

A poet, an artist, and a boy

By Alaina Findling and Krystle Klitzke

“O Nature! I do not aspire/To be the highest in thy choir,/To be a meteor in thy sky,/Or comet that may range on high;/Only a zephyr that may blow/Among the reeds by the river low;/Give me thy most privy place/Where to run my airy race.” Henry David Thoreau was an early 19<sup>th</sup> century poet, philosopher, essayist, imagist and political activist who drew his inspiration from the beauty and majesty of nature. It was there that he could write his masterpieces that would awe the world for years to come. Thoreau explored the meaning of life by going into the forest, and it was there that he found his purpose: to write about what nature is to us and its importance to the human soul.

Just as Thoreau would find his peace in nature, a little boy named Will finds his tranquility and passion in birds. Seeing one bird in nature makes him go silent and ecstatic at the same time. That one little spark of nature he sees lights a fire in him that is palpable whenever it happens. Those sparks of inspiration are good for a person, healthy even. If seeing one little thing in nature, like a bird, a flower, or even just a tree, can make someone happy then we, as human beings, wouldn't be so caught up in this crazy world we live in. Simple pleasures like that are good for everyone; it sets the mind apart from the crazy hustle and bustle of today's world. We have the chance to open our minds and just appreciate what nature has given us: a place for us to be creative, thoughtful, and free.

Peace of mind can also come in the form of an art and creativity, like drawing for instance. A modern day artist, Parry Ingli, uses pastels to display the splendor he finds in natural landscapes. He usually likes to draw areas surrounded by water in general. He says about himself “I am what artists call a ‘plein air’ artist. That means I work outside, directly from what I see, not from photographs. I have to be there. I like the hilly steep countryside and river bluffs, so sometimes I have to tie myself to trees while I'm working.” We don't have to be as extreme as Ingli, but if we don't keep ourselves somehow connected to nature, we could lose our great sense of creativity.

For some people, the only place they can find harmony is in the woods and being in nature. When they get out into the middle of nowhere, away from all the inner-city busy life, they can also find themselves. For some individuals, like Thoreau, that's how they discover their spirituality. Once you have relaxed, your mind releases endorphins that give you that "runners high". The runners high can give you a sudden mood lift, mental clarity, and overall vigor. The reason we can relax and appreciate nature is because it has already achieved the perfect formula to life. It needs no adjustments or anything; it just thrives the way it is. In this simplicity we can find a balance and serenity. That serenity, tranquility, and harmony can help heal the pain and anxiety of the chaos that is happening in the world today.