**KERSTIN FIRMIN**

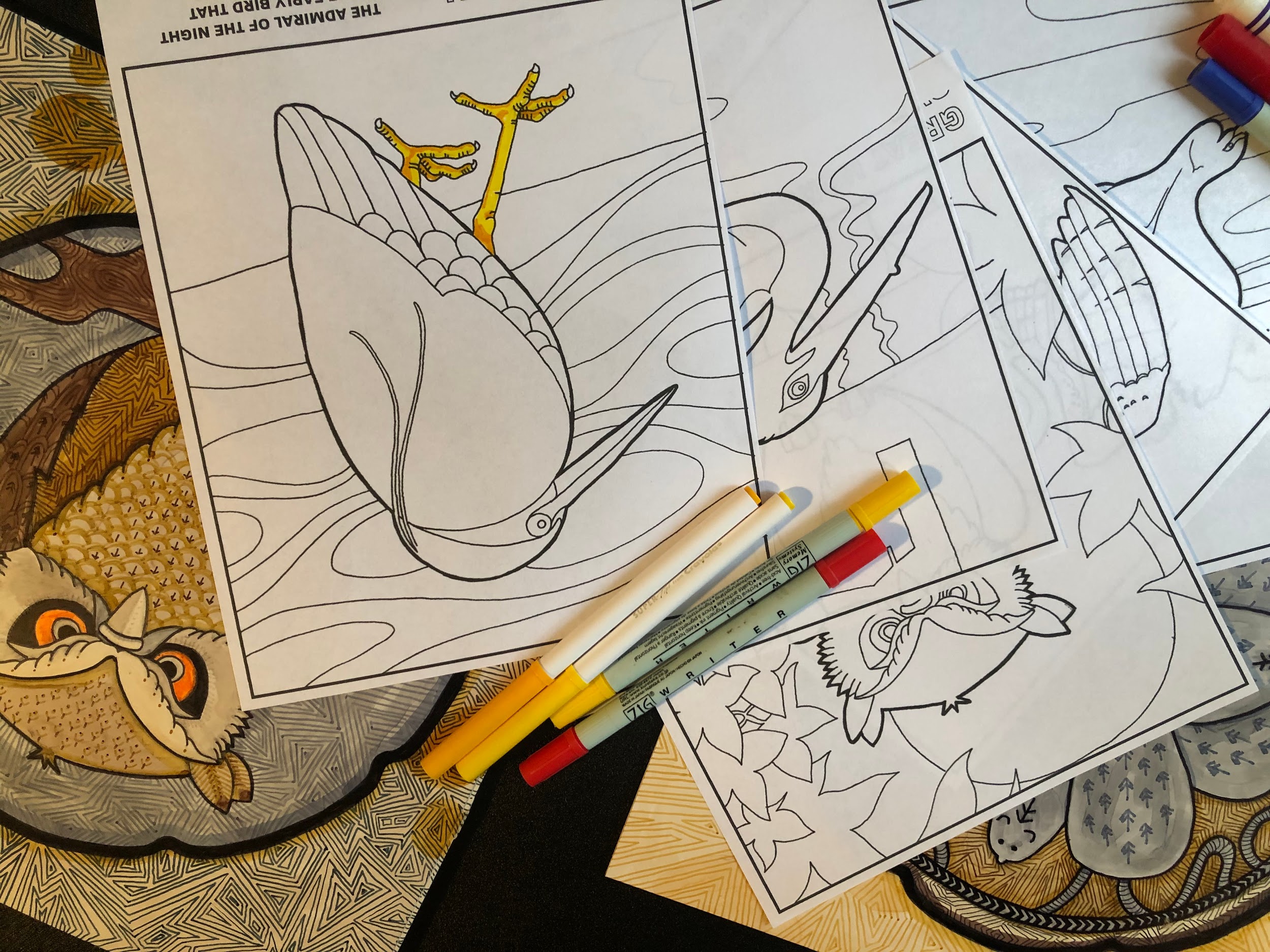
[**WILD LIFE REFUGE**](https://kerstinfirmin.myportfolio.com/)

Photography and Illustration

This is my love letter to Lake Merritt, my refuge. During the current shelter-in-place crisis, access to nature and open, public spaces is more critical than ever. Even as we self-isolate to protect public health, our physical and mental health depends on fresh air and safe space to breathe[[1]](#footnote-0).

There are many inequities in access to outdoor space. Private outdoor space frequently remains the privilege of property owners, residents of newer luxury apartments and suburban apartment complexes. A recent study also showed that areas with higher income and education were found to have significantly better access to public open space[[2]](#footnote-1). That is why urban public open spaces like the Lake Merritt Wildlife Refuge are so critical.

If you feel stuck indoors, without easy access to nature, I am sharing these photos and coloring pages for you. [Download the coloring book pages](https://kerstinfirmin.myportfolio.com/) and share them with kids of all ages around you.



1. <https://www.gih.org/views-from-the-field/the-urgent-need-for-nature-during-and-after-covid-19/> [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2019/03/inequality-parks-and-green-space-income-race-research/585166/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)