



# NOW IN NATURE



## I Like Big Fruits and I Cannot Lie

by Laura Weinel

The words “evolutionary anachronism” sound complicated, but the science behind them is simple.

For instance, a seed has one job—it needs to be dispersed. That’s why many plants’ seeds are encased in delicious fruits that entice animals to eat them. The animals then do the work of moving the seeds away.

Some of Ohio’s plants, though, like osage orange, pawpaw, or honeylocust, have fruits and seeds that are too large for our wildlife to eat. Why?



Those fruits evolved thousands of years ago to be eaten (and have their seeds spread) by megafauna like giant ground sloths and woolly mammoths.

How do these plants still exist today, then, if their seed dispersers have gone extinct?

Well, pawpaw may fall from its parent tree and rot or somebody may plant it in their backyard. So, seed dispersal is technically still happening, just on a much smaller scale.

As a result, most of these plants now have much smaller geographic ranges and are not nearly as prolific as they once were.

## A Coming Dream

by Olivia Bautch

A summer’s dream  
A sun-kissed meadow  
Life hums underneath  
Though diminutive, sustaining  
And avian entertaining  
Fed by drifting down  
A network unseen  
Silenced with the snow

A new direction  
A path to wander  
And keep such company  
Deciduous elevation  
From all angles invitation  
“Flutter, scurry, stare”  
To mind intention  
To tarry longer

A dormant bloom  
A coming dream  
That may reseed by spring  
Fall fire floods the hillside  
Warmth and loss coincide  
Only One predicts revival  
Of the past to resume  
Or new life foreseen

A space to play  
A cool meditation  
Life springs downstream  
To silence youthful tempers  
In slimy, fragile wonders  
Or gentle trickling sound  
Washes away  
Anxious agitation

A dark blue moon  
A forest silhouette  
With starlight sprinkled down  
What glow quells  
apprehensions  
Or perhaps familiar presence  
Seen now in blurred vision  
Facts of afternoon  
Are strangely evident