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Personal Statement
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My love for the environment started at a young age, my family life was chaotic to say the least, and nature was always a place I felt safe and calm. I have a special obsession with plants, when I am in the forest, they are what I see. I want to know what they are, how they fit into the ecosystem and how they fit into human culture.

The study of ethnobotany has been something I have done as a hobby, and professionally through my work at Quiet Heart Wilderness School. Through my work at Quiet Heart, I have learned edible, medical and utilitarian uses of plants and gained lots of practical experience using plants. To learn more, I took a deep dive into guide books about the plants and local ecology and found I love learning about ecosystems and plants. As my knowledge deepened, I taught more and more classes that focused on plants, and found I love teaching and seeing my students grow in their connection with nature.

Because of my love for plants and the medicinal value they hold, I thought I wanted to become a doctor and heal people with herbs, so I went to Western Washington University and studied Neuroscience. It was a degree that had a good deal of classes in both Biology and Psychology which allowed me to learn about several different areas of science I found interesting and helpful. Psychology had the benefit of helping me understand the people around me and biology helped me understand the world around me. Throughout college I kept teaching at Quiet Heart on weekends and in the summer, and planned on it being something I would always do part time, because it lit me up like nothing else did. I studied hard, but failed to have the extreme passion for neuroscience that I had for the earth.

When I graduated, I returned to work at Quiet Heart over the summer before getting a job at a medical lab at UW. The job at the lab was not what I expected. I had hoped that I would find the work rewarding and exciting, but unfortunately I found it to be soul crushing and longed to be outside teaching again.

I applied for a job at Mount Rainier Institute, which is a University of Washington run outdoor education center, and I got the job and headed to the mountains. At this job, I loved learning and teaching about ecology, and being surrounded by people who had adjacent passions. I loved getting to bring kids into the woods and see them light up as they saw their first old growth tree, or learned they could eat a plant they walked by for most of their lives without noticing it. Outdoor education work is very seasonal, so at the end of my spring season, I lined up work in Yosemite national park for the summer, and there I got to explore a whole new region with different plants and different natural history. I loved exploring the new to me ecosystems. After working seasonally in Yosemite, I got a job back up in Washington at North Cascades Institute, where I continued learning and growing in my knowledge of ecology and plants. At

this job I got to work with kids from all different backgrounds, many of whom had never been in the woods before and I loved it.

       In the spring I signed up for a Ethnobotany Course at a school called Ravens Roots, and learned even more about plants, ethnobotany and ecology. The course covered the unique bioregions in Washington, and each month we would go to a different area of the state and learn about the plants there. I want to learn more, which is why I am applying to graduate school in Environmental Studies. Through this program, I want to learn more about the ecologies I love, and research ethnobotany as a path forward in our struggling world. People have lost touch with the earth, and I believe that finding connection with nature can help solve the climate crisis we are facing on earth. Through understanding of historical and present day tending of the earth by people who have lived in harmony for thousands of years, we can find solutions and come to a time where people live with the earth in harmony instead of making war with it.