

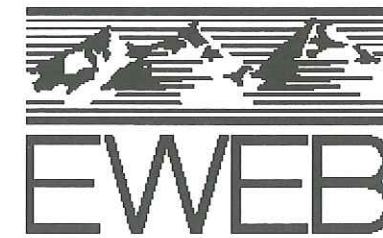
# HONORING OUR RIVER:

2003

A STUDENT  
ANTHOLOGY  
COLLECTED FROM  
THROUGHOUT THE  
WILLAMETTE RIVER  
WATERSHED

# Honoring Our River 2003: A Student Anthology

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*Founding Sponsor*



**Portland General Electric**



Working to preserve  
this treasure called Oregon

**WILDWOOD  
MAHONIA**



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**Honoring Our River: A Student Anthology** began as an effort to stimulate an awareness of an important but fragile resource, the Willamette River. Our goal has been to foster basin-wide participation from students of all ages and disciplines. This project is designed to nurture respect and appreciation for the river system that connects all basin dwellers and provide a showcase for creative student writing that honors our river. Students from several other countries, demonstrating that the issue of watershed health has worldwide impact, have joined our Oregon writers.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the Willamette Watershed educators and writers who donated their time and expertise to the anthology through their participation as editors, guest writers and/or judges.

**Susan Abravanel**  
**Rick Bastasch**  
**Barbara Drake**  
**Charles Goodrich**  
**Holly LeFors**  
**Barry Lopez**  
**Felix Schein**  
**Joan Maiers**  
**Kathleen Dean Moore**  
**Nora Mylet**  
**James H. Nicholson III**  
**Clemens Stark**

A special thank you to all the schools that participated in the creation of **Honoring Our River 2003** by submitting student entries to our contest. Your contribution was crucial to building this wonderful collection of literary works from throughout the Willamette River Basin. Please refer to the inside of the back cover for a full listing of participating schools.

In addition, we would like to thank **John Miller & Bridget Welborn** from Wildwood/Mahonia for producing the anthology and guiding the process. Our thanks also to **Julie Schaum** from EWEB for the beautiful cover design and **Ron Cooper** for the use of his amazing photographs.

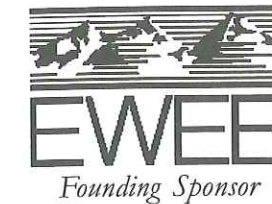
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The Willamette River Watershed is home to two-thirds of all Oregonians. The health of this precious natural resource is in great need of protection. Students, as well as other basin citizens, need to see themselves as part of a basin-wide community, sharing both the costs and the benefits of a healthy river system.

**For more information on how to protect our watershed call the Oregon Watershed Help Line:  
 (toll free): 888-854-8377**

**For more information on the Honoring Our River project contact  
 Bridget Welborn at 503-585-8789 or email: [bridgetma@aol.com](mailto:bridgetma@aol.com)**

## A Word from Our Sponsors



The **Eugene Water & Electric Board** appreciates the value of the Willamette Watershed and the vital role it plays in the vitality and health of the citizens to whom we provide water and electricity. The waters of the Willamette have been the cornerstone of our success over the last 90 years and we believe they must be preserved and enhanced to insure the success of our community in the future. There is no better way to illuminate the importance of this vision than to hear our students speak their hearts with words of hope for a healthy and vibrant river for generations to come.

Randy Berggren, General Manager  
 Eugene Water & Electric Board



Portland General Electric

**Portland General Electric** is committed to working collaboratively with those we serve to build a sustainable Oregon. As a part of that commitment, we are pleased to sponsor the Honoring Our Rivers Anthology. The work of these young authors speaks to the importance of rivers and watersheds in creating healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities. We thank them for sharing these wonderful messages that touch our hearts, as well as our minds. Their willingness to share their passion and thoughts, and the excellent work they have created, are valued gifts to our community.

Carol Dillin, Director of Public Affairs  
 & Corporate Communications  
 Portland General Electric



The **Wildwood/Mahonia** group of companies is proud to be part of this wonderful publication. Our activities in agriculture, watershed restoration urban design and development are guided by the principles of quality, sustainability and community involvement. The similar imagery found in the work of Willamette Valley students and the entries from other parts of the world show how all of these students have a shared environment and a shared future.

John D. Miller, President  
 Wildwood/Mahonia



Once again, in what is becoming a Willamette tradition, Honoring Our River yields abundant proof of the depth of feeling we harbor for our river. "HOR" brings us encouraging news on at least two fronts. First, the children of our Willamette watershed--and from watersheds far away--care deeply for river places. That means if we apply ourselves and become the stewards we hope to be, the land and waters we pass on will be in very good hands. Second, art and thought are alive and well in young minds. The **Willamette Restoration Initiative** is very privileged to have helped frame this youthful stream of words for your viewing pleasure.

