

Honorable Mentions and Excerpts

Shea Spellman

(6th Grade, Waterford, CT)

"Walking at the Beach"

*The sun stares
at me
like I've done something wrong.
I grasp my mom's
cold, white hand[...]
As the sun
competes with
the moon
at a game
of hide and seek,
the sky starts
to darken*

Mairead Blatner

(5th grade, Providence, MA)

"Midwest Sand Dunes"

We are now settling in at our first destination on this trip: Warren Dunes State Park. When we first got here, my brother and I set up the tent and then we all went on a hike along the "Nature Trail," which had more mosquitoes than any other nature. At the end of the trail, Mt. Randall, a huge dune, loomed up in front of us.

It seemed crazy to try to climb it, so naturally my family was going to try it anyway. About halfway up, I took my shoes off because the sand was weighing them down. My 18-year-old brother still claims that I got to the top first because I was lightest and so didn't sink into the sand so much. He's a sore loser.

Olivia Zaller

(5th Grade, Coronado, CA)

"Bryce Canyon National Park"

Ever since visiting Bryce, I think of life differently. It's encouraged me to enjoy nature the way it is. The wonderful rangers I met were so helpful, had studied for years, found something they were good at, and most importantly, enjoyed their jobs[...]. The views and sights of Bryce look like they have been snatched out of a wondrous fairytale. So mystifying, mind-

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blowing...you get away from the life you've been living. Forget everything.

Paul Blanchard

(7th Grade, Staten Island)

"Nauset Beach/Cape Cod"

Nauset is a special each to me because it is very fun and entertaining and as a kid I hate to be bored. You can run in the sand, body surf, bogie board, surf, have a catch, anything really, whereas some other beaches are less taken care of, are unattractive, and the water is dirty. Overall, if you want a nice, peaceful, relaxing day you should go to Nauset Beach to enjoy the beauty of the ocean. And if you want an awesome, radical day you should also come here for that reason; that is if you're willing to come all the way out to Cape Cod, Massachusetts. There's just one draw back...there are Red Sox fans.

Laina Rae LaMastra

(7th Grade, Staten Island)

"The Woods"

As I walked into the woods the shock of what I saw hit me as if I had ran right into a brick wall. It wasn't what I remembered at all. Tears filled my eyes but not because I was sad. Big machines filled the woods and rocks everywhere but it wasn't like the rocks that were here before. They were there because the people who owned the machines were digging and tearing away the land. I had once saw lots of animals in these woods and now I don't even see a spider. Now the only thing I can see are holes where the trees should be.

Sophia Wyne

(7th Grade, Staten Island)

"Nature"

*My head turns forward
I look up into the sky
I slowly close my eyes
I think to myself
What would we do without nature?
It's beautiful.*

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Nicholas Borghese

(7th Grade, Staten Island)

"Camping by the Delaware River"

We all told scary stories then went to bed. All of us except my mom slept like a baby. My mom couldn't sleep at all; she was so scared that when a big chunk from a tree fell and hit the ground, she jumped like it was a bear outside. The next day was the saddest day because we had to leave. That day I learned that nature can be really fun when you learn to do things with it such as camping on the side of a river you are going to see again later in life. You can also just lie down underneath a cluster of trees and just listen and watch the nature and notice how relaxing it is[...] Nature is all around you but you can't have it forever. So preserve it, help it, or love it. Nature is always around you so learn to live with it and love it until you die. You just have to know how it helps you so you could help it back.