

# Forest Friends Magazine #1



Written and Edited by Zoe Dubois



## Dedication


I dedicate *Forest Friends* magazine to all the naturalists, nature lovers, environmentalists, and everyone who has helped and is helping to keep the magic of nature and wildlife alive.

*“The clearest way into the universe is through forest wilderness.”*

*~John Muir*

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# Home

I walk deeper  
Into the forest  
Feeling all my worries and thoughts evaporate.  
Feeling grounded and knowing  
That the forest is somewhere that will always  
Be there for me.

I breathe in  
The smell of pine and the sweetness  
In the air.  
I breathe out  
Tension, negativity and doubt.  
Animals run around me,  
Scurrying about.  
Just being natural beings.  
But when I am in the forest  
I can be natural, too.  
There are no people to judge  
Me.  
Just solitude.  
Peacefulness.  
I feel a deep knowing  
That the forest  
Will always  
Be my home.

## Flight (a haiku)

As the autumn leaves fall,  
The soft, feathery-winged crow,  
Soars into the air.



Zoe D. 2020





## Off to Dreamland (a haiku)

The squirrel struggles  
To keep its eyes open but  
It's off to dreamland.

## Awakening (a haiku)

The squirrel opens,  
Its little eyes in wonder,  
For it is dawn.

## The Mosquito with Ego (a limerick)

There was mosquito with ego.  
Who was given the name Dorito.  
She flew by a man,  
Who just clapped his hands  
And that was it—finito.



## Ask Martha

Dear Martha,

I love to go camping and hiking, but I always get so bit up by mosquitoes and I find them so frustrating. I do my best to wear insect repellent and stuff, but I am still very bothered. I don't understand how mosquitoes can be good for the ecosystem when they really get on my nerves. Do mosquitoes have a real purpose or are they just a nuisance?

Sincerely,

Millie Lynn





Millie Lynn,

It's great to hear that you love camping and hiking. I do, too. I am also bothered by mosquitoes. What I know about mosquitoes is that they are frustrating. It's just the truth. An interesting thing I learned about mosquitoes is that they have both positive and negative impacts on the ecosystem. For one, they provide food for bats. The mosquito larvae that live in water provide food for some kinds of fish. I learned that the male also is a pollinator; isn't that interesting? Even though mosquitoes can carry diseases and mosquito bites are itchy and frustrating, mosquitoes are still an important part of the ecosystem. I hope this information helps you. I wish you good luck getting as few mosquito bites as possible.

Sincerely,

Martha

# Springtime Cinquain

A time  
Of joy and hope,  
And fresh, new beginnings.  
Blossoms open and remind us  
Of spring.



Arno Smit—unsplash.com





# Sense and Feel

Bare feet,  
On the ground.  
Prickly pine needles,  
On your feet and all around.  
Leaves falling  
On your head,  
With brilliant colors  
Of orange and red.  
Under the shade  
Of maple and oak.  
Feel happiness and joy  
and a rush of hope.  
Explore the world  
and the possibilities ahead.  
And explore the wisdom  
Of spoken words said.

# Review of Forest Floor Nature Resort

My trip was like pound cake for my children and me—very sweet and rich. Enjoyable, too. My children and I went on a three-day vacation to Forest Floor Nature Resort and we stayed in one of the “cozy cabins”. There was snow on the ground, but inside the cabin it was as warm as if the sun was shining inside. I would rate it **ten stars** if I could. Here is why:

~ The service was great. People there always said “hi” and smiled at my children and me. By the end of the week, my children had even made a friend or two!

~ There was a program for my children for 2-3 hours a day. They are three and eight years old and the program accommodated both of my children so I had some time to myself to relax and take a walk.

~ There were activities for kids, teens, and adults. My eight-year-old was able to go sledding while somebody from the kid’s care team watched her. My three-year-old and I went to a parent-kid yoga club at the same time.

~ There was a hot tub, a sauna, and a pool, but it was too cold to use the pool. My family will have to come back in the summertime.

~ The food at the restaurant was so flavorful, and it tasted so fresh, too. There was such a large variety and there were options for children, who are picky eaters, like mine.

I highly recommend Forest Floor Nature Resort. You will LOVE it! It is great for parents and kids, and also suitable for adults seeking quietude.

Thank you so much for reading! And make sure to take your next vacation at Forest Floor Nature Resort.

~ Sage S.



# **HOW TO MAKE EASY SNACKS OUTSIDE!**

**Outside Cuisine online  
subscriptions and magazine  
will help you learn how to  
make healthy snacks! And you  
will have access to online  
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# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am so fascinated by your magazine Forest Friends. I am especially fascinated when you talk about birds (although I love all wildlife, too). I am learning so much about wildlife from reading your stories, articles, poems, and more.

