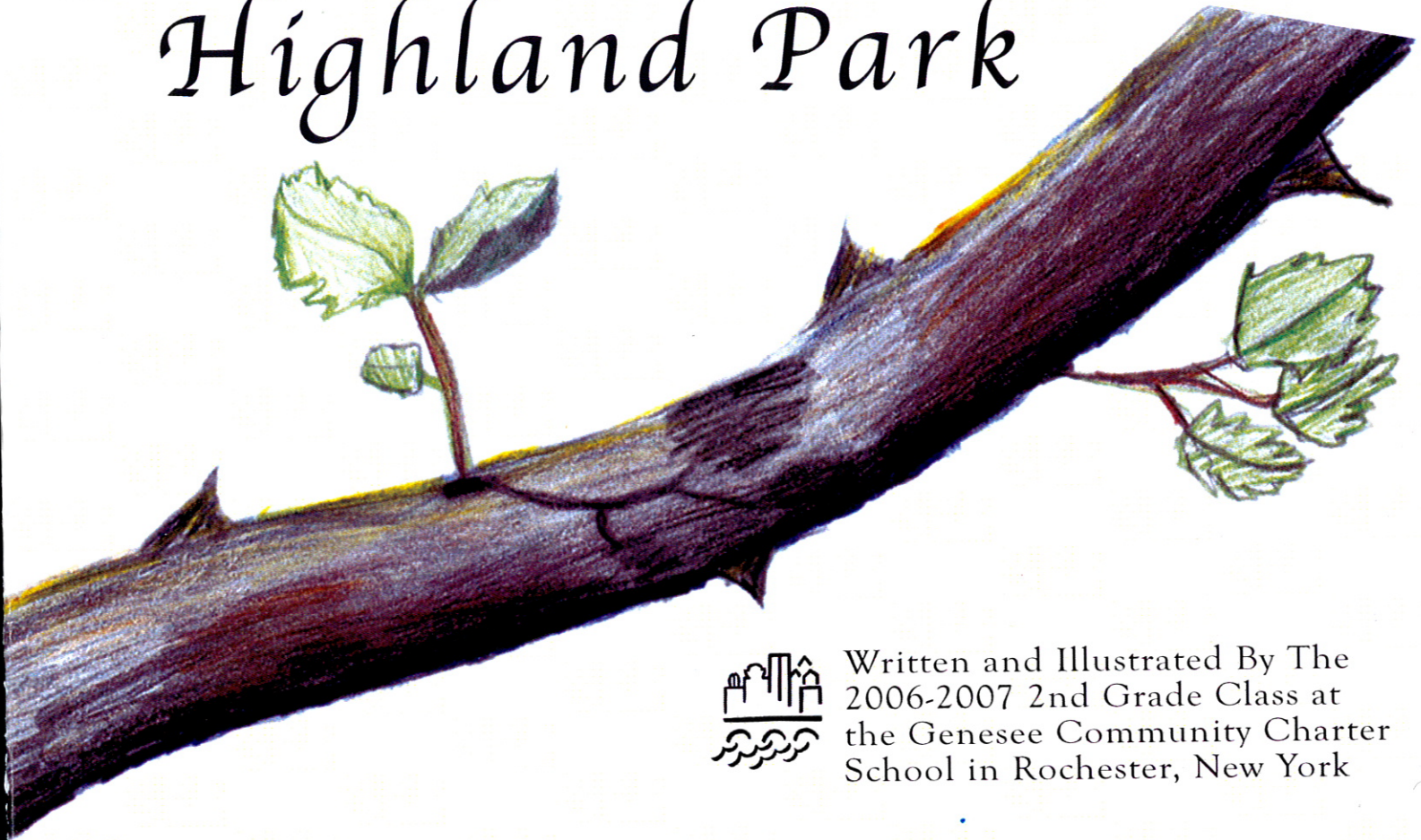


# A Walk Through Highland Park



Written and Illustrated By The  
2006-2007 2nd Grade Class at  
the Genesee Community Charter  
School in Rochester, New York



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at the Rochester Museum & Science Center  
657 East Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14607



## Introduction

This book is the final product our class created at the end of a 3-month Learning Expedition called *A Walk Through Highland Park*. During our expedition we had field studies to different habitats, we cared for animals in the classroom, and guest experts helped us learn about the Animal Kingdom. Each student researched an animal that lives in Highland Park and took notes about their habitat, life cycle, adaptations, and place in the food web. Students also visited the park several times to sketch and write about their animal. Our writing focus was on using descriptive language to paint a picture in the reader's mind, and also to use specific and accurate words to teach people what we learned. We decided to create this book so others could learn and enjoy a walk through Highland Park.

We want to thank several people in particular who helped us with our expedition. Mrs. Carol Southby from the Rochester Botanical Society took us on our first walk through the park, and Teresa Stango-Listrani and Holly Ragusa from the Rochester Museum & Science Center attended field studies with us and provided animals for our classroom. Thank you to the staff from *Wild Wings* and the Seneca Park Zoo for the experiences they provided, and to all the parents who drove and made our field studies to the park possible. Finally, thanks to Mr. Tim Fuss from *Pixelwave* who took numerous photos used in this book.

To learn about The Genesee Community Charter School visit [www.gccschool.org](http://www.gccschool.org) and for information about Expeditionary Learning Schools visit [www.elschools.org](http://www.elschools.org).