Rick Bastasch, Executive Director  
 Willamette Restoration Initiative



Working to preserve  
 this treasure called Oregon

**SOLV**, a 33 year old statewide non-profit founded by Governor Tom McCall, builds community through volunteer action. It is committed to involving members of the Oregon community in learning about and improving watershed health. Honoring Our River is a wonderful way for students to share their thoughts and experiences about the Willamette Watershed. Through their poems and essays, the rest of us can be inspired to preserve this treasure called Oregon.

Jack McGowan, Executive Director  
 SOLV

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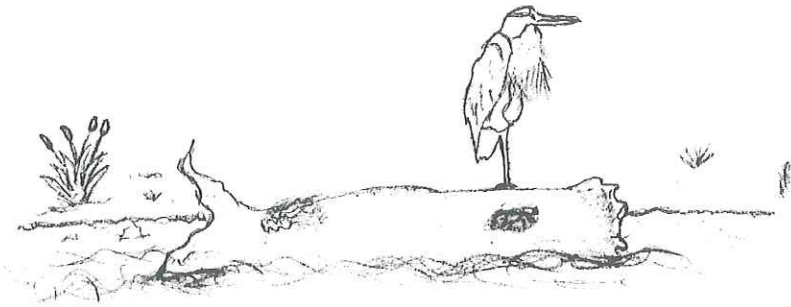
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# Student works, part I



Steven Valot  
8th grade

## Timeless

The water moves across the soft rocks like a meandering line of sweet and natural laughter. It pushes and swirls into corners with a passionate kiss to the banks. This gentle beast nourishes the flowers and animals that must live at its side. It takes the disrespect and abuse with honor and keeps moving forward defiantly.

Debra Roseberry  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

## LIFE

The river is a place of . . .  
Refuge  
Feelings  
Erupting in bursts  
That propel you  
Through  
LIFE

Eli Salus-Kleiner  
Home Schooled

## The River

River running down to the shore.  
Lots of shiny salmon going up a waterfall,  
Wiggling and flying over the water wall.  
Me, watching on a rock in the river.  
River  
    running  
        down  
            to  
                the  
                    shore.

Ryan Houlberg  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

## Healthy River

Fish need rocks on the river floor  
And healthy trees along the shore

Don't build dams of cement and stone  
Leave the salmons' river alone

Native plants in the ground  
Keep the river healthy and sound

Keep out the waste, it makes it stink  
And makes the water unsafe to drink

Fallen logs along the side  
Give the fish a place to hide

Stop the landslide and the flood  
It causes too much debris and mud

Follow these steps and their many stages  
And keep the rivers clean for many ages

Ryan McGoldrick  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade

## A token of luck

Swiftly, calmly  
A blue jay  
Dips down  
To feed the large  
Silver tornado  
A glinting feather  
For a safe  
Roller coaster ride  
To the sea

Abby Conyers  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade



Barry Lee  
8th Grade

Everything I ever needed was right at the creek,  
The calm, tranquility, and nature that I seek.

I like to sit on the rocks, and listen to the sounds,  
Birds chirping, water gurgling, and fish and bugs swimming round and round

But things are changing, people don't care anymore,  
I see the creek now with muddy water, and trash on the shore.

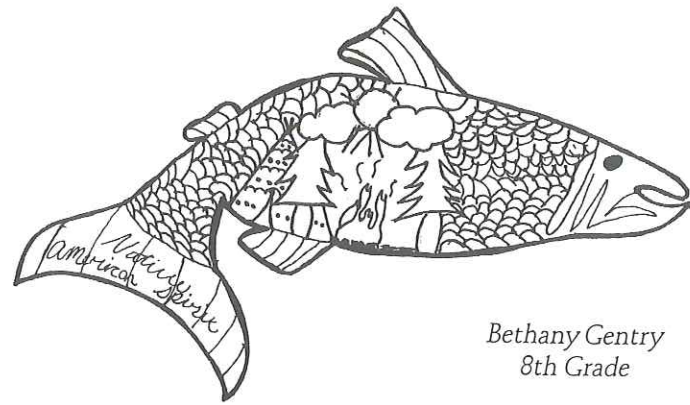
I wish people would experience the creek like I do,  
Then maybe, just maybe, my dreams for the creek would come true.

