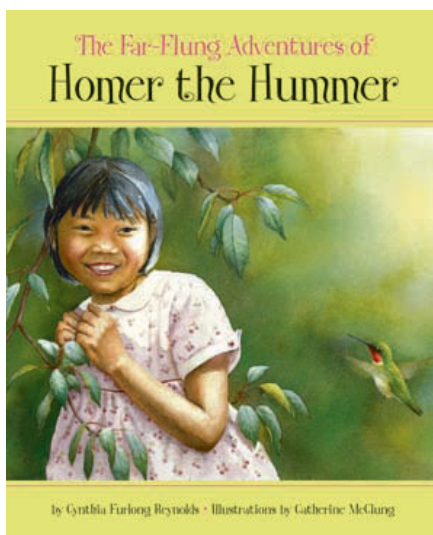


The Far-Flung Adventures of Homer the Hummer

written by CYNTHIA FURLONG REYNOLDS illustrated by CATHERINE McCLUNG

Teacher and Parent Guide



created by
MAURA DALIAN

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Hummingbird Math

NAME _____

A ruby-throated hummingbird beats its wings on an average of 53 times per second in normal flight. They move their wings in a figure-eight motion. To see an example of a hummingbird hovering, you can view a Quicktime movie at <http://www.hummingbirds.net/about.html>. Notice the figure-eight motion of the bird's wings. This helps them to fly sideways and backward. What remarkable tiny acrobats they are!

Based on this average, 53 times per second, how many times would a hummingbird beat its wings:

In one minute? _____

In half an hour? _____

In the time it takes you to do your homework? _____
(No fair saying I don't do homework . . . besides, do you really want your teacher to know that about you?)

In the time it takes you to travel to school each morning? _____

In the time it takes you to eat your dinner? _____

Now think of your own! A hummingbird beats its wings _____ times in the time it takes me to _____

Use the space below to complete your calculations.

Hummingbird Cafe

NAME _____

Read the book *The Far-Flung Adventures of Homer the Hummer* to find out what hummingbirds eat. After looking at the examples on the left, complete the menu with wonderful dishes, desserts, and drinks you might offer at your new restaurant, The Hummingbird Cafe.

MENU

Appetizers

Spiders on the HalfWeb ~

Begin your evening with a delectable and crunchy entrée of black and brown spiders served atop delicate shining web. Nesting birds may want to keep the web to use at home and you are welcome to do this.

Beverages

Hummerfizz Sip ~

A rare treat as you dine with us. A delicious red syrup gathered from the finest columbine and freesia flowers we could gather up.

Entrées

Nectar Noodles ~

You will love the wild taste of these noodles made from the softest spider insides. They are a real delicacy served with a sweet nectar sauce drizzled over the top.

