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My Fourteenth Summer

Near the brook
in the upper field,
the air is still and sweet
with clover and
goldenrod.
My thoughts are
syrupy-thick with hot summer days,
lazy, stifling.

I come here
often now,
to doze in
sweltering heat
among the droning, steady buzz of gnats,
endless green pasture
'tween me
and the bustling house of
babies and soapy laundry.
I feel set apart,
and so alone,
yet at peace,
as my skin
grows bronze with sunlight.

From somewhere
down below there comes
the bellow of
a cow.
It hangs,
sticky in the air
like brown molasses,
then falls into nothingness,
swallowed by the
all-engulfing
heat
of a midsummer day.

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He who draws noble delights from the sentiments of poetry is a true
poet, though he has never written a line in all his life.



-George Sand

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I come here
often now
for the solitude I
fled as a child.
Then I was young,
as those down below,
and it mattered not
who I was,
or where I came from.
But I am older now,
in need of understanding.
And so,
I come in silence,
to seek my soul
upon the hills.

—Denise Bickel,
Ninth grade, Parsippany Hills High School,
Parsippany, New Jersey

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