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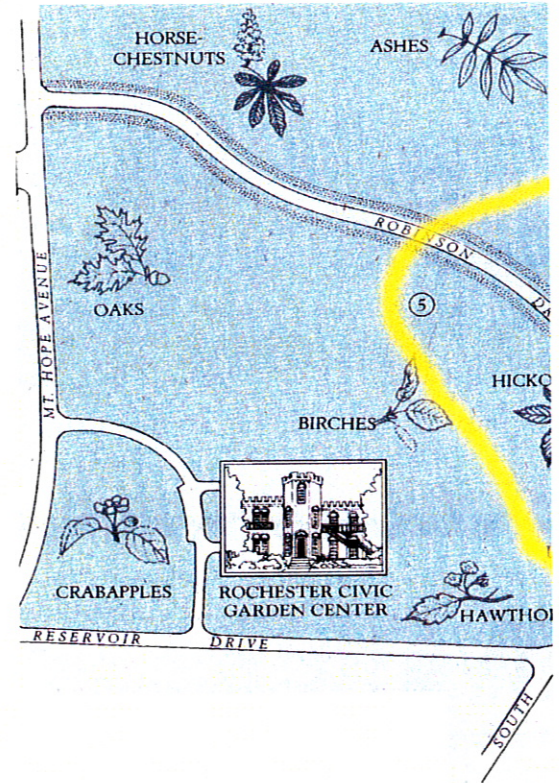
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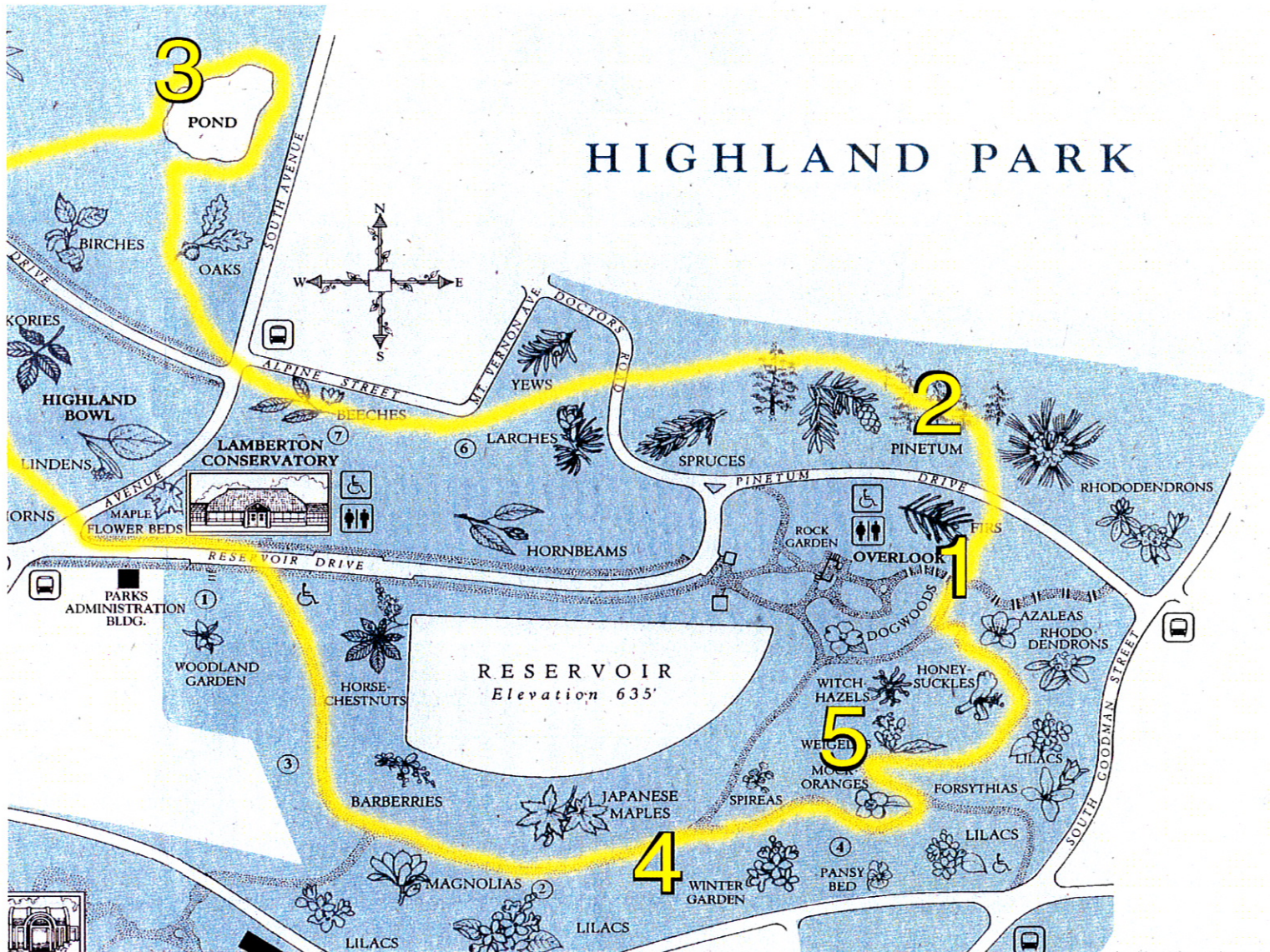
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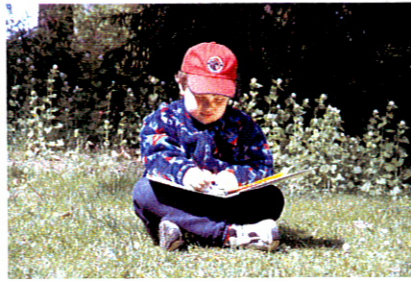
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# HIGHLAND PARK



# Stop 1



## Born Naked and Helpless

By Noah W.

**O**n a moist, muggy, misty day a small Yellow Bellied Sap-sucker's body is born naked and helpless from a small white egg. The naked bird cracks open a small white egg sitting in a nest made with twigs and mud in the cavity of a tall pine tree. Squawking for sweet sap and arthropods (bugs) to eat.

**A**s this great bird starts to get older, stronger, and bigger it starts to peck, drill, fly, and find its own food. Its sharp, long beak makes it easier to slurp down sap, arthropods, and small bits of fruit. Now as fall ends, winter starts and the only eastern bird that's completely migratory starts its migration to find better sap, juicier fruit, and more arthropods.

**S**oon after winter ends and spring begins in Rochester, the Yellow Bellied Sap-sucker returns to build a new nest. Another small bird is born naked and helpless from a small white egg.

**A**nd as it becomes older and stronger it finds its own sap, fruit, and arthropods. Now as winter starts another bird starts its migration. And when that migration ends you know what happens. The Sap-sucker family becomes one bird bigger. A new nest is built and a new life starts when a new bird is born.

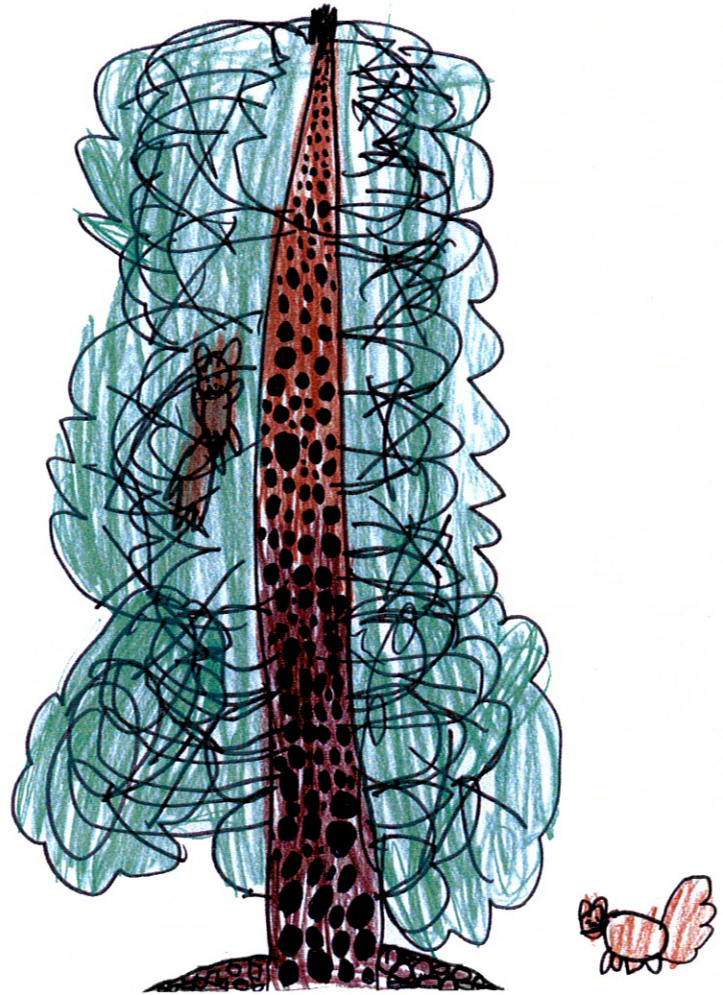
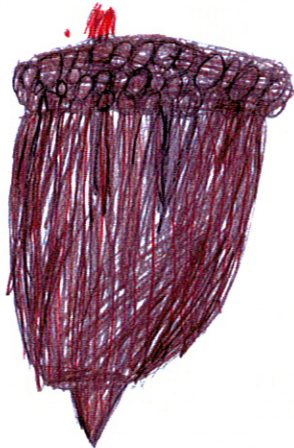


*This tree is great for Yellow Bellied Sap-suckers to nest in a cavity in the tree or get sap from it, and it's a great place to have young.*

# I Am A Squirrel

By Brian C.

I am a soft, bushy, brown tree squirrel.  
I am storing acorns and nuts for the winter.  
Foxes, raccoons, hawks, and owls always  
want to eat me.  
I hear a predator.  
I am scurrying up my tree to my home.  
I am safe.  
I am a squirrel.



