EXPLORER'S GUIDE
Journey to the Heart of Nature

A Sharing Nature Activity by Joseph Cornell

Since you won't have time to do every exercise, choose the ones that are most interesting to you and that give you the greatest sense of involvement with your special place.

"When I discovered a new plant, I sat beside it for a minute or a day, to make its acquaintance, and try to hear what it had to tell me." — John Muir

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

After choosing a Special Place, take the time to wander around to see what's there. Then pick a spot where you can think about your site, make yourself comfortable, and answer these questions:

1. **What are the first things I notice about my site?**
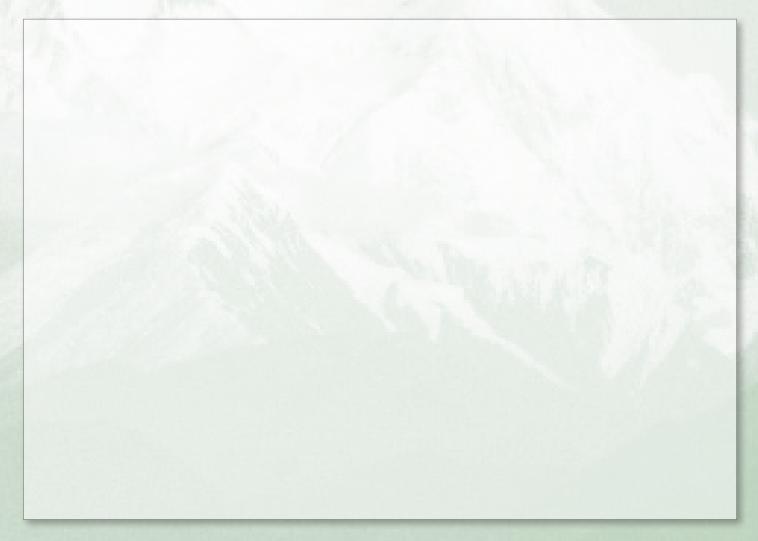
2. **What do I like about being here?**

WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

Listen to the symphony of sounds around you. Concentrate on the distant sounds, and then gradually shift your attention to nearby sounds.

Can you hear the trees singing with the wind? See if you can pick out the song one tree is singing and describe it.

SKETCH YOUR BEST VIEW

Find your favorite view and then draw it. You'll show your drawing to your guest, who will then try to find the view.

SHARE SOMETHING THAT MAKES YOU SMILE INSIDE.

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VERTICAL POEM

To practice this exercise, first observe something that captivates you—perhaps a field of flowers or a secluded sea cove. Notice its effect on you, and choose a word that captures your feeling. Then use each letter of the word to begin a line of your poem.

The simple structure for a vertical poem makes it very easy to write. After successfully crafting their verses, people have exclaimed to me, "It's been forty years since I've written a poem!"

The Vertical Poem below was written in a forest in Northern California:

<u>F</u> ragrances of oak and pine

<u>O</u> pen up the heart and mind.

<u>R</u> emain still awhile and listen:

<u>E</u> verywhere is Nature's song—

<u>S</u> ometimes as silent as a leaf falling;

<u>T</u> ime is suspended.

—Tom W.

VERTICAL POEM

Write the word you've chosen, one letter on each line. Then use each letter to begin a line of your poem.

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