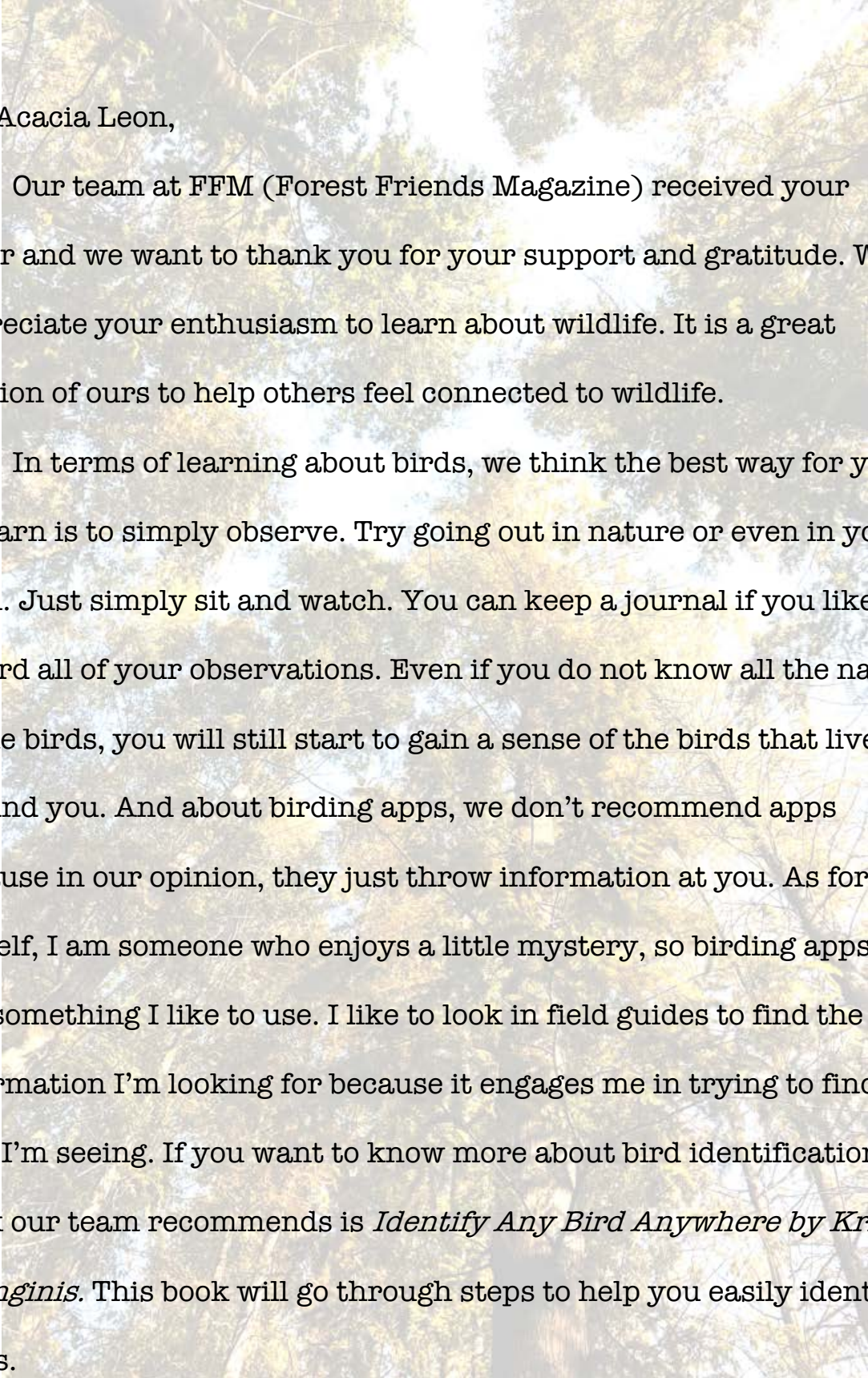
I am super curious to learn all about birds. What do you think is the best way for me to learn about the different birds? And what birding apps do you recommend so that I will have an easier time identifying birds?

Thank you so much for writing Forest Friends magazine. It has gotten me really inspired to learn more. I didn't even know how much I didn't know about wildlife until I started reading Forest Friends magazine; isn't that funny?

I appreciate your passion for sharing about wildlife; it shines through when I read your magazine. Also, when you write stories about people like me, I feel very understood. Thank you so much for the inspiration I have gotten from reading Forest Friends.

With gratitude and support,

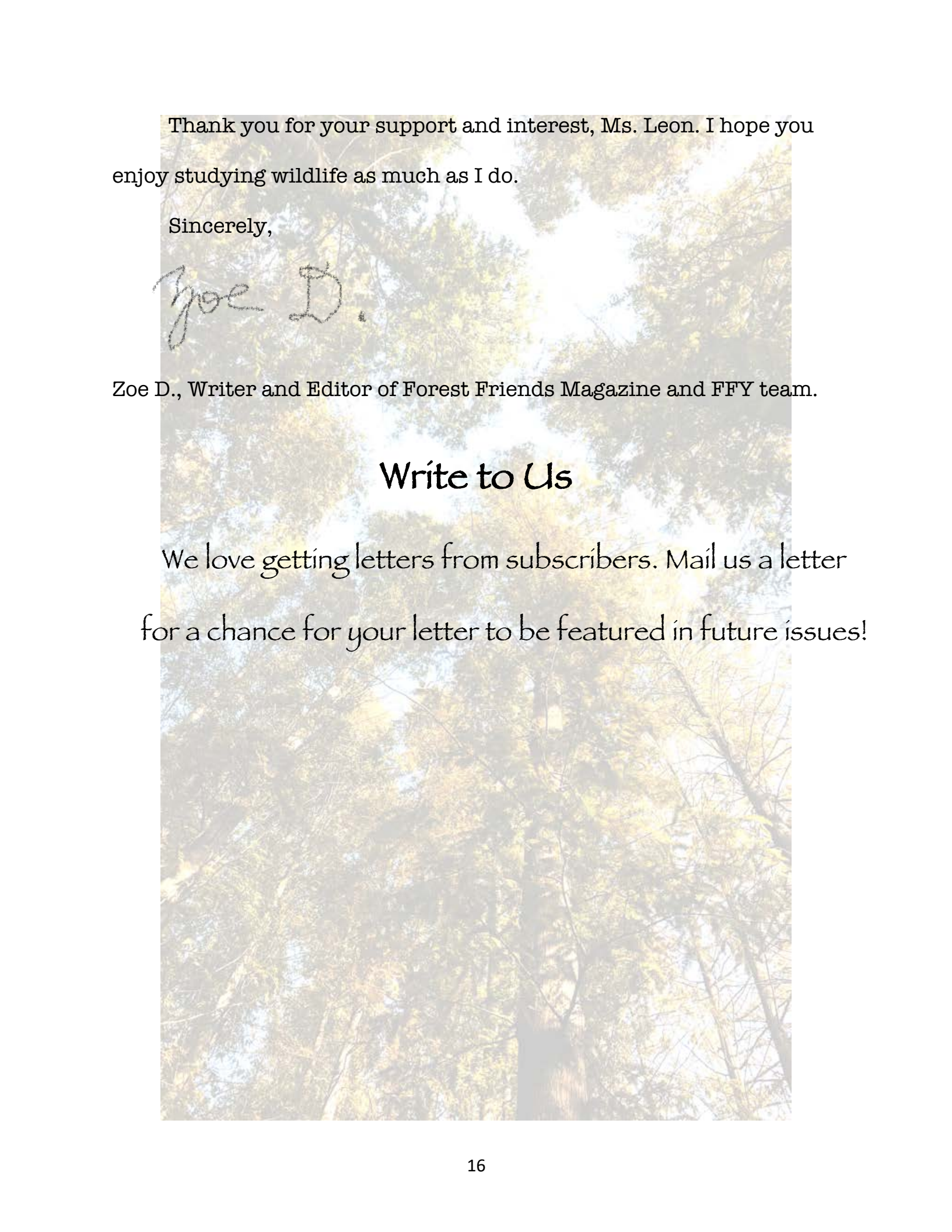
Acacia Leon



Ms. Acacia Leon,

Our team at FFM (Forest Friends Magazine) received your letter and we want to thank you for your support and gratitude. We appreciate your enthusiasm to learn about wildlife. It is a great passion of ours to help others feel connected to wildlife.

