



# DEEP-ROOTED

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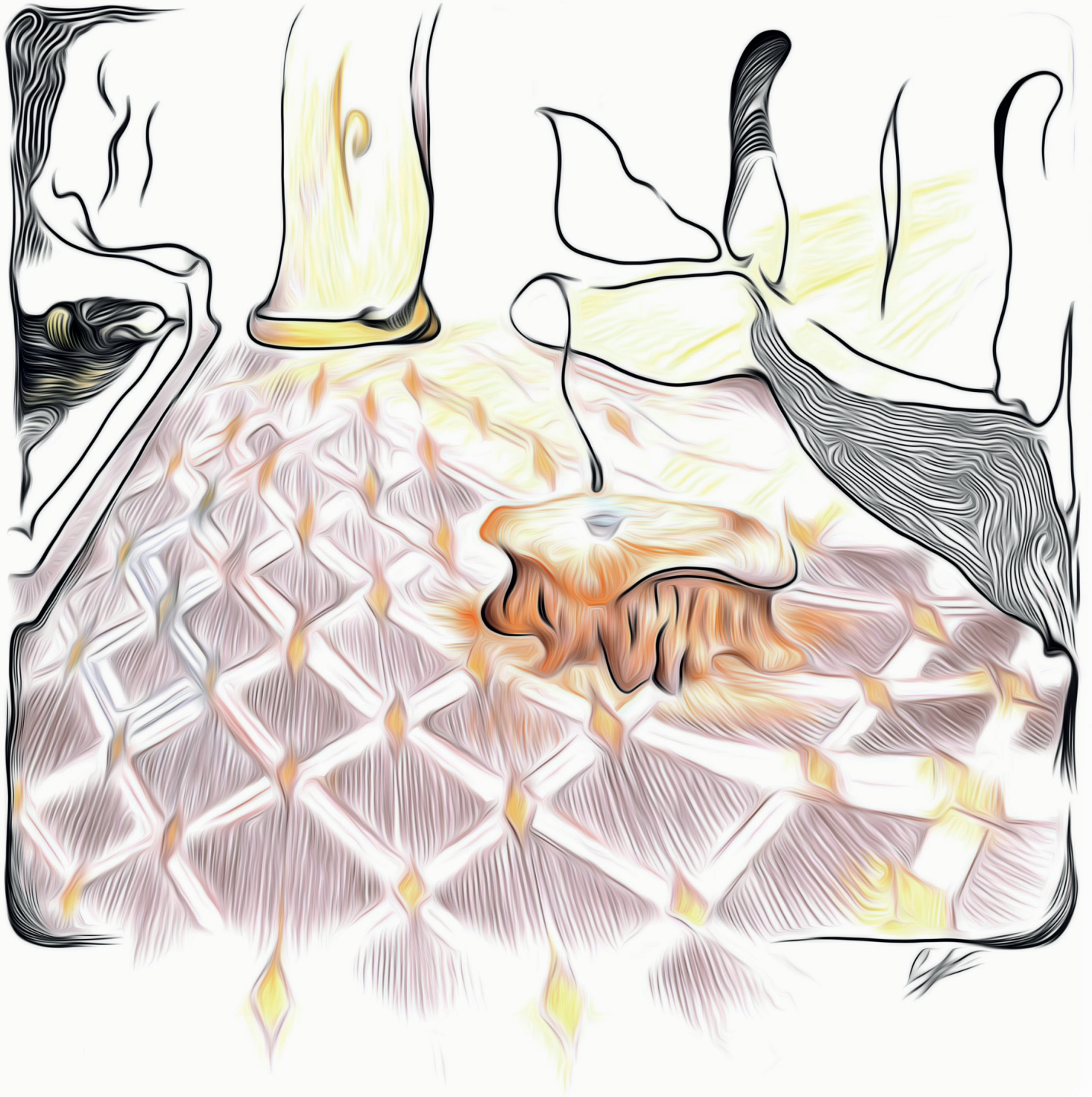
*Short Story & Illustration by Silvia Peshova*

Earlier than you could hardly imagine being awake, light pulled its bed sheet. Its ethereal presence became sensible, absorbed by each element in that tiny rooftop space. Everything was beyond normal here – for the majority, a few square meters defined that plain sloping roof construction. Despite the superficial emptiness, both minimalism and precise purity dictated its debut. It appeared to be more spacious merely for the lack of furniture. The shabby smoked oak parquet flooring had only a few covered areas: a medium birch grain wardrobe in the bottom centre, a low pinewood single bed in the left corner, a small cupboard straight from the entrance and a desk.