Josie Solari  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade

## The Mighty Willamette

Willamette River oh mighty one  
Indians lived along side you  
Lewis and Clark found you  
Luminous on a full moon  
Anglers thank you  
Mighty strong currents have you  
Emerald green is your color  
Tidal ever changing with the pull of the sun and moon  
Tributary of the Columbia River  
Ecosystem I pray for you!

Beau LeBleu  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade



Bethany Gentry  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Spirit

I feel the river spirit  
and the rain,  
running through my heart.  
I feel the wonder  
of the spirit in  
my lovely river.

Janice Brendlinger  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## I Have The Will And Admit

I have the will and admit,  
That my intensesness can overwhelm the unwary or unfit...  
Many great spirits have danced in my waves,  
As ancient elders stand witness to the destruction of my veins...  
Rain's drops are my heartbeat, her pulse the flow of my blood...  
Autumn's leaves are a spiraled skirt blowing in the wind, floating through my fingers,  
Sacred trees' tall arms hide my castle walls...  
Great Spirits spit fire to the sky, making creases for my life to fill,  
Earth's riches gathering in my bed...  
My basalt ledges and gorges seep into the canyons of human minds,  
My shores bear the burden of this planet, a playground to the claiming species...  
I have the will and admit,  
That my power can overwhelm the wary, and even the fit...  
It is easy to be lost in a gaze upon my skin,  
Tumbling over rocks to a turbulent pool, a tantalizing tingle in the mind...  
For years my shores have leaked poison into my lungs,  
My limbs turning black over time...  
Build life around me; kill the life within me until I run red,  
But never believe that this river is dead.

Dove Miller  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

## There's A River

There's a river so calm  
There's a river so light  
There's a river that glows  
With gloss all through the night.  
That river I know  
That river I see  
If I could be something  
That river I'd be.  
It brightens my day  
It darkens my night  
It helps me to see every day's  
Morning light.  
When I gaze out the window  
I see all the deer.  
When I swim down the river  
I go slowly in first gear.

Down by that river where I grew,  
I got out my sketch pad and  
That river I drew.  
My thoughts and feelings  
All down deep within  
When the birds start their  
Singing it makes my heart spin.  
I'm just always there from  
Dusk to dawn the birds all  
Come out and at once they're all gone.  
Down by that river with  
The birds and the dove  
Oh yes! It's that river that river I love.

Ashlie Gonzales  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade

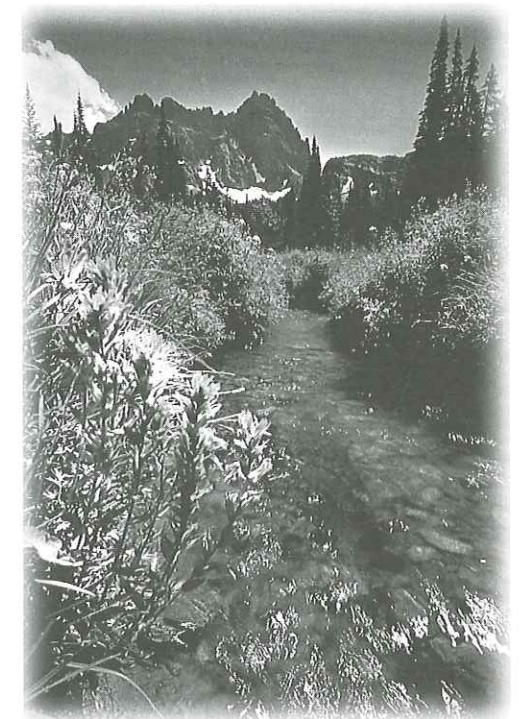
## Liquid Treasure

Rain- cool, clear trickle  
Splash, melody in the wind  
Rush from crest to canyon.

River- roar your wild cry  
Waves crash in rapids,  
Carving jagged rocks.

Sea- life's sovereign cradle  
Revered sustenance of our planet  
Precious gem to all.

Katharina Perez-Haemmerle  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade



## Cold

The river is cold and you can get purple lips.

Kaila Hiddleston  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade

## What the River Remembers

High in the Cascade Mountains, snow begins to fall in the wilderness. The wilderness lies still, but underneath the snow's crust, the ground-layer begins to soften and move downhill. The earth begins to withdraw warmth from an established "Bank" account it has earned in relationship with the sun. Swiftly the water accelerates, through fallen trees and over rocks, sanitizing any impurity that might have descended from its former atmospheric journey. Never slowing to question her destiny, the water emerges more powerful with each passing mile.

