

A Walk Through History

by Mr. Malloy's 5th grade class, Chelsea Heights Elementary

Red and orange crumbling leaves layered the ground like cat litter, like frosting on a cake. The day as bright as a red and yellow fiery ball, at one in the afternoon. The old fireplace, a crumbling mountain covered with vines, made me think of Grandview Lodge.

We sat in the dried up pond, looking at what had once been a waterfall. I wondered how it was built and why it wasn't cared for. Why didn't they put fish in it—sunnies, northern, bass and salmon?

An avalanche of a memorial. Ash tree, oak, pine, poison ivy, burdock. I watched lady pick up a dead mole. I watched dogs on leashes, running and walking. An orange and black caterpillar was lying still on the sidewalk. And the day went on. School, home, homework, bed.

A Walk in the Como Woodland

by Ms. Bartol's 5th grade class, Chelsea Heights Elementary

The smell of green leaves
reminded me of camping in autumn
in the forests of Duluth.

The wind in the leaves
drowned out the traffic
on Como Avenue.

The broken-up fireplace
with worn bricks gave a feeling
of peace, and I was calm
as a baby sleeping, as a kitten
in the windowsill, or on my stomach.

The smell was like cookie dough
with chocolate chips and milk.

The grass was a pillow,
a marshmallow with the chill
of autumn. I wanted to eat
s'mores.
I sat on the ground and pretended
I was under water.
I wondered how many ants
were on my shoes.

The bridge was
a mountain. I wondered
how I could get the burrs
off my back.

On the return, a mouse

or mole lay dead
on the smooth grass.

A Door to the Forest
by Ra Kour's 6th grade class, Como Park Elementary

We walked through the healthy air
as the wind blew on our faces
like cardinals and blue jays
flying branch to branch,
among trees bare as statues.

The leaves had parachuted to the ground,
abandoning the old maples and oaks.

Burrs and brown thistles clung to us
like porcupine needles. We strayed down
the prickly path that was like a fallen tree,
and sat on the dew-damp grass. Birds sang,
wind whistled past us.

I saw the dead waterfall
buried behind the trees, and I thought
how peaceful, how like the pattern
of wind on a pond, like the beat
of an owl's wings.

Then our stomachs growled like lions
ripping apart a zebra.
We walked through the echo tunnel
to the big field. To sandwiches
and milk, then the bumpy sidewalk
back to school.

Como Woodlands
by Kelly Dudeck's 6th grade class, Como Park Elementary

I shivered under the trees that Friday
as I looked at the flowers—I didn't know
what kind—pink, yellow, purple.
As the leaves changed from green
to orange and yellow, as the wind,
like the coolish moon traveling
around the world, touched my skin.
As I felt my blood rushing, the river raced,
my heart pumped in and out, and leaves crunched,
as I stepped on them.

There used to be a waterfall before

time stopped for it, and the well dried up.
There used to be a fireplace. Deer once grazed
on pine cones and black berries.
A bridge led to this path, and the cascades.

The 1930s are gone, with the eagles
and the years. The invasive
thistles have driven out the native plants.
I looked at all the sad trees, that Friday,
the ground overflowing with leaves
that will fertilize new growth, as though
it is the future of the world.

A Walk in the Woods

by Michael Binns' 6th grade class, Como Park Elementary

I smelled the fresh humid air
at the memorial for that poet.
I held the pod of a Kentucky
Coffee Tree—dry
and brown like beef jerky.
Pollen as orange as Cheetos
suddenly appeared on the tips of my shoes.
I avoided the circle
of poison ivy at the fireplace.

Even with its broken stones,
it was taller than the ceilings at Como School.
I sat at the ruined picnic table
that felt like ice,
with blue and black graffiti growing over it
like vines.

At lunch we went to the baseball diamond
to play football. Pierre
made two interceptions. Peyton
made two touchdowns.
I ate nothing that was cooked.
I raced my friend.

Standing on the deck at Como Lake,
I saw a fisherman haul in a large branch.
On the bridge, as we walked back
to school, a black and white cat
paused to stare at us.