Skipping Stones

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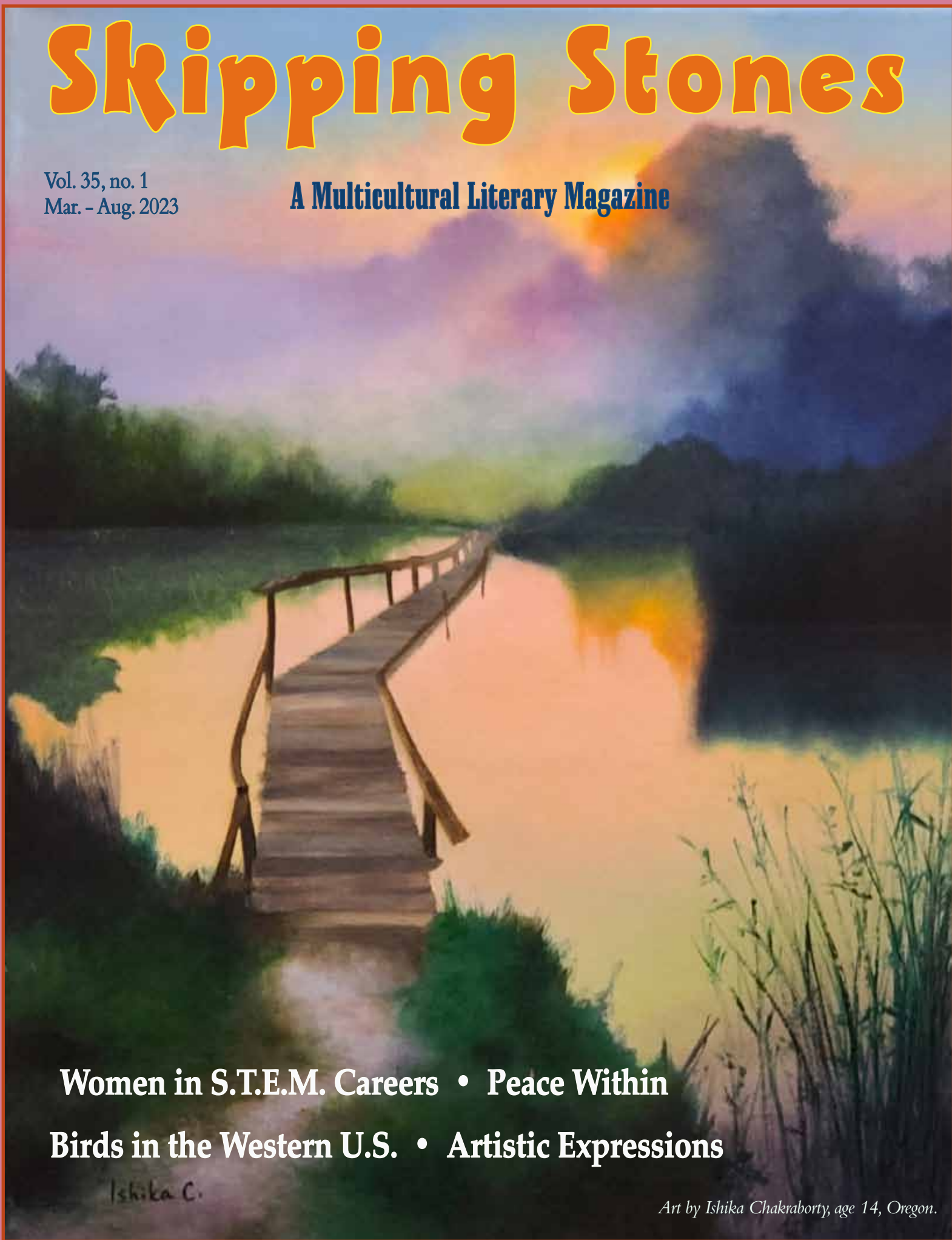

Women in S.T.E.M. Careers • Peace Within

Birds in the Western U.S. • Artistic Expressions

Art by Ishika Chakraborty, age 14, Oregon.

brown deserts that once abounded with life, for the gradually disappearing glaciers and for the millions of innocent animals whose habitats have been taken away by us human beings.

The trees were cut down, the factories that pollute the environment were built, the emissions and waste were not filtered out, the natural resources were taken away, the land was disfigured, the deadly weapons were tested, and innocent people were killed.

Did we, the inhabitants of the Earth, expect that nothing would happen?

Is it appropriate for us to live only for ourselves, just for today, here and now?

Unfortunately, we cannot change the past, but we have the future in our hands!

We must change everything—we need to return what we took from Nature.

Oh God, help us realize our mistakes and change what we can. Clean the seashores of our trash, plant new hectares of dense forests, learn how to properly recycle plastics and other waste products, giving them a "second life," replace aerosol sprays that destroy the atmosphere with environmentally safe means, not burn fallen leaves, but make eco-friendly paper out of them. Can we do these things in near future?

Is it worth waiting for such changes to take place someday in the future? Why not start working on these changes now? After all, it is quite simple—just keep everything in order, recycle, clean up our neighborhoods and be a wise steward of our own lives and our little worlds, taking care of our environment.

There is something which is most crucial. We all should learn to truly love one another, not to be indifferent, but to help. We should not fight but seek for reconciliation. We should seek not to criticize but to support, because only unselfish Love can change everything and help us move in the right direction, toward the Light. Everything will pass, except for it. For Love is eternal!"

Caged

A burial is taking place,

where she will lie, forever with a moving element,

Captured behind the stories her Grandmother brought to life—the pungent scent of salt air, the water's kiss as she dove under the surface. It was easy to remember the scents of wilderness that permeated the air, the dappled sunlight bending colors every which way, all the large and tiny details of her stories. It was even harder to forget the way she always began with "once upon a time…"

Yet her wings fly in the space tomorrow brings, the corals, sea turtles, and organic ocean motion seem within reach, once again.

She flies on the quilted connection of the sea turtles, the regal angelfish, the manta rays. Her body beats slowly in my palm. Each pulse sent to the ventricles widens the heart chambers a little bit more until soon her heart is as strong as any.

Corals woven with shamrock and streaks of fish with vermilion scales swim through my dreams, a distant memory, accompanied always with the promise of a fragmented future.

As time hurdles forward, slivers of currants and azures, and bursting ocean ecosystems slip through my grasp, until only a barren cemetery remains.

Da-dum, da-dum, da-dum. The rhythms of the ceremony pulse beneath my fingers. *Da-dum, da-dum, da-dum.*

The swell of the northern current awakens my humanity, immersing my soul in the island waters, where first life and memory began.

*—Tara Prakash, age 16, Maryland. "*Caged *is a poem characterizing the movement of time in the context of climate change. The trapped bird in the cage represents Mother Nature, and I work to bring to life the climate crisis through visuals and details of the impact and repercussions the oceans are receiving. I set the poem in a burial scene, beginning with death and ending with birth. Overall through this poem, I am trying to convey the urgency and impacts of the climate crisis through the eyes of Mother Nature."*

There was a sheet of paper, folded into a square, laying on the ancient ground under that pensive old Oak. This letter was left there for all who are willing to truly love and change our beautiful world.

—Yarynka Yarosh, 15, grade 9, Kyiv, Ukraine. On March 9, 2022, she and her family had to flee Kyiv due to Russian invasion and bombing. You can also read her story, **The Most Precious Gift!***, on our website.*