*Squirrels like trees because predators can't get them.*



# I Am An Earthworm

By Webster K.

I am one of the coolest animals on earth.

I am a worm.

When I was young I emerged from a round yellow cocoon.

My habitat is amazing.

The grey rocks sit and protect me from the robins pecking at the ground.

The trees' leaves are like a curtain against the bright blazing sun.

I migrate deep under the rich soft soil and cuddle with a hundred worms.

In spring I tunnel toward the top of the dirt.

Suddenly a robin dives for me.

I cling to my burrow with my chatae and I win the tug of war.

It gets my head but I can regrow it with my five brains.

I spot my favorite food, a decaying willow leaf.

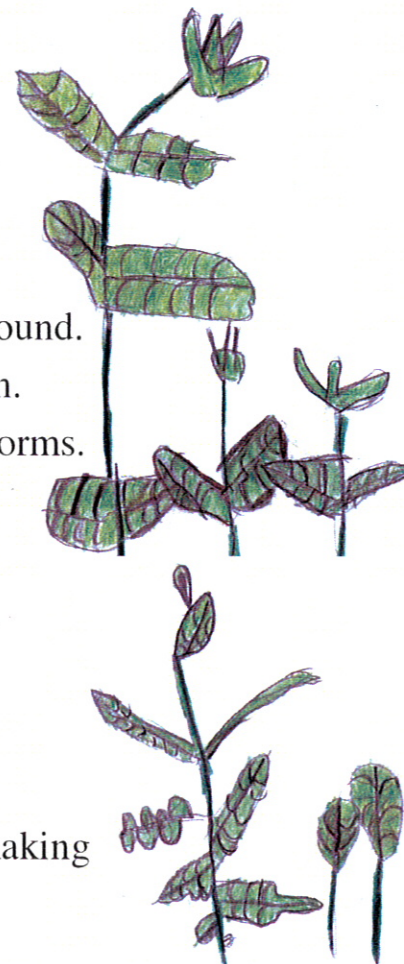
I breathe and drink with my slimy moist skin.

I stretch out and receive sperm cells from another worm and start making  
eggs.

A ring forms on my body.

It slides forward gets the eggs and fertilizes them.

A new life has begun.



*The plants protect the worms from birds and the sun, and in return the worms let the plants' roots breathe.*

**T**he fly races to a dead rat  
Beating its wings over 200 times a second

It lands

Suddenly the fly regurgitates on its food to  
soften it and then he sponges it up

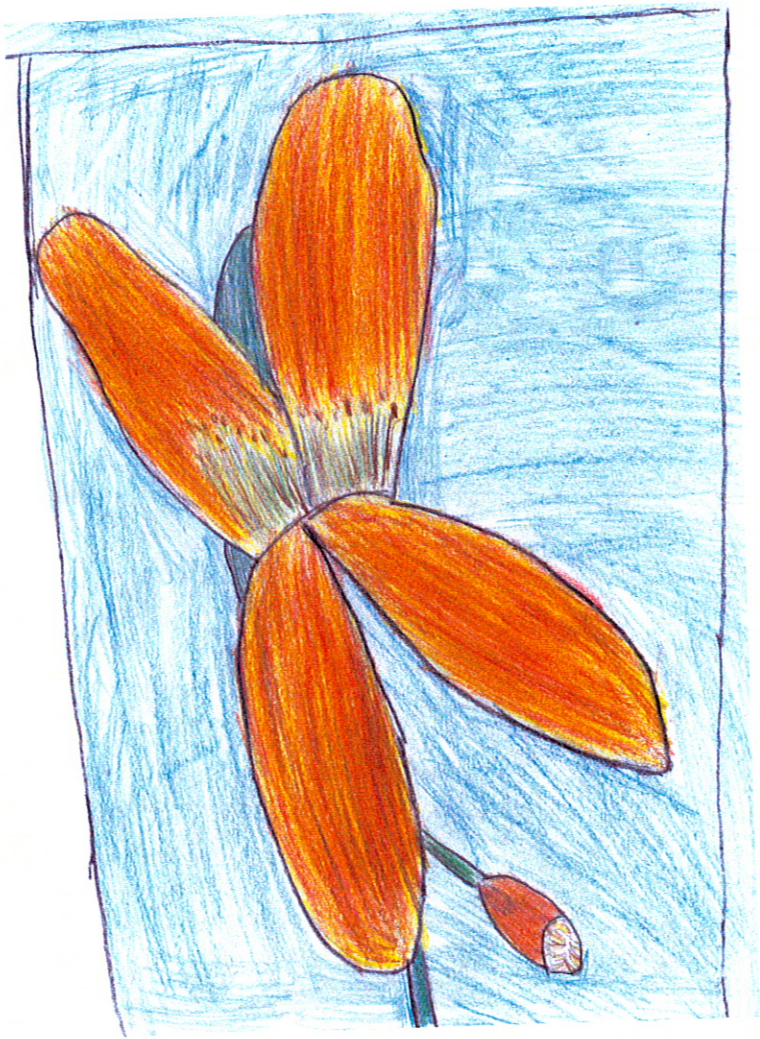
As the fly eats, it looks around with four  
thousand eyes for predators like a skunk or  
dragonfly

There are no predators around

Slowly, the fly walks away from the rat

Quickly, he jumps up and backwards and  
soars into the air to a tree

*By David T.*



*A flower would be a safe place for flies to lay eggs.*

## The Robin's Life Cycle

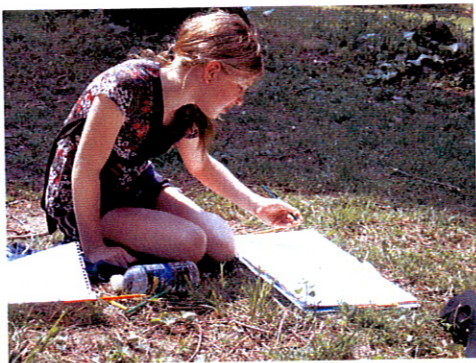
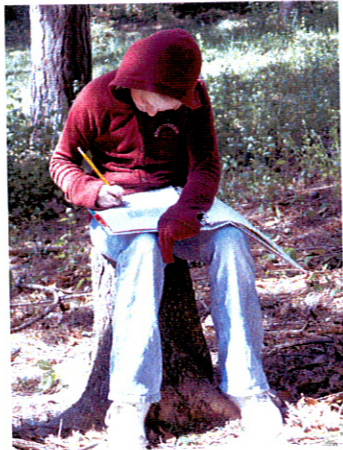
*By Peter C.*

A robin soars over a field. She lands on a green Pine tree. Soon a humble nest is made. Seven light blue robin eggs are laid. Nineteen days later they hatch. The male robin comes along. He feeds the baby robins a juicy earthworm. Ten of the robin's neighbors help chase a crow away from eating a baby robin. The family starts to migrate to the southern parts of Highland Park- then they keep on going. The babies learn how to fly. Two of the robins leave their small nest. They perch in small berry bushes. The other robins want to wait for a while then they leave. They find males and females. Then the circular cycle starts all over again.



*This tree is a place that robins would find fallen berries, bugs, and worms.*

# Stop 2



June 2007

Dear Great Horned Owl,

Hey! I need to tell you something. I would like to live my life peacefully. I know it's part of the food chain that you eat me but could you eat something else, like mice? When I'm clumsily walking back and forth on a log hoping to catch a bug and you're hungry and up and about at night, you come swooping in trying to catch me for dinner. I hear you because I have very keen ears to hear your silent flight! I hiss! I clack my teeth. I arch my back. I stomp. Then I put my body into a U shape. I raise my long bushy tail and then I fire my strong smelling musk oil that scares you and other predators away.

