

THE WEEKLY MUSE

A WEEK'S WORTH OF CURATED CURIOSITY.

ISSUE NO. 001 / AUGUST 2026



Late
Summer
Hang

CREATING AN OASIS IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD.



THE WEEKLY MUSE

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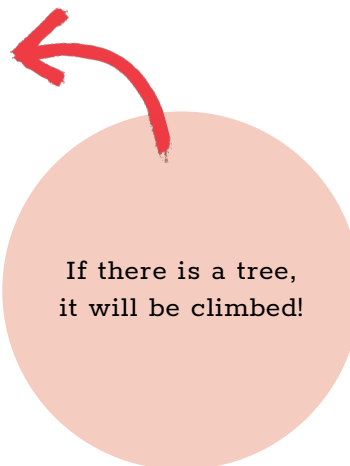


HELLO

These last weeks of summer invite us to slow down even more before Fall routines begin.

When I was a kid, by mid-August I was scrambling to finish my Summer reading, stressing about what my first day of school outfit would be and already finding it hard to sleep at night because the new school year was coming at me like a freight train. As a homeschooling mom I'm so grateful my kids won't be experiencing that dread. We are excited to dip back into schedules and structure, but still loving the freedom we enjoyed all summer. Soaking up the last days of sleeping in, endless hours spent at the swimming hole and lunches at the splash pad. This issue is all about savoring the last few weeks of August and looking forward to new beginnings next month.

SUSANNE WHITAKER, FOUNDER



WELCOME TO THE WEEKLY MUSE

Your weekly dose of curated curiosity.



The Weekly Muse was created for families who want to infuse ordinary days with a little more magic.

This is not another curriculum to purchase, organize and eventually forget about. (I've done it!) It is not a schedule to keep up with or a list of things you *should* be doing. The Weekly Muse is here to offer possibilities.

It can become part of a homeschool week, provide direction for an unschooling family or bring more intention to the evenings and weekends of children who attend traditional school. There is no right way to use it. Just take what works for your family.

When a new issue arrives, make a cup of coffee and read through it. Notice what catches your attention. Choose a book. Print a page. Pin an idea in your datebook. Gather a few supplies. Put one adventure on the calendar before the week fills up.

You might follow an idea through the entire issue, or you might read the story and ignore everything else. One family may spend the week at museums and playgrounds; another may stay home to make art, cook something new and watch the birds outside the kitchen window. Take what fits your family, your season and the amount of energy you actually have.

The point is not to create a perfect week. It's to make room for good books, interesting conversations, new skills, shared meals, spontaneous outings and the moments your children will remember.

If your goal is to raise **curious, capable** kids who are engaged with the world, **confident** enough to participate in it and connected to the people sharing it with them - you're in the right place.

Choose what inspires you. Plan the adventure. Make every day count.

"If your goal is to raise curious, capable kids who are engaged with the world, confident enough to participate in it and connected to the people sharing it with them - you're in the right place."

READ

AMONG THE MEADOW PEOPLE



AMONG THE MEADOW PEOPLE

The Froghoppers Go Out Into The World

Written all the way back in 1897 by a kindergarten teacher named Clara Dillingham Pierson, *Among the Meadow People* is 28 tiny stories about the bugs, frogs, and critters living in the grass right outside your door. This week we're reading about the froghoppers. Have you ever noticed that foamy stuff on plant stems in the summer? Turns out, inside that foam, there are baby froghoppers hiding, using those bubbles as protection until they're ready to hop out into the world. Kind of amazing, isn't it?!

THE LITERARY LENS

Personification

Personification is when an author gives thoughts, feelings or actions to animals or objects. Writers use personification to make a story more interesting and help the story come alive. Can you find three times in the story when the author uses personification? Write them each down in your notebook.

THIS WEEK

First, read the story on the next few pages. Then try the following as a conversation, or in a notebook.

1. Try telling a story from the perspective of something in your kitchen. A teapot, stalk of celery, a spatula. If it could talk, what story would it tell?
2. Describe today's weather as if it has feelings. Is the wind in a hurry? Is the sun kind and warm? What are the clouds doing?
3. Rewrite the story about the froghoppers from the perspective of the Goldenrod in the story.

