

Never before have I lived in such a serene setting. All of our other houses had been located in busy neighborhoods where somehow a lawnmower always seemed to be churning, and cars were constantly zooming along a not-so-distant freeway. It's not like that here though. Being surrounded by sky-high pines, budding green underbrush and an expansive bay estuary sucks the man-made clatter out of the world. All that's left is the endless twitter of birds and the rustle of branches. Living in such beauty encouraged me to explore the serpent-like trails that crisscross the point, and the fond thoughts of nature I was left with after one hike in particular still affect me today.

The sun was hidden behind dense clouds that loomed over me menacingly, but the somber weather didn't discourage me. I plodded over to the trailhead branching off of my backyard, pushing aside overgrown brambles and making my way down the soft grassy path. Faintly, I could make out the sound of waves bashing the beach beyond the bay, but the birds chirping above were much more prominent. Chilly wind whistled by; nipping at my fingers and face. Still, curiosity pushed me onward, and in placid silence I ambled alone.

Massive leaves littered the ground, sopping wet and slowly decomposing. A black ground beetle dashed out from under a maple leaf-If it hadn't been making a sharp clicking noise, I definitely would have crushed it. Removing my foot from over the loud bug, I stooped down to examine it before leaving the peculiar beetle undisturbed. After walking for a bit longer, I came upon a gorgeous tree covered in chartreuse mosses. The canopy stretched across the trail. A peek of sun shone through the cloud cover down onto the golden leaves as I admired the scene. Small scintillating droplets of water from an earlier rainfall dripped one by

one to the soil. I breathed in the earthy smell of the woods and sodden terrain as a smile spread across my face.

Not before long I reached the edge of the point. The trail pressed right up against the bay, lined with driftwood and flotsam. Near my feet, a pair of death cap mushrooms boasted their presence with the characteristic red top and white spots. Two otters romped in the glassy water offshore, creating fine ripples that spread gently across the surface while farther off on the marshy estuary a great blue heron poised to nab a fish. I turned a corner to the river side of the point, and sadly spotted the end of the trail. Just as I was about to turn around, an inconspicuous wooden bench came into view. Brittle lichen blanketed its surface, but the thought of resting was so inviting I seated myself. It was there I thought of all I had experienced and realized my love of everything in nature. From the majestic heron, right down to the commonly overlooked ground beetle, all nature is beautiful and deserves to be honored.