In terms of learning about birds, we think the best way for you to learn is to simply observe. Try going out in nature or even in your yard. Just simply sit and watch. You can keep a journal if you like to record all of your observations. Even if you do not know all the names of the birds, you will still start to gain a sense of the birds that live around you. And about birding apps, we don't recommend apps because in our opinion, they just throw information at you. As for myself, I am someone who enjoys a little mystery, so birding apps are not something I like to use. I like to look in field guides to find the information I'm looking for because it engages me in trying to find the bird I'm seeing. If you want to know more about bird identification, a book our team recommends is *Identify Any Bird Anywhere* by Kristi Dranginis. This book will go through steps to help you easily identify birds.



Thank you for your support and interest, Ms. Leon. I hope you enjoy studying wildlife as much as I do.

Sincerely,

Zoe D.

Zoe D., Writer and Editor of Forest Friends Magazine and FFY team.

## Write to Us

We love getting letters from subscribers. Mail us a letter for a chance for your letter to be featured in future issues!



# Tips for Identifying Birds

Have you ever seen a bird in your yard? Most of you probably have. But have you ever seen a bird in your yard and you didn't know what kind of bird it was? What did you do about that bird mystery? Maybe you scrolled through your phone trying to find what kind of bird it was. Or maybe you looked through field guides. Or maybe you didn't do anything at all. Well, in this blog, no matter where you're at, can all learn a few tips that everyone can benefit from.

## **Do:**

~ Look at the behavior of the bird. For example, if it is flying, ask yourself: What is its flight pattern? Is it soaring in circles or in a straight line? Look for little things like that.

~ Find out where it lives. And what season is it? This will be helpful when you look in field guides.

~ Look at the shape and size. Is the bird smaller than your open hand? All these details are important.

~ What sound is the bird making? It is helpful if you can remember the sound.

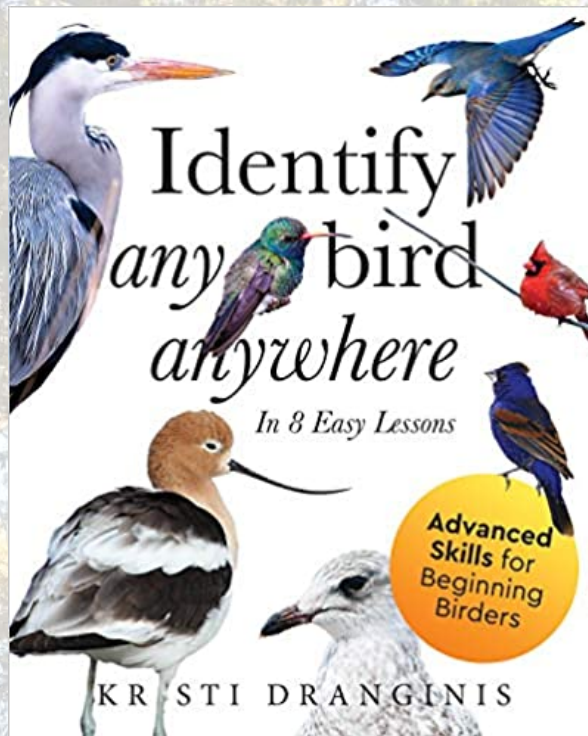
## **Don't:**

~ Use birding apps. When you look in a field guide, you will find the bird, instead of the app finding it for you. People usually want to solve mysteries right away, but if you wait and find the answer yourself, you can most likely remember the bird for longer after you found out what it was. This makes you feel successful.

Once you've looked at the behavior, the size, shape and habitat, then look in the field guide and try to identify the bird. For more information on identifying birds, read *Identify Any Bird Anywhere* by Kristi Dranginis.

Thank you for reading and I hope you enjoyed reading this blog.

# Having Trouble Identifying Birds?



*This book will help you identify birds "with **seven** questions that will change the way you look at birds... forever."*

***Don't delay!  
Buy today  
@ amazon.com.***

# The Eagle Escape (a senryu)

A bird lover sees,  
An eagle and tells friends, but...  
The eagle is gone.



Mathew Schwartz—unsplash.com



# How-To Make a Bird Feeder

Are you looking for a nice and easy recipe that attracts birds? Well, I know I was. I love birds and I wanted to figure out how to make something for the birds that was fast and easy. If you are in the same position or a similar position, be sure to try this simple, fast, and yummy for the birds' bird feeder.

To make your bird feeder, first cut out a piece of cardboard in any shape you want. I made a heart. If want to hang your bird feeder, cut a small hole in the top. \*

Next, spread a thin layer of any kind of nut butter on your piece of cardboard. \*\*

**TIP:** Be sure to spread your nut butter evenly so it will dry properly later and don't give up; When I made my bird feeder, it was hard to keep the layer even.

Next, take your bird seed and sprinkle it over the top. Do this a few times until your cardboard is covered with seeds.

Then, carefully turn piece of cardboard over to remove excess seeds that didn't stick to the nut butter. \*\*\* **TIP:** Make sure you have something underneath the surface you are working on; I recommend pouring the excess seeds back into the bag of seed.

Once your cardboard is covered in seed and you can't see your nut butter very well and you have brushed off all the excess seeds, let it dry overnight. If you want to hang your bird feeder on a tree, tie a ribbon or piece of string through the hole. Then, hang your bird feeder or leave it on the ground for all birds (and possibly squirrels) to enjoy.

When I made this recipe, I really was pleased with the results. If I made it again, the only thing I would do differently is to spread a thinner layer of nut butter so it would have dried faster.