Uniting as one large body, the water dominates anything in her way. She has become mighty and carries with her the wisdom from the road once traveled. Her spirit is as wide as the water is deep and she invites surrounding life to share in her wealth.

The river cannot remember a time when fish weren't running along side of her, waving and bobbing for joy in the oxygenated bubbles. Animals came and knelt, giving thanks for the life-giving deluge. Plants stretched their roots and bent their boughs in hopes of tapping a steady vein. Even the sun smiled to see its own reflection in the friendly moving mirror.

One day the river rounded a bend and discovered that the trees that had always outlined her edges, had disappeared. The river held a special place in her heart for the trees because these trees had a way of calming her torrents. She continued to look intently around every bend, but the trees were nowhere to be found.

The sun appeared without a smile, fierce, and rather cantankerous. The river asked the sun, "please lessen your heat", but the sun couldn't help it and flashed even more intensely.

The river lost some of her strength, but she attributed this to old age. Unfamiliar objects caught rides in the slowing current but some lost their buoyancy and became snags that also served to weigh her down. It seemed every day she felt more depressed and murky. Her color changed and all her friends noticed that something was wrong. Fish that once delighted to ride the tide down stream, turned their backs on her and tried to go away and up-stream. One day when she felt at her lowest, she splattered out a prayer. This prayer could be heard for miles and it shocked listeners in the distance. Choking noises reverberated throughout the valley and many thought the river might be drowning.

Perhaps due to the river's desperation, her prayer was heard. Someone, whom the river had never expected to see again, came to her edge. "Could it really be him?" she thought. She *did* remember this man! He had forged a bond with her when he was but a sandy-haired child. Like the trees, this child was special.

Many a summer day, he sat quietly by her edge and dreamed of far-away places and other rivers. He brought a cotton nap-sack with his lunch in it and when the time came for him to leave her edge, he always carted away no less than four "unfamiliar" in his cotton sack, which always made her feel better. When the boy wanted to swim or dive, he always fancied one of the river's lagoons. He never worried the river by venturing beyond his limits. She loved the funny faces he would make at her underwater. Opening his eyes underwater, he pretended he was looking at the river through a fluid magnifying glass. This game made him feel inseparable from her. She loved the boy and knew they shared a communal bond.

Seeing him standing all grown-up now was thrilling and comforting. Her intuition told her he had come to help. He had not come to play or even touch her, but she knew that he understood.

He left briefly and came back with many of her favorite kinds of trees. Dogwoods, cottonwoods, and stately firs, were among the first to be planted by her edges. He brought many friends and they brought lots of cotton sacks. Working together, they took away pounds of snagging "unfamiliar" and the river felt improved. With the weight of the unfamiliar gone, she felt strangely empty. Now she could hear that her current was muted. The river rested and she had no choice but to allow her faith to hit rock bottom. She remained determined and made many new friends during her recuperation. New and old friends alike stood beside her and became fierce allies for her. They fought for her survival in ways that she could not understand, but all these efforts took time.

The river's impediments caused time to advance sluggishly, but her friends pressed on in many luminous ways. They took pictures of her and wrote poems about her. They sang songs about her and began to enlighten each other concerning the river's fathomless potential. Many people who lived by the river valued her for the first time. The river began to glisten like polished jewels, as respect for her grew into fame. As she began to run swiftly again, music returned to her depths. She coursed on to the sea, feeling highly favored and blessed in the knowledge that she was once again in equal partnership with goodness.

Earlene Wagner  
College



Katie Hinkle  
8th Grade

## It is the River

It is the place where I can think,  
Where my thoughts run free,  
Flowing swiftly to a haven deep in the  
Heart of the forest.

It is my tranquil spot.  
Peacefulness and serenity wash over me  
As I sit among lush foliage  
And nature's mysterious wonders.

It is the place that nature thrives from,  
Where toads ribbit from their lily pads,  
Where otter build their homes,  
And where all vegetation grows.

It is my beautiful spot,  
Lying near pools of sparkling diamonds  
Filled with tiny pebbles,  
Sweet notes of music gracefully fill the air.

It is the place where hopes and dreams begin,  
Where my future lies,  
Where the sunlight warms my very being,  
And where the wind breathes into my soul.

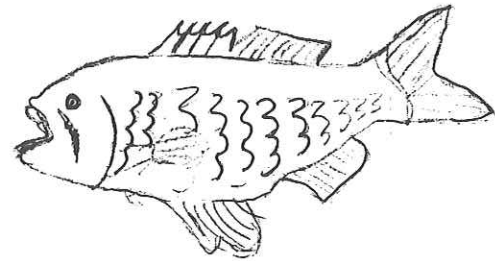
It is the river.