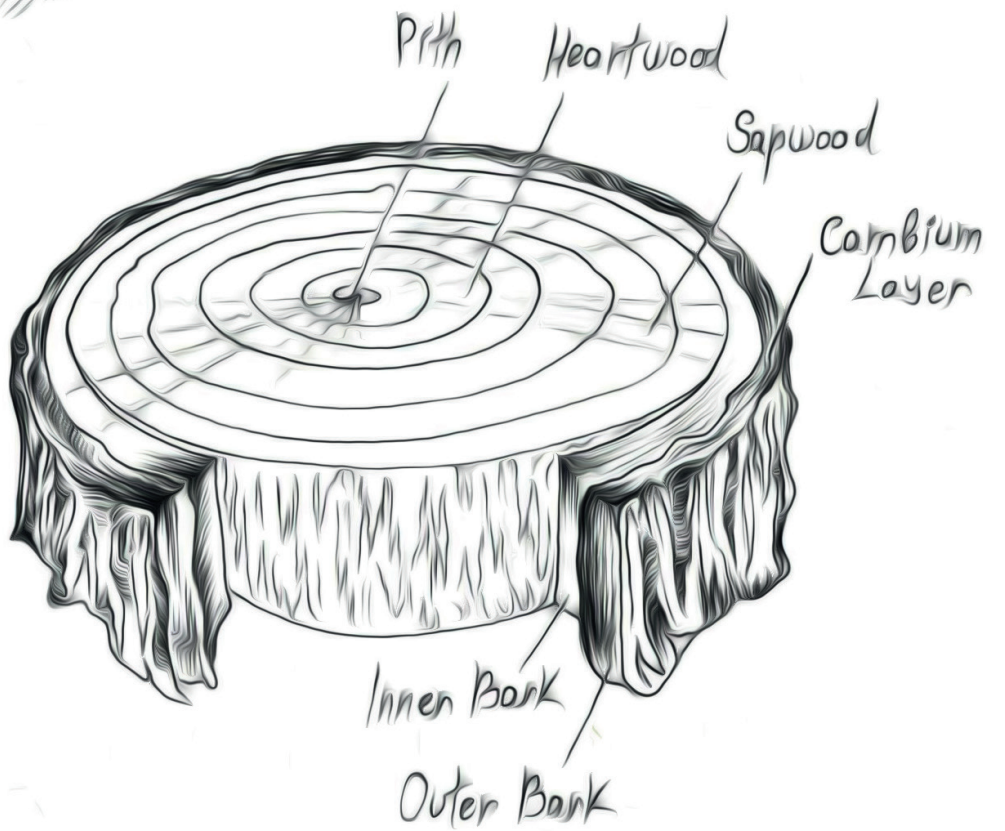
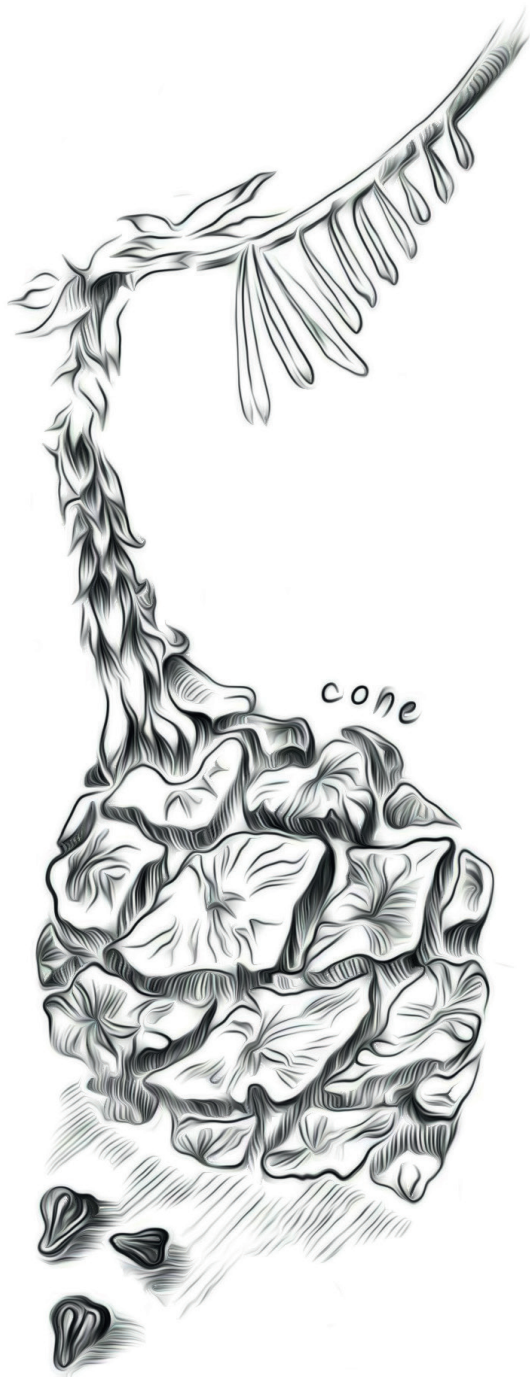
In the slowly awakening face of that day, all features gained clarity. Illumination worked its way through Fia's light-beige knit blanket, giving her a foretaste of consciousness. Ejection on the dot. She was now heavy, constrained by Earth's pressuring force. Every cell was affected apart from her vigorous mind. It was always on the go, nonetheless diligent. It had to be, as dreams were the ether of her spiritual universe...