Step 1\*



Step 2\*\*



Step 3\*\*\*



Zoe D. 2020

# Enslaved by Interesting Objects

I don't know about you, but I love birding and also gardening. A few months ago, on a Friday, after work, at about four o'clock, I was on my way to the local nursery to buy some plants for my garden. I got out of my car and walked through the gates of the nursery. A new product caught my eye.

"Hi there," the clerk greeted me. "What can I get for you today?"

"I'd love a few pots of zinnias and maybe a sunflower," I replied. "Also, I'm curious about your new product. What does it do?"

"It's an electronic device the size of the world's largest cheez-it and it is solar powered. Its scent also attracts birds. You put it outside and then when the birds fly on it, the electronic takes a photo. The device is also connected to your phone and it calls you and tells you what kind of bird it is; it also texts you a photo. It's a wonderful product!"

"That sounds great!" I said. "I love birds but I'm having trouble identifying them. How much does it cost?"

"\$10.00 plus tax," the clerk answered. "Would you like to buy the Identifying Electronic? It's a wonderful product. Only \$10.00."

"I'm thinking," I said.

"It's very useful and wonderful," the clerk said again.

"Do you have one?" I asked the clerk suspiciously.

"Um, no," admitted the clerk, "but my friends have the Identifying Electronic and say they wish they gotten it a million years earlier. They said that if they had known how much they were missing out on, they would die! The Identifying Electronic is something even the president would most likely LOVE! You should totally buy this awe-inspiring product." The clerk put a hand to her heart and looked at me with teary eyes.

By this time, my thoughts and common sense evaporated out of my head. I do love birds, but all my sensibleness froze in my head because the clerk was talking so

much. Clearly the clerk had a different intention than I did. The clerk chirped on and on like a meadowlark and I finally lost myself.

“It’s awesome and wonderful,” repeated the clerk.

“Fine!” I said, “I’ll buy two pots of zinnias, a pot of sunflowers and the Identifying Electronic.

When I got home, forty minutes later, after some brief errands, I set out the Identifying Electronic on my porch and threw away the manual because I never need stuff like that. The clerk had already told me what to do. And my, the clerk wasn’t wrong; it was really wonderful (or so I thought)! The Identifying Electronic took wonderful pictures! I was so happy. I danced around my house, which is basically a cottage. I was so hungry, I could eat a wolf, so I made myself a quick, microwavable dinner. I started getting calls and texts of birds from the Identifying Electronic. I got pictures of wrens and sparrows and even a hummingbird. I was overjoyed. Since I was so impressed with the quality of the Identifying Electronic, I texted my friend Alex about it. Alex was so impressed by the photos I texted, that Alex immediately rushed to get one. By the end of the night, my five best friends, Morgan, Sydney, Sky, River and Alex all had Identifying Electronics. Then I finally curled up in my bed and fell asleep with a big smile that went from one ear to the other.

The next morning at about 4 a.m., I was awakened by a sound. It was my phone. “Maybe it’s something really important,” I thought. But no; it was my Identifying Electronic. I thought, “Oh dear!” but I was so tired that I fell back to sleep.

A few minutes later, my phone rang again. And again. And again. I did everything I could think of to muffle the sound: I put pillows over my phone, I put a pillow over *my* head, but nothing worked. Finally, about an hour later, I gave up trying to muffle the sound and I left my phone in my bedroom and sleep on the hard cement like living room floor.

When I woke up, I studied the Identifying Electronic. I looked on the bottom of its square figure. I saw a 24-hour hotline number, so I quickly dialed the number. After a gazillion minutes, somebody on the hotline answered me.

“Hi, I need help with my Identifying Electronic. You see, I have a prob—”

“You bought the Identifying Electronic, eh. Great! Please write a customer review at our website. Talk about the portability, the quality of the photos...”

I was so upset, I hung up and tried to forget what had happen. My poor night of sleep, was making me feel like a sleep deprived kangaroo. At least I had a fun Saturday planned. My friends and I were going to have dinner and then go see a movie. The day ran by me like a herd of elephants. I kept getting texts and photos from the Identifying Electronic. Finally, it was time for dinner. I got into my car and drove to the restaurant to meet my friends. The food was good but our time together was otherwise a disaster! First Sky got a call; then Morgan did; then me; then River; then Alex; then Sydney. And guess who these calls were all from: The Identifying Electronic!

“Maybe I imagined what the person said on the hotline,” I thought. “That must have been what happened.”

I tried again. “Hi, I have a serious problem. My Identifying Electronic—”

“Well, I know how to help you. Just write a customer review and write about—”

I ended the call. What was going on?

After another day of the Identifying Electronic misery, I said, “Forget it! I hate my phone ringing over and over like a songbird. I did better without the Identifying Electronic!” I ran outside and smashed the Identifying Electronic on the sidewalk! I started crying after that. I called the hotline one more time. This time, I started with a different opening.

“Hi, I need help.”

“With what?”

“My device keeps going off and I can’t sleep.”

I listened to what the person said. If you ever have a problem like I did, keep the manual of the product you bought. Sometimes you can’t see even the most obvious things. Here is what the hotline person said: “All you have to do is look on the left side of your product. That’s why we have something called power buttons.”

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# Is That What You Really Want?

When Athena had finished her walk, she no longer had the body of a human being. She looked down at herself. She saw feathers. The feathers of a sparrow. “What had happened?” wondered Athena. She thought back to the long and troubling day that she had been through.

After school, Athena had come home with an invitation to a dance that her whole 8<sup>th</sup> grade class had been invited to. She had been so excited that she had ran home and called her friend Julia. “I want to go but I’m nervous because I’m afraid will just hide in the corner.” Athena remembered saying. After ten minutes, Julia had reassured her that everything would be fine. “Thank you so much for talking to me, Julia. All I have to do now is ask my parents for a ride.”

She had walked into the kitchen with a smile on her face. “Mom, Dad, I want to go to a dance on Saturday night at Jeff’s house. Can you drive me? Please? Please?”

“That’s cool, dear.”

“Can I go? Can I go?”

“Athena, your Aunt Juniper’s birthday party is Saturday night. We don’t want to miss that. We’ll have a lovely time.”

“But Mom—”

“I’m sorry, Athena but the whole family is going.”

“There it goes,” Athena had thought, “All my plans are going down the drain!”

She had gone on a short walk to lighten her mood. As she had walked under the maple tree she had thought, “I wish I could fly away like a bird.”