Jennifer Smith  
11<sup>th</sup> Grade

## What Am I?

I am cold. I am fast. I am rough.  
I am one of the many reasons you live.  
I can be as beautiful as gold.  
Other times I can be as ugly as coal.  
I am the river.

Conrad Neil  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade



Oksana Mazhnikova  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade

## The Story

The river tells a beautiful story  
If you listen you will hear  
It will tell you about the seasons  
The fish that have swum in its waters  
How forest turned into towns  
How children grow  
Rain, sun, storm, snow  
Keep on writing the story  
Take care of the river  
And it will tell its story for generations to come

Cheyenneh King  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Little Droplet

Home is a tremendously big cloud;  
Little droplet comes down dressed up as snow  
Then falls into the river to change its shape to flow.

Down big waterfalls and onto the rocks,  
While animals come out to play  
The little droplet just swims away.

It crashes into a huge salmon and quickly makes a wish:  
To return to its buddies in the clouds up above  
To redo the roller coaster ride and escape the fish!

Hans Perez-Haemmerle  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Do You Know Where Your River Goes?

Rain is pattering against my window  
Falling to the ground  
And making its long journey in a river of nowhere  
A river that changes shape,  
A river we can never keep track of.  
Twisting and turning so sharply,  
We wonder if it will stay on track and not die.  
It intertwines with others it grows older,  
So we sometimes cannot pick our river out of the crowd,  
But it is there.  
It is like the human race.  
Each river following a different path,  
But all have the same common destination.  
To claim success for ourselves without destroying our bodies first  
For our river,  
It is reaching the ocean, without being polluted first.  
The only difference between the river and ourselves is,  
We have the choice to pollute our bodies or not to,  
The river has no choice.  
We are like our river,  
Before we are exposed to evil.  
We are  
Pure  
Free  
Innocent  
Just like the river

Teresa Makowski  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade



# A River has Many Voices

Featured below are the winning entries submitted from China. The students were asked to write about their river, the Yangtze (Chang Jiang). One of our sponsors, Wildwood/Mahonia, has developed close ties to the Yichang community while working on watershed restoration projects on the Yangtze River. The American and Chinese students share a common future that will be greatly determined by the quality of their common environment.

## Life's Source

As a child, I always went to the river and sat near it. The wind was very soft and the air was very pure and fresh. It made me feel wide-awake. I liked it very much.

But after a few years passed, I returned to the river. I found that the water wasn't clean. The air wasn't fresh, either.

I know that people don't protect the environment. Much waste is thrown in the river or near the river by the people. As a student and as a citizen, I hope all of us can protect the Changjiang River. It means to protect our mother.

Now people place a much higher importance on environmental protection. There are many buildings and trees on both sides of the banks. Many people pick up the waste by themselves. The river seems more beautiful than before.

Fan Jie

Grade 1, No. 1 Senior Middle School

## 生命之源

从小，我常常去河边，坐在岸旁。和风轻轻地吹，空气是多麽的清新。它趋走了我的睡意。我多麽的欢喜。

几年过去了，我又回到了河岸边。可我发觉河水不再清澈。空气也不再清新。

我了解到人们没有保护好环境。人们将很多废物丢进河里或河旁。作为一名学生和公民，

我希望我们能保护长江，也就是说保护母亲河。

现在人们对环境保护的重要性有所提高。高楼林立，两岸树影婆娑。许多人都自觉地拾起

河边的垃圾，长江看起来比以前更美丽。

Fan Jie 作

第一高级中学一年级

## My Good Mother

When I was a child, you played with me.

When I was alone, you talked with me.

When I was hungry, you gave me some food.

When I was thirsty, you gave me some water.

Sometimes you're very kind; but sometimes you're very angry

Because some people made some mistakes.

But I love you all the time.

So I'll do my best to protect you.

I'll help you to become more and more beautiful.

I'll plant more and more trees beside you.

I hope you will be happy every day.

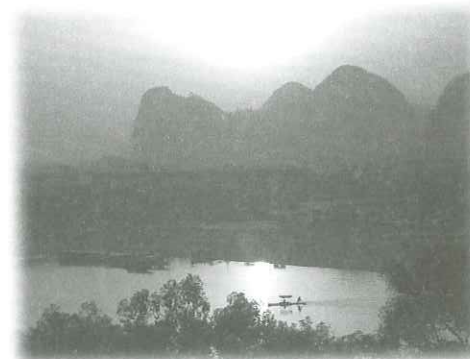
I hope you will be healthy.