As her pale feet felt the ground, via gentle touch she revived her somnolent skin. For the first time, her dreamy hazel look scanned the room and delved straight into that single patch of light. Only several seconds kept it from reaching the exact middle of the desk, and where rays have formerly spread, the electrifying cinnamon-coloured wood came to notice. Something about the masterly detail made that desk highly exceptional.

Fia possessed remarkable aural and kinaesthetic awareness. Withal, one insurmountable matter made her feel like she was only scratching the surface of actual living. It was dead quiet. Her vocal cords were indifferent, so that she could never weave a single note into the ever-reigning stillness. She was dumb. That peculiar balance between senses endowed her with a phenomenon. She stood up. Her strong-willed posture arose in the calm before the storm. The light had just reached a barely noticeable hemisphere carved into the middle of the desk. Her soul clicked with that whereas her mind was still sharp to the point and fresh from her midnight travels. Meanwhile the hemisphere became as if light-absorbing, looking like it was storing glow within. Long-awaited sign. Launching towards it with a small watering can, the girl activated a process beyond imagination. Water drops sprinkled immediately sinking in the rounded space, resembling a paint bucket full of dew. Following were several handfuls of moist soil, rich on nutrients. Something in the atmosphere was uplifting, anticipating. This organic mixture fed life into that 'something', whilst it still being on the hold. In the serenity of a moment, Fia leaned down to pull out the long thin straps around her neck, which joined in a miniature glass ornament. Releasing a tiny clip, she unleashed a thick white-greyish airy substance in addition to the rest. Fog that was. Her breath slowed down keeping her on pins and needles...







Suddenly, lines and rings of the desk started acting as a magnetic field, moving inside out, transitioning colour to almost crimson-orange. Every single piece of wood, according to its kind, regained vitality. This place was nothing like its previous version. Not anymore. Wind breeze, sweet and delightful, sneaked trough and fondled the slowly emerging stems stimulating their growth. Inflorescence. Everything became green. It was clear by now – every sliver gave life to a plant, sealed beforehand. The mystery of the desk was disclosed: brown-orange tint, fibrous bark, scale-like needles, and even tiny, egg-shaped greenish cones – certainly, a coastal redwood.

Snap. Snap. Snap-snap. The desk's plane began branching out and burning through. First, the heartwood, then the intact and outer bark. Fia kept a mindful eye with a slim brush and colour palette in hand. Beneath the smoke and leftover ash there formed a map. A world map with millions of pins. With a pointing moist brush, she slowly panned her hand across the surface and chose a pin. From a tiny point snuggled amongst the hills on the coast of western North American continent, California, it expanded to a large purely white panel ready to be filled.

The girl remembered the calmness of the coastal giants, the wet climate and the six months period of piling snow. She was there just before reality pinched her to wake up. In her dream world, she could travel anywhere and hear daily global happenings on a single subject. Not everything she could control. Typically, the cover of the dream declared the topic - now being 'Tallest trees: Redwoods'. These journeys fascinated her most as trees were somewhat close to Fia. Her actual name signified 'flickering fire', and the fact that redwoods were flame resistant and even profited from partial burns, tickled her curiosity.

Her head was now a broadcast flecked with events. They whispered conservation stories to educate and moreover inspire her. Numerous layers of information had to be woven into that visual atlas in front of her. Layers of history, geography, biology and contemporary nature supervision. This is where her muteness faded, where her flaw disappeared giving way to her passion. She settled to the map completely to draw and enlist what she saw and heard:

'...Sequoia sempervirens (coast redwoods) are generally limited to a narrow band of hills along the California coast and Sequoiadendron giganteum (giant sequoia) grow in a narrow band of California's Sierra Nevada /a mountain range/. In earlier eras redwood relatives grew in a wide swath across North America, Europe and Asia... And now, humans are planting Sequoia in far-flung places... New Zealand, Chile, Mexico, Germany, South Africa... '

'...late 1990s were a contentious time in California's redwood forests. The epidemic of Wall Street leveraged buyouts that started in the Reagan years had hit the redwoods hard, as trees more than a thousand years old were cut to pay off junk bond obligations. By 1997 fewer than five percent of the ancient redwoods that California had boasted a century before still remained, and most of that five percent was on the chopping block...'