Well now she was a bird. And what was she going to do about that?

Athena tried to scream. But she couldn’t. All that came out was a frightened chirping sound. She tried to cry. But she couldn’t. She went under the maple tree and thought, “I wish to fly away like a bird.” To try and reverse herself back into a human but she remained a bird. After a minute, another sparrow landed next to her and it sang a beautiful tune. Then it flew away. Then a great large peregrine falcon swooped toward her at lightning speed. Quickly, she

flapped her wings and flew into a shrub just in time. The falcon had missed her by inches. She flapped her wings and soared into the air. She kept flying. Then she saw a forest come into view. "This is not too bad," thought Athena, "maybe it was a good thing tha—" CRASH! Athena flew straight into an elm tree. The tree felt as hard as rock. The wind groaned softly. Athena plummeted toward the earth trying to scream as she fell, but she could not.

Athena fell into the forest and she landed in a shrub, next to a large cave. "Ouch!" she tried to scream, but no sound came out. If she could have screamed, she would have screamed loud enough for the whole world to hear but only chirping noises came out of her mouth. Her whole body ached. Trying to scream and cry with all her might, Athena walked slowly into the cave. She sighed. She knew she would be safe there.

Athena tried to sleep as she snuggled close to the wall of the cave. The wind groaned and moaned. As she had hoped, Athena curled up tight and slept. She had a dream. In her dream, there was a hiker, hiking down a mountain in the fall. Crunch...crunch...crunch said the leaves. Her bird eyes flew open. Athena tried to fall asleep again but...Crunch...Crunch...what was that? Athena listened harder. CRUNCH! The sound was clearer now. CRUNCH! She peered slowly into a smaller room in the she had not seen before. She gasped. The furry body of a squirrel was now visible. It was chewing on almonds. The squirrel caught a glimpse of her and ran over to her. Athena shivered. She curled up close to the wall of the cave and the squirrel joined her. Inwardly she sighed. "What a great friend I've made," she thought, "and my how warm he is, too."

When Athena opened her eyes, she flapped her wings to see if they had healed. However, she groaned in pain. More than she had the day before. She looked around to try to find the squirrel. She could not find him. Then it hit her like a speeding bullet. The squirrel had been using its teeth to damage her wings! She ran and flapped her wings and exited the cave as fast as she could go. She found a small hole in a tree where she decided to sleep. Within an hour, she was asleep.

The next morning, when she opened her eyes, she shivered. Her stomach growled. Her stomach was so empty that she could not sleep.

At the end of the day, Athena's mind was so full of thoughts about food, she could barely think straight. Her head hurt. She tried thinking about something else, but her mind was

fixed. She was trying to cry. The pace of her breath got fast and her heart beat faster. “How did I get into this?” she wondered, “What can I do?” She heard the wind die down a bit. She felt a rush of hope. “I have two options,” thought Athena, “stay here and starve, or try to find food. It’s my choice.” Feeling encouraged, she flew out of the hole in the tree despite how much she grimaced. She flew down to the ground and looked for grain.

As she devoured bit of grain, her stomach barely felt better. Then she looked around. She saw a medium sized dove. It looked ancient. She looked into its eyes. She heard words forming in her head. “Please, I want to go home.” She only thought these words though.

The dove looked into her eyes again and she heard words in her mind coming from the dove. “Use your mind. A great and powerful tool. Think. Of home. You have always had the ability to go home.”



Zoe D. 2020



# What a Long Trip! Or Maybe it Will Be Short...

I was heading to the Friendly Forests. “This is taking a while,” I thought, “Forests are supposed to be close to towns.” First I drove down Arch Way. As you may know, it is a very long and winding road. Then I drove over a hard bump. I sighed. This journey was going to take time. Then, one side of my car started to bounce. “What’s going on?” I wondered aloud. I groaned so hard when I realized I had a flat tire. It was such a rural area that I knew it would take at least an hour for my car insurance company to arrive and help me.

After two unpleasant hours, I finally got back on the road. Finally, I turned on Friendly Forest Creek Road. Then I parked my car. I walked and walked and walked some more. As I began to see an oak tree come into view, my leg fell into hole. Out from the hole, flew a swarm of yellow jackets and they flew out to sting me from head to toe. However, I knew that you should run away as fast as you can when this happens, so I did. “Yay! I’m getting away!” I thought. I kept running—SMACK! I ran straight into a big oak tree! Although I was safe from many yellow jacket stings, I had a black eye and bloody nose. “Oh dear,” I thought, “this is going to be a long journey.”

After I cleaned up my bloody nose with a couple of tissues that had been in my pocket, I walked on. I climbed the first bay tree I saw. It was so peaceful and quiet. I closed my eyes and went to sleep. A while later, I woke up on the ground and my ankle hurt. The only explanation was that I had fallen out of the tree. I managed to stand up putting minimal weight on my ankle. I saw a message carved on the trunk of the bay tree. It read, BEWARE OF LIONS! I heard a low growl in the distance. I thought, “Maybe this is going to be a short trip after all.”

## It Is Never Too Late

As the sun set, a fox snuck through the deep forest. Soon he began breathing more and more heavily. Then he started panting and his eyes got big. "Will I ever become king of the forest?" he wondered. Soon he found the den he had been looking for. He puffed up his chest proudly and then tiptoed into the den. With every step, the fox stopped and looked around. After a few moments, he decided that no one was in the den. He began to investigate the den and just as he was about to enter the last room in the den...CRASH! He yipped and whined. Then he heard an angry voice:

"What are you doing here!"

"I should be king of the forest!" the fox declared.

A coyote came out from the shadows. "Orange! Me and my family have told you endless times to not bother us anymore. Please leave! Now!"

One more coyote came out from the shadows. Orange the fox shouted at the two coyotes, "You are so frustrating! I should be king. I may be small, but I certainly am smart, and your family is what is stopping me from being the leader of the forest!"

