

## Whose world?

We arrive at camp  
and step out of the truck

a merlin screeches  
high above the Douglas firs

a red-tailed bumblebee  
buzzes by the yellow goldenrod  
that stands as tall as me

a hummingbird hovers  
in the salal flowers  
at my knees

a garter snake ambles  
through bunchberry  
by my ankles

I grow quiet

I disappear  
into wonder:

whose habitat  
am I in?



## Poem study

**What is happening in the poem?** A person (the speaker of the poem) has arrived at camp by truck. They are in the wilderness. Their senses are awake. What do they hear? The merlin's screech, bee buzzing. What do they see? A red-tailed bumblebee, yellow goldenrod, a hovering hummingbird.

**Why did the writer make the speaker "disappear"?** They have gone quiet with amazement and awe. They are taking it all in. They are watching and listening. They are being respectful. They are not needed here. They do not belong here. They are in the habitat of other creatures. They are not in their habitat.

**Did you notice?** The poet wrote about things all around the person: overhead, by their head, by their knees, by their feet. The writer has plunged the person entirely into this place, from head to toe.

## Discussion

**What is habitat?** A habitat is the natural home or environment of a plant, animal, or other organism. It provides them with food, water, shelter and space to survive.

**Do people have a habitat?** Yes! It can include the natural environment, but is often more the built environment – cities, towns, apartment buildings, houses.

## Art and science connection - two options

Students study the animals and plants in the poem, or research animals and plants local to them.

**Large-group drawing:** Students work in groups with large sheets of paper. They draw or trace a life-size child, then work together to draw the rich, colourful natural world around and above the child.

**Individual drawing:** Students create a picture of themselves immersed in rich, colourful nature.

**Notes:** Challenge students to make the child "quiet" in the picture. Maybe it's only an outline of the child, with no colour. They could be a silhouette, or drawn with a dotted line. Maybe the nature drawn over them, obscuring them.

Students can go to a park to observe and draw in silence, adding animals they know to be local.

