

Rooted Everyday

Press Release

Greek School Girls Win First Environment-Themed Short Story Prize

10 July 2019

For Immediate Release

The Rooted Everyday Mediterranean Short Story Prize celebrates and protects the rich culture and biodiversity found in Mediterranean ecoregions.



School pupils within the Rooted Everyday campaign eco-regions of Lemnos in Greece, High Atlas Mountains in Morocco, Montados in Portugal and Shouf mountains in Lebanon were invited to submit stories with an environmental theme to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and preserving cultural heritage in the Mediterranean.

Alongside the adult competition, children and young people could enter into either a 500 word prize for 7 to 13 year olds, or the 1000 word prize for 14 to 18 year olds.



 /rootedeveryday

 @rootedeveryday

 @rootedeveryday

In Greece, there were two main winners Elisa Katsigiannopoulou (7-13 age group), and Penelope-Konstantina Tramountani (14-18 age group) with two runners up Melina Kelesidi (7-13 age group) and Stavroula-Maria Stenou (14-18 age group). The young writers showed exceptional storytelling skills and inspired the judges. The winners were presented with certificates in a special ceremony.

Judge Letta Vasileiou explained the judging process and her experience: “It was with great joy that I took up the role of the judge on the students’ writing competition. I was caught up in pleasant surprise when I received and read their works, only to discover their true writing potential! All of the young participants, and especially the ones who won, produced exceptional stories, with flowing language and full of imaginative ideas. I felt like I was instantly carried over to Lemnos island, looked upon its landscape, smelled its fragrance and saw its inhabitants. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this experience.”

Rooted Everyday is a new environmental campaign launched by a consortium of conservation organisations to raise awareness and celebrate lesser-known Mediterranean heritage and natural resources, whilst highlighting the threat of extinction to both nature and indigenous culture in the campaigns ecoregions.

WWF, Global Diversity Foundation, MedINA, DiversEarth and Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon have united their local biodiversity projects through this bold, new campaign funded by the MAVA Foundation.

Notes to Editors:

1st prize 8-13

The Harvest of Memory

By Eliza Katsigianopoulou

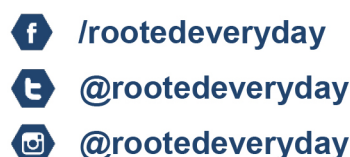
The story is a collection of fanciful impressions made on the mind of Eliza, the narrator, of the rustic and simple way of living on the island of Lemnos. She is with her grandfather on their farm and we see and hear from her point of view some of the many local traditions, folkloric legends and stories about pirates of the island, as well as learn about traditional agricultural practices such as the gathering of the grapes. The story is written with an all around nice and humorous tone at times, built at a brisk pace and utilizing properly the local vernacular, phrases and words.

2nd prize 8-13

The Old Olive Tree

By Melina Kelesidis

The story begins from the perspective of an old olive tree, reminiscing its life in the field and all the people that it has known and loved over the years. The tree lingers over a



special memory of a girl named Maria, who loved the tree very much and often came to look and smile at it.

Coming to the present day we find out that a modern, busy city is built around the old olive tree, poisoning its leaves with soot and smoke and the acrid smell of oil. Meditating over this dire situation the tree eventually is cut down in order to build a new supermarket where it once stood. What's more, they make wooden shelves for storing pasta out of its trunk and branches. Slowly dying, but still watching all kinds of people go by in this new miserable state, what's left of the spirit of the tree meets up again with little Maria whom it recognizes by her eyes and smile. Having its faith rekindled by this meeting the tree dies happily.

1st prize 14-18

The Island of Fire

By Penelope-Konstantina Tramountani

The story begins with the birth of princess Hypsipile and the ancient Greek gods endowing her with grace and gifts of beauty. Aphrodite is the only goddess that shuns her and departs as Hypsipile grows up on the island of Lemnos. She reaches seven years of age without ever talking once while the women of the island are tormented by a horrible disease. Rage is incited by the locals who consider her a monstrosity and want her dead. We learn that it was Hera that has accepted Hypsipile's ability to talk as a gift from the princess's mother, Queen Myrina, in return of the slow-working medicine for the Lemnian women's ailments that would have cured them eventually. Hephaestus intervenes out of pity and turns Hypsipile into a dragon. Eventually, Hypsipile flies over the countryside and confronts the Lemnian people and led by her own mother, they manage to kill her by driving a spear through her lungs. After seeing that, the gods decide to flee into another planet to avoid destruction from man's fury.