Desserts

Nectar Ice Cream ~

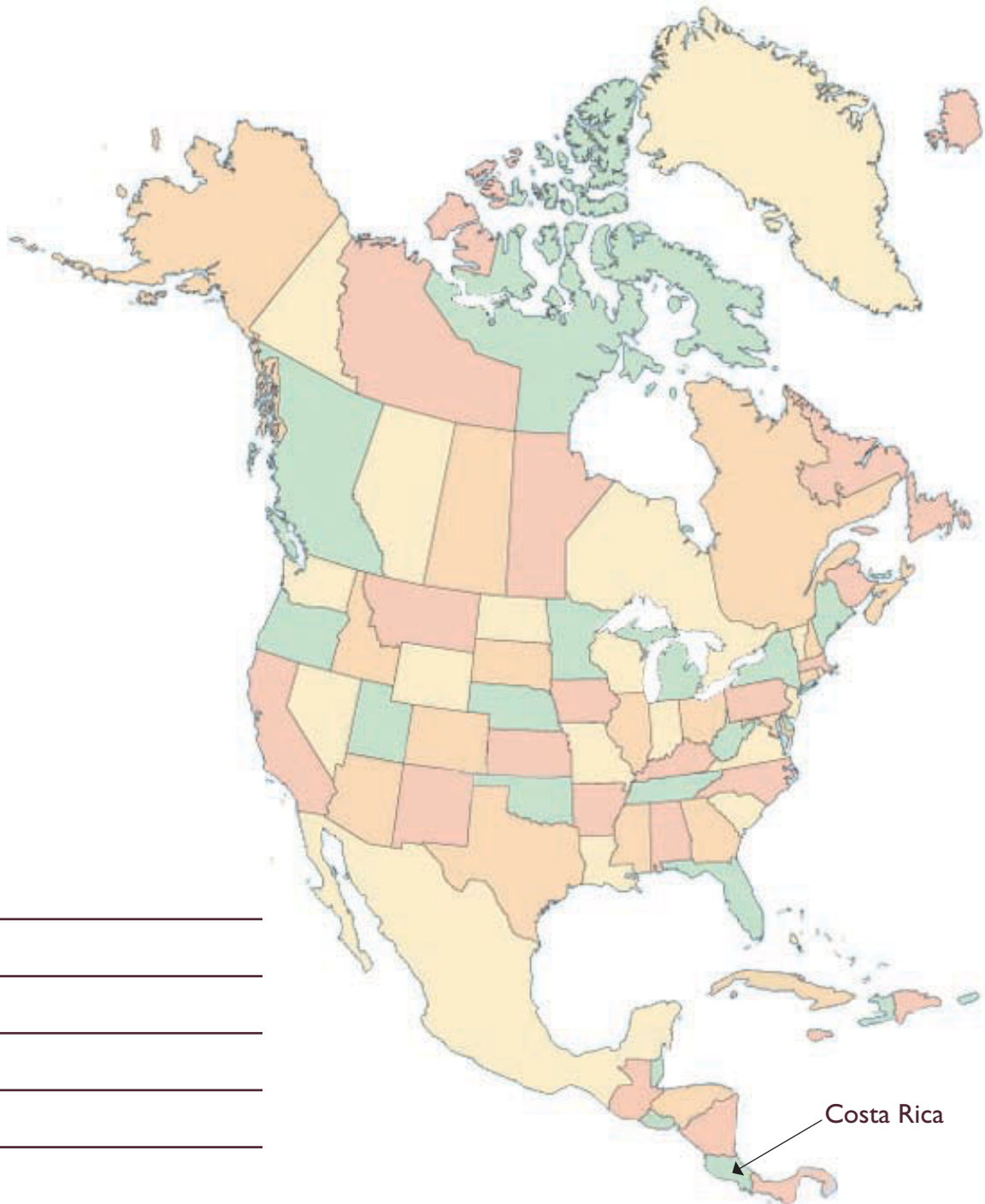
Top off your meal with a small scoop. We serve it soft and smushy, just right for slurping through the beak.

Homer's Route

NAME _____

Look back at the book, *The Far-Flung Adventures of Homer the Hummer*. Using a marker, trace the approximate route you think Homer flew. What large body of water did he cross? _____

Name five states he may have flown through. You may have to consult a map of the United States.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Postcard from a Hummer

NAME _____

You are a male ruby-throated hummingbird. You have set out on your journey northward, ahead of your mate. Check the two maps in the packet to see where you would fly. What do you think you would see? Where might you find food? What states would you fly over to get to your breeding area? Write a postcard back home telling your mate of two adventures you have had as you forage for food. Next, design a stamp that has a picture of a hummingbird. Finally, address the postcard to your mate. On the front of the card, draw a picture of something you have written about. (She is probably still in Costa Rica.)



Range of the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird

NAME _____

Color the breeding range red.

Color the wintering range blue.



