

The Pond

There are places along a bird's migration path that are essential to its journey; places where the bird rests, eats, gathers, and prepares for the next leg of the journey. Wetlands are essential environments that are naturally occurring as way stations for the birds and a year round home for the countless other species that generate the ecology of this rich area of aquatic biosphere.

What places in your life serve this function? What are your sanctuaries, your habitats that nourish and replenish and assure your safe journey forward into the world?

Find a place along the perimeter of the pond, or sitting on the bench and let the essence and necessity of this small habitat sink in. Feel it the way you feel your other indoor sanctuaries. What happens when we remove this critical habitat from the lives of its inhabitants? What happens when your sanctuaries are destroyed or made absent somehow? In our tendency towards rampant development, many of these vital habitats are destroyed. Have you ever had one of your vital habitats destroyed? Perhaps a house fire or a forced relocation. How did this impact your life? What was lost? What was gained? Moscow has several small wetland areas like this one which have been preserved. It is often, as a human species, that we perceive the need to remedy a situation AFTER the damage has been done. How could you, right now, sitting here, conceive of a different way to approach that equation? How would it be if we entered into dialogue with the land and its various inhabitants prior to making 'improvements' as we seen them as humans? Have you ever destroyed (knowingly or unwittingly) the habitat of other beings? Cutting down important wild grasses, flowers and 'weeds' that house a myriad of beings in order to manicure a lawn? Cutting down an acreage of trees for house placement? Whose needs get to come first in these dynamics?

Consider again how your sanctuaries feel to you and how it would be (or was) to have them forcefully removed from you. Extend this same sense to the birds, creatures and plants of this environment in front of you and imagine what it would be to remove this from them?

Write your poem or reflection based on these questions and the sensations/discoveries you make in putting yourself into the position of being the animal in the habitat that is threatened. How would it be different if the agent threatening your existence actually engaged in discussion with you about mutual need and benefit rather than deciding for you?