

I roll over on the unfamiliar mattress to see what time it is. The time reads, 5:24 AM. Ugh!! Waking up early is the *worst*. I gaze around the room. Sunlight is beginning to stream through the blinds, leaving stripes on the rustic farmhouse floor of my grandparents' house. I'm staying for a week here with my cousins. They look as peaceful as the dust floating in the sunlight. However, I know I won't get any more sleep this morning.

Some sort of force or feeling coaxes me out of bed. I tiptoe to the door, then slowly open it. It creaks a little, but my cousins don't stir.

*Phew.*

I silently sneak down the stairs. The birds are chirping quietly outside. It's a beautiful morning, but still, I'd rather be sleeping.

I gently open the door and go outside. The early morning sun reveals the dewdrops glistening on the grass. My feet disrupt the perfect green lawn as I make my way over to an apple tree in the corner of the yard. The yard borders a forest, which is as alive and

green as ever. The fresh morning smell is almost overwhelming to my nose.

I walk over to the tree, looking at the sunrise. Beautiful scarlet streaks the sky. The reddish heavens fade to indigo as they get closer to the horizon. The leaves are silhouetted so wonderfully against the morning sky. This would be such a pretty painting.

I sit under the apple tree to watch the sun rise higher and higher. There isn't a cloud in the sky. The cool air breezes gently across my skin, making leaves ruffle in the yard. I stare into space, watching the day start to unfold.

A bit of motion near the forest catches my eye. I look closer at the creature shuffling towards a rotten log. With a start, I realize it's a black bear! I've heard they're making a comeback in Ohio, but I've never seen one myself. I lean forward to get a better look at the bear.

The bear claws the log to pry grubs out. It sniffs the wood carefully and waddles to another one. I can see the dew in its fur, even

from such a distance away. The bear seems perfectly captured in the morning air. This may just be the coolest thing I've ever seen.

The bear snuffles along the edge of the forest. I'm captivated by the prospect of seeing such unique wildlife. I make up my mind to make sure I always do bear-friendly things while I'm outside. The black bear goes up onto its hind legs and scratches a tree. Then, it lumbers off into the forest.

I've been watching the bear for so long that I didn't notice my grandma come outside. "This really is the best time of day," she says quietly, careful to not disturb the peace.

"It is," I agree. I guess that waking up early isn't so bad. You can look at nature in a whole new light. I think I'll do it more often!

The End