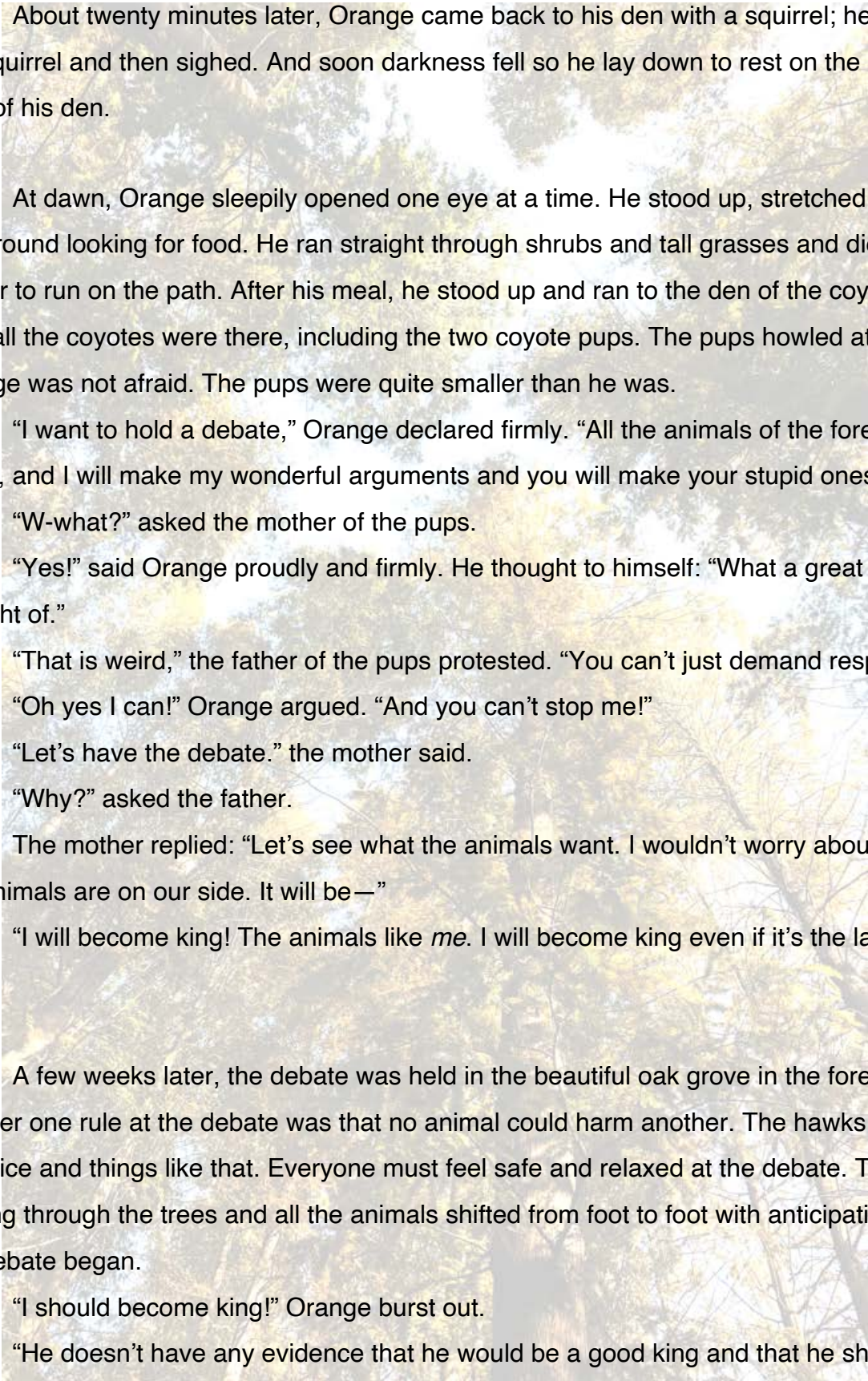
"The forest should be a free place. It should not be a place ruled by one ruler. Now please leave my family's home or I will take action against you!"

Orange's shoulders slumped. The coyotes towered slightly above him.

"I'll be back," he told the coyotes. With that, he ran out of the den. Sighing all the while, Orange trotted all the way back to his home.

Back at his den, he snuggled up into a ball and sighed. Outside the birds were chirping their evening song. "Be quiet, birds," grumbled Orange. He walked to the edge of his den and peeked out. Then he screamed at a pair of chirping wrens: "Be quiet! You're being way too loud."

Orange looked firmly at the wrens and before he could say anything more, the wrens were gone. Orange's stomach was growling loudly so he decided to go hunt.



About twenty minutes later, Orange came back to his den with a squirrel; he feasted on the squirrel and then sighed. And soon darkness fell so he lay down to rest on the soft forest floor of his den.

At dawn, Orange sleepily opened one eye at a time. He stood up, stretched, and then ran around looking for food. He ran straight through shrubs and tall grasses and did not even bother to run on the path. After his meal, he stood up and ran to the den of the coyotes. This time all the coyotes were there, including the two coyote pups. The pups howled at him, but Orange was not afraid. The pups were quite smaller than he was.

“I want to hold a debate,” Orange declared firmly. “All the animals of the forest will come, and I will make my wonderful arguments and you will make your stupid ones.”

“W-what?” asked the mother of the pups.

“Yes!” said Orange proudly and firmly. He thought to himself: “What a great idea I thought of.”

“That is weird,” the father of the pups protested. “You can’t just demand respect.”

“Oh yes I can!” Orange argued. “And you can’t stop me!”

“Let’s have the debate.” the mother said.

“Why?” asked the father.

The mother replied: “Let’s see what the animals want. I wouldn’t worry about it. Most of the animals are on our side. It will be—”

“I will become king! The animals like *me*. I will become king even if it’s the last thing I do!”

A few weeks later, the debate was held in the beautiful oak grove in the forest. The number one rule at the debate was that no animal could harm another. The hawks couldn’t eat the mice and things like that. Everyone must feel safe and relaxed at the debate. The sun was shining through the trees and all the animals shifted from foot to foot with anticipation. At last the debate began.

“I should become king!” Orange burst out.

“He doesn’t have any evidence that he would be a good king and that he should be

king,” argued the mother coyote.

“Why shouldn’t I be king?”

“Because the forest will not live forever if you don’t respect it,” replied the father coyote.

“And the forest doesn’t need a ruler.”

“Just because we haven’t had one before doesn’t mean we shouldn’t have one now.”

Orange argued. “I will be a good king and, if I am not made king, I will be so mad.”

One of the robins said: “You still haven’t said why you should be king.”

“Yeah,” added a turkey.

“We don’t need a ruler,” a beaver said.

