

AUTUMN IN WESTFIELD

By Bret S., Westfield, IN

Autumn is almost here- my body tells me so. All of the regular symptoms of the fall season have stimulated my senses.

There is that sudden, gentle breeze that makes my hairs stand on end and immediately settle and makes the trees sway like the flickering flame of a lit candle. There is that familiar yet indefinable smell that swarms my nostrils and establishes instant serenity. Is that the scent of burning wood entering my nose? Or is it nature's way of saying that fall has come? I do not know, and, in a way, do not want to know. It is sometimes better to wonder.

Unfortunately, school has begun, but with this comes the joy of seeing old friends and of meeting new people. And sometimes, when I return home, I walk into my yard and look up. The sky is bright, the leaves are changing, and it feels like a fresh start. I breathe in deeply the brisk air only autumn knows, and I stand, relax, live.

But something here is wrong. This is not quite like the memories of my childhood. The crackle of leaves breaking has been replaced by the vroom of cars passing by. I remember the browns, reds, oranges, and yellows falling from the sky in a light, bouncing motion that seemed to capture time. Now I just see the violent and random colors of cars, blinding me as the sun's rays reflect off of them.

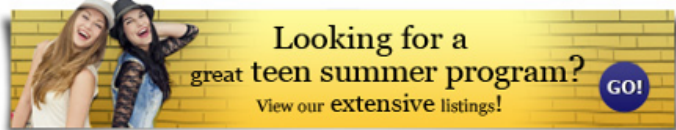
Wasn't there a horse farm next to my neighborhood? Now there is just another neighborhood, its unoriginal and identical colors and shapes drab and uninviting. As I drive through the town, I can't help but wonder, "Was that building there yesterday? Did there used to be this much traffic? Are those gas prices right?"

Even at school, my home away from home, I don't recognize these halls. I know the geography, but I'm sure that these hallways didn't used to be so crowded. I don't remember having to bulldoze through the hallways, yet everyday I see kids tossed about and trampled on even worse than Mufasa.

Is this really what has become of the little farming community of Westfield? I can't honestly say I remember feeling so trapped. Are we really so self-absorbed and so obsessed with self-expansion that we are no longer able to appreciate the little things in life that represent true beauty and make life worth living? Luckily, I'll be gone within a year, free to the confines of some university, somewhere, some fall day.



Image Credit: Anna R, Sudbury, ON, Canada



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