Listen I'm using my words but you won't listen to me and I don't like that!!!! And you know that I'm an omnivore and eat meat and plants so I can still eat you, hah hah !!!!!!!!

Sincerely, Your Prey,  
The Striped Skunk

(Lydia R.)



*The striped skunk looks for bugs  
in the shade and trees.*

In the high grass and dirt of the meadows, the male snake camouflages with its green and brown stripes up and down its body.

He slithers in the path of a female, searching to find a mate and when he does...

He fights another male to see who is stronger.

The female watches.

She makes her choice.

The garter snake is stronger.

He wins the combat dance.

He will make a good father and he can protect his family.

His babies will be strong.



*This tree is a wonderful place for a Black Rat snake to slither up and make a home. The ground under this tree is a comfy area for a Garter snake.*

*By Emma S.*

# I Am A Bat

By Danielle M.

I am a nocturnal, hunting bat.

My big ears help me listen to my echo to  
find my prey.

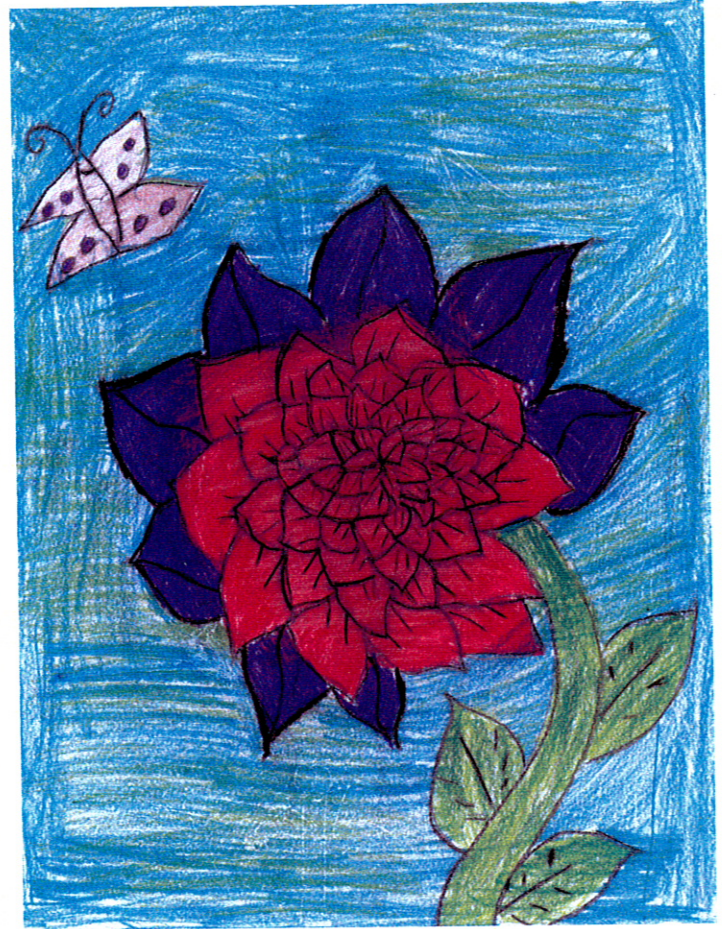
When my echo comes back I know where  
to find flies and mosquitoes.

I use my stretchy and rubbery wings to fly  
quickly towards my prey.

During the day I sleep upside down by  
hanging from my toes.

And then I wake up at night to hunt.

That's why I am a nocturnal, hunting bat.

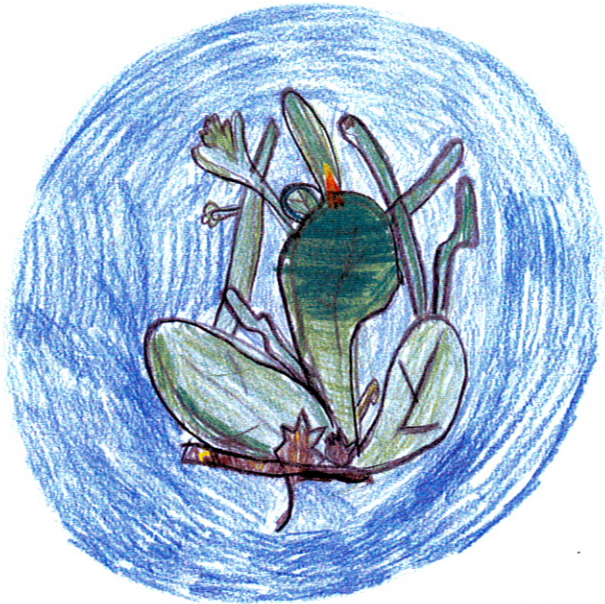


*The hungry bat eats the juicy mosquito after it drinks  
nectar from the colorful flower.*

# The Masked Robber

By Grace C.

The trash guard searches through the damp, heavy piles of leaves.



*A raccoon would find insects in a patch of grass.*

Insects and earthworms scurry to hide.

Her flexible hands reach down to accomplish her stomach's mission.

Her ears listen for danger.

She waits uphill for lights to sparkle away.

Her clever mind races through mazes and she reaches her den.



# I Am A Chipmunk

*By Jessica V.*



*Pinecones are something chipmunks might use  
because chipmunks eat them.*

I am a chipmunk

I am smaller than a loaf of bread

There are five furry black stripes on my back

In my fur is the color light reddish brown

My mother chipmunk gave birth to me

In the winter we all hibernate underground in our  
burrows

Every few days we wake up to eat

In the spring, my mother always goes to a tree that  
has pinecones and acorns

In the daytime we scurry for nuts

We put the nuts in pouches inside our necks and  
take them back to our burrow

I am a chipmunk

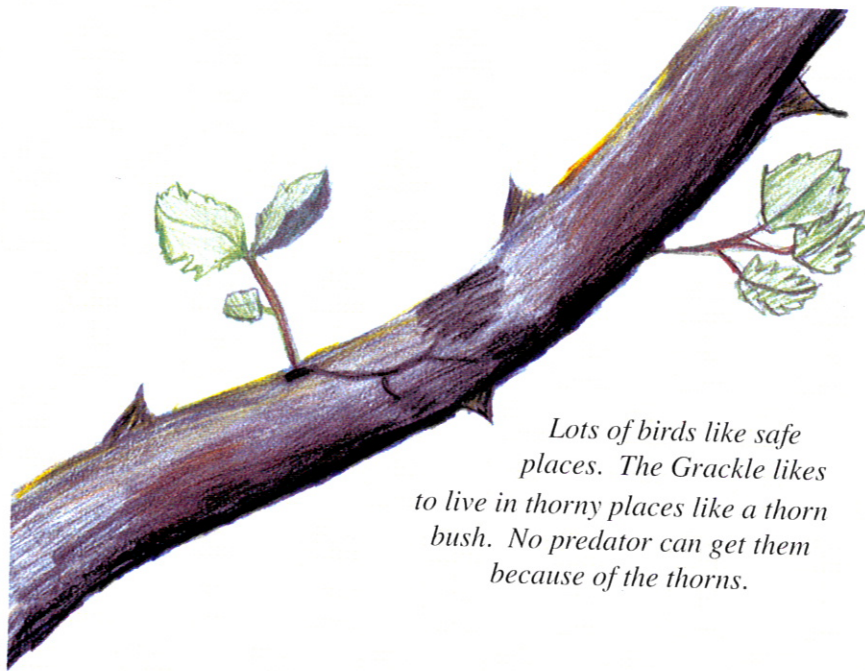
# Stop 3



June 2007

Dear Flock,

Yes it's me the Grackle, who perches on the gigantic branch of the pine tree and leaps down and splashes around in the pond. The one whose scratchy voice sounds like a rusty gate. Then... I soar through farms and cities, pushing my way through the flower gardens. So now you know it's me. So here is the reason I sent this card: I met a female Grackle. The weirdest thing happened. I puffed up my feathers and spread my wings and tail. We built a nest of woody stems, leaves, grass, string, and dirt and I put in mud and hair. Then... she laid three eggs and we sat on them for two weeks. This afternoon I spied an earthworm slithering around. I speeded down towards it. I stretched my beak open wide and gulped it down. When I perched up I heard a sound of chirping birds. The eggs have hatched! So I hope now you know what happened to me!



