



15th Annual RRAS Nature Writing Contest

*Results for 2020: Winners & Honorable Mentions for
Junior (Grades 5-8) and Senior (Grades 9-12) Divisions*

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, entries were down this year (23 works of prose and poetry). \$100 in prizes was awarded. Special thanks to teachers Pete Harrison of Beginnings, Inc (Briceland) and Angeline Holtski of Academy of the Redwoods for encouraging many of their students to enter. — *Sue Leskiw, Contest Coordinator*



***Junior Division:
1st Place
Livity Salus
6th Grade,
Beginnings,
Inc (Briceland)***

“Give Nature a Chance”

Nature, so pure, so rich,
Nature is the reason we are all alive.
It is every breath you take,
Every path you walk.

Nature is the sun on your face,
The rain dripping off your window.
Nature is the soft, cold snow,
Falling like petals in the spring.

Nature is your life,
If you did not know that,
I hope you do now.

Perhaps take a moment,
And smell, feel, breathe, be mindful
Of all the nature around you.

Nature is the sweet rose,
The sour lemon,
The rough sand.
Nature is the sharp thorn,
But it is also you.
You are a part of it,
As it is a part of you.

Nature is the harsh winter,
The sweet spring,
The endless summer,
And the beautiful autumn.

Nature is everywhere,
It's the crisp apple,
The juicy plum,
It's the food you just ate.

Nature is the rapid river,
The huge ocean,
But yet, it is also a
Sweet, small, calm pond,
Rippling slowly.

Nature is the gross green, red, yellow
Algae, floating.
But remember,
Nature is also a little fox,
So cute, so delicate.

Nature is often misunderstood.
The huge, mean, furious bear,
Is just trying to protect herself,
and her young.

All creatures are sweet, gentle things,
But only if you treat them right.
Treat everything with care and respect,
And it will do the same for you.

This is how I see nature,
and I hope now it's the same for you.
Take a break from all the stress,
And relax in the nature around you.



***Junior Division:
2nd Place
Kieran Lambert
6th Grade,
Beginnings,
Inc (Briceland)***

“Outdoor Fun”

In this writing I’m going to tell you about outdoor fun and what it means to me.

First, I love fishing. I like fishing because it’s really fun. The first thing is setting up. I like setting up since you get to learn different knots and what to put on for different fish. Next, it’s really satisfying when you make the perfect cast. Lastly, it’s really fun when the big fish grabs on and takes off and then you reel it in.

Next, I like hunting. The first thing I like about hunting is the peace and quiet of the woods. It’s very relaxing, walking around the woods in silence. Next, it’s really nice when you finally find something and you get the shot. Lastly, you get a proud feeling after you eat since you got your own food.

Lastly, it means building forts. First, it’s fun to get together with a friend and build a fort. Next, it’s really cool when your fort starts coming together. Lastly, it’s nice when you’re finished and you can play around in it and you also have a chill zone.

So that’s what outdoor fun is to me.

***Junior Division: 3rd Place
Coral Contreras
6th Grade, Beginnings, Inc
(Briceland)***

“Closing In”

Two steps in and I’ve already forgotten reality. The peaceful presence is pulling me away from the ever present glare of the T.V screen telling the tragic stories of the news. Away from the toxic noises of honking cars. Away from the constant demands of school. My mind is blank and freshly new. I’m as carefree as the songbirds and as calm as the swaying redwoods surrounding me. A sudden jolt forces me away. My eyes are opening to the real world. Plastic has consumed the room. My eyes dart around hopelessly searching for peace. One object not mocking me with destructive contents.

Again, I’m back in the other world. Not a single ziplock floating in the wind with terrible intentions. My nose fills with sweet air, the scent of wildflowers dancing in a fantasy, and the trees are singing me a lullaby. Again, I’m shoved back into the other place. I stand around in a pile of paper. Screaming paper. Crying paper. Screeching of the harm to their former self. When they danced for hundreds of years only to be torn down and flattened into paper.

And again I’m away. The screaming has stopped. I’m at the beach now. The warm sand embracing me. The water is the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen, its turquoise color clearing to reveal a colorful reef. Inviting me to jump in. I plunge into the water. I open my eyes to a terrifying reality. Fish, eating plastic shopping bags like candy. Turtles, consumed by straws and soda holders, surrounded by a blank, bleached reef. With a scream, I suddenly realize I’m trapped under water by miles and miles of floating plastic.

Then somehow, I’m back in my oasis. Animals playing in the sunlight running up to be pet. They feed their growing young. I finally get close enough to touch them when I’m taken away. Cages and cages of suffering animals grimly greet me. They are wailing as they are given shots to make them bigger. I run away but I come to see the worst thing I’ve ever seen. Thousands of animals are being led to their slaughter. I watch them be dragged closer and closer to the end of their life. And suddenly, I’m among them. The chop of the kill is getting closer and closer. The dark end closing in.



***Junior Division:
Honorable Mention
Lachlan Watts-Tobin
8th Grade, Mistwood
Educational Center***

“What Nature Means to Me”

To me,
Nature means freedom.
freedom from society,
to go
and revel in one’s hopes and dreams.
To run
wild and free
in this great expanse.
Untied
from the bonds of civilization.

Nature is a verdant force
of immense beauty
and great power.
It is the ultimate source of life
protecting and nurturing
all manners of creatures,
bird and beast
from the tiniest ant
to the largest whale.
It has always been there
from the dawn of time.
And if we give back
it will be there till the end.

Nature is a wonder to behold,
it is the force that drives us on,
keeping us afloat,
a force of zeal.
It is pure and uncorrupted
for it is the love that binds us together,
the hope that lights our way.
It gives us strength.
Without nature
we are nothing.
For without nature,
all is lost.
So, what nature means to me is
“Everything.”
Nature is the most important thing we all share.
It is everything.



***Senior Division:
1st Place
Jessica Lamas
9th Grade, Academy
of the Redwoods***

“What Nature Means to Me”

Lying in the grass,
I feel the ground cold on my back.
It drives me to get up, but I stay still.
It’s relaxing to feel so close to something so far.

I turn to lay on my side, taking in the view
Tiny windmills called flowers flood the land that
my eyes can see
The background, stalks of green.
The sun presses closer to the Earth to save its
warmth.
I look at the feet of trees that have soaked in the
sun all day,
Prospering from the energy and life it brings to us.

Birds chirp,
Home from their long day of flying.
Beautiful colors reflecting as the sun itself settles
for sleep.
Home at last they agree

I roll to my back one more time,
to take in the last drops of the sun that it can offer.
Sitting up against the long trunk of the redwood
that stood so close,
feeling the roots that fed and fulfilled its hunger
today.

I relish in the feeling of peace that filled my heart,
due to the surround sound of nature and the
landscape I dreamed to be a part of.
Nature has an offering of support to sustain us and
give us what we need to survive and be our full
potential.
Off home we go to join the sun and the birds fall
under the slumber of the glowing moon.

***Senior Division: 2nd Place
Natalee Swift
9th Grade, Academy of the Redwoods***

As I walk through the forest, I am at peace.
Although I feel the presence of many other
creatures around me, I am not fazed,
In fact, I feel almost connected with them,
As if this nature has been my home for my entire
existence,
The creatures invite me into their home, their
mind,
Just as I invite them into mine.

The peaceful silence is broken,
As I recognize the call of a Steller’s Jay.
She is speaking to me with passionate intensity
I feel as if I am obligated to listen.
She speaks to me about what is deeper in the
forest.
She speaks of a freedom that has never been
encountered by man.
She speaks of a life that does not revolve around
power,
But instead genuine happiness and contentment.
She speaks of a world where every animal is one,
Where we are not singled out for our differences,
Where we are not victimized for our weaknesses.
She tells me I must see it, and I believe her.

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She reveals herself to me,
I recognize her deep blue and black signature,
I am temporarily blinded by her beauty,
She calls to me, once again, to tell me that I must
follow her.

I am close behind, as she gracefully glides through
the air,
As if she has never felt more free in her life,
As if she has absolutely nothing to lose.
I find myself longing for this feeling,
For her wings, which guide her journey,
I must know where she has found them.

She takes me to depths which I have never dared
to encounter,
However, with her I feel safe, secure.
We rush past Redwoods,
Glide over small creeks.
But I still find myself able to savor the beautiful
view of the forest.
I wonder where she is taking me,
I long to see this Magical place where she found
her wings.
As we advance, I am more curious.

The Jay slows down, and eventually stops at what
appears to be a nest with two small eggs,
she has completed her journey,
But I am still eager to know mine.
However, watching her land in her home,
Watching how content she is, in what is obviously
no magical land,
I realize that her wings were not given to her in
the Forest of Freedom.
She has found them, in herself.
She has found freedom, happiness, equality, all in
her body and mind.
It was not placed upon her, it was not blindly given
to her,
She put differences aside, and accepted the rest of
the forest into her mind.
She has found her own peace,
And she has taught me that I must do the same.

Senior Division: 3rd Place

Lylian Lopez

9th Grade, Academy of the Redwoods

“A Walk Through Nature”

Walking alone in nature is something that I enjoy
doing in my free time.
How would I live without it. I wonder to myself.

Anyone could use a nature walk to relax once in a
while.
The relaxing sounds of the nature surround me.

Now I am alone and I can get my mind off things
even if it’s only for a while.
A squirrel happens to walks across my path. I try
to say hello.
Then, I happen to startle it so it runs away. I guess
I’m alone again.
“Until we met again” I say as I see the squirrel run
up the tree.
Reaching the running river was my goal for today.
I wish I could go farther.
Eventually I will get the courage to explore further
into the forest.

Meanwhile I’ll just walk around this part of the
forest.
Even though I am alone I don’t feel lonely because
I hear the animals.
And lately I’ve been very down so it helps to get my
mind off things.
Nature is my happy place.
So I am very happy to finally have the motivation
to walk into the forest.

The overwhelming feeling I’ve felt for these past
few weeks fades away.
On the path I follow I wonder what would happen
if I were to go off the path.

My mind wonders as I reach the end of the path. I
don’t want to leave.
Everything seems so different. It felt like a
completely different world.



***Senior Division:
Honorable Mention
Mina Morris
9th Grade, Academy
of the Redwoods***

“Nature and Its Worth”

Hearing the whistling of a blue jay
In the brisk winds of a spring day
I feel the hot hot sunshine and the warm ray
I realize nature is where I want to stay
We are killing the Earth and we need to try harder
Animals are dying in the plastic-filled water
Nature means a breath of fresh air
Or a warm summer walk
Seeing the lake and its shining glare
In the summers jumping off rocks

This will all be gone if we don't take care
Mother Nature can only do so much

To all the plants I don't think this is fair
We don't have time, we are on a crunch
We leave it to people like Greta to fix this mess
Us young people have to put up with the stress
We want to wake up to a breath of fresh air
I do not know if everyone is aware
Nature is the most precious thing we were given
In this complex world
We will save our planet I truly have hope
I want my children to not have to cope
With fixing this beautiful world that is being
destroyed
We need to fill this void.

Senior Division: Honorable Mention

Yasmin Amador

9th Grade, Academy of the Redwoods

The Milky Way galaxy a vast mysterious realm
Among these mysteries in our solar system is the
Planet from the sun
Our planet
Our strange planet
Our planet that's graced with various lands and
seas
Land and sea that are filled with mysteries and
adventures just awaiting exploration
Mysteries and adventures that produce emotions
and fill you with strange sensations
Strange sensations that leave a chill running down
your back
Strange sensations that produce a feeling of
warmth and comfort
Strange sensations from the mystery of nature and
its many aspects
The many aspects in nature that provides a place
for all
Something for the people who crave that
adrenaline rush and adventure
Something for the people who frolic in the sun
enjoying the sensation of the sun on their skin
Something for the people who dance in the rain
loving the feeling of wet grass squish beneath their
feet
Something for all

All of nature provides a home to something
somewhere

A home that welcomes all
A home that brings people together
A home that is filled with adventures
A home for you
Nature is a home
A home of many things
The many things that make nature what it is
Nature is a dangerous place
Nature is a beautiful place
Nature is a mysterious place
Nature is an adventurous place
Nature is a calm place
A place for all
For me and for you
Nature is not black and white
That's the beauty
Nature isn't this or that
Nature is subjective