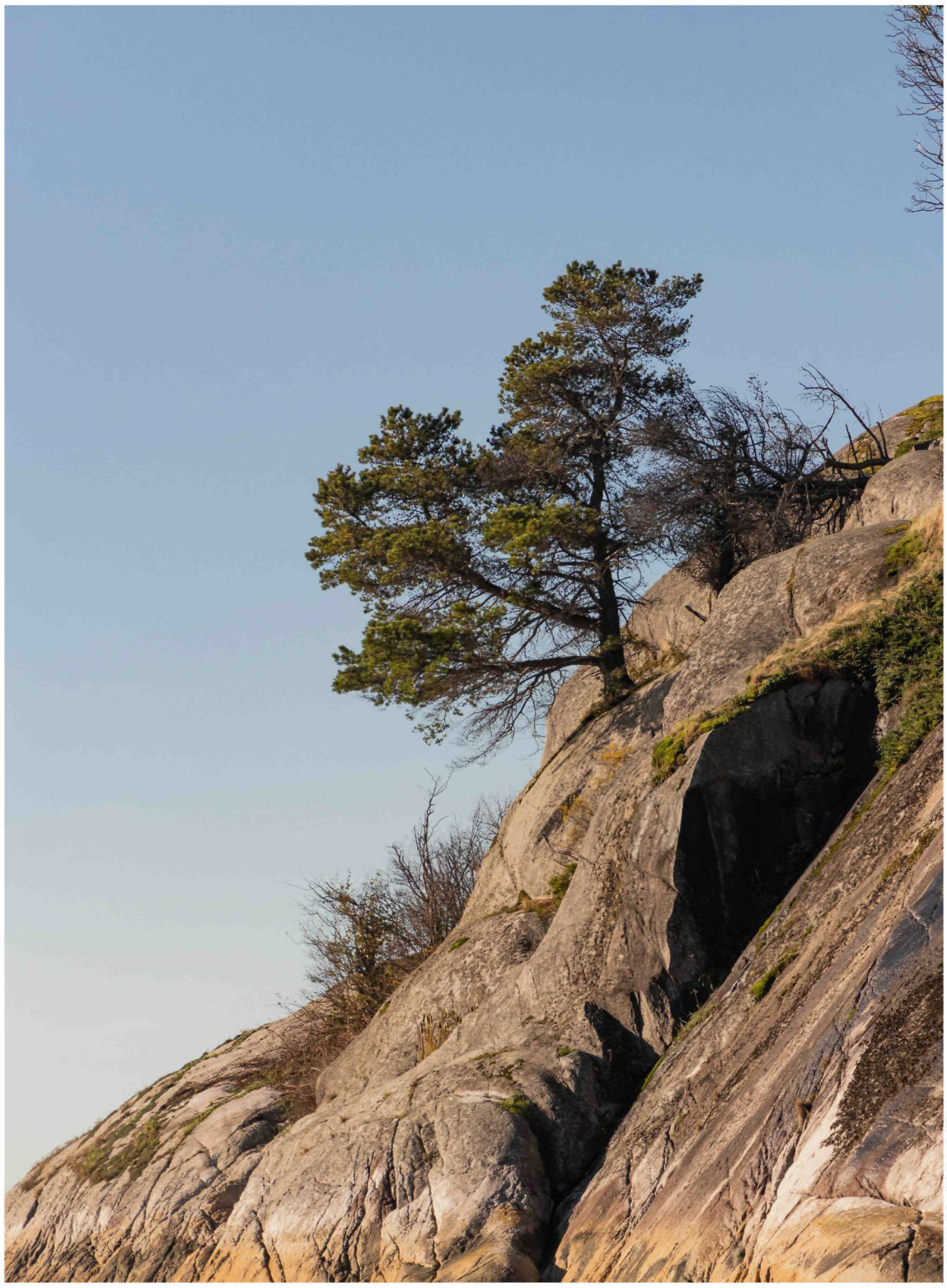
African Routes, Canadian Roots

Free museum admission for UBC students, staff + faculty, with valid UBC ID

November 4, 2021 – March 27, 2022

MOA

Museum of Anthropology at UBC
A place of world arts + cultures



ISABELLA FALSETTI

Ecosystem resilience

ISABELLA FALSETTI

British Columbia is home to an incredibly diverse range of ecosystems, from the temperate rainforests of the coast to the arid valleys and grasslands of the Interior to the alpine tundra in the north.