*Lots of birds like safe places. The Grackle likes to live in thorny places like a thorn bush. No predator can get them because of the thorns.*

Sincerely,  
The Common Grackle  
(Brienne S.)

# The Cricket

By Katherine F.

A field cricket leaps out of its tunnel to see the peaceful, dark night.

It starts looking for food with its long antennae.

Two field crickets suddenly see the same insect and dart for it at the same time.

The faster cricket gets the insect.

A male cricket starts chirping with his front wings and tries to attract a female cricket.

The female cricket wants to chirp but cannot.

She is attracted by the beautiful song.

A gentle breeze carries the tune over the meadow.



*This would probably be a good place for a cricket because tree crickets are a dark brownish-green color, and crickets would be blended in with the tree's dark color.*

June 2007



*This would be a great place for a deer to munch  
on some grass and have a good rest.*

Dear Grass,

I love your juicy goodness. It feels so good to wake up and munch on you. Mmmmmhhhhh. I am sorry when I eat you but you are part of the food chain and I am an herbivore. You get energy from the sun and when I eat you I get energy from you. You are so tasty when I grind you with my flat teeth. I am also sorry when I smush you flat. I do not mean to, but when my fawn and I sleep on you you're so comforting. In the winter I miss you. I have to eat bark from the trees and other woody plants when I can't find you. I love you very much.

Sincerely,

Deer

(Taliha S.)

# Adaptations Of A Rabbit

By Cienna C.



*This habitat provides food for a rabbit. It has good hiding spots and homes.*

**F**ields of grass and blooming flowers  
bending in the gentle breeze.

A hungry rabbit slowly hops into a  
grassland.

She calmly munches on grass and clover.

Powerful ears twitch.

Out of the bushes pops a fox.

The Eastern Cottontail's strong back legs  
spring into action.

It leaps into the air and darts into its  
burrow.

The Eastern Cottontail escapes.

The female mosquito feeds on slimy, juicy blood for its nutrition.

It lays its eggs on the surface of the smooth water.

The tiny, squirmy larva squirms out of the egg.

The upside-down larva breathes through an air tube.

Soon it turns into a pupa.

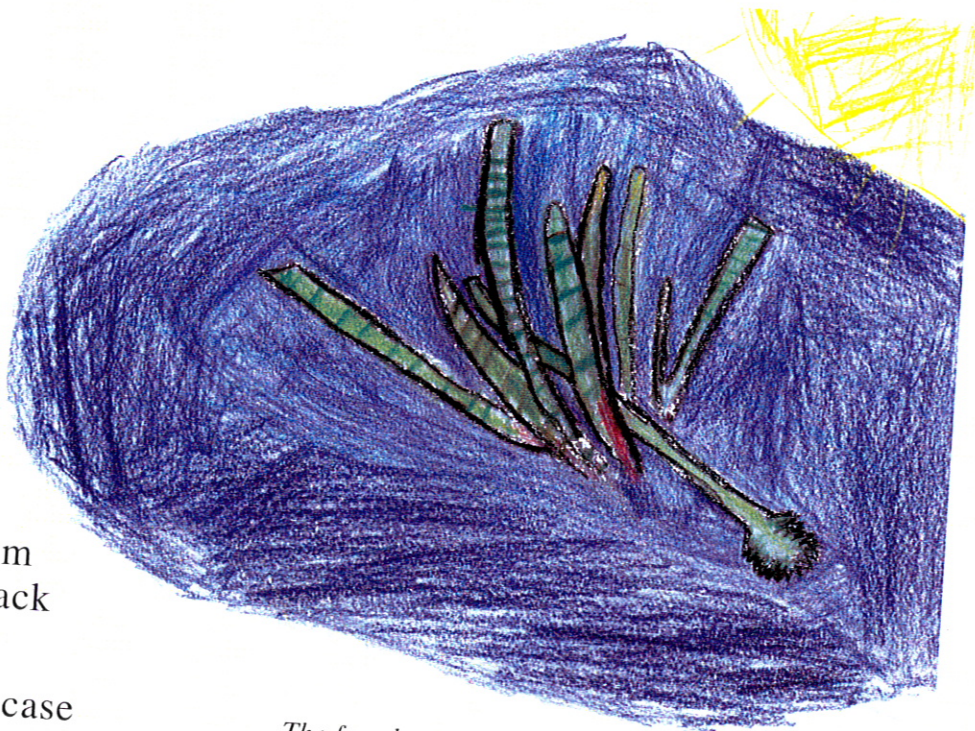
The pupa can swim away from danger with its little, strong back fins.

Finally, the pupa rises out of its case and turns into a mosquito.

The mosquito's pair of antennae that reach forward help it sense its world.

The male and female mosquitoes feed on yummy nectar, but the female mosquito feeds on slimy juicy blood.

*By Shawn O.*



*The female mosquito would lay her eggs by the reeds.*

# I Am A Male Mallard Duck

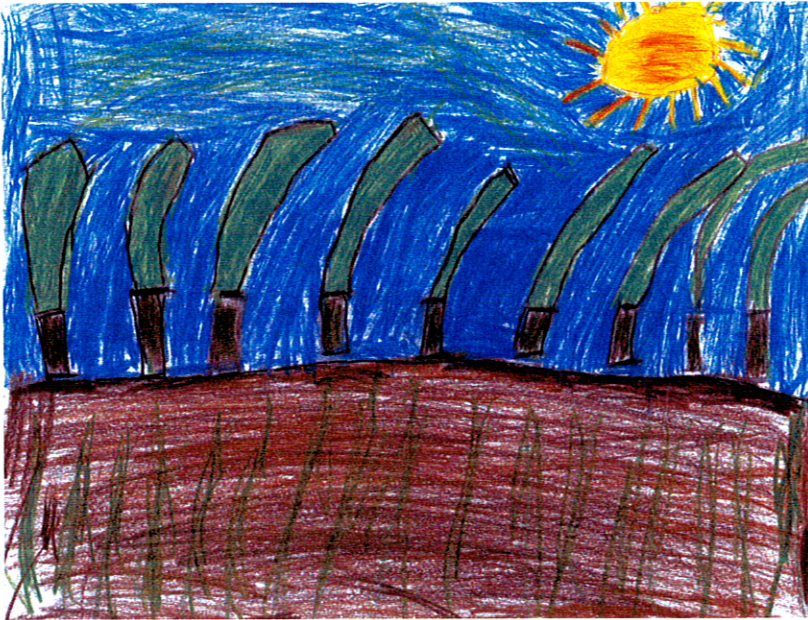
I have a wide bill to put oil on me to protect my feathers from the water.

The water runs down my back like it's rolling down a slight ramp.

I have a bright green head to attract a mate.

I am not a diving duck.

I am a dabbling duck and my food is on the surface of the shallow water.



*The Mallard duck looks into the shallow water.*

I grab my prey by tipping my head into the water, my tail angling up into the air.

I push my head below the surface. I am searching for a big, fat, juicy frog or insect.

I have found my prey and I devour it.

