

Shelter

In May of 2011, while visiting Malalangwe, a private reserve in Southeast Zimbabwe, I had the delightful opportunity to spend time with a team of elephant researcher', Sharon Pincott, an Australian, and Dumi Mayo, her Zimbabwean assistant. Together they had spent twelve years studying the migratory habits of the "presidential herd" of elephants in Hwange National Park. Many of the families of these elephants had become so comfortable with the researchers, that they would parade their babies right up to the vehicle: one family, the "L's" led by "Lady" even touched us.

In "Shelter", which depicts three members of the "W's" - "Whole", the matriarch, and her sister, "Wilda" are sheltering "Wholes" unnamed baby from the sun with their bodies. The birds, cattle egrets, which follow the herds to eat insects, which are stirred up by elephant's passage through the grass, are carrying nesting material, created by the stem of one of the mango leaves also imbedded in this paper.

"Shelter" celebrates the gentler, maternal side of these wondrous creatures!