



Caldecott, Elen & Cuthew, Lucy, 'Editor's Letter'

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Editor's Letter

Elen Caldecott & Lucy Cuthew

Elen

Leaf Journal is delighted to be publishing its first issue today.

That is too dry a sentence to describe how this actually feels. The truth is that I - Elen - am thrilled. Thrilled that, just over a year ago, Lucy Cuthew got in touch with me with an idea. She had heard, through mutual friends, that I'd been thinking about starting a journal for our discipline, for writing for young people in the academy. I *had* been thinking about it; I'd done some preliminary research and mentioned it to a few people. But then the pandemic hit, I got my first secure faculty post (with all the extra work that entailed), and launching a new journal was put so far on the back burner it dropped off the cooker completely. However, Lucy's message was galvanising. Lucy was galvanising. She was enthusiastic, passionate and joyful. She had a vision for a journal that would encourage new scholars and preserve the wonderful work we were both seeing from students who didn't think of themselves - yet - as researchers. My nascent idea for a journal had been that reading it would be like sitting beside a fireplace with a clever friend, hearing them talk about a new insight or idea; it would be collegiate, warm, fascinating. Our visions blended so well, I couldn't resist Lucy's offer to work together. And now, a year later, I'm thrilled that the vision is real. Thank you, Lucy, for being so inspiring.

Lucy

A year ago, when I got in contact with Elen to tentatively suggest starting a scholarly journal, I had only the loosest idea of what that might mean. I wanted to somehow capture the amazing, original research I saw being produced by the students I was teaching. I wanted to avoid students having to address the same questions, without the

benefit of the research and insight their predecessors had already produced. I had no idea how to start an academic journal, nor any idea how much work it would entail. Elen, however, did. Luckily she said yes right away. I already admired Elen professionally, but nothing could have prepared me for what a power-house she is. Working with Elen has been exactly like sitting beside a fireplace with a clever friend: a clever friend who knows how to get things. Without her knowledge, skill and dedication, there would be no *Leaf Journal*. It has been a lot of work, but it has been rewarding work; deep, fascinating and enriching work. The articles submitted to us have been original and insightful, the comments from our generous college of reviewers have been intelligent and thoughtful, and the authors of the papers you'll find here have been committed and delightful. It has been a joy. We all know that books for children matter; so too must *writing* for children. This is complex work we are engaged in, it is woven with ethical, personal, social and technical considerations. I'm so proud of our first issue of *Leaf Journal*. I hope these articles galvanise you, provoke you, inspire you. Thank you, Elen, for saying yes.

The eight articles published in Volume One are, by design, shorter than traditional scholarly articles. We hope that reading them might fit into a tea-break or a bus-ride. We hope you find this mix of established and emerging scholars akin to listening to the words of well-informed friends. These articles are for anyone with an interest in writing for young people. Please share them widely, engage with them, argue with them, build on them.

[Ash Bond](#) shares her passion for Greek mythology and takes us into the Underworld in her discussion of Melinda Salisbury's *Her Dark Wings* and her own work-in-progress *Daughters of Artemis*. [Charlotte Teeple-Salas](#) returns to the past in a different way as she explores the attraction of the time-slip novel, both for herself and for the wealth of publishing professionals interviewed in the article. [Carley Lee](#) also looks to industry expectations as she reflects on, and questions, the importance of hope in Middle Grade novels. [Noah Weisz](#)' article challenges the pervasive assumption that a style he calls the 'narration of emotion' is the best way to convey intensity in Young Adult fiction. Two of our authors write about Young Adult fiction and the patriarchy: [Zoe Marriott](#) considers four different retellings of *Beauty and the Beast* - including her own *Barefoot on the Wind* - and the intersection of class and gender in creative decisions made; [Sophie Clarke](#) advises the budding writer of feminist fiction on how best to create - and then destroy - a patriarchy. Finally, we have two authors whose articles consider the responsibilities of writers for young people: [Janette Taylor](#) asks how authors might exercise their duty of care when writing about suicide; [Mimi Thebo](#) begins a conversation regarding the ethical representation of animals in books for young people and asks whether Spivak's metaphor of 'the subaltern' might usefully be applied in this context. Each essay is an entertaining, insightful gem.

We can't conclude without thanking the people who made *Leaf Journal* possible.

To every single person who submitted an article to us, whether it has been published here or not, thank you for trusting us with your words. We know it isn't easy to submit something you've worked hard on for judgement and we are grateful you took the risk.

To our Editorial Board, thank you for your support and wisdom. It's great to know we have critical friends watching over us.

To the College of Reviewers - our massive, unending thanks. You are all experts in your field and you gave your time freely in order to support the sharing and dissemination of knowledge. You are the foundation of the academy.

To our respective universities - Lancaster University and Bath Spa University, thank you for the practical and financial help. The first year of this new journal was significantly easier because of you.

Volume Two of *Leaf Journal* is in the planning stages, as is our inaugural conference. So it doesn't stop here. Sign up to our [Mailing List](#) to hear our news and, if you'd like to get in touch with us, our email is: leafjournal@bathspa.ac.uk.

With our best wishes until next time,

Dr Elen Caldecott
Lucy Cuthew