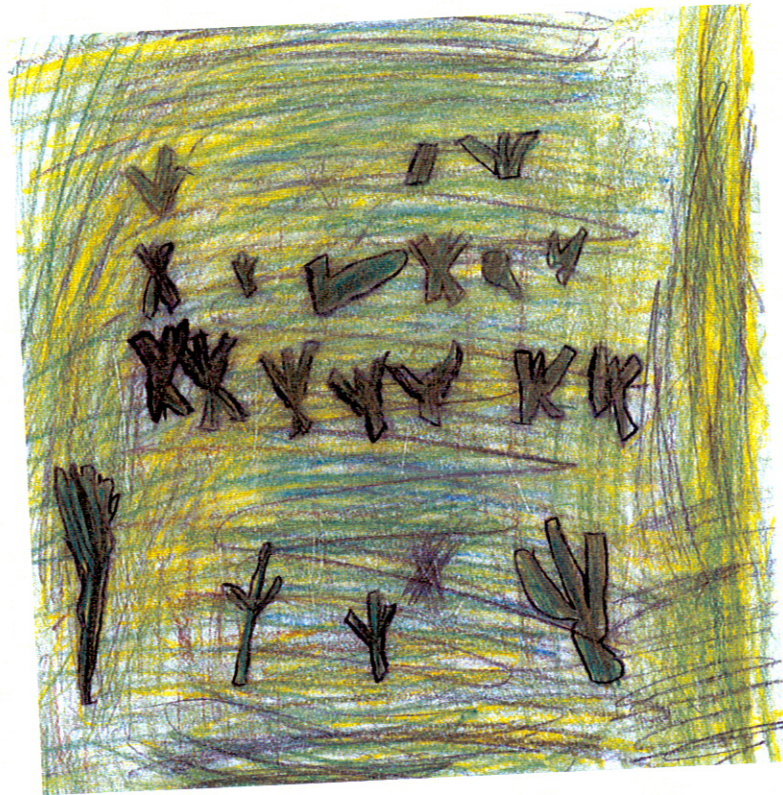
I am a mallard duck.

*By Taylor R.*



Dear Butterfly,

I am getting hungry. Very, very hungry. I'm so hungry I'll eat a butterfly. I would suggest you try to run or hide. But I don't think running would be a good idea because I can fly 60 miles per hour. So don't run, just hide. Wait. I have huge eyes that almost meet at the top of my head, which help me see all around me. So don't bother hiding, you're going to die. But before I kill you I'll tell you some more about myself. I use my legs as a catching basket. So when I fly over you I will catch you in my legs. Wait, I shouldn't have told you that adaptation. Now you have a slight advantage of getting away. But I hope you don't because I'm very, very, very hungry.



*This pond would be a good place for a dragonfly because a dragonfly could lay its eggs in the reeds.*

From Your Predator,

Dragonfly

(Elijah G.)

# Pond Life For A Frog

By Noah D.

A frog looking up into the air trying to find a  
juicy fly in the floating twinkling sky

The frog jumping in the air for joy when he  
sees a fly

He accidentally falls in the pond of freezing  
cold water

How did his life begin?