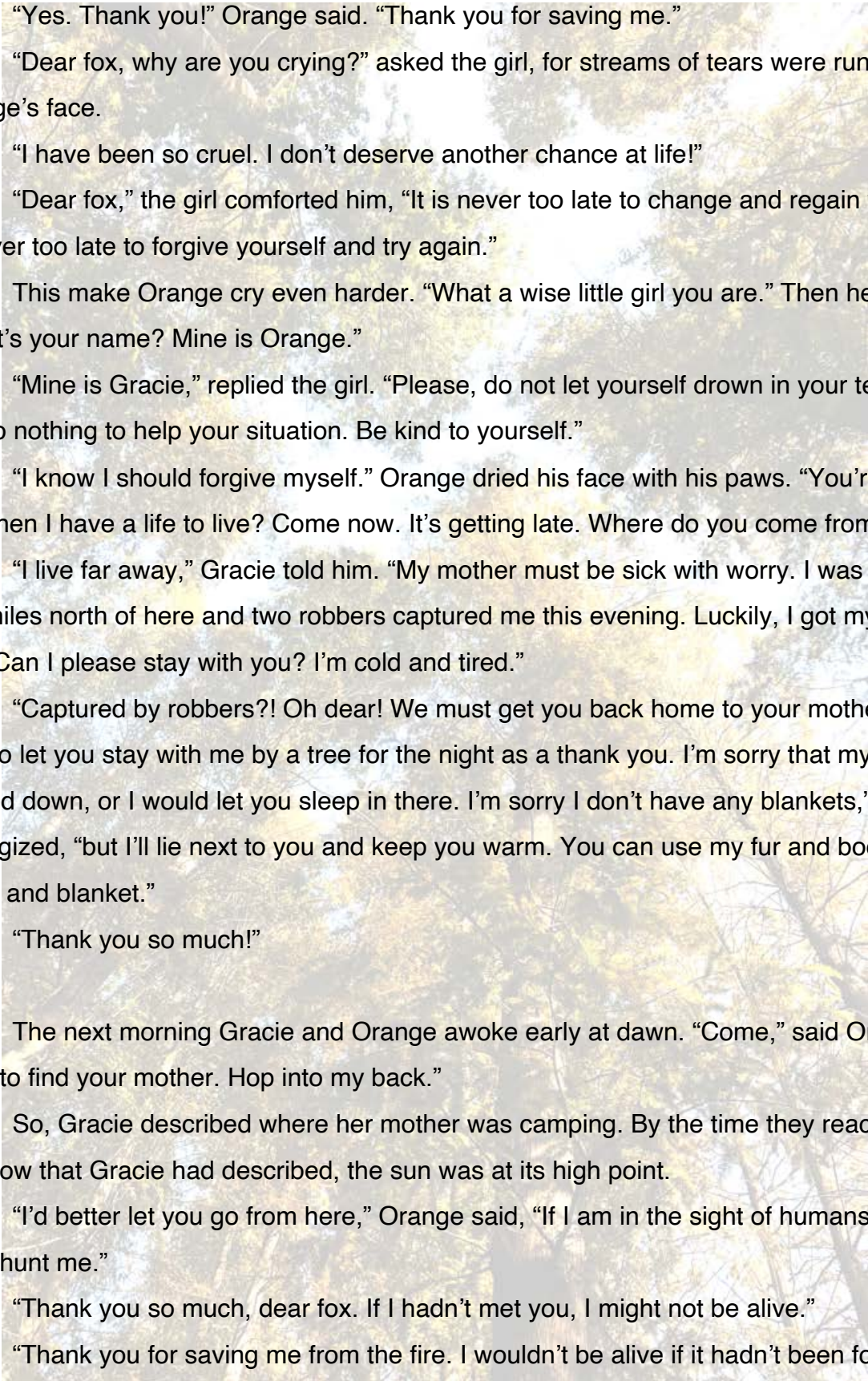
“You won’t be a good king either,” a mouse said.

We’ve gotten along fine without a ruler before,” a deer pointed out. “We don’t need one now.”

Orange’s eyes turned bright with anger. With that, he ran into the forest.

One night, Orange was shivering so he decided to make a fire. Although his coat was thick, he liked fires. He made a nice big one right by his den. “Ah,” he thought, “What a nice warm fire.” And before he knew it, he drifted off to sleep; the warmth of his fire had made him extremely drowsy. Then wind blew, and branches and leaves fell from the trees including some small, dry tree branches from the tree above where Orange was sleeping; some dry grass blew into his fire as well. The fire grew rapidly. The fire began to spread quickly throughout the forest. Then, Orange’s eyes flew open. He saw the fire. He began to cough because of the thick smoke. He tried to run to the creek, but the flames of the fire surrounded him. Orange had beads of sweat running down his sides and he could barely breathe anymore; it was so smoky. From the side, he felt water rain down on him. “Rain?” he thought. The fire began to slowly subside. Soon Orange saw the creek. Next to the creek was a young girl; she was throwing bucket after bucket, full of water onto the fire. Orange’s eyes filled with tears. “I have been so cruel to the animals of the forest,” he thought. “I deserved to be killed in the fire! This fire is all my fault.”

The girl came nearer. She couldn’t be more than nine or ten years old. She walked toward Orange. “Are you okay?” she asked softly.



“Yes. Thank you!” Orange said. “Thank you for saving me.”

“Dear fox, why are you crying?” asked the girl, for streams of tears were running down Orange’s face.

“I have been so cruel. I don’t deserve another chance at life!”

“Dear fox,” the girl comforted him, “It is never too late to change and regain your trust. It is never too late to forgive yourself and try again.”

This made Orange cry even harder. “What a wise little girl you are.” Then he asked, “What’s your name? Mine is Orange.”

“Mine is Gracie,” replied the girl. “Please, do not let yourself drown in your tears. That will do nothing to help your situation. Be kind to yourself.”

“I know I should forgive myself.” Orange dried his face with his paws. “You’re right. Why cry when I have a life to live? Come now. It’s getting late. Where do you come from?”

“I live far away,” Gracie told him. “My mother must be sick with worry. I was camping a few miles north of here and two robbers captured me this evening. Luckily, I got myself out of that. Can I please stay with you? I’m cold and tired.”