AMONG THE MEADOW PEOPLE

The Froghoppers Go Out Into The World

ALONG the upper edge of the meadow and in the corners of the rail fence there grew golden-rod. During the spring and early summer you could hardly tell that it was there, unless you walked close to it and saw the slender and graceful stalks pushing upward through the tall grass and pointing in many different ways with their dainty leaves. The Horses and Cows knew it, and although they might eat all around it they never pulled at it with their lips or ate it. In the autumn, each stalk was crowned with sprays of tiny bright yellow blossoms, which nodded in the wind and scattered their golden pollen all around. Then it sometimes happened that people who were driving past would stop, climb over the fence, and pluck some of it to carry away. Even then there was so much left that one could hardly miss the stalks that were gone.

It may have been because the golden-rod was such a safe home that most of the Frog-Hoppers laid their eggs there. Some laid eggs in other plants and bushes, but most of them chose the golden-rod. After they had laid their eggs they wandered around on the grass, the bushes, and the few trees which grew in the meadow, hopping from one place to another and eating a little here and a little there.

Nobody knows why they should have been called Frog-Hoppers, unless it was because when you look them in the face they seem a very little like tiny Frogs. To be sure, they have six legs, and teeth on the front pair, as no real Frog ever thought of having. Perhaps it was only a nickname because their own name was so long and hard to speak.

The golden-rod was beginning to show small yellow-green buds on the tips of its stalks, and the little Frog-Hoppers were now old enough to talk and wonder about the great world. On one stalk four Frog-Hopper brothers and sisters lived close together. That was much pleasanter than having to grow up all alone, as most young Frog-Hoppers do, never seeing their fathers and mothers or knowing whether they ever would.

AMONG THE MEADOW PEOPLE

The Froghoppers Go Out Into The World

These four little Frog-Hoppers did not know how lucky they were, and that, you know, happens very often when people have not seen others lonely or unhappy. They supposed that every Frog-Hopper family had two brothers and two sisters living together on a golden-rod stalk. They fed on the juice or sap of the golden-rod, pumping it out of the stalk with their stout little beaks and eating or drinking it. After they had eaten it, they made white foam out of it, and this foam was all around them on the stalk. Any one passing by could tell at once by the foam just where the Frog-Hoppers lived.

One morning the oldest Frog-Hopper brother thought that the sap pumped very hard. It may be that it did pump hard, and it may be that he was tired or lazy. Anyway, he began to grumble and find fault. "This is the worst stalk of golden-rod I ever saw in my life," he said. "It doesn't pay to try to pump any more sap, and I just won't try, so there!"

He was quite right in saying that it was the worst stalk he had ever seen, because he had never seen any other, but he was much mistaken in saying that it didn't pay to pump sap, and as for saying that "it didn't pay, so there!" we all know that when insects begin to talk in that way the best thing to do is to leave them quite alone until they are better-natured.

The other Frog-Hopper children couldn't leave him alone, because they hadn't changed their skins for the last time. They had to stay in their foam until that was done. After the big brother spoke in this way, they all began to wonder if the sap didn't pump hard. Before long the big sister wiggled impatiently and said, "My beak is dreadfully tired."

Then they all stopped eating and began to talk. They called their home stuffy, and said there wasn't room to turn around in it without hitting the foam. They didn't say why they should mind hitting the foam. It was soft and clean, and always opened up a way when they pushed against it.

"I tell you what!" said the big brother, "after I've changed my skin once more and gone out into the great world, you won't catch me hanging around this old golden-rod."

READ

AMONG THE MEADOW PEOPLE

AMONG THE MEADOW PEOPLE

The Froghoppers Go Out Into The World

"Nor me!" "Nor me!" "Nor me!" said the other young Frog-Hoppers.

"I wonder what the world is like," said the little sister. "Is it just bigger foam and bigger golden-rod and more Frog-Hoppers?"

"Huh!" exclaimed her big brother. "What lots you know! If I didn't know any more than that about it, I'd keep still and not tell anybody." That made her feel badly, and she didn't speak again for a long time.

Then the little brother spoke. "I didn't know you had ever been out into the world," he said.

"No," said the big brother, "I suppose you didn't. There are lots of things you don't know." That made him feel badly, and he went off into the farthest corner of the foam and stuck his head in between a golden-rod leaf and the stalk. You see the big brother was very cross. Indeed, he was exceedingly cross.

For a long time nobody spoke, and then the big sister said, "I wish you would tell us what the world is like."