In a tiny egg laid by his mother

Protected by a thick jelly

The egg grows into a tadpole

The tadpole quickly moves its tail to swim

It breathes through its gills

Soon its tail is gone

Now it is a little, full grown frog

It can go on the land

Hopping around trying to find a juicy fly to eat

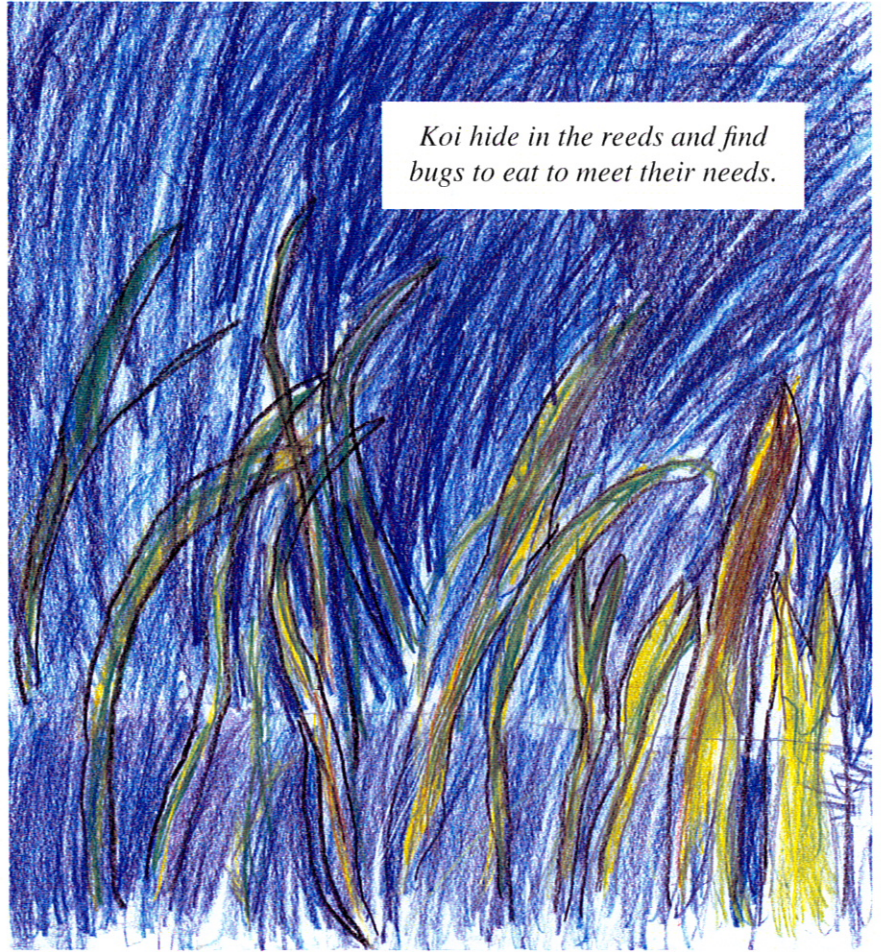


*A frog lives in the water because it  
hibernates under the dirt in the water.*

June 2007

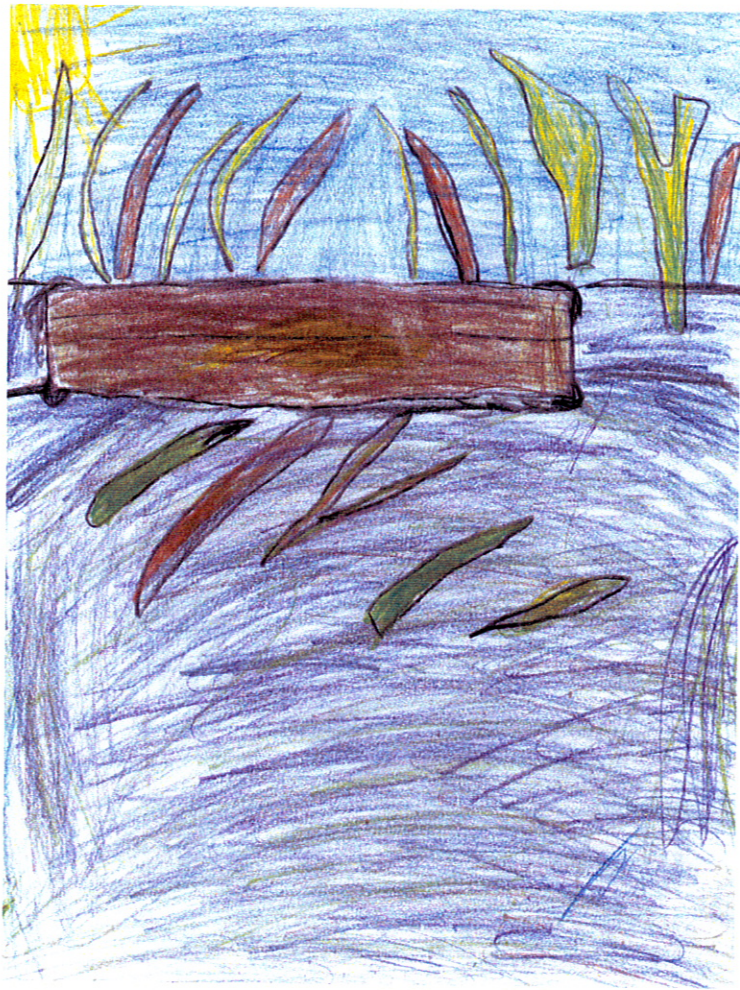
Dear Skunk,

You won't get me to eat because I will slip with my strong fins and slide away from you. Skunk, why do you eat me? There are 22 different types of Koi and you eat all of us. When I hear your rustling noise in the bushes I dive down to protect my eggs. I am happy to provide your family food but I am also sad that I will die. Hey, another of my enemies is the turtle. He knocks my eggs around every day. We bury our eggs so you and the other predators can't get them. Our eggs are way too important. We can't trust any predators with our sons and daughters. But soon they will be in the wild and you might get them. I will be sad but we are all part of the food chain.



*Koi hide in the reeds and find bugs to eat to meet their needs.*

From, the Devastated Koi Fish (*Finn G.*)



*A log is a good place for a turtle because it can get sunlight and can find fish in the pond.*

## The Painted Turtle

*By Jesse D.*

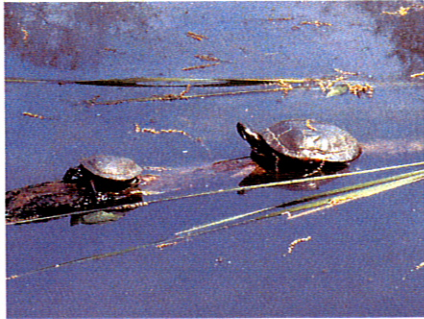
I see the turtle snatching at its tasty prey.  
A painted turtle getting sunlight on a  
log.

The green hard shell of a turtle.  
A turtle going very, very, slowly on land.  
The turtle swimming fast in water.

I see a turtle slowly jumping not that high  
in the pond.

A painted turtle fluttering his long claws  
right in front of the female's face.

Did you know that turtles have been on  
Earth for more than 200 million years?



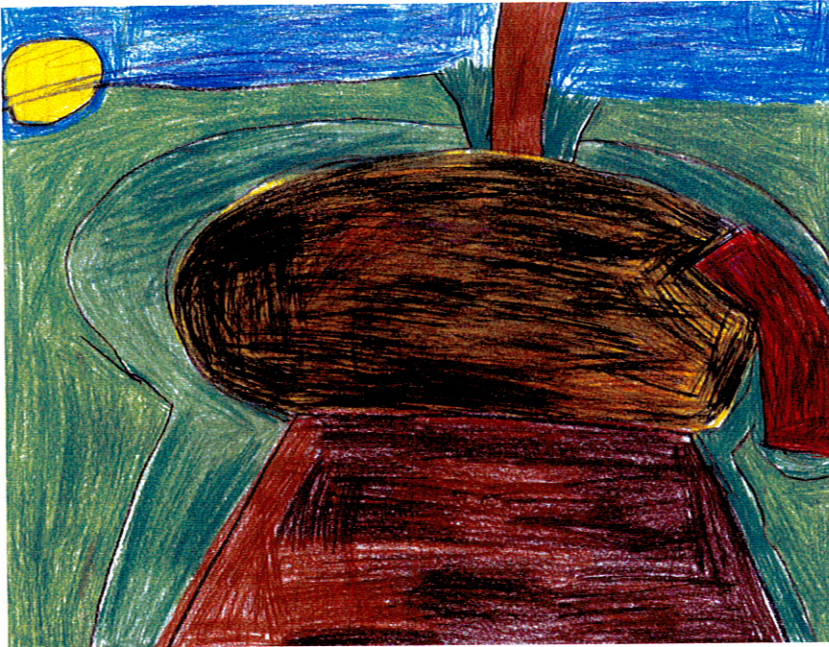
# Stop 4



# I Am A Groundhog

By Tasha C.

I am a hungry, brown and black groundhog in Highland Park.  
As I listen from my deep hole I can tell if the coast is clear.  
Slowly I appear in the open.



*Highland Park is a good place for groundhogs because there is a lot of room and bushes to help them hide their holes.*

I eat my clover and wildflowers so happily.

I have four flat teeth to chew my food.

I also have sharp nails to help dig holes.

Suddenly something starts to move in the bushes.

I quickly go back to my den to check on my pups.

My blind babies need my milk to survive.

I am a groundhog in Highland Park.

June 2007

Dear Raccoon,

Yesterday I swooped into the forest and perched on a tall tree looking for my prey. I saw a big juicy worm. I glided down. I stuck my long beak into the ground and pulled it out. While I was away, you quietly snuck to my nest and stole one of my eggs.

Stop stealing my eggs! You are making it so there won't be one more starling. I am worried you might make us become extinct (I don't want to become extinct!). Just because your babies have to eat doesn't mean you can kill mine! Go steal someone else's babies.

Angrily,  
Starling

(Jordan M.)

P.S. Please don't steal my eggs.



*This is where a starling would get worms  
and seeds for his family.*



# A Black And Yellow Bumblebee

By Jonah M.

One early morning a black and yellow bumblebee buzzes across the meadow.

Hopping from daisy to daisy.

Spreading pollen.

Sipping the sweet nectar.

Speeding towards her hive... to bring back pollen to the queen.

She finally gets there.

The queen lays her eggs on the soft beeswax.

Before becoming one-inch long bumblebees they are still tiny larvae.

Larvae hatch from eggs and change into a pupa as they spin a silver cocoon.

Inside the cocoon pupas change into adult bees.

And one early morning a black and yellow bumblebee buzzes across the meadow.

And life continues...



*This lilac is a great place for bees to collect pollen and nectar.*

I am a beautiful butterfly flying happily in the meadow.

I use my proboscis to sip nectar from the lilac.

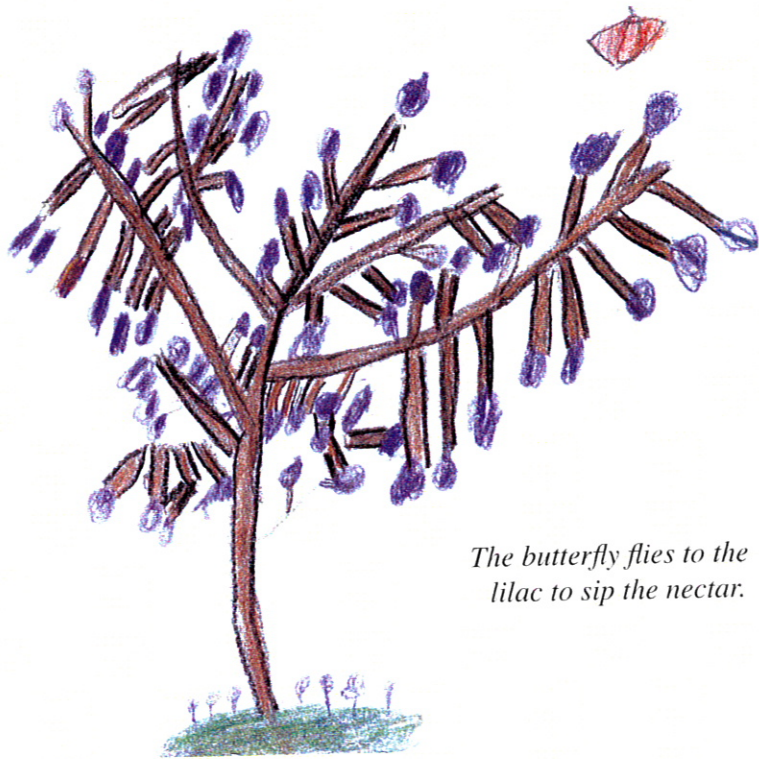
I lay hundreds of eggs on the green leaves.

