

Silent, swift, refreshing the breeze, the song
of sweet birds, the buzz of the bees. I
remember this sound from front and to
back the wisp of the grass,
the train on the track.

This experience changed my life you see.
Not just “nature’s call,” the nature in
me.

I’ve learned so much, discovered
much more, the clouds, the plants,
It’s just not a bore.

The woods are there, the river’s
waves to and fro, from crickets to deer,
they have nowhere to go.

Just remember that nature is earth’s floor.
Care for it, nurture it, and it will be there
ever more.

- Emma G.

5th Grade

Sandlake Elementary - Holmen

1st Place - Poetry

Roses are red. Violets are blue.
The refuge is kind and quiet, too.
The only sound is the flock of birds, and the breeze
swaying.
My eyes are squinting up at the sun.
As I write what I see:
I see the sun shining.
I hear the birds' wings.
I taste the coldness of the breeze.
I feel the pointy grass as it touches my hand.
I smell the earth that I sit upon.
I had fun.
But now it is time to go'
Leaving only my footprints behind.

- Keena N.
5th Grade
Sand Lake Elementary – Holmen
2nd Place - Poetry

Amazingly over the lake,
I see the swans.
Never before have my eyes
See such a wonderful sight.
A moment to remember forever
For sure!

-Adeline F.
5th Grade
Sand Lake Elementary - Holmen
3rd Place - Poetry

The Trip to the Marsh

Excitement bubbled up in my stomach as I sat down on the leather seats of the school bus. In moments, it roared to life and slowly picked up speed. Faster, faster, and faster, we went leaving Sand Lake behind us, as third grade drove to the best place on earth.

After a bumpy ride over the black, concrete streets, the bus screeched to a stop. The doors opened and a woman climbed on. She was wearing a light brown uniform with dark brown pants. Printed on her shoulder was, "Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge" in white letters on a blue background. She explained that today we were going to collect seeds. I grabbed my dad's shoulder tightly and tugged.

"I'm so excited!" I whispered when he looked down at me.

"I'm sure you are," he replied.

The brief introduction didn't last long and after the chaos of us getting off the bus, we were separated into groups.

Then we were off! Marching noisily on the path through the marsh, we all kept a keen eye out for any of the seeds that we needed.

As we grabbed reed seeds, water splashed up my rubber boots and it's cool, sticky surface stuck to my legs. In the distance, a bird sang its song.

"I think that's a chick-a-dee," I told my dad.

"You could be right," he said in return.

As we continued, the rangers kept pointing out different seeds and plants.

"Look!" I said, pointing to the geese flying overhead.

"Those geese are flying south for the winter," the ranger explains.

"Cool!" I whispered.

As we continued, I felt quiet, at peace and one with nature. The sounds of birds in the distance, the wind blowing in my hair, and the sound of the grass and insects.

My heart was aching with sorrow when my father and the ranger said it was time to go.

Slowly, I trudged onto the bus and as we sped away, I longed to be there in the woods.

-Autumn B., 5th Grade
Sandlake Elementary – Holmen
1st Place - Personal Narrative