The big brother knew no more about the world than the other children, but after he had been cross and put on airs he didn't like to tell the truth. He might have known that he would be found out, yet he held up his head and answered: "I don't suppose that I can tell you so that you will understand, because you have never seen it. There are lots of things there—whole lots of them—and it is very big. Some of the things are like golden-rod and some of them are not. Some of them are not even like foam. And there are a great many people there. They all have six legs, but they are not so clever as we are. We shall have to tell them things."

This was very interesting and made the little sister forget to pout and the little brother come out of his foam-corner. He even looked as though he might ask a few questions, so the big brother added, "Now don't talk to me, for I must think about something."

AMONG THE MEADOW PEOPLE

The Froghoppers Go Out Into The World

It was not long after this that the young Frog-Hoppers changed their skins for the last time. The outside part of the foam hardened and made a little roof over them while they did this. Then they were ready to go out into the meadow. The big brother felt rather uncomfortable, and it was not his new skin which made him so. It was remembering what he had said about the world outside.

When they had left their foam and their golden-rod, they had much to see and ask about. Every little while one of the smaller Frog-Hoppers would exclaim, "Why, you never told us about this!" or, "Why didn't you tell us about that?"

Then the big brother would answer: "Yes, I did. That is one of the things which I said were not like either golden-rod or foam."

For a while they met only Crickets, Ants, Grasshoppers, and other six-legged people, and although they looked at each other they did not have much to say. At last they hopped near to the Tree Frog, who was sitting by the mossy trunk of a beech tree and looked so much like the bark that they did not notice him at first. The big brother was very near the Tree Frog's head.

"Oh, see!" cried the others. "There is somebody with only four legs, and he doesn't look as though he ever had any more. Why, Brother, what does this mean? You said everybody had six."

At this moment the Tree Frog opened his eyes a little and his mouth a great deal, and shot out his quick tongue. When he shut his mouth again, the big brother of the Frog-Hoppers was nowhere to be seen. They never had a chance to ask him that question again. If they had but known it, the Tree Frog at that minute had ten legs, for six and four are ten. But then, they couldn't know it, for six were on the inside.

FORAGE

THE GOLDENROD IS BLOOMING

GOLDENROD

Goldenrod grows all over the US.
You've probably seen it growing on
the side of the road while driving
or while hiking in the woods.

If it's late summer/early fall,

Goldenrod is around.

Once you start paying attention,
you will see it! Once you've located it,
you're ready to take the kids on
an adventure to
forage some Goldenrod.



KNOW WHAT GROWS HERE

*Getting to know the plants
around us is a beautiful practice.*

*If you feel inspired, start your
family field guide. Each issue of
The Weekly Muse will focus on a
plant. With your child, create
your monograph page.*

Have them sketch the plant.

Get to know it.

*Work with it (make tea, a
tincture, some infused honey!)
We can all dabble in herbalism
and learn the plants around us.
The world is your curriculum.*

PLANT MONOGRAPH

GOLDENROD · *Solidago* spp.

AT A GLANCE

FAMILY	ASTERACEAE (DAISY)
GENUS	SOLIDAGO
SEASON	LATE SUMMER-FALL
HABITAT	FIELDS · ROADSIDE · EDGES

KNOW THE PLANT

Look for upright stems crowned with branching plumes of tiny yellow flower heads. Leaves are alternate and often lance shaped, but details vary across the many goldenrod species. Color alone is never enough for identification.

ENERGETICS

Warming, drying, astringent.

ASSOCIATIONS

Sunshine, abundance, positivity.

LEARN THE PLANT BEFORE YOU WORK WITH IT.

TRADITIONAL PREPARATIONS

Traditional preparations include **infusions** or **tinctures** to support respiratory health. **Tea** to increase urine flow / flush kidneys or support sore throats. Make into a **poultice** for wound healing, apply topically to draw out infection, crush and apply to soothe bee stings. Use as a natural fabric dye. Burn to purify air.

PLANT PRACTICE

Observe before harvesting.
Make a record of the plant as you found it.
What do you see? Log these details in your field notebook.

- 01 WHOLE PLANT: shape, height
- 02 LEAF + STEM: attachment, texture
- 03 PLACE: light, insects, date

FORAGE

PLANT MONOGRAPH

AT A GLANCE

FAMILY

GENUS

SEASON

HABITAT

KNOW THE PLANT

ENERGETICS

ASSOCIATIONS

TRADITIONAL PREPARATIONS

PLANT PRACTICE

Observe before harvesting. Make a record of the plant as you found it.

FIELD NOTE 01

FORAGE

THE GOLDENROD IS BLOOMING

1. Research

Show the kids some pictures of the plant, talk about it, walk through the plant monograph together and let them sketch a picture of Goldenrod.

2. Adventure

Head out for your adventure. Bring scissors and a basket to bring back what you gather. Everyone can carry a stalk and really feel the abundance. There is more than enough for everyone.

3. Stay Engaged

Here are some things to talk about on your walk.

- a. Goldenrod is the bees last meal before hibernation!
- b. If we see Goldenrod what time of year must it be?
- c. Over 100 species of insects feed on Goldenrod!
- d. Goldenrod is found in big clusters because they are connected by rhizomes - stems that grow horizontally underground.

4. Work With The Plant

The easiest way to get to know a plant - make some tea. Goldenrod tea can be great for a sore throat or to help soothe seasonal allergies. But more importantly, for children, the experience of making tea from a plant they foraged themselves is very special.

Using fresh or dried Goldenrod, take about a tablespoon of leaves and flowers (using about the top six inches of the plant). Rinse well and roughly chop. Pour boiled water over the plant matter and let steep for around seven minutes. Strain and enjoy.



FORAGE

THE GOLDENROD IS BLOOMING

"September" - Helen Hunt Jackson

The golden-rod is yellow;
The corn is turning brown;
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusty pods the milkweed
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest,
In every meadow nook;
And asters by the brook-side
Make asters in the brook,

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes' sweet odors rise;
At noon the roads all flutter
With yellow butterflies.

By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best of weather,
And autumn's best of cheer.

But none of all this beauty
Which floods the earth and air
Is unto me the secret



WRITE

KIDS LOVE TO TELL STORIES. HERE'S A THOUGHT STARTER FOR EVERY DAY THIS WEEK.

THE PERFECT BEACH DAY

Describe your perfect day at the beach. What are you packing in your beach bag? What music is playing? What do you hear, besides the waves? What scents fill the air? Who is spending the day with you? How do you spend your time? What makes this day absolutely perfect?

SUMMER BRAIN DUMP

Fill an entire page with words that remind you of summer. Think beyond the obvious! Include sights, sounds, smells, foods, places, feelings, colors, and memories. Use different colored pens or markers to make your page come alive.

**A reminder for parents:
If their hands can't keep up
with their imaginations,
let them narrate
while you write.**

A PRO GUIDE

Choose something you're really good at - baking cookies, building forts, drawing dragons, riding a bike, taking care of your dog, anything! Write an instruction guide for someone who has never done it before.
Don't skip any steps.
The more detailed, the better.

YOU'RE THE HISTORIAN

Think back to one favorite moment from this summer. It doesn't have to be a big vacation, it could be something as ordinary as a movie night at home. Describe what happened using as many details as you can. Where were you? Who was there? What did you notice? How did you feel? Would you do it again?

SKY VIEW

While exploring the woods, you discover the most magnificent climbing tree you've ever seen. You climb higher and higher until you reach the very top. As you settle onto the highest branch, you notice something unexpected in the distance. Describe what you see.

MOVE

BUILDING DAILY HABITS THAT STICK

CROSS IT UP

Opposite elbow. Opposite knee. Find your rhythm.



01 REACH



02 SWITCH



03 FIND YOUR RHYTHM

TRY IT

Lift one knee and bring your opposite elbow toward it. Set your foot down. Switch sides and find a comfortable rhythm.

MIX IT UP

Face a friend. Take turns making a pattern for the other person to copy.

NOTICE

Which side feels easier?



EXPERIENCE

THE LATE SUMMER HANG

THE IDEA

Build a place worth lingering and let the afternoon unfold from there.

NO SPECIAL EQUIPMENT.
JUST SHEETS, TREES, BOOKS,
FOOD AND TIME.

01 BUILD THE HIDEOUT

Drape a sheet over a clothesline or low branch. Secure it with clothespins and let the kids shape the space.

02 HANG LOW

Tie a sheet between sturdy branches for a kid-sized hammock made for napping, swinging and spinning.

03 BRING INSIDE OUT

Gather books, pillows, sketchbooks and a snack tray; Everyone will want to stay awhile.

