

Invitations for a Poetry Field Trip

“If you want to learn from a tree, go to a tree.”

~ Basho

Talk, or ask questions, to something alive in nature (tree, insect, bird)

- Find something alive and “zoom in” on it.
- Look at it from up close and far away and from different angles.
- Sketch it. Describe it.
- What do you want to say to or ask this thing? What do you wonder?
- Sample poem:

OH TREE

*Oh tree, oh tree, how does it feel
to be blown in the wind,
oh tree, oh tree, how does it feel
to have birds light on your leaves?
Oh person, oh person, it feels just great
to have them land on me,
and the wind makes me feel free.*

~ Russell, 4th grade

The Poetry Studio, Marlboro, VT

Listen, Look, and Create Comparisons

- Close your eyes and listen for at least two minutes.
- Give your attention to the variety of sounds. Enjoy. Wonder.
- List the sounds you hear, and where you hear them (far or near, behind or in front)
- Think about other things that make similar sounds and create comparisons.
- Sample poem:

TREES TALK

*Trees talk
All the time
They yell
They whisper
They even rhyme
When they're mad
They blow their leaves
Sometimes they let out a deep s-i-g-h
They tell the truth
They even lie.*

~ Erin Kopal, age 11

from River of Words: Young Poets and Artists on the Nature of Things

Wish for something in nature

- Look around and listen outdoors.
- Notice what catches your attention and imagination.
- Is there anything you wish you could do, or something you want to become?
- Is there anything in nature you want to change, or share with someone?
- Sample poem:

THE TOP OF THE MAPLE

*The top of the maple
where birds sit and rest
and where little caterpillars
nibble emerald green leaves.*

*I wish I was one of those summer green leaves,
sunlight oozing through me,
I wish I could sit on the highest bough
of the maple
and touch the sapphire blue sky.
The top of the maple.*

~ 8 year old poet

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Notice changes in nature: What looks, sounds, or feels different from the last time you were in this same place?

- Make a list of what you saw, felt, or heard before and compare it to right now
- What do you notice or want to ask about changes in nature?
- How does spring feel different from the winter: for you, for other living things?
- Sample poem:

SEASONS

*The seasons change
so much for the plum tree
one day with leaves
and another
without.*

~ Derek Wyant, age 11

from River of Words: Young Poets and Artists on the Nature of Things