I love you forever, my good mother,

-----Yangtze River

Wang Shuang

Grade 2, Yi Lin Senior Middle School



The Yangtze River goes across my motherland; it goes a long ways, and in the end, it goes into the sea. It gives us food and water, it gives us power, it makes it easy to go into my country by ship, and it was the beginning of the first Chinese culture. Only she could have this name --- our Mother River!

Cheng Long

Grade 2, No. 16 Junior Middle School

扬子江流过我的祖国，源远流长，在它的终端，汇入大海。它提供我们的食物和水，给我们提供电力。轻舟直下，游览我的祖国十分便利。它是中华文化的起源。只有她才配得上这个名字——母亲河。

Cheng Long 作

第 16 初级中学二年级

## 我的好母亲

孩提时，你同我一起嬉戏。

孤独时，你同我倾谈一齐。

饥饿时，你给我食粮。

干渴时，你给我琼浆。

有时，你一团和气，但有时，你也会暴戾。

但我永远热爱你。

因此我要竭尽全力保护你，

将你妆扮得越来越美丽。

我将种下更多的树木傍着你，

我愿你日日快乐无比。

愿你康健

我永远爱着你，我的好母亲——扬子江。

Wang Shuang 作

第一高级中学二年级

## A River has Many Voices cont.

Featured below is an essay written by 5th grader Yuriy Bodnar about the Yenisey River in Russia. He moved to the United States from Ukraine in 2001. Yuriy spoke no English when he came here. He has since learned to read and write in English. Yuriy enjoys reading encyclopedias so he can learn more about the world.

### The Yenisey River

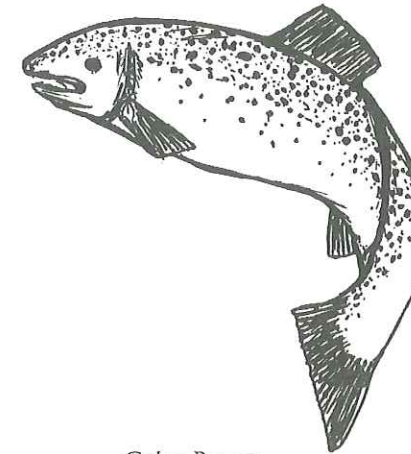
Yenisey River is located in Russia. It is in Siberia. It flows through the city of Krashoyarsk. It is very deep and long. Boats, barges, yachts and ships carry cargo, people, tourists, and passengers. There are hydrofoil glider boats, they are called "Rockets", that cruise up and down the river. There are many different kinds of fish: carp, trout, pike, bass, sturgeon, catfish, etc. The water is cold both in summer and in winter. There are some places where it freezes over in winter. The people cut holes in the ice to catch fish. There are many parks along the banks of the Yenisey. The people like to swim, fish and jet ski there. There are also restaurants, concert halls, gyms, playgrounds and campgrounds for the people and children to spend summer vacations. It is a fantastic place to enjoy the nature and have a rest. A huge bridge was built across that river and when you are crossing it, it takes your breath away.

Yuriy Bodnar  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Река Енисей расположена в России. Она находится в Сибири. Течёт она через город Красноярск. Она очень глубокая. Лодки, баржи, яхты и корабли перевозят груз, людей, туристов и пассажиров. Есть теплоходы на подводных крыльях, которые называются "Ракетами", они катают вверх и вниз по реке. Есть много различных видов рыбы: карп, форель, пика, осётр, сом и т.п. Вода в реке холодная как летом так и зимой. Есть некоторые места, которые зимой замерзают. Люди делают отверстия во льду для того, чтобы ловить рыбу. Вдоль Енисея есть много парков. Люди любят там плавать, ловить рыбу и кататься на водных мотоциклах. Там также есть рестораны, концертные залы, детские площадки и места для палаток, чтобы люди и дети могли провести свои летние каникулы. Это фантастическое место для наслаждения окружающей природой и отдыха. Огромный мост был построен через реку и у каждого захватывает дыхание проезжая по нему.

Юрий Боднар  
Пятый класс

## Student works, part II



Caley Brown  
8th Grade

### Sacred Song

I am the Willamette  
and my memory is long.  
In the choir of my currents,  
I sing a sacred song.

I have heard and I remember  
ancient beasts in forests grand  
when the floods that etched the valley  
carved my name into this land.

First soft steps of Calapooia  
stalking game in shoes of skin,  
'til the fevers stole their young ones  
disappearing like the wind.

Anxious voices of the settlers  
piercing sunrise like a sword,  
crack of whip and creak of harness  
as their oxen brave a ford.