The eggs hatch into caterpillars and each caterpillar turns into a chrysalis.

When the caterpillar comes out of the chrysalis it is a butterfly.

Before the butterfly can fly it has to dry its new wings in the hot sun.

Another beautiful butterfly flying happily in the meadow.



*The butterfly flies to the lilac to sip the nectar.*

*By Desiree M.*

# The Clever Ladybug

*By Connor W.*

A ladybug walking in the hot sun looking  
for its favorite prey, an aphid

The tiny green bug jumping to escape  
from the red and black predator

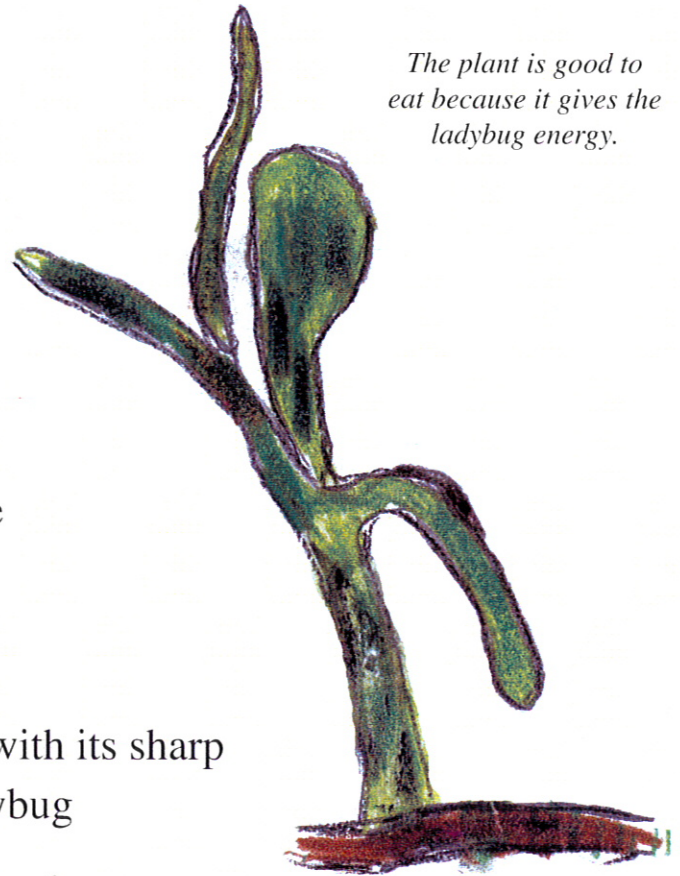
A hungry ladybug tearing the aphid into little  
pieces

Larvae eating a hundred a day

A robin swooping down to grab the ladybug with its sharp  
beak, spitting out the nasty tasting ladybug

The robin learning that ladybugs are not good prey

Other ladybugs feeling happy because the robin learned the lesson



*The plant is good to  
eat because it gives the  
ladybug energy.*

# Stop 5



# I Am A Sharp-Shinned Hawk

By Nassir J.



*A Sharp-Shinned Hawk can perch on the tree branch so it can catch robins.*

I am a hawk that lives on the branch of a pine tree.

I am a... baby bird that's screaming for help as an owl catches me.

I am a hawk that calls for the female to give the food to the babies.

I am a bird that eats bats, lizards, robins, rodents, mice, frogs, and grasshoppers.

I am a bird that lays oval shape eggs so they won't roll out of my nest.

I am a Sharp-Shinned Hawk.

# Smart Wolf Spider

*By Sam C.*

Walking in the fields, the wolf spider goes  
looking for a home and food.

The Wolf Spider sprinting away from the  
snake and barely gets in the water just in  
time.

The Wolf Spider looking with its eight eyes  
for a yummy fly.

The Wolf Spider not using his web to catch  
a fly. Proving to the female that he is smart.

The Wolf Spider ready to jump on its tasty  
fly.

The Wolf Spider tears the fly's wings off so  
it can't fly.

He catches the yummy and juicy fly and kills it with his venom.



*This is a good place  
for spiders. There are  
bugs and it's a good  
place to make a web.*

The grasshopper hops fiercely through the garden looking carefully for her appetizing meal: a leaf.

She tears the small leaf into shreds.

After that the grasshopper lays her important eggs in a deep hole.

She wraps them in thick foam.

When they become hard they're called egg pods.

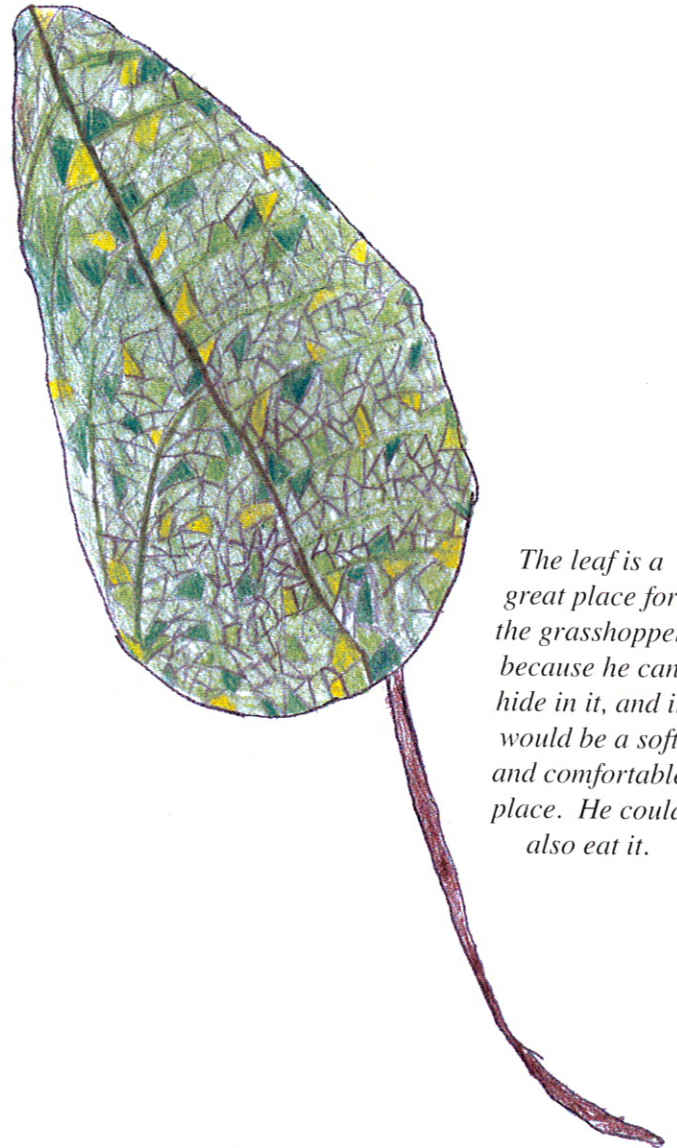
Suddenly, a bluebird soars overhead.

It dives down looking for prey.

The grasshopper soars in the air and dives into a big patch of grass.

She gets away.

*By Natalie E.*



*The leaf is a great place for the grasshopper because he can hide in it, and it would be a soft and comfortable place. He could also eat it.*