Homer Vocabulary

NAME _____

The words below are from the book *The Far-Flung Adventures of Homer the Hummer*. See if you can guess their meaning from the context. Then check to see if you are right using the dictionary.

tailwind “a warm northbound **tailwind** begins to blow...”

guess _____

actual _____

panorama “Homer peers down at a patchwork **panorama** of farms, forests, and rivers stretching far below him.”

guess _____

actual _____

bonanza “He fails to find a **bonanza** of sweet sugary nectar...”

guess _____

actual _____

fragrant “...a farm stand overflowing with **fragrant**, flamboyant flowers offers a smorgasbord of fine dining.”

guess _____

actual _____

flamboyant “...fragrant, **flamboyant** flowers...”

guess _____

actual _____

detaching “It’s a hummingbird!” the man says, gently **detaching** Homer from his perch.”

guess _____

actual _____

Homer Vocabulary (continued)

torpor "...apparently that bird was in a deep sleep called **torpor** and he woke up."

guess _____

actual _____

migration "Ruby the Hummer appears at the end of her long **migration** from the south."

guess _____

actual _____

preening "Birds glide, glean, and grub while calling, clamoring, chattering, cheering, singing, screeching, screaming, pecking, poking, and **preening**."

guess _____

actual _____



Crossword Puzzle

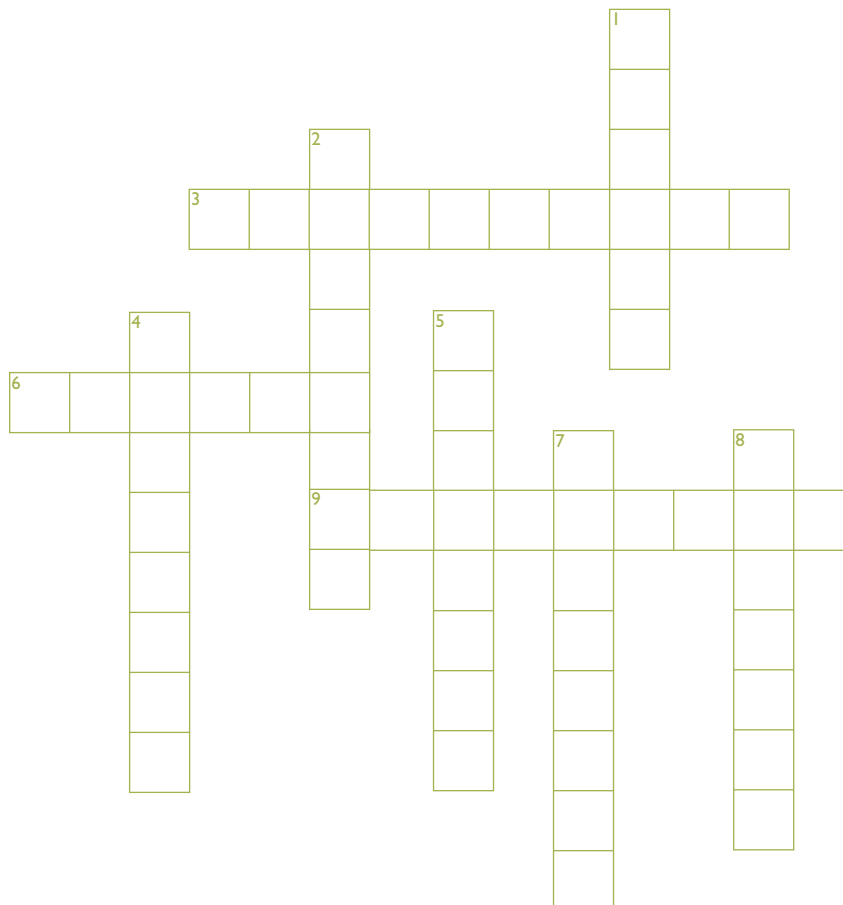
NAME _____

Across

3. strikingly bold or brilliant, showy, colorful, and dashing
6. sleepiness, slumber, drowsiness; to be stiff or numb
9. periodically pass from one region to another as certain birds, fishes

Down

1. to unfasten and separate
2. a wide extensive view of a landscape or other scene
4. trimming or dressing feathers with the beak or tongue
5. having a pleasant odor; sweet smelling, delightful
7. a wind coming from directly behind a moving aircraft or vessel
8. a source of great and sudden wealth or luck



Hummingbird Concert

NAME _____

Hold a Concert to Welcome Back the Hummingbirds!