Now my banks are edged with cities  
and my swiftness has grown slow,  
but my song can heal all sadness  
as it did so long ago.

Come and seek my silent places  
where the heron stands like stone.  
Come and let my song embrace you,  
seep into your heart and bone.

Jordan Prasnewski  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Legend

She speaks no language  
But her own.  
A pattern of whispers  
Grazing the wind.

Like a slow pulse  
Of wood upon skin,  
Her current  
Throbs with perilous water.

Circe.  
Medusa.  
Willamette.

Sarah Koski  
College

### The River Sonnet

I am the Otter,  
Playful and sleek,  
The river's daughter,  
I am not meek.

I am the Fish,  
I dance in the brook,  
My fins do swish  
And stay far from the hook.

I am the Frog,  
The river's wanderer,  
I sit on the log  
To pause and ponder.

I am the River,  
Strong, the giver.

*Olivia Johnson*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Leave No Trace

The River flows swiftly past  
An old elk rolls in the grass  
An osprey flies high overhead  
You're in the Willamette Watershed  
A beaver builds its home so strong  
A salmon keeps swimming, its  
journey long  
When you see the wonder of this  
place  
Be inclined to ....

#### Leave NO trace

*Daniel DiBartolo*  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade



### Watershed

Clipping, picking, raking ivy that's dead  
Cleaning up the Willamette Watershed.  
Clearing out the Riparian Zone  
Ripping out vines that are overgrown.

Checking the creek for micro-invertebrates  
Learning scientific principles as our class investigates.  
Building up strength and stamina, too  
Cleaning the watershed – a great thing to do.

*Jesse Goldfarb*  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade

### "FROM AN EAGLE'S EYE VIEW"



An eagle lay nervously in her nest. She had hungry baby eagles, but nothing to feed them. The mother eagle decided to leave them and go and find food. She figured she would fly over the river and see what she could find. She left her nest and headed towards the river.

As she flew over the river she saw a small patch of smooth water that looked like it had turned to glass. As she reached the riverbank she could see lots of tadpoles swimming around the edge. To her great surprise, a big fish swam up and ate one!

As the mother eagle made her way down the river she could see many things. She saw a ski boat, which looked like it was carrying three passengers. Moving along she reached the great waterfall. She could see that the pool of water at the bottom was very deep. She soared over the waterfall. It felt great!

When she got to the bottom of the waterfall she saw a deep pool of water with baby salmon. They were squirming and swimming about as most baby fry do! There were many different types of beautiful trees and plants growing along the river. It was very peaceful and pretty.

As she went a little further she began to see rapids. They were very BIG rapids! She knew that fish like she needed to feed her babies lived in that part of the river (spawning salmon), but it would be hard to catch them in the rapids. She flew lower and spied many fish. She tried to pick one up with her talons, but it got away. She flew back up and skimmed the area. She saw a fish struggling. She dove and caught it! She was home free!

She now had food for her baby eagles. She flew back up the beautiful river to her nest and hungry babies. All of her life, she appreciated the beauty of the river.

*Audrienne Wilson*  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

### The River

Fish jump high in the river  
Plants dance gracefully in the river  
Rocks play and have fun in the river  
Thank you river!

*Lila Neahring*  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

### A River's Dream

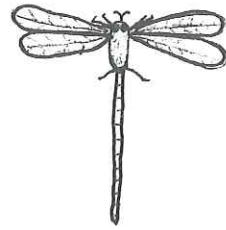
The vast sky and open plains,  
The small pebbles and bitter algae.  
The trees have roots, strong and bold.  
The river's dream came true.

*Philip Scoles*  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade

## A River

Starting from a glacier, spring, or rain.  
It quickly flows, winding through a valley towards  
the ocean blue, or the sea.  
Cascading down mountainsides.  
Rocky, sandy, and muddy bottoms full of rocks with  
algae and moss.  
Logs and sticks float with the current.  
Flowing, shining, splashing, as it runs to meet the  
ocean.  
Housing fish, salamanders, aquatic insects and more.  
Amazing plant life living near.  
Bluish, greenish, purplish,  
Clear like thin air.  
When it falls off a ledge, it whirls white and bubbling  
as it falls.  
Crashing, splashing.  
A landing run for a heron.  
The River

