

106° at Willamette

The riparian grove, normally a microclimate of relative coolness, an expected oasis for people, squirrels and songbirds, today provided only relief from the intense glare of the sun, the air beneath the trees heavy with their transpiration and no sign of animal life anywhere.

106° at Willamette, Take Two

The riparian grove,
Usually an oasis,
Provided relief from intense sunlight,
But not the heat.
Air heavy from transpiration,
The leaves felt warm to my touch.
And I wonder,
Can trees get heat stroke?

How the Cups Got Warped

Because someone had the idea to start the National Writing Project, another person in Oregon caught the vision for it and began it here. Because the Summer Institute was so successful over the years, people began adding additional workshops, an Advanced Institute, Writing for Children, and now Writing in Science. Because Ruth has been involved in OWP for a long time, she got to do the Writing in Science week-long workshop. Because there are always snacks at any OWP workshop or institute, and because no one would be signed up to bring snacks for the first day, Ruth grabbed the cups, napkins, plates and snacks for the first class meeting when she did her grocery shopping the week before the workshop. Because she didn't want to haul the nonperishable supplies into the house and then back again to the car, Ruth left them in the back seat until the first morning of the workshop. Because she has parked her car in the sun several times after buying the cups and before the day of the workshop, and because it was unusually hot in the Salem area, the temperature in the car had risen several times to the point at which the plastic cups were becoming very flexible and losing their form. Because the plastic of the cups was no longer entirely solid the day Ruth picked up the composition books, the cups easily changed form when the bag they were in was inadvertently buried by the pile of composition books. Because the plastic cups, now dented, re-solidified and slightly contracted as the temperature inside the car cooled overnight, they were dented and oddly shrunken when Ruth brought them into the workshop Monday morning. Because Ruth is an excellent teacher, she recognized the teachable moment, and seized the opportunity for another writing exercise...