To see how coastal and marine ecosystems exhibit resilience against natural and human environmental perturbations, *The Ubyssey* visited Whytecliff Park — a marine protected area (MPA) in West Vancouver.

"Ecosystems are complex, adaptive systems," said Kai Chan, a professor at the UBC Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability (IRES). "There's no single balance of nature; there's no equilibrium to which a system returns. Those ideas were popular decades ago. Now, it's clear that that's just not how they work."

Instead, Chan explained that ecosystems are governed by attractors — states that are somewhat stable, but can be interrupted by natural disturbances, like fires and pest outbreaks. With climate change, however, many "natural" disturbances are becoming further amplified by human activity.

ISABELLA FALSETTI

MELISSA LI

Chan has conducted research on sea otter population dynamics off the west coast of Vancouver Island, observing the effects of rewilding a top predator on the overall resilience of an ecosystem.

Otters are a keystone species, meaning that they have a disproportionately large effect on other species in the surrounding ecosystem. During the Canadian fur trade of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they were brought to the brink of extinction.

With the otter virtually removed from the ecosystem, benthic organisms like urchins, sea stars, clams and sea cucumbers experienced unchecked population growth and thus increased kelp consumption. This imbalance resulted in a trophic cascade, due in part to kelp forests' photosynthetic and carbon-sequestering abilities, which became severely diminished. The capacity for kelp forests to support fish populations, which in turn support human populations, was also significantly reduced.

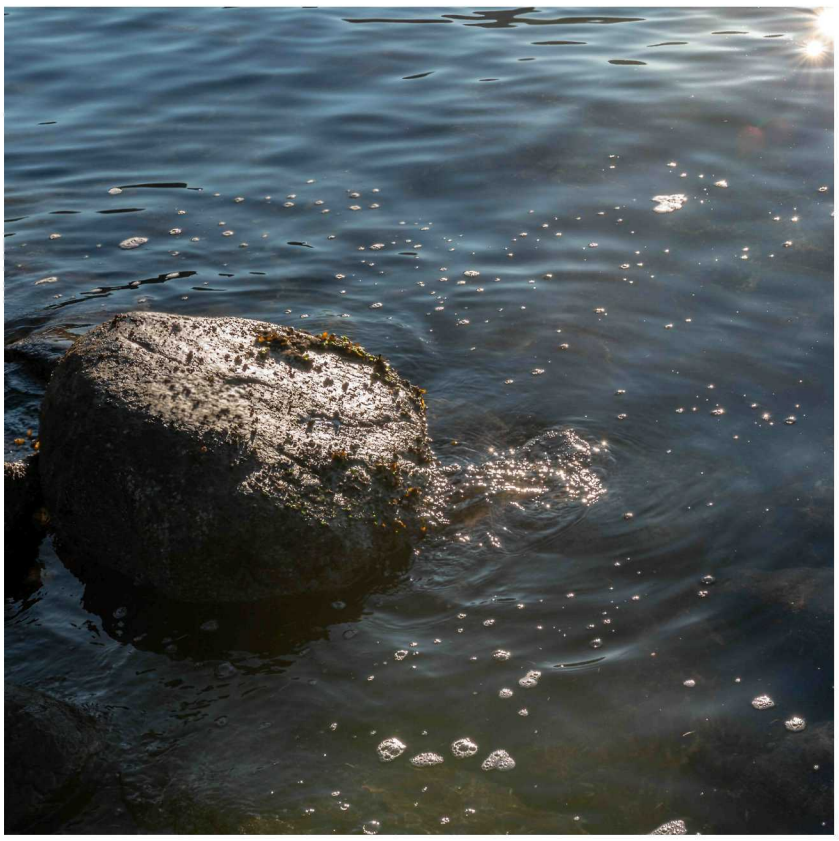
Both of these qualities are reflected in ecosystem services, which we, as humans, benefit from immensely. Therefore, a decrease in ecosystem resilience often means an equally negative impact on human society.

This is why keystone species like sea otters play such a crucial role in marine ecosystems, and why rewilding their populations is fundamental in ensuring continued ecosystem resilience.

"People imagine that ecosystems are already resilient," said Chan, "and the reality is that most of the ecosystems that we know are only a shadow of their former self because we have so badly tampered with them ... that [species] can't play anywhere near the same kind of roles that they do in this system."

“People imagine that ecosystems are already resilient ... The reality is that most of the ecosystems that we know are only a shadow of their former self...”

ISABELLA FALSETTI



MELISSA LI

MELISSA LI

ISABELLA FALSETTI

Though we were unable to visit Vancouver Island, many of these same ecological principles are at play within the intertidal zone of Whytecliff Park.

As the province's first no-take MPA, meaning that fishing, mining, drilling and other extractive activities are prohibited, the conditions at Whytecliff are able to foster higher species biodiversity compared to other coastal parks in the region.

Just below the surface of the glimmering blue water is an abundance of kelp, sea stars, coral and sponges that comprise a diverse reef system. These reefs provide natural flood protection, acting as a buffer against stronger waves while maintaining nutrients that wash into the intertidal zone. The beaches and shoreline levies at Whytecliff act as further protection against high tides and storm surge events, and will be crucial in mitigating the effects of sea level rise due to climate change.

In a move to increase public awareness of and appreciation for these benefits, West Vancouver was one of the first municipalities in Canada to estimate the value of its ecosystem services. According to the District of West Vancouver's website, West Vancouver's intertidal zones alone provide an estimated $549 million worth of ecosystem services annually.

These services take the form of shoreline protection, which reduces the costs of damages from erosion and flooding; biodiversity, which facilitates primary production of oxygen and essential nutrients; and cultural and recreational opportunities.

As climate change worsens, preserving ecosystem resilience and the services it provides will depend heavily on community action and political governance. The heat wave that ravaged the Pacific Northwest and its marine life this summer is just a preview of how coastal ecosystems will continue to be pressured by climate change.

Like people, ecosystems have limited resilience to environmental stressors. Responsible management of resources, increased awareness of ecosystem fragility and developing long-term strategies for risk assessment are key to maximizing the capacity for both natural systems and humans to adapt to changing conditions. At the same time, perpetual human interference cannot be relied upon as a safety net. Overmanagement and homogenization tend to limit biodiversity, and can in fact reduce an ecosystem's resilience against disturbance, rendering organisms more susceptible to disease or infestation (as was the case with the mountain pine beetle outbreaks in Canadian national parks).

There is no one correct image of resilience for a given ecosystem, just as there isn't for any one person, but there is still a limit to how much stress either can endure before they collapse. 𝔘