*Benjamin Swetland*  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

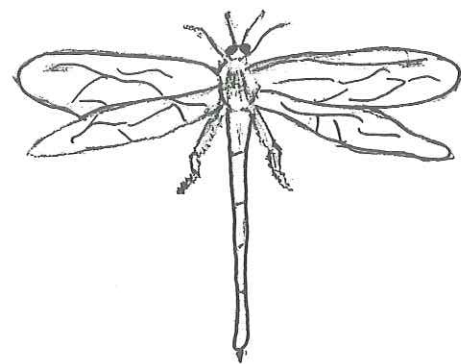


*Cassy Beaulieu*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## The River Below

At the river below,  
I saw eternity  
River's edge glowing with light  
Leaves turned yellow and red  
Falling from the Maple trees  
Reflecting the amazing river's glow.  
I heard the song of the birds,  
Whistles of many different kinds.  
The river's water was so peaceful  
You could see salmon swimming through the water  
Like swans gliding on air  
Salmon were silently jumping in the water  
With the wind whispering the quiet song of the forest  
All this on my visit  
To the River below

*Hailie Brown*  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade



*Maxim Gayduchik*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade



## "I Am the River"

Flowing down, over, around-my waters transcend the bends in the earth  
Following curvilinear paths to dissect mass, my task is varied and plentiful  
Following the far ends of the globe I bring life and sustenance to all  
Not withholding my nourishment from one or the other  
Yet people continue to use me, to fight over the rights to my body  
All flowers may bloom beside me; every tree may dip its roots into me and take freely  
Sometimes calm, sometimes turbulent, sometimes shallow, sometimes deep-  
I am the river

Each plant, each living being may grow green by my streams  
Map my waters but I will continue to change slipping away like a cloud in the air  
I cry for replenishment; I cry for the same care I show you  
Draw near to me and see your reflection  
But be dear and care for me like I matter, as you know I do  
Drink me up and be well; bathe in me at night  
But don't take me for granted  
I am the River

Ride my waves; lie on my shores; play in my pools  
But keep me cold and clean; don't contaminate me with debris and disease  
Don't dam me and try and control me, for the tighter you grasp the quicker I'll slip away  
And your loss will be your own  
So take heart before it's too late  
See how connected, how interwoven are our fates  
Protect me; protect your future...  
I am the river

*Jed Pennell*  
College

## Moonlight

A shimmering path of white gold dances across the dark river to my feet, flickering and swirling with each ripple. Somehow I feel drawn to it. I want to grab it, hold it, and plunge into it. But I'm afraid. What if the sparkle slips through my fingers and the magic trickles back into the dark water?

I have moments when I'm afraid to reach into the unknown; when I'm afraid to trust. I have trusted too much to muster blind courage. Often, the moonlight is only on the surface. Already I see a metamorphosis in the swirls and ripples of the river. Will it still be there when I am ready to reach for it? And if I dive into the white gold light, what will I find?

I turn and walk down the sidewalk. The soft yellow glow of street lamps safely lures me away from the pale illumination of the moon. Glancing over my shoulder, I notice the moonlight following me. I smile.

*Courtney Gardner  
College*

## At Midnight

At midnight,  
if you look closely at the river,  
you will see the moon shining on it.  
It will have ripples moving in the black waters.

*Dalton Rux  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade*

## River Dreams

Think about if you were a rock sitting at the bottom of the big river, feeling the water flow and ripple above you. Moving you so gently with the momentum of the current. Sensing the fish move close to you. Almost feeling their pink bellies and shiny fins dance around you.

Think if you were a fish swimming in the big river, jumping through the flowing river. Feeling the water swirl under your belly. Swimming over the wavy green seaweed, feeling it tickle your sides, while offering a close wall of protection.

Think if you were the water making up the big river. Flowing along feeling all the plants and animals that you share your waters with. And on a hot summer day feeling children splashing in your fresh waters.

Someday when you're walking by the river's edge looking into the water, watching the rocks, fish, and water move, ponder this: how would you feel being one with the water?

*Lindsey Warne  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade*



## Raindrop

The  
little bud  
of water  
falls absently  
into the world it  
cannot recognize. It lands  
still in one piece onto a leaf of a  
monstrous green tree. It is soaked into  
that leaf and travels down into the dirt,  
where it collects phosphates and nitrates, magnesium,  
and sulfates which are attracted to its chemistry. They  
follow it into the spindly root system of an alfalfa. The drop  
travels up until it can see the sky, leaving behind the elements in  
its struggle to the surface. The view of the sky is suddenly blackened  
by a mouth with large flat teeth and round lips crashing toward the drop's  
perch. Soon it is swimming in a sea of red and white blood cells, systematically  
passing through different chambers of absorption. The flow is abruptly increased  
and yet the drop sees no sign of the sky or soil. Then heat radiates into the heart  
of the drop and it quivers in anticