

*The drinks are cold, the spotlight is hot, and Luxury Literature sits with the minds behind the magazines. Don't flinch when they kill your darlings. Welcome to Gold Leaf Lounge, Tara. We will see you in now.*

*Luxury Literature Magazine (LLM):* How would you describe Callistra's identity?

*Tara (T):* I like to think of us as a magazine that aims to give everyone a chance to see their work published regardless of any background they may have. A lot of times, pieces get rejected because there are personal biases against certain submissions, or they don't fit certain themes to a T, the genre they're in isn't one that is accepted or because there are too many submissions already. We want to remove these barriers in our magazine. Even though our issue 01 subs aren't open yet (we're working very excitedly to open them soon!), when we do open submissions, there won't be any specific genres or submission criteria. And we'll try to have at least a 70% acceptance rate.

*LLM:* When reading submissions, do you read as a poet first or an editor first? Or are those lenses inseparable for you?

*T:* A poet! It's honestly a running joke with my friends at this point that anytime they want a review on a piece, the first thing I'll say is OMG, I LOVEEEEEEE ITTT and then I'll ask if they want an editor's POV and suggest a zillion changes to it. I'm a big fan of every good submission I come across because as an artist, I know the thought and emotion that goes into it, which is why you'll always find me trying to accept as many subs as I can when we do open our submissions.

*LLM:* What's something you've learned from another role or job that you've brought into Callistra?

*T:* So long story short, I was once a Vice-chairperson to this really mean girl in an MUN and by the end of the conference she'd managed to make everyone (including me) cry. I'd learnt one crucial leadership skill that day, if you're leading a team, your first priority should always be the morale and comfort of that team. You can never get efficiency or productivity if your team isn't happy and motivated. So, I try to be kind, motivating and as fun as I can. I'm still not perfect, but I'm learning and trying to do better. And I'm immensely grateful to the Callistra Team for being such wonderful colleagues and friends!

*LLM:* If your magazine had a signature scent inspired by the poems it publishes, what notes would it include?

*T:* Ooh, since our theme for May is stars and universe based, I'd say a hint of lavender, petrichor (that's the smell of the first rain) and mangoes. I don't know how to explain why, but that is what my synesthetic brain says.

*LLM:* Describe your dream submission.

*T:* A piece that is raw, powerful and resonates with my soul. And while that is a very general description, there is no other concept of an ideal submission for me because like I said, every piece has character and I will fall irrevocably in love with it if it's a good one, and for a new magazine like us, every submission we get would be a dream come true!