The story ends with a cautionary note about how we have killed this new species that could have benefited mankind with its gift of fire, as we have done with many others in the past.

The story captures a sense of dread and beauty and is structured in flowery and poetic prose.

2nd prize 14-18

The secret of the Lily

By Stavroula-Maria Stenou

We follow a series of memories of the narrator. The story is written in the first person and it is following a girl narrator with her grandmother in Lemnos island, where a special kind of flower, the Lily of Aphrodite is growing. The story goes on to describe the natural beauty of Lemnos, as well as some traditional agricultural and stockbreeding practices but it always focuses on the Lily and on the way it was first created by Aphrodite,

protected by all and timelessly revered for its beauty as well as its formidable healing powers.

Nearing the end of the story the narrator laments the fact that nobody cares today about the Lily. People just casually walk over it with cars and machinery, ripping it from the sand and not being aware of its power and wisdom.

In the epilogue, the narrator cannot decide whether her grandmother's tale about the origin and power of the Lily is true or not but resolves to try and save it out of her love for Lemnos island, since love itself was born out of a Lily.

The story is written in a very personal and associative manner full of kind tenderness.

Letta Vasileiou Biography

Letta Vasileiou was born in Athens. She studied the guitar under the guitarist and composer Notis Mavroudis and was awarded her Degree and Diploma with honors and distinctions. She also studied music theory, piano and horn. She has attended various master classes given by greek and foreign performers. At present, she teaches at the "Codaly" conservatory. She is also studied European Civilization at Hellenic Open University.

She is also the author of many children's and adult's books as she has been drawn towards writing since early youth.

She has published the following books:

"The Princess of the bottom of the sea" "Mimis the Bigfeet" " The kitten that wanted to be an astronaut", "Four friends looking for the earth" (Minoas editions), "Tsirlimigos the quiet elf" (Papadopoulos editions), " The flying Marbles" (Minoas editions), "A little tortoise called Louie" (Hellenic Letters editions), "The Santa Clause mix-up", " The Christmas starfish" and "Children of the sky" (Kedros editions), " 7 hearts" (Kedros editions), "SOVOF the moving sun" (Pnoi editios).

In an attempt to combine literature and music she does interactive music presentations of her children's books; furthermore, her CDs "The Silver-Green Forest: The Animal School" and "The Silver-Green Forest: Christmas Time" have been released by Acroasis music label. Apart from her work as a lyricist and composer, she has rendered the libretto of the children's opera "Brundibar" into Greek and has participated in the production of the CDs "The instruments and the drums" and "A sweet goodnight".

Images of the pilot sites for the campaign are available here; [Dehesas](#) [Lemnos](#) [Morocco](#) [Shouf](#)

More information: <https://www.rootedeveryday.org>

[Link to information about Lemnos, Greece](#)



 /rootedeveryday

 @rootedeveryday

 @rootedeveryday

[Link to Information about Shouf, Lebanon](#)

[Link to information about the High Atlas, Morocco](#)

[Link to information about Dehesas \(Spain\) and Montados \(Portugal\)](#)

Twitter @RootedEveryday **Facebook** /RootedEveryday **Instagram** @RootedEveryday

About the campaign:

The Rooted Everyday campaign is run by a core team of environmentalists who are working with projects, eco-regions and partners from across the Mediterranean.

Our mission is to reverse the loss of biodiversity which is caused when people stop cultural practices that have existed for generations. By working with Mediterranean critical eco-regions and partners we aim to show the value traditional ways of life can have in protecting our environment. By supporting Rooted Everyday projects and campaigns you're standing up for conservation and Mediterranean heritage.

The Rooted Everyday eco-regions are in [Lemnos in Greece](#) led by the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (MedINA), the [High Atlas mountains in Morocco](#) led by the Global Diversity Foundation (GDF), the [Shouf Biosphere Reserve in Lebanon](#) led by the Society for the Protection of Nature Lebanon (SPNL), and the [Dehesas and Montados in Spain and Portugal](#) led by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Trashumancia y Naturaleza. [DiversEarth](#) is also part of the core team. Other campaign partners working across the Mediterranean are [IUCN](#), [Yolda Initiative](#) in Turkey and [GOB Menorca](#).

The projects and campaign are funded by the [MAVA Foundation](#) for Nature. The campaign and communications are created with Wordsby Communications.

