

Cody Sedlacek
820 South Baytree Avenue
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Dear Gary Paulsen.

I remember reading your book "Woodsong" when I was in the sixth grade. At the time we weren't given the option to choose what book we were to read for our English studies. Our teacher assigned to us Woodsong, and being a younger youth I thought "yeh, another dumb book to read." I quickly learned though that this book was one I could closely relate to with my fascination for wildlife, nature, and hunting. My family and I often go camping in a place near a farm by Hershey, Nebraska.

We often spend many nights sitting by the fire when temperatures are in the 0 to 10 range and the only thing to do to stay warm is sit and gaze at the fire and tell stories of the many hunts we have had. Oftentimes while sitting there we have heard coyotes howling near the river behind us, small creatures creeping from behind us, and even deer coming near our fire to investigate our presence while we were sitting there. These are a few experiences which helped me relate your book to my life. While camping we often hunt also. We hunt deer, coyote, crow, pheasant, dove, and sometimes beaver which tend to dam up the creek near the bridge on which we cross to get back into the woods where our camp is.

When we hunt we often lie on large stacks of hay bales on the edge of where open flat land and woods meet so we can see what animals come out from the river not far beyond. In the beginning of your book when the doe crashes into the ice, it made me think of lying on the hay bales listening for deer to cross the river to feed on the open flat land, and hearing them crashing through the river when they cross. Hunting, though, was

not always a way to learn to respect nature for me however. My cousin and I would often walk several miles along the woods and kill literally whatever small game we could see with our rifles just for the fun of it. Anything from squirrels to small birds was fair game for us.

Upon finishing your book, I was inspired to recollect all the poor critters I had killed for my own fun and enjoyment and built a more respectful attitude towards my hunting ways. Now I only shoot what I am going to eat or what I can find use for instead of nonchalantly killing game in the least respectful way. I found that nature does no harm to me so why do harm to nature? I especially saw a kind of spiritual connection in your book when Scarhead seemed to make you realize that you were just another animal to him, and you weren't worth the effort of killing. When I read the chapter in which Storm dies, I realized that not only humans, but animals too have a certain way they wish to die peacefully, and not in a struggle in the end.

Sincerely,



Cody Sedlacek

