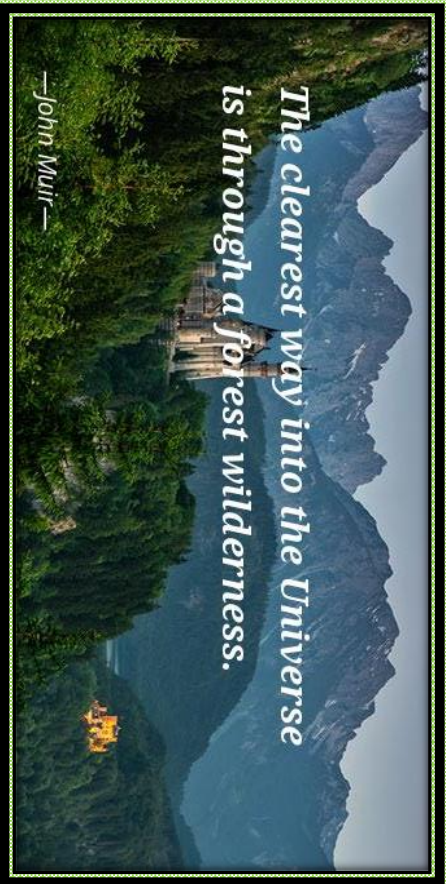
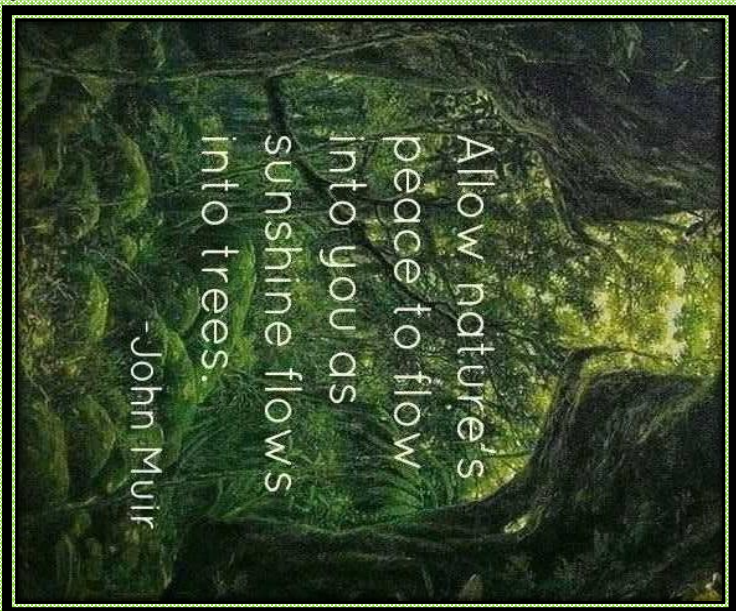




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# Sustainability in the Early Years John Muir Experience

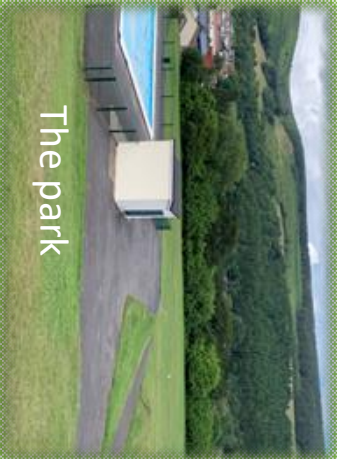


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## Discover

I must begin by touching on the fact that this experience has led me to realise that throughout my life I have taken natural beauties, wildlife and their environments for granted through a lack of appreciation and not taking the time to truly pay attention to nature and all that it has to offer. The John Muir Award has given me the incentive to take time out of a busy life and find out more about the area in which I live. The award required me to explore, discover and conserve an area that holds meaning. Firstly, I decided to explore my garden however I am also lucky enough that my garden backs directly onto the local park which also leads to the Taff Trail, so I decided to explore them all. I chose these areas because the park and its surroundings hold fond memories of my childhood where I have spent many happy summer times. Also, in recent years I often take my dog on walks in the park and on the Taff trail.