'...for millennia the Tolowa, Yurok, and Chilula tribes, among others, lived behind an almost impenetrable redwood wall more than 300 feet high, eating salmon, elk, and tan oak acorns and carving long canoes from the logs that fell to the ground...'

'...each old coast redwood and giant sequoia tree is actually a forest in itself. Whole communities of plants and animals congregate under the tree-tops of these giants, thriving hundreds of feet off the ground, supported by the massive branches of the world's tallest and oldest trees. Ferns, shrubs like the huckleberry pictured here, moss, lichen, birds, salamanders, and tiny rodents all call the old redwoods home...'

'...emblematic species of the great forests—northern spotted owls, elusive little seabirds called marbled murrelets, and Coho salmon—continued their dangerous decline, while the reeling economy and housing bust were shuttering sawmills throughout the redwood range...'

'...redwoods are no less magical for foresters. Because their bark and heartwood are rich in compounds called polyphenols, bugs and decay-causing fungi don't like them. And since there's not a lot of resin in their stringy bark, larger redwoods are highly resistant to fire...'

'...perhaps the most amazing thing about redwoods is their ability to produce sprouts whenever the cambium—the living tissue just beneath the bark—is exposed to light. If the top breaks off or a limb gets sheared or the tree gets cut by a logger, a new branch will sprout from the wound and grow like crazy...'

'...Humboldt Redwoods State Park home to the largest contiguous block of old-growth redwood forest left on the planet—some 10,000 acres... the mix of rich soils, water, and fog rolling in from the ocean have produced the planet's tallest forest. Of the 180 known redwoods greater than 350 feet, more than 130 grow right here...'


'...Julia 'Butterfly' Hill Made Redwoods a Global Issue...'

'...The Giant Forest, a grove in Sequoia National Park, protects 41 named sequoia groups, including the President and, measuring only slightly bigger, Earth's most massive tree, the General Sherman...'









'...amongst striking discoveries... even the rate of growth of a big tree, not just its height or total volume, can increase during old age... The finding contradicts a long-held premise in forest ecology – that wood production decreases during the old age of a tree...'

'...they handle the weight and the cold with aplomb, as they handle so much else. They're a snow tree... That's their thing...'

'...today less than 5% of the roughly two million acres of virgin forest remains, mostly in parks and reserves throughout the range...'

That last extract came as a shock. She pulled back for a moment to rethink it all. Every day, every topic, provoked similar emotions – of excitement, fascination, desire to uncover the unknown. And every time it all led to concern which she could not avoid but rather build up into anger, disappointment, even nihilism. How could knowing be so enchanting and equally repulsive. She racked her brains in attempt to bring positive, uplifting news, to remind herself of how and when people care and appreciate. Because to hope was to keep the flame alive. Then, a sudden flashback:

**20140871**

**Sequoia sempervirens**

**Wiedmann #3**









'...A forest of 40 trees cloned from the tallest living things on Earth was planted in the bright spring sunshine at the Eden Project in Cornwall today (March 14 2016)... A partnership between the Eden Project in Cornwall, UK, and Archangel Ancient Tree Archive (AATA), based in northern Michigan, USA resulted in this historic planting... The grove of coast redwoods could live for 4,000 years and reach nearly 400ft in height. They grow naturally in Oregon and California so should thrive in Cornwall's mild, damp climate... As they grow, they will form an avenue of giants along the main entrance road to Eden... The first sapling in the ground was a clone of the Fieldbrook Stump, the remains of a famous northern Californian redwood which was felled in 1890 when it was around 3,500 years old... This is a unique archive, a living library of genetics that can be utilised for our generation and for hundreds of generation...'

She closed her eyes and as if she could visualize Eden. She had eye solely for the aesthetical. As if through binoculars, the two biomes and the road with all planted samples were displayed. Into detail, she inspected sample 20140871 - gazing at its red-brownish lined bark, encountering a fly inhabitant and even noticing its shapes being refracted by a crystal-clear water drop. She began to draw with light, soon enough leaving no blank space on that panel.

One more night was pinned into her 'mind map', with both the good and the bad, with both art and science, with both pasts and predictions. The next day she will probably wake up in a room made out of butterfly wings, animal skins or who knows what else, to learn another story and see another day. At the end, the metaphor of waking up is a message to humanity. Before we all start having nightmares portraying merely devastating news, we could communicate knowledge via visual and contextual stories, furthermore, participate in them ourselves. Thus, we will grow wisely with the pace of a redwood tree and draw our future beautifully like Fia did that morning.

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