It is spring and the weary little birds are just arriving. In cooperative groups of four, choose a familiar tune. Some suggestions are: "Happy Birthday," "Row Your Boat," "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "This Little Light of Mine," "This Old Man," "The Ants Go Marching," or even the "ABC Song." Now compose lyrics, those are words to a song, that fit the tune you have chosen. Write the song on the sheet provided and practice and perform it at your class's Hummingbird Concert!

Song Title

Sung to the tune of

Lyrics composed by: 1. _____ 3. _____
2. _____ 4. _____

Verse One

Verse Two

How to Make Hummingbird Food

This activity requires you to use the stove so be sure to get a grown-up to help you.

Fill a pan with 4 cups of water. Bring the water to a boil. Measure 1 cup of sugar. Remove the pan from the stove and stir the sugar into the water until it is completely dissolved. Let the nectar cool before filling your feeder. You can color the nectar red, but it is not necessary. The hummingbirds will eventually find it. They feed early in the morning and in the evening. Once they discover your feeder they will remain loyal customers. This means it is necessary to take the feeder down, clean it, and refill it. Feeders can gunk up with black mold and other unsightly things. Don't let your restaurant get a bad review! Be diligent.

*The ratio is 4:1 when making the food. Extra food can be refrigerated in a covered container for a few days.



How to Attract Hummingbirds

Another way to attract hummers is to plant a garden to which they are attracted. The garden would include plants such as:

TREES AND SHRUBS

Azalea
Butterfly Bush (Buddleia)
Cape Honeysuckle
Flame Acanthus
Flowering Quince
Lantana
Manzanita
Mimosa
Red Buckeye
Tree Tobacco
Turk's Cap
Weigela

VINES

Coral Honeysuckle

Cypress Vine
Morning Glory
Scarlet Runner Bean
Trumpet Creeper

FLOWERS*

Perennials

Bee Balm (Monarda)
Canna
Cardinal Flower
Columbine
Coral Bell
Four O'Clock
Foxglove
Hosta
Hummingbird Mint (Agastache)

Little Cigar
Lupine
Penstemon
Yucca

Annuals

Beardtongue (and other Penstemon)
Firespike
Fuchsia
Impatiens
Jacobiana
Jewelweed
Petunia
Various Salvia species
Shrimp Plant

*Some may be annuals or perennials depending on climate.

Note: Japanese honeysuckle attracts hummingbirds also, but it's an invasive and troublesome exotic species that's no longer recommended.

Other sites with good gardening advice:

<http://www.canada-gardens.com>

<http://www.rubythroat.org/attractingmain.html>

Information obtained from the web site <http://www.hummingbirds.net/attract.html>

Label North America

NAME _____

Locate and label each place on the map on the following page. If you get stuck, use an atlas to check the ones you can't identify.

Atlantic Ocean—the ocean east of North America

Belize—a country in Central America at the southeast border of Mexico and northeast of Guatemala

Canada—the second-largest country in the world; it is north of the United States

Costa Rica—a country just north of Panama

Cuba—an island country in the Atlantic Ocean off the southeast coast of the United States

Dominican Republic—a country located in the eastern part of the island southeast of Cuba (it is east of Haiti)

El Salvador—a country in Central America that is south of Guatemala and Honduras

Greenland—an island in the Atlantic Ocean northeast of Canada

Guatemala—a country southwest of Mexico and west of Belize

Haiti—a country located in the western part of the island southeast of Cuba (it is west of the Dominican Republic)

Honduras—a country northeast of Nicaragua

Jamaica—an island country in the Atlantic Ocean south of Cuba

Mexico—a country southwest of the United States and north of Guatemala and Belize

Nicaragua—a country just north of Costa Rica

Pacific Ocean—the ocean west of North America

Panama—a country at the southernmost tip of Central America

Puerto Rico—an island in the Atlantic Ocean east of the Dominican Republic

United States—a country north of Mexico and south of Canada



Hummingbird Poetry

NAME _____

An acrostic poem is poetry where each line begins with a letter from the poem's topic. Brainstorm all that you know about hummingbirds here. Take 1–2 minutes for this.

