

# MOUNTAIN, WATER, BIRDS, SMOKE

A collaborative poem created at the 2019 Multicultural Unity Fair in State College, Pennsylvania.  
Forty-two different central Pennsylvanians contributed.

My central Pennsylvania smells like dirt after it rains,  
feels like flannel and granite,  
looks like the rusted hulls of ships in the fall,  
tastes like chocolate whoopie pies and the sopas at Lupita's,  
sounds like crickets and massive amounts of bird song,  
smells like sweet meadow grass and tar.

*It's mountains, mountains,  
mountains and ridges, trees and mountains, mountains  
and rhododendron, green, red, and yellow mountains, always  
in any season, the soft green hills, the look-out on the mountain, ridges  
and gray sky.*

My central Pennsylvania smells like kettle corn and lilacs,  
sounds like bees on goldenrod in October,  
sounds like the music of Spanish, English, Arabic, and Chinese,  
sounds like rain coming down the valley,  
feels like stinging nettles and well-sanded wood,  
looks like downtown and stars.

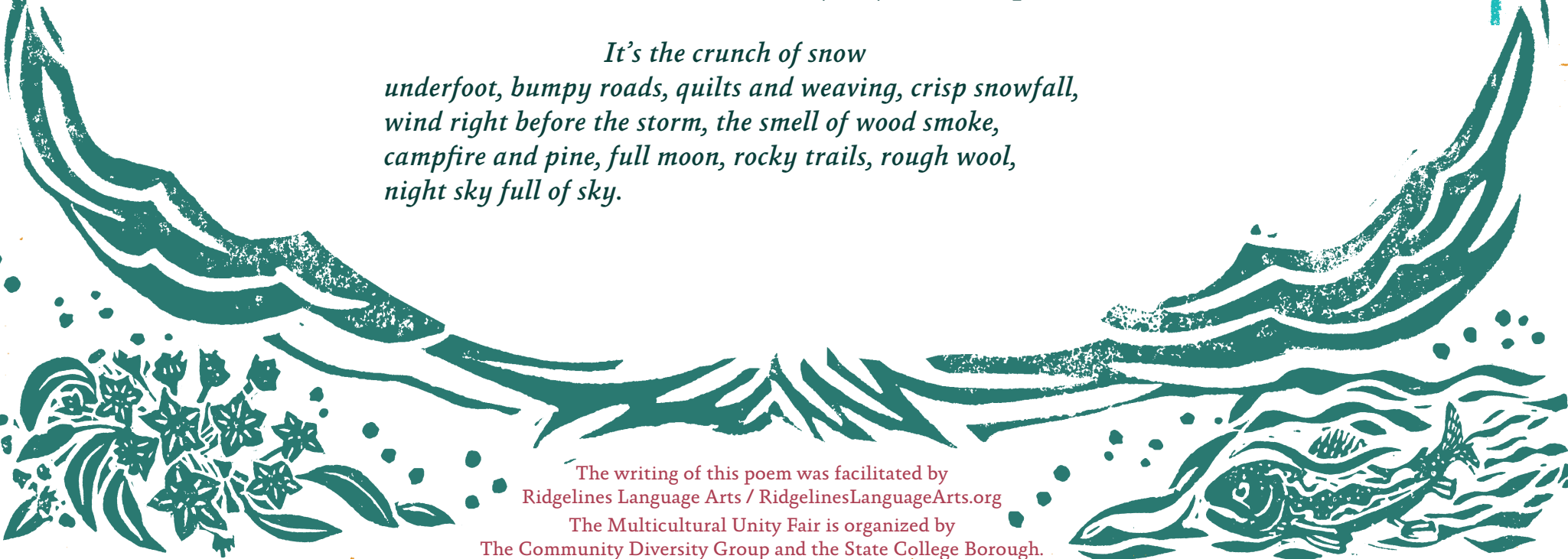
*It's creeks running especially  
after a heavy rain, sparkling clear streams, babbling  
and flowing creeks, the rush of cool water of Spring Creek, peepers  
and creeks, The Arboretum's lit fountain at night, creek sounds,  
flowing water, trickling of water at Shingletown Gap.*

My central Pennsylvania feels prickly like a cut down corn field,  
smells like Cheese Shoppe coffee roasting,  
looks like the back alleys and historic buildings of Bellefonte,  
tastes like savory curries and grilled stickies,  
looks like honeyed sun angling into the Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza,  
sounds like buggies and bullfrogs, like marching bands and cows.

*It's the mourning doves  
that you hear in spring, the cardinal call, the blue heron, early  
morning bird song, morning bird song, whip-poor-will, cardinal,  
screech of hawks, a tiny oriole nest fallen on the ground,  
its texture totally visible.*

My central Pennsylvania tastes like sweet corn and pickled beet eggs,  
looks like mortar board hats tossed,  
smells like apple butter cooking down in Penns Valley,  
smells like horse manure on a field,  
looks like the flood of students crossing campus,  
looks like an autumn archway of yellow tulip trees.

*It's the crunch of snow  
underfoot, bumpy roads, quilts and weaving, crisp snowfall,  
wind right before the storm, the smell of wood smoke,  
campfire and pine, full moon, rocky trails, rough wool,  
night sky full of sky.*



The writing of this poem was facilitated by  
Ridgelines Language Arts / [RidgelinesLanguageArts.org](http://RidgelinesLanguageArts.org)  
The Multicultural Unity Fair is organized by  
The Community Diversity Group and the State College Borough.