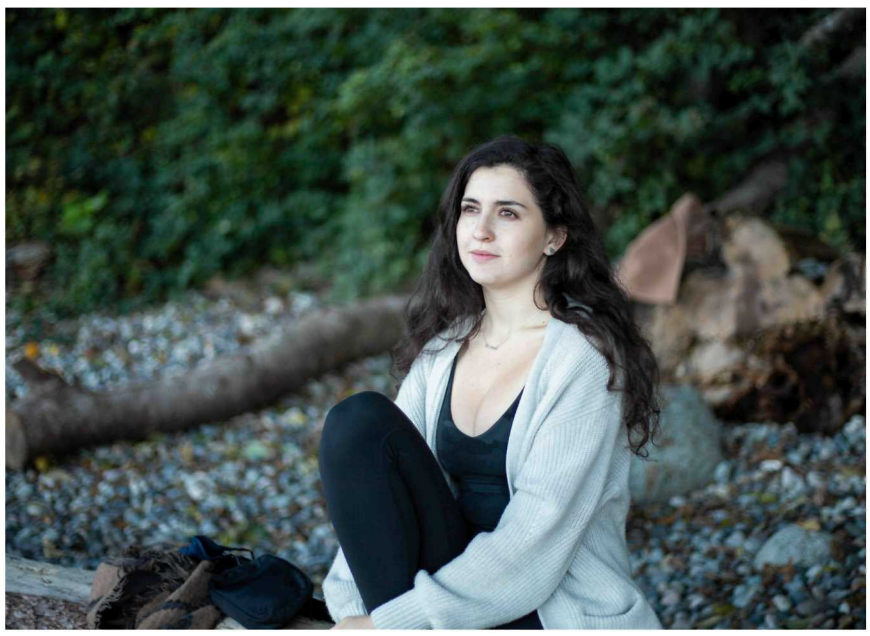
ISABELLA FALSETTI

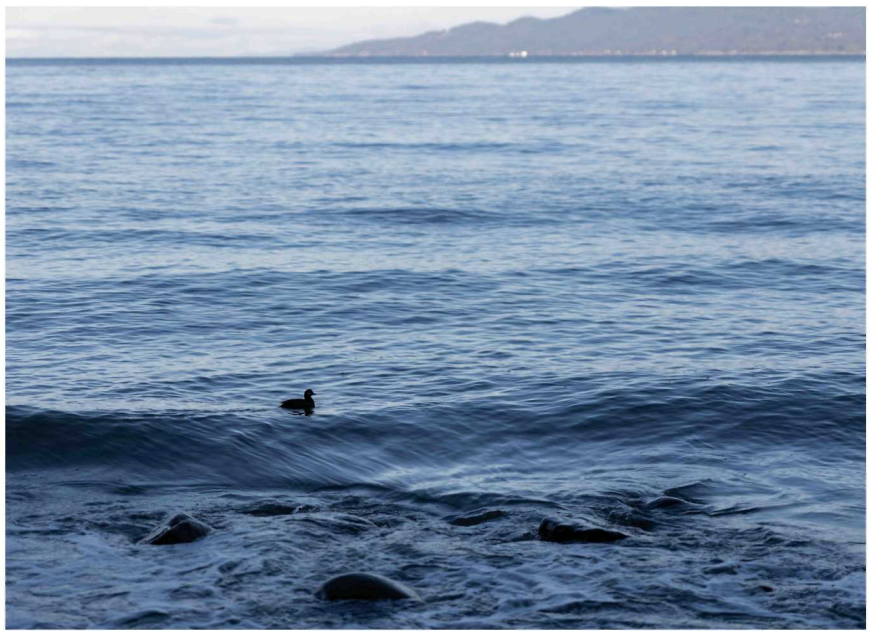
SELF, CENTRED

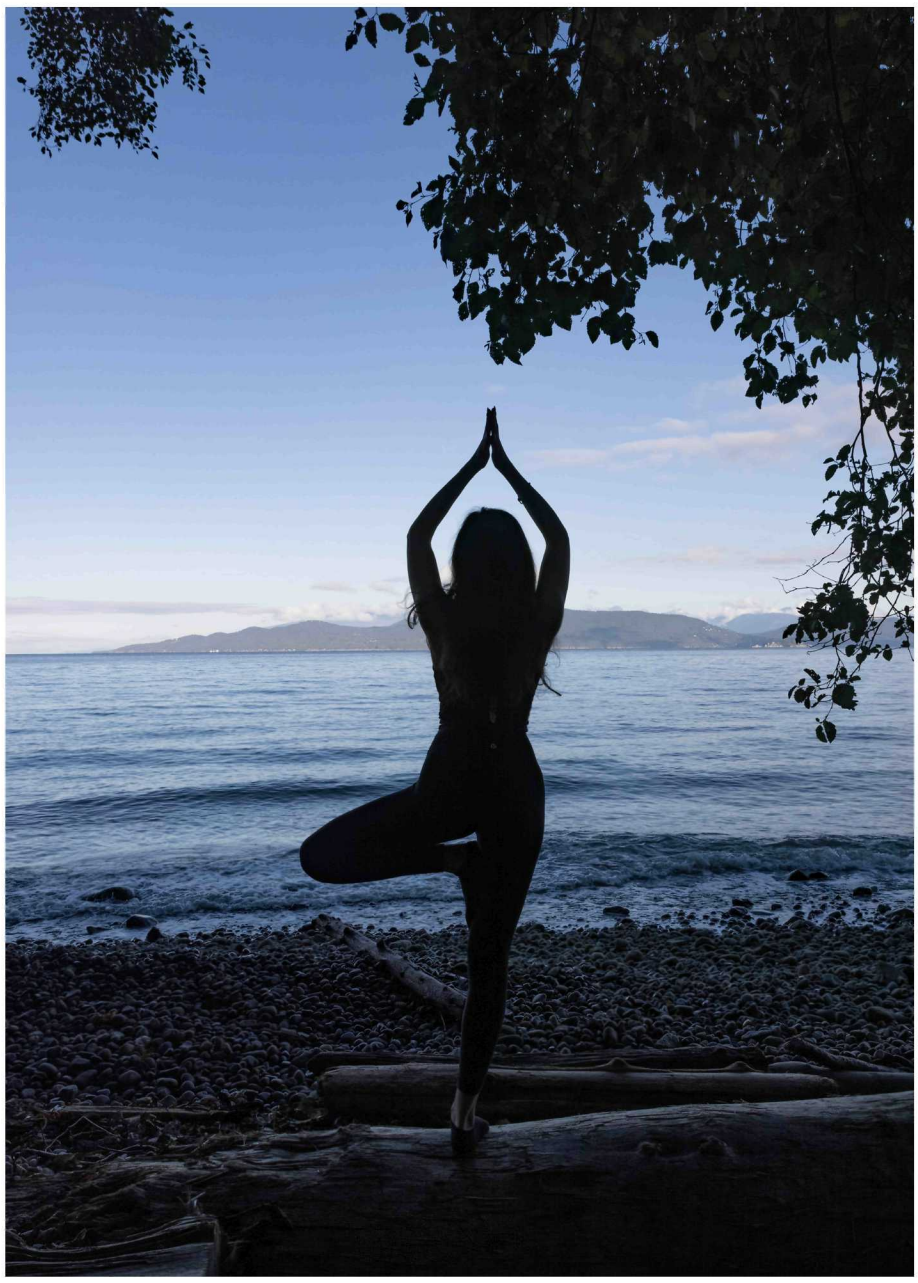
The many faces of resilience

ISABELLA FALSETTI

Resilience can be gently taught and forcefully learned: while some can choose to opt in, others are unable to ever opt out. As such, the way in which resilience manifests depends heavily on the person and the conditions they are dealt. Maybe it's an opportunity for introspection or developing a creative outlet, or perhaps it's finding a way to regain autonomy over mental and physical illness. For these three UBC students, however, a key component of resilience was paying attention to their energy limits and prioritizing self-fulfilment.







Nika Perel

This past summer, Nika Perel, a fourth-year psychology major, made it her quest to find a peaceful place on campus to call her own. She found a quiet spot on Tower Beach on the northern edge of Point Grey Peninsula looking out on Burrard Inlet and Bowen Island.

She wanted a place where she could "unapologetically [be herself]."

"I would come [here] every single morning and I knew that as soon as I reflected on its imagery, sat down on the same log ... I knew that I could tap into that same energy that I was able to receive from it in prior days."

Over the past year, Perel said she has been engaging in deep self reflection and questioning her perception of the world. To her, resilience is "an ability to overcome and recognize that you are so much more than what is happening to you in a current moment."

She compared this transience to waves crashing onto the shore: "One comes after another, one comes in and each one is impermanent."

Continuing to use nature as a metaphor, Perel likened the decisions we make each day to watering seeds. "I always say that we have a certain number of seeds. And seeds are the things that are happening to us in our life. Whether that's school, whether that's relationships, whether they're good or bad. Every day we're given a certain amount of water, which is our energy. And every day we have to consciously make the choice of which seeds we want to water because we have a limited amount of energy. Yet sometimes all we water is the seeds of doubt, seeds of frustration, anxiety."