Use what you have learned from the book *The Far-Flung Adventures of Homer the Hummer* and try writing an acrostic poem about hummingbirds.

H _____
U _____
M _____
M _____
E _____
R _____
S _____

Stanza and End Rhyme

NAME _____

A stanza in a poem is an arrangement of four or more lines. It forms a division for a poem much like a paragraph forms a division in other types of writing. End rhyme is when the words at the end of lines rhyme. There are different ways of organizing your rhyme scheme, or plan.

Roses are red,	A
Violets are <u>blue</u> ,	B
Sugar is sweet,	A
And so are <u>you</u> !	B

This is an example of an ABAB rhyming scheme. The last words in lines two and four of the stanza rhyme. Using what you know about hummingbirds from reading *The Far-Flung Adventures of Homer the Hummer*, try writing a poem about hummingbirds that contains two stanzas and an end rhyme scheme of ABAB like the poem above! Good luck!

I. Brainstorm all the ideas you have about hummers here.

Stanza and End Rhyme (continued)

2. Write your first DRAFT here.

3. Go back and proofread. This means to check for ideas and content only. Does your poem make sense? Have you chosen words carefully?

4. On the next sheet write your final copy and decorate it with beautiful drawings of hummingbirds!

Stanza and End Rhyme (continued)

NAME _____

Title of Poem

Alliteration Activity

NAME _____

In the book the author, Cynthia Furlong Reynolds, uses many examples of alliteration. Alliteration is when words following each other have the same beginning sound. For example, in the title *The Far-Flung Adventures of Homer the Hummer*, both important words begin with the “H” sound. Be a detective! Find ten examples of alliteration in the book. Write them below and don’t forget to use quotes because you are copying someone else’s words.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

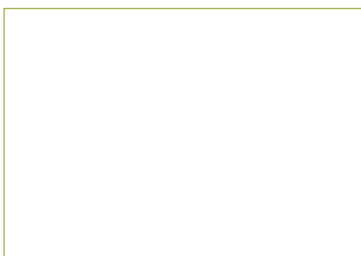
Now try writing some sentences about hummingbirds using alliteration on your own!

- | |
|-------------------|
| 1. _____
_____ |
| 2. _____
_____ |
| 3. _____
_____ |
| 4. _____
_____ |

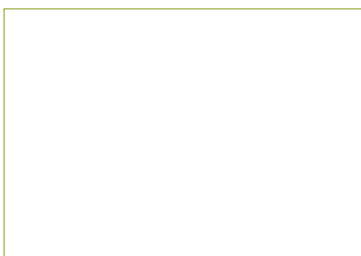
Sequencing Activity

NAME _____

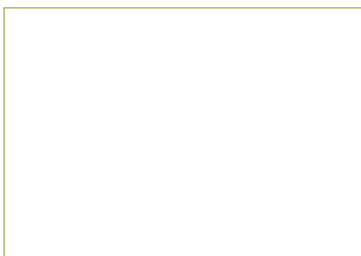
Below are the events from the book *The Far-Flung Adventures of Homer the Hummer*. They are out of order. Draw and color a picture illustrating the event. Then cut the strips on the line. Put the event strips in the proper order, number them and staple them together. Check back in the book to see that you are correct!



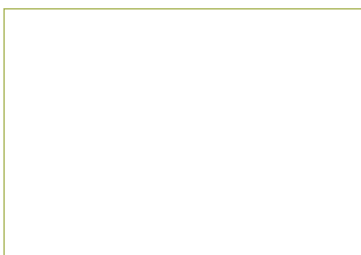
_____ Homer wakes up and buzzes out of grandfather's pocket.