The park



My natural garden



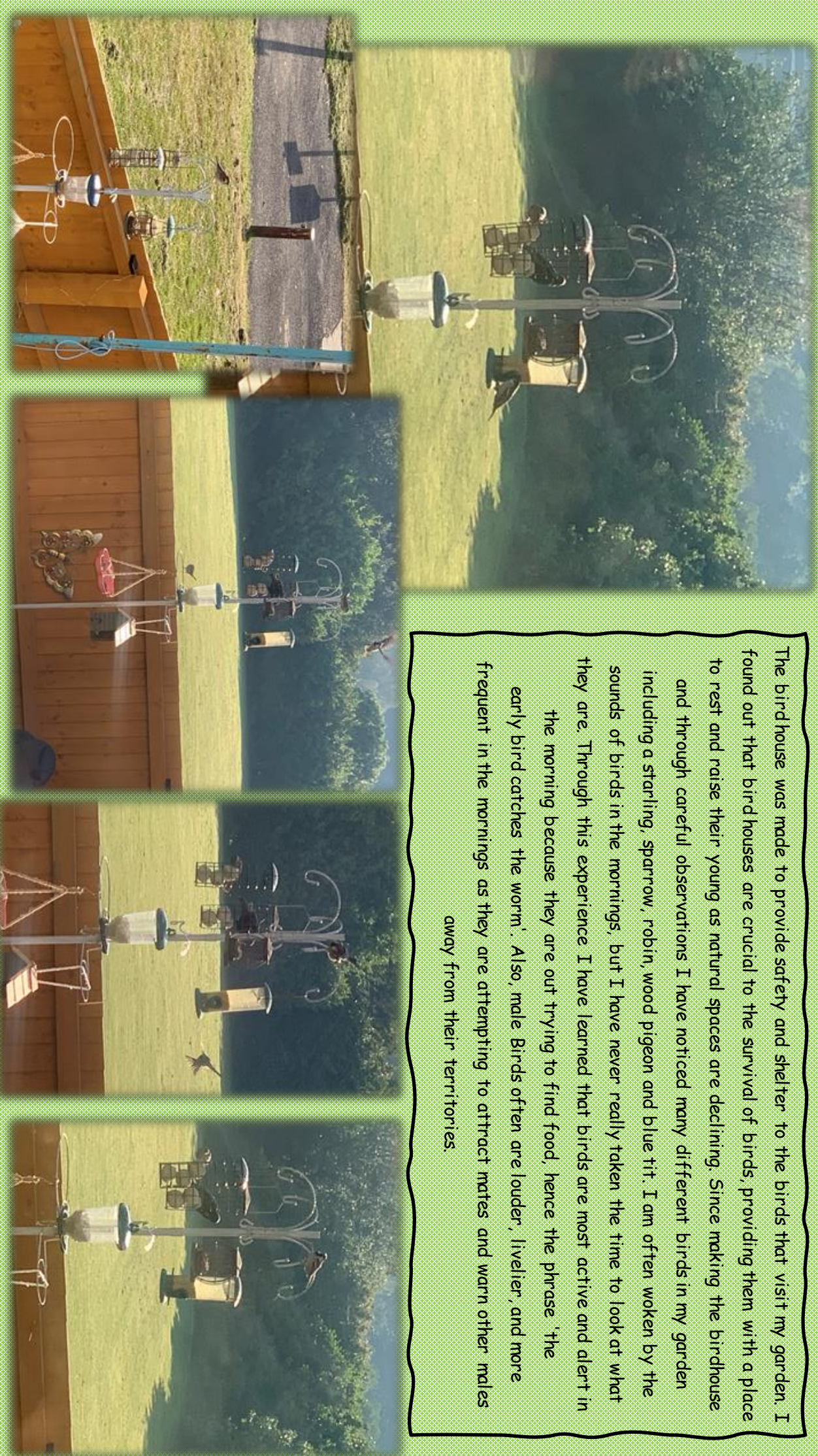
Taff Trail



Through exploration of my garden, I soon realised the vast amount of Artificial flowers and grass within it, although they are aesthetically pleasing, I found out through research that artificial products substantially reduce the biodiversity within your garden as it is made of plastic so soil dwelling wildlife such as worms cannot live there. It also blocks access to the soil beneath the turf for burrowing insects, which as a result living creatures could be starved of food. Not only does artificial grass have no climate benefits, but the vast production of the plastic emits carbon and uses fossil fuels. Plastic deprives people from contact with a natural surface. Some of my favourite childhood memories are sitting on a soft lawn, plucking a daisy or dandelion flowers and the touch and smell of mown grass is a happy memory of my childhood. Swapping this natural element of a garden can make sense for stopping mud or saving chores, but I feel sad at the thought of children growing up with artificial lawns and everything they will miss such as getting a bit muddy or seeing a spider, all these things are little life experiences and memories that shape us to who we are today.



The birdhouse was made to provide safety and shelter to the birds that visit my garden. I found out that bird houses are crucial to the survival of birds, providing them with a place to rest and raise their young as natural spaces are declining. Since making the birdhouse and through careful observations I have noticed many different birds in my garden including a starling, sparrow, robin, wood pigeon and blue tit. I am often woken by the sounds of birds in the mornings, but I have never really taken the time to look at what they are. Through this experience I have learned that birds are most active and alert in the morning because they are out trying to find food, hence the phrase 'the early bird catches the worm'. Also, male birds are louder, livelier, and more frequent in the mornings as they are attempting to attract mates and warn other males away from their territories.





Restored paddling pool



Tennis courts

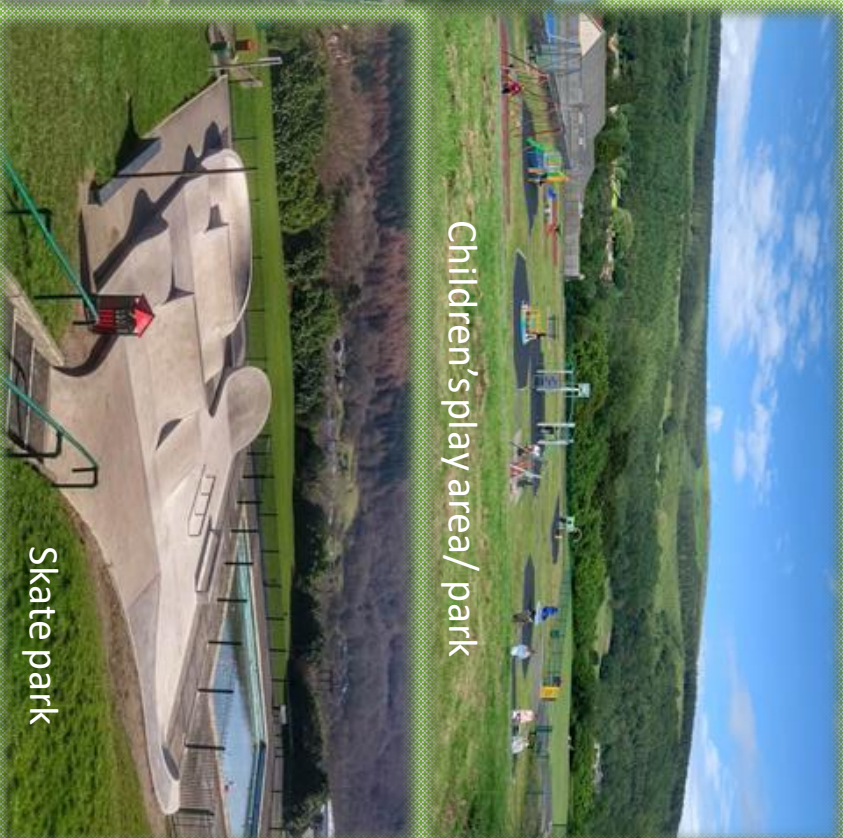


Pavilion



Bowling green

Within the park I have found out that in 2017 the council funded a £180,000 grant to improve facilities including better tennis courts a new skate park, new children's play area and resurfacing the paddling pool. Through my I noticed that the park is used by many and is an extremely popular recreational facility within the local area. The park is used by local schools for events such as sports day, it is also a well-liked area for families to bring their children to socialise and play, dog walkers and exercising. In the park there is also a Bowling Green that the local bowls club use on a regular basis for their tournaments. As well as benefits for physical health, park green areas are associated with positive mental health and well-being as people are given the space to engage with nature.



Children's play area/ park



Skate park

Some of the wonderful wildlife and insects I discovered during my experience...



Frogs



Caterpillar



Butterfly



Lady Bird



Dragonfly



Caterpillar



Robin



Swan



Squirrel



Bumble Bee



Wasp



Spider



Woodlouse



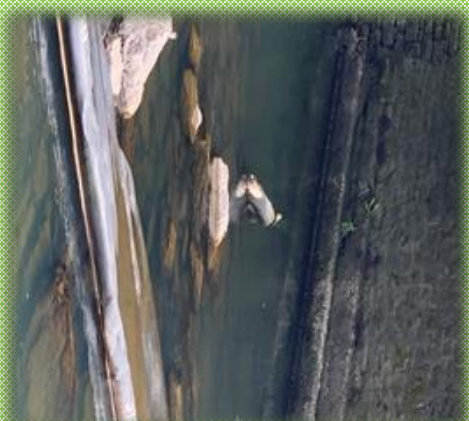
Moth



Butterfly



Sparrow



Yellow tit

Some of the beautiful bedding flowers planted during the summertime in my garden. They have finally blossomed. Looking at these flowers fills me with a sense of happiness....



These trees hold a special meaning as they were planted in remembrance of my grandfather. Every year when they flower, I feel as though he is visiting the garden as he was a keen gardener himself and took great pride in his garden. And the flag flies as he was a proud Welshman.



The extensive amount of litter I discovered that deeply saddened me...



Litter has the potential to cause harm to human health, safety, welfare, as well as the environment. The harmful impact of litter includes trapping or poisoning animals, killing aquatic life directly through choking and indirectly through its impact on water quality.



## Conservation

As an act of conservation within my garden and outlined in my scrapbook I decided to build a bug hotel, a bird house and restore my bird feeders and bird bath. I collected natural materials from my local park to put in the bug hotel including, bamboo, stones, leaves, acorns, twigs and moss. The bug hotel was created in hope that minibeasts and insects would benefit by using it as a safe space to lay their eggs and seek refuge from predators. the bird house was made to provide safety and shelter to the birds that visit my garden. I found out that bird houses are crucial to the survival of birds, providing them with a place to rest and raise their young as natural spaces are declining. Since making the birdbhouse and through careful observations I have noticed many different birds in my garden including a starling, sparrow, robin, wood pigeon and blue tit.





I decided to put the bug hotel in cool, darkened place where there are no predators and in a grassy, natural area that is most likely to attract insects, and the bird house was put in a quiet area within my garden in order to not scare away the birds.



The amount of litter I discovered during my exploration of the Taff Trail led me to want to take action. Therefore, I decided to go on a litter pick within that area.



I also created a station where dog walkers can take and give dog bags, in hope to promote a cleaner area for all.



### Reflection

Through this experience I feel as though I am now seeing nature and the outdoors in a truly different light. Sometimes life is extremely busy, and I don't take the time to admire my surroundings. However, now I believe I have a better awareness and understanding of the world around me. I feel extremely lucky to live in an area that has such natural beauty, from the views of the valley and the rolling mountains that look as if they have no end. Also, I now appreciate the little things like sitting in the garden and listening to the sound of the birds singing in the morning, families and children having fun in the park, the sound of the rain falling on the windows and the image of the sun rising over the treetops and setting in the distance or the colours of a rainbow brightening up the sky.



The overriding factor that has shocked and saddened me is the sheer volume of litter that I discovered during my time exploring the Taff Trail. I have written a poem about the effects litter may have on the environment



### Litter, Litter all around

Litter litter all around,  
Why drop your rubbish all over the ground?

Litter litter everywhere,  
Oh, little insects you might scare.  
Don't drop litter over there,  
Show a little love and care.

There are bins all around,  
look left and right.  
Don't leave your litter behind,  
It just isn't right.

Reduce, reuse recycle-  
that's what you have to do.  
Keep those words in mind  
And our earth will be as good as new.

When you drop your litter,  
Without a thought in mind.  
The environment will suffer  
So just keep it and be kind.

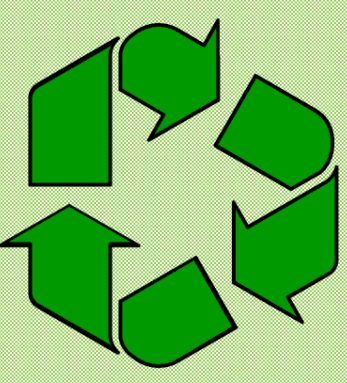
There are bins all around,  
look left and right.  
Don't leave your litter behind,  
It just isn't right.

It may blow into the stream,  
Where it sinks just out of sight.  
Choking living things,  
Morning, noon and night.

So, Reduce, reuse recycle-  
that's what you have to do.  
Keep those word in mind,  
And our earth will be as good as new.

When a glass is smashed,  
It could hurt those little paws.  
Litter's causing too much trouble,  
That's why it's against the law!

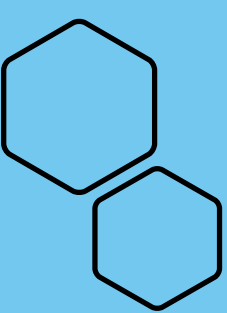
There are litter bins in sight  
To put your rubbish in,  
Its not good to be a litter bug,  
Instead, just use the bin!





Through my exploration I developed a particular interest in bees, which prompted me to create a short story about what I imagine the daily life of a bumble bee would look like.

# Bumble's Adventure



Down in the garden where the pretty  
flowers grow, there lived a busy little bee  
named Bumble.

One day Bumble decided to go on an  
adventure. He set off early that sunny  
morning to collect his pollen...





His daily job was to collect  
pollen for his hive,  
Every morning he would leave  
and shout  
“Bee back in five!”

Off he went buzzing around  
looking for his nectar,  
When he’s out he turns into a  
great little inspector.

To his surprise, Bumble couldn't seem to find any pollen,  
He began to feel worried  
So off to the next flower bed he flew in a hurry

Buzz Buzz Buzz



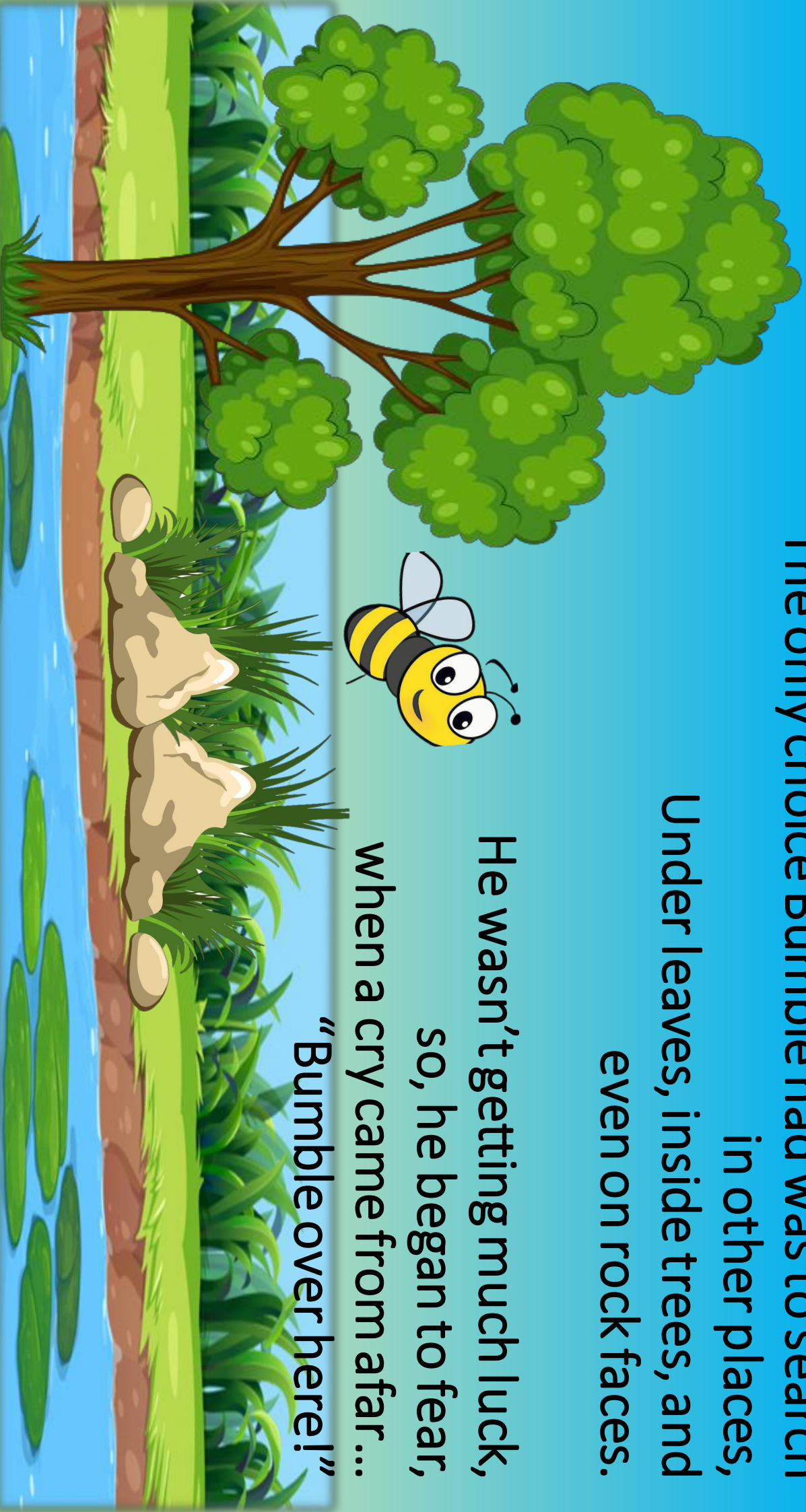
It came to his attention that the flowers had none,  
But he carried on looking in the glistening sun.  
Bumble was puzzled.. “bzzzz, oh dear” he said,  
He wondered where he’d find the pollen as he scratched his head.



The only choice Bumble had was to search  
in other places,  
Under leaves, inside trees, and  
even on rock faces.



He wasn't getting much luck,  
so, he began to fear,  
when a cry came from afar...  
"Bumble over here!"



“Oh, hi there there Sammy Spider, I didn’t see you over there, I’ve been searching high and low, got any pollen to spare?”

“I can’t help you I’m afraid, that sort of job is for the bee’s, I best run along and spin more webs, with my 8 legs and knees.”



On his journey he meets a little lady bird,  
“Hello there, sir,  
I’m in a pickle haven’t you heard?”

“What can I do for you, my stripey little friend?,  
“I’m looking for some pollen,  
got any I can lend?”

“Pollen you ask? I haven’t got any myself,  
Have you tried Sid the snail?  
See if he got any on his shelf?”

“Thank you, Mr. Lady Bird,  
I’ll buzz off to ask him now,  
I really need to get some pollen  
before Queen Bee gives me a row”





Bumble flew over to the next flower bed...

*Buzz Buzz*

"Hello there Sid, I've been searching all morning,  
I haven't had any rest,  
I'm looking for some pollen,  
I have been on quite a quest!"

Sid has a look all inside his home,  
"I Haven't got any sorry,  
try the ants around the gnome!"

Which one do I ask? There too many to choose!?"

"Hi I'm Anny I'm down here" the ant says by Bumbles shoes.

"I need some pollen, there seems to be none left!  
I was hoping to borrow some,  
sorry to be a pest"

BUZZZ BUZZZ



"I'm sorry Bumble we don't have any here,  
Maybe you should try Mrs. Butter, she should be quite near."





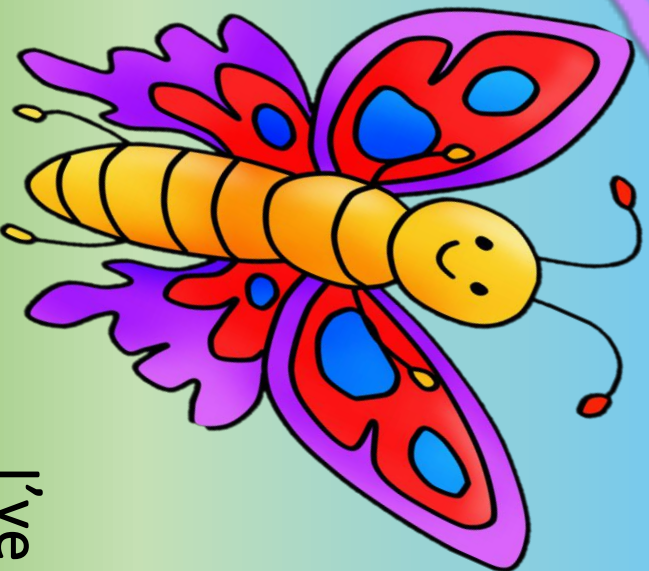
Bumble was buzzing around, looking far left and right,  
When suddenly he collides with a butterfly, mid flight.

“Owch, that hurt!” Mrs Butter exclaimed.

“Oh, Bumble you look quite upset”

“I just want to find some pollen before I forget.”

“I don’t have any with me, but I know someone who will,  
I’ve got a friend called Betsy, she will give you quite the thrill!”



Off Bumble flies, in a rush all happy and excited,  
In the distance is Miss Betsy, he will be so delighted

“Hi there Bumble my friend, I heard you’ve had a struggle,  
You’ve cried so much I see you’ve made a little puddle.”

“Oh, Betsy, you don’t know the day that I have had.  
The lack of pollen in my flower patch has made me kind of sad.”

“I was wondering if you could spare a helping hand  
If you could lend me some of your pollen that would be grand”





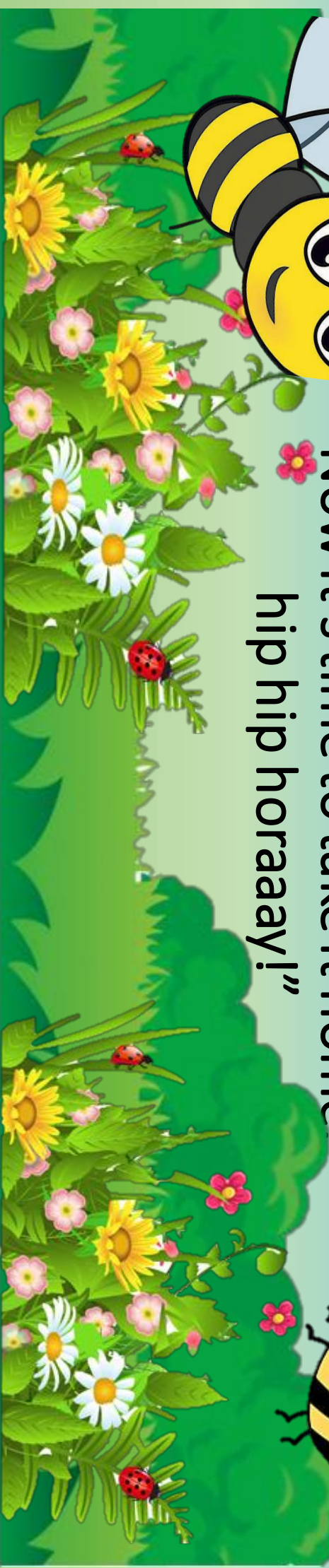
“Of course, you can!

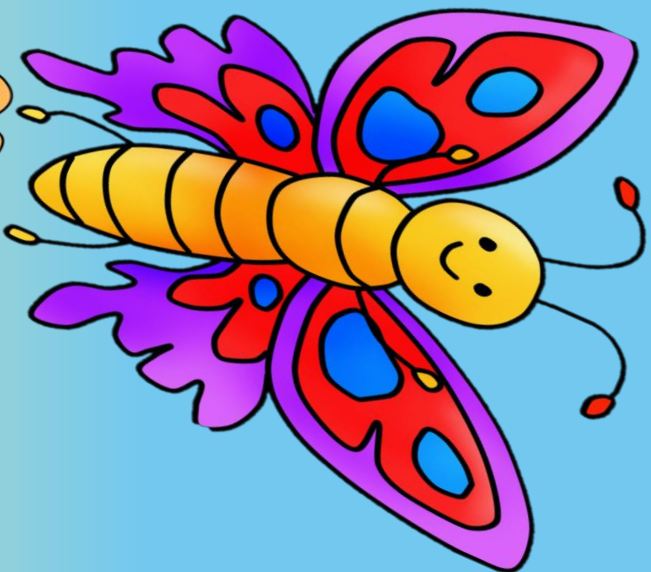
Follow me and take all that you can”



With a smile from ear to ear,  
Bumble took it all and ran!

“Thank you, Miss Betsy,  
you’ve really made my day.  
Now it’s time to take it home  
hip hip horaay!”





The End

