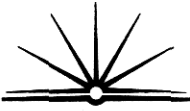


Q2 (c) poet.

Dear Ms. Mack,

I have just read your poem 'cicadas', and was struck by the beautiful, slow tone you created in this poem. My name is Sally, by the way, and I live in Brazil. Another aspect of your poem that really made me think was how the cicada changes. It made me think about an experience of my own. The cicada ~~spends~~ ^{spends} the early part of its life in a spot that is ~~as~~ about as safe as anywhere, just living a "slow life." The cicada then feels "some signal", some change in the air, forcing him to realize that it's time for change.

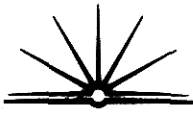
My early life was like the cicada's, I lived with my family, went to school, had friends, just lived out my years as I thought they should be lived.



after 16 years of living life, something changed. the waters started to shift and you're looking for a bit of change, a bit of independence, something different. I don't know what made me think of student exchange, but it was the right way to gain what I was looking for. I'd go overseas, to a new world, just like the cicada "surfaced through the leaf mould", find new situations, new people and gain a better understanding of myself & how my perceptions could change.

Leaving all my friends and family at ~~the~~ home was strange, sad, but liberating in ~~the~~ a way as well. I guess it's like the cicada "heaving head and limbs through split skin, unfurl the laced air of your wings". Going overseas just opened up so many new possibilities to me.

while the cicada changes its form, I stayed the same on the outside, ~~but~~ the



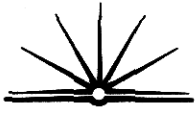
~~It~~ ~~was~~ change occurred on the inside.

I learnt not to take anything for granted, like so many people do, and like it used to. I learnt how other people live - at first I was an outsider, it was like I was observing my host family and the kids at my school, "I was looking in on them."

But it gradually changed so that I was actually "inside" with them, they all became a part of the new me. I made new friends which made me realise that although there are many differences between us, there were still some fundamental "sameness", and that's how the world works.

The memories that I have with me, and will always have with me, are like the cicada's drone, they remind me what I learnt. Unlike the

Unlike the cicada, who can't go back to his "slow life", I had to return to mine,



and found that the people and things I'd left a year before had changed as well, even if not as radically as I had.

The change had occurred in different ways, and I found that I had "outgrown" a lot of old friends, and things couldn't return to exactly the way they were. Time doesn't freeze, and change is inevitable.

But the memories that I have with me, and will always have with me, are like the cicada's drone. They remind me of what I've learnt.

Thank-you for the poem,

Sally.