_____ Homer arrives at an English-style garden where an artist lives.



_____ A farmer finds Homer lying next to his tractor and places him in petunias where he can eat for the next several days.



_____ Homer arrives at his breeding destination, where he will remain throughout the summer.



_____ Ruby, Homer's mate, arrives, builds a nest and lays two eggs. She teaches the chicks to fly and forage for food.



_____ Homer follows a tractor and is trapped in a barn.



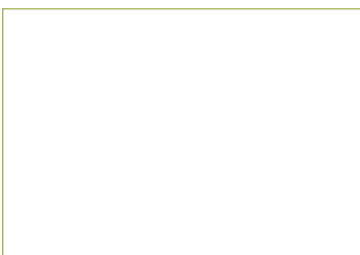
_____ Autumn arrives and Homer begins the long journey back to Costa Rica.



_____ Ruby and Homer are painted by the artist and meet a little girl in the garden.



_____ Homer leaves the Monte Verde cloud forest in Costa Rica.



_____ Homer stops at a farm stand to feast on some fragrant flamboyant flowers.



_____ Homer is almost eaten by a frog.



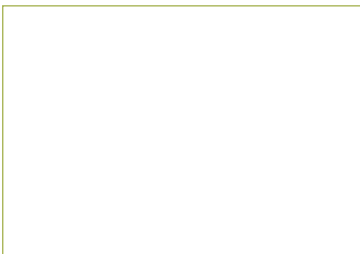
_____ Homer eats and eats to prepare for his long journey north.



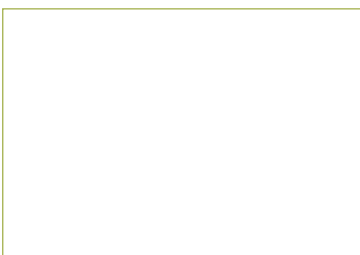
_____ Homer is very cold and slips into a deep sleep called torpor.



_____ On an early morning in mid-March Homer begins to fly northward across the Gulf of Mexico.



_____ Homer spies a hot air balloon, discovers it does not offer food, and flies on using the mountains as his map.



_____ A grandfather softly massages Homer and puts him in his pocket thinking that he is dead.

Creative Writing Ideas

1. What if you woke up one morning and for 24 hours you could fly like a hummingbird? You can fly fast, far, backward, forward, and sideways. What would your day be like? Tell the story of your day. Begin with waking up and end with going to sleep.
2. Have you ever been on a long adventurous journey? Write about it. Begin from where you start and finish where your journey ends. Your story might have a home—adventure—home pattern. Does it?
3. Homer's flight from Costa Rica is extraordinary. Write about something you have done that is extraordinary. If you can't think of anything you've done, what will you do in the future that is extraordinary?
4. John Audubon was a bird lover and expert. He is mentioned in the book. Find out more about him and write a short biography about him.
5. One big myth about hummingbirds* is that they piggyback a ride on the back of larger birds; usually geese are cited. John Audubon may have helped to keep this myth alive. He was out hunting and shot a goose. He regularly shot and ate many of the birds he painted. He went to retrieve the goose, turned it over, and he reported that a hummingbird flew from under it. Of course this isn't true. Hummingbirds are able to fly outstanding distances on their tiny wings.

Some other hummingbird myths:

- The hummingbird is a cross between an insect and a bird.
- Hummingbirds don't have feet. (All birds have feet. Hummers don't walk on theirs though.)
- Hummingbirds never land. (They perch on feeders and tree branches all the time.)

* Myths taken from the web site <http://www.hummingbirds.net/about.html>

Can you create a legend about hummingbirds? For example, you might try to explain how the hummingbird got its wings. Or how the ruby-throated hummingbird came to have a ruby throat. Good luck!

Other Sources

Other great sources for hummingbird information:

<http://www.hummingbirds.net>

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Unpave the Way for Hummingbirds

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/unpave/hummer.html>

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