04 MAKE IT A PARTY

Invite friends, let the kids take the reigns in planning - they can plan a menu, set the outdoor table and pick the music.

BUILD IT BEFORE LUNCH. STAY UNTIL THE LIGHT CHANGES.



MAKE

AN INVITATION TO CREATE

The perfect end of summer activity: creating flower arrangements! If you're not growing your own flowers, you can get lots of flowers at a reasonable price at Trader Joe's. Lay them out on the table with some scissors, find some cute jars and ribbons, and let your kids make their own flower arrangements. They will come up with some great ideas on who to gift these to or where to display them in the house.



MATERIALS

- flowers
- glass jars to use as vases
- scissors
- ribbon

Try not to manage them too much and let them have free creative reign over this project.

TABLE

KITCHEN RITUALS

These jello cups are the such a great thing to prep and keep in the fridge for snacks!

They're hydrating and refreshing. And the gelatin adds a little protein. You can definitely experiment with liquids - sometimes I'll use chamomile tea instead of coconut water (maybe try your goldenrod tea here!)

INGREDIENTS

1.5 tablespoons gelatin
2.5 cups coconut water
1/2 cup frozen passionfruit
1 cup grapes
1 tablespoon honey

METHOD

Place three tablespoons of water in a small bowl with gelatin. Set aside for two minutes.

Combine coconut water and passionfruit in a saucepan on low and whisk until passionfruit melts into the coconut water.

Let cool and add honey to taste (should be slightly sour, but not too sour!)

Add gelatin to the mixture and whisk until incorporated.

Pour the mixture into ramekins and add grapes to each one.

Refrigerate for about four hours.



OUTSIDE, ALL DAY



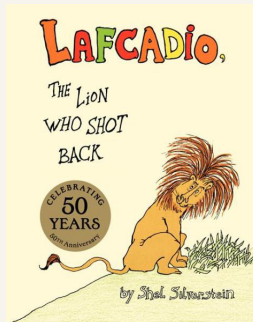
"Get outside. Begin to notice what becomes possible."

-Zach Bush, MD

This Week's LIBRARY FINDS

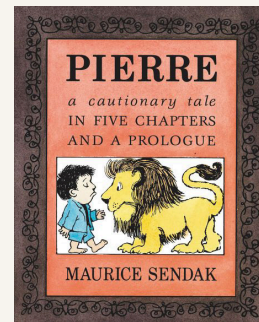
Here are six books we thought were worth bringing home. Reserve these online before your library trip this week.

1



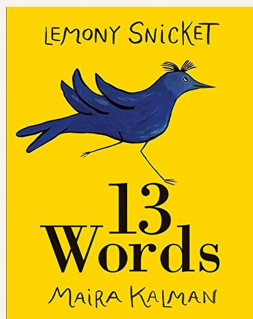
LAFCADIO
By Shell Silverstein

2



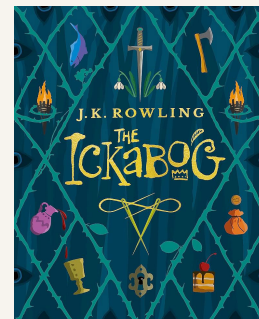
PIERRE A CAUTIONARY TALE
By Maurice Sendak

3



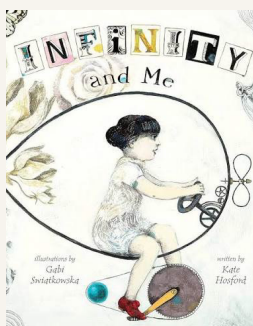
13 WORDS
By Lemony Snicket & Maira Kalman

4



THE ICKABOG
By J.K. Rowling

5



INFINITY AND ME
By Kate Hosford

6



THE GIRL WHO DRANK THE MOON
By Kelly Barnhill

GOALS

Make It Yours

WEEK OF _____

ONE THING TO READ

ONE THING TO MAKE

ONE PLACE TO GO

ONE PERSON TO SEE

ONE THING TO WRITE

ONE WAY TO BE IN SERVICE

ONE WAY TO MOVE

ONE THING TO CELEBRATE

ONE QUESTION TO ASK

ONE SKILL TO PRACTICE

WEEK ONE

Make It Yours

WEEK OF: _____

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN

WEEK TWO

Make It Yours

WEEK OF: _____

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN