

Middle Creek

By Lovena Nickle
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I long to go back to that day at Middle Creek with my friends. It was the ides of March — the swans had flown in by the thousands. A windy day it was, as the huge, white swans floated together, like friends, on the lake with the white caps on the water and the frost hanging in the air. I long to go back to Middle Creek.

I, not knowing where they came from, only south, know that they are heading north to the tundra — for they are known as the Tundra Swans. They float on the lake, facing north, facing the north winds. Look! Several attempt flight, flapping their wings with their webbed feet still in the water as the crowd honks their displeasure — “It is too cold to take flight ...!” It was too windy this day to leave Middle Creek.

Driving around the park, watching flocks of Canada geese graze in the dead, barren cornfields — gleaning the last traces of the fall harvest, but we keep getting drawn to the lake — the swans are what we came to see. Twice as large as the geese — the largest and most beautiful, graceful bird we’ve ever seen. I long to go back to Middle Creek.

Walking a path to another part of the lake we discover a smaller flock of several hundred swans. Look! Did we startle them? Maybe they’re testing the wind? A hundred or so flew noisily in circles over our heads, just above the trees — like an air show! We stood fixed in our spots, mouths open, enjoying this rare spectacle as the swans stretched their bodies in delight ... then after about 10 minutes, they settled quietly back down on the lake. It was too windy this day to leave Middle Creek.

We drove off discussing the day in awe. Tomorrow they may leave as they came, by the thousands, if the winds are right. We better enjoy them now, we say — for with each passing season their numbers diminish— victims of pollution, accidents with fences, planes and electric wires. I long to escape the stresses of everyday life. I long to go back to Middle Creek.