She said that part of her practice of resilience is consciously asking herself where she wants to direct her energy — "What seeds do I want to water today?" We have a limited amount of energy, she said, and we need to "[recognize] just how valuable it is."

Rita Jin

Rita Jin was deprived of a proper in-person graduation ceremony after graduating from high school straight into a pandemic. After such an underwhelming build up only to begin university online, she felt robbed of a sense of closure.

"First year was just notoriously hard," said Jin. She described sometimes feeling lost and secluded at home, unable to see friends. Any family conflicts that arose became inescapable and had to be addressed up front, which also began to wear on her over time.

Beginning second year in person was yet another transition, and posed the additional challenge of trying to keep up with society's expectations after a year and a half lost to remote learning.

Many people have coped with the isolation and stagnation of pandemic life by taking up a new hobby. For Jin, photography became the outlet through which she could direct her creative energy. It gave her a way to visualize the world from a different perspective and pushed her to explore places she wouldn't have otherwise.

"It's a really creative way to energize yourself ... and [be] able to put your own thoughts onto an image," said Jin. Finding beauty in the mundane allowed her to step back from the monotonous pace of schoolwork and become more in tune with her surroundings.

As a way to build her own resilience in the face of personal obstacles, Jin used the past year and a half to not only focus on the things that make her happy — like photography — but reflect on the limits she sets for herself as well.

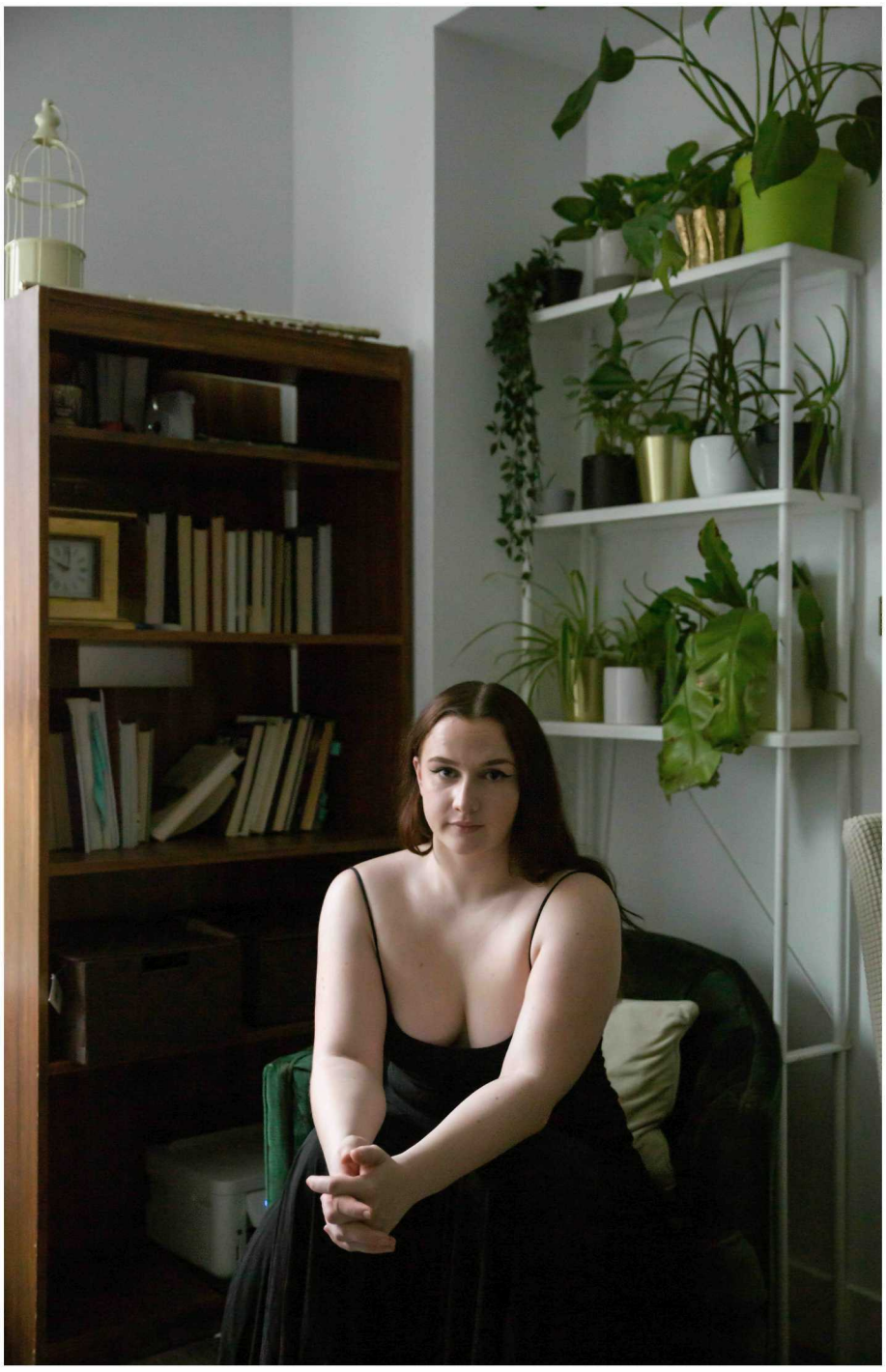
"In high school, or just growing up, I was kind of like, 'Okay, I know I can work hard, I can do whatever.' But it's very emotionally tiring at times."

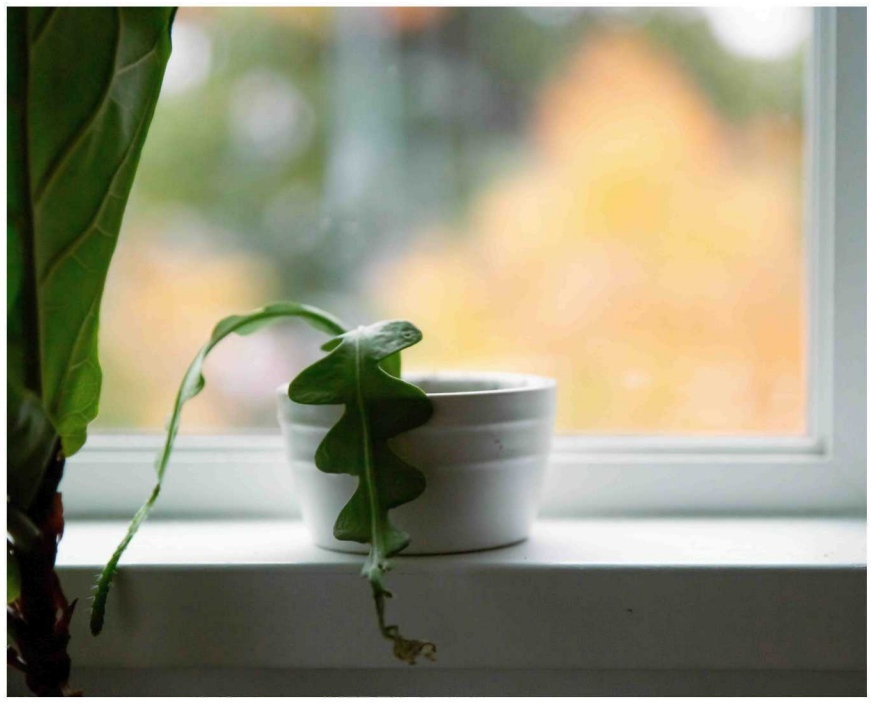
So Jin asked herself: "What makes people happy?"

"Most of the time, it's not giving goals that you could accomplish ... But it's just kind of validating, 'What are the small things that I can insert into my day to make it better, to make myself feel more consistent [in the long term]?'"

Now, Jin reorients her actions and intentions to prioritize her own happiness.

"I am really proud of myself for doing that because it shows that I'm stronger mentally. I know how to say 'no' to [some] things and say 'yes' to other things."





Sage Houston

For Sage Houston, resilience is not a choice.

As someone who struggles with ADHD and was recently diagnosed with endometriosis, resilience is required to keep up with a double major, work multiple jobs and perform essential tasks like cooking meals and maintaining a clean living space.

Endometriosis is a chronic condition where the endometrial tissue, which normally lines the inner wall of the uterus, grows elsewhere. Those who live with endometriosis can experience severe pain, bleeding and infertility, among other symptoms.

"I got that diagnosis in March," Houston recalled. "The average time for diagnosis is 11 years." For Houston, it took nine.

Endometriosis is not hard to diagnose, Houston explained; rather, it's because doctors — especially male physicians — tend to dismiss the symptoms as an overly dramatic reaction to period cramps or other pain. "There's so many excuses they make for it, instead of just taking it seriously and believing people when they say they're in pain — especially women and people with uteruses."

This combination of mental and physical conditions (and the concurrent medical trauma) has greatly shaped Houston's definition of resilience.

"I think for a lot of people ... [they] look at [resilience] as a really beautiful thing ... and I think [for] people who have gone through years of trauma or chronic pain, or whatever the situation is, resilience is a really, really painful thing."

Houston expressed how exhausting it is to "[exist] in a state of constant vulnerability" and the frustration of having to embrace conditions that she can't control.

"I don't want to be resilient anymore. I want to have support."

To combat this feeling of powerlessness, she commits her time to the Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture and conducts research for the UBC Human Rights Collective on threats to academic freedom in Canada — two causes she is incredibly passionate about. She also seeks out activities that "serve absolutely no purpose" other than bringing her joy, such as hiking, snowboarding and weightlifting.

Physical activities are especially empowering for Houston when much of her energy is consumed by the conditions she lives with. It's a reminder that "however I'm feeling that day, that there's strength inside of me."

"So much of it feels like it's wasted or just taken away from me in that survival mode sort of resilience. But there's still aspects of it that I get to use, really just for myself and for my own enjoyment and not just to get through the day." 𝔘

