

*What if the faculty of storytelling were not specifically human but rather the last remnant of our animal selves? (Amitav Ghosh, *Gun Island*)*

Tell the Untold!

An Environmental Writing Competition of the Rachel Carson Center

Stories about our world today are often negative, focusing on environmental crises, increasing displacement, and violence. Ever more disconnected from each other and the environment that sustains us, we seem to tread an irreversible path. How, then, could more positive futures come about? Perhaps from acknowledging the past, and perhaps from rethinking the role of storytelling and the nonhuman, as Indian novelist and thinker Amitav Ghosh has suggested in several of his fiction and nonfiction books, like *Gun Island* and *The Nutmeg's Curse*. The above quote suggests that the connection between storytelling and animality can provide inspiration in the creative process of imagining alternative (and potentially more hopeful) pasts, presents, and futures.

With this writing competition, the [Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society](#) (RCC) in Munich invites writers to submit works of 1) short fiction or 2) creative nonfiction that respond to the entangled social and ecological challenges of our contemporary world. Alternatively, participants of the competition are invited to 3) reflect in a short essay on the role and relevance of (literary) fiction, such as that of Amitav Ghosh or other environmental authors, for the environmental humanities. In the spirit of Ghosh's writing, which is known for its blending of historical realism with irrealist elements, submissions may also experiment with literary form.

The RCC will be awarding prizes in each of the following categories:

- Short Fiction Prize: €1000 (for texts up to 2500 words)
- Creative Nonfiction Prize: €1000 (for texts up to 2500 words)
- Reflective Essay Prize: €1000 (for texts up to 2500 words)

The winning submissions, as well as those that receive an honorable mention, will be published in an upcoming [virtual exhibition](#) related to an interdisciplinary RCC project on fictional literature and the environmental humanities. Authors will retain the full copyrights to their texts; however, at the time of submission they must agree to publication, which is scheduled to appear on the RCC's [Environment and Society Portal](#) in early 2026.

The international prize committee consists of both scholars and writers. The competition is open to all except current employees of LMU Munich.

Please submit your text, indicating the category you are submitting for, along with a short biographical paragraph (up to 200 words) in one PDF file **through this webform** <https://www.portal.graduatecenter.lmu.de/ocgc/rcc-writing-competition> **by 6 June 2025**. The winners will be announced in late August 2025.

For questions, please contact writingcompetition@rcc.lmu.de.

The competition is part of the "[Strengthening the Environmental Humanities](#)" project (2020–2026) funded under the "University of the Future Project" line of the Volkswagen Foundation.