“Captured by robbers?! Oh dear! We must get you back home to your mother. I’d be glad to let you stay with me by a tree for the night as a thank you. I’m sorry that my den was burned down, or I would let you sleep in there. I’m sorry I don’t have any blankets,” Orange apologized, “but I’ll lie next to you and keep you warm. You can use my fur and body as a pillow and blanket.”

“Thank you so much!”

The next morning Gracie and Orange awoke early at dawn. “Come,” said Orange, “we need to find your mother. Hop into my back.”

So, Gracie described where her mother was camping. By the time they reached the meadow that Gracie had described, the sun was at its high point.

“I’d better let you go from here,” Orange said, “If I am in the sight of humans they may try to hunt me.”

“Thank you so much, dear fox. If I hadn’t met you, I might not be alive.”

“Thank you for saving me from the fire. I wouldn’t be alive if it hadn’t been for you.”



Gracie looked into Orange's eyes and patted his head before turning and hesitantly heading across the meadow. She looked back at him sorrowfully with damp eyes and then before Orange knew it, she disappeared on the other side of the meadow. Orange's eyes watered and he, too, hesitated before turning and trotting away back into the forest.

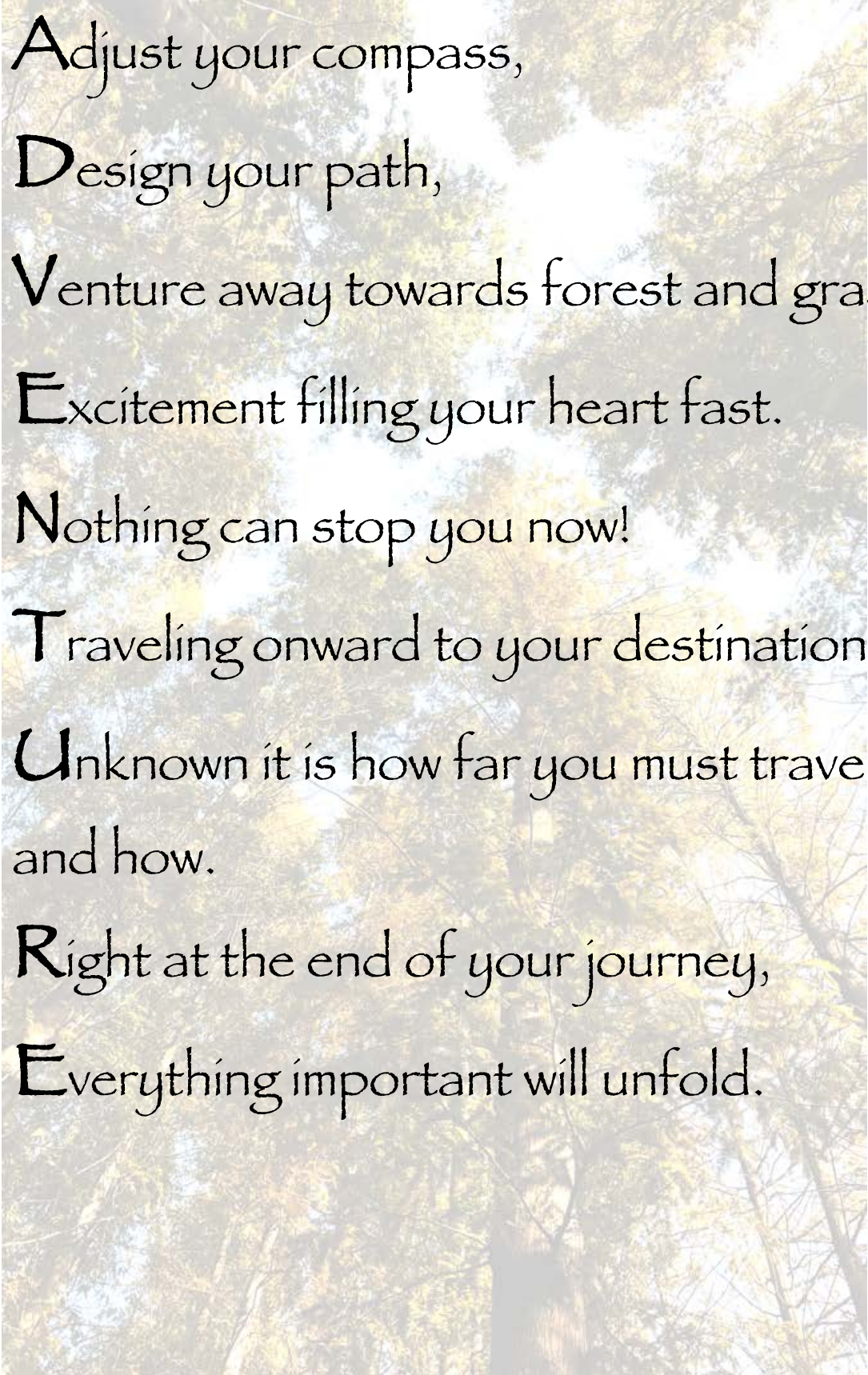


Scott Walsh—unsplash.com



# Be You

Walking, stepping, running, hiking  
Down a trail of dry,  
Over a hill, and "Wow!"  
There are  
Elk.  
They are just standing there  
Being themselves.  
The elk walk, their backs gleaming in the buttery sunshine.  
They are so different  
Living their life in the wilderness.  
They are true to themselves and just live every minute  
Being who they are.  
We walk closer.  
They walk away.  
The elk eat and  
Turn their heads towards us.  
They keep eating and  
Being themselves.  
We retreat.  
So do they.  
Not interacting  
With humans is fine.  
Just let them be true to themselves so that they are  
Just being them.



Adjust your compass,  
Design your path,  
Venture away towards forest and grass,  
Excitement filling your heart fast.  
Nothing can stop you now!  
Traveling onward to your destination.  
Unknown it is how far you must travel  
and how.  
Right at the end of your journey,  
Everything important will unfold.

# About the Writer/Editor



Zoe D. 2020

Hi, my name is Zoe Dubois and I am 13 years old. I live in California. I homeschool and I have written this magazine through the *Cover Story* curriculum. I have loved nature and animals since as long as I can remember. I hope that reading this magazine has brought some love for nature and animals into your life. Thank you for reading Forest Friends Magazine.

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With gratitude,  
Zoe Dubois