i push my roots deeper into the ground
As though i have always lived here,

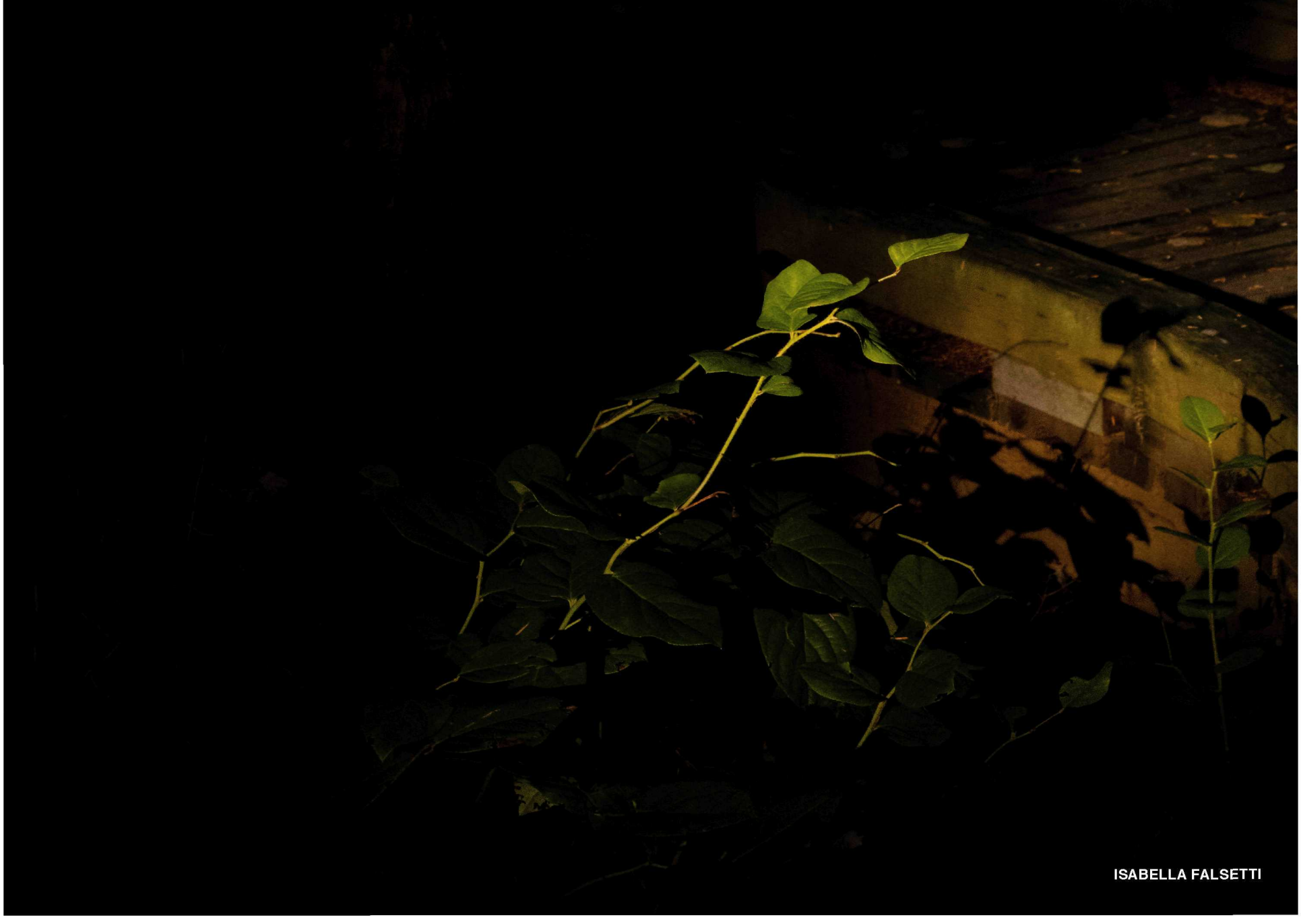
And didn't germinate a mere
Two decades ago
When the rest of the foliage
Was still breathing here.

Don't you know,
That the leaves formed a cradle
For me when i was born?

And that the rain herself
Fed me from her
Generous cloudy breast?

So that even if you try
To cut me down today
The forest will perhaps
Eat you alive.

— *Shanai Tanwar*



ISABELLA FALSETTI

IS ADHD HOLDING YOU BACK?

DO YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS?

PERFORMANCE: Not getting the marks you want?
ATTENTION: Mind wandering during lectures, not able to focus?
RISK-TAKING: Excessive drinking, reckless driving, drugs?
HYPERACTIVITY/IMPULSIVITY: Binge eating, shopping, gambling, gaming?
ACADEMIC & DEVELOPMENTAL: Struggles in elementary and secondary school?
RELATIONSHIPS: Strained interactions with friends, family, partner?

THINK YOU NEED HELP OR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION?
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