

## **My Home, My West Virginia**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place

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Coming home from school, I thought I might take the long way. Today was a beautiful spring day, and it was perfect for a walk through the trees. I found my secret dirt path, the one that was hidden between two bushy pine trees, and I only knew where its long, winding road led. I climbed up the hill where the road began, and I was on my way.

Many times before, I had come here to enjoy the day. Sometimes, I would just come here to sit and watch the wildlife roam by. Bluebirds and maybe a radiant red cardinal would fly into a nearby tree and sing a clear and crisp song, while I sat on my sitting rock, as I called it, and would drift off into my imagination. Sometimes, a deer would roam by, timidly eating the greenery around me. Many times, a squirrel or a chipmunk clambered into a nearby tree and watched me. Yes, this place is truly a beautiful place, with its many wildflowers blanketing the ground, its trees with their emerald leaves shadowing the path, and the sounds of wildlife all around me. This is my home, my West Virginia.

I began to cry when I stepped onto the path. Tomorrow would be the day that I would move away from West Virginia, and sorrow filled my heart. I thought one last walk would bring back the memories of my wonderful days here. I walked down the little dirt path that was barely visible to the naked eye, but I knew this place like the back of my hand. I traveled down the path until I came to my sitting rock. A tall willow hung its branches over top of my rock, its long, tentacle-like leaves hugging me all around. A mallard duck and a female were swimming in the pond nearby, quacking for their little yellow-tinted ducklings to come join them. All of the babies jumped in excitedly, except for one. The duckling would dip his webbed foot in the water, but he didn't seem to get the courage to dive into the pond. I laughed when he finally dove down into the water, so clear and as blue as the skies overhead. I walked to the edge of the pond and dipped my

feet into the mirror-like pond. Minnows were swimming all around and a beautiful bluegill was out near a log. The sun's warm rays kissed my face, and the cool breeze whipped my hair. I loved this place, so calm and soothing, and I was glad this was my home, my West Virginia.

I walked further down the path until I came to a meadow, so rich and green with life. A beautiful red tail hawk was circling above me, screeching to the sky. It finally landed in an oak tree, and I could see through his amber eyes, so beautiful and wise. I laid down in the soft grass, and butterflies flew all around me when I fell, fluttering their long, steady wings until they found a flower to rest upon. The grasses tickled at my face, and yellow bees were flying through the sky. I didn't want to leave this place, this little piece of heaven on Earth, but I was expected to be home by six. Tears began to fall from my eyes. I knew that tomorrow would be horrible. I was leaving this beautiful place, and I was never to come back. We were moving away, and this would be my last time on this path, the one place no one but I knew about. As I walked home that day, I looked up to the sky and saw the most beautiful sight. A sunset was slowly sinking into the Appalachian Mountains, and the sky looked like a rainbow, fading from blue into yellow into orange. Not a cloud was in the sky, and my heart filled with wonder. My mind went back to the baby duckling. I realized that all humans are like that, afraid of something new and unknown, but it all works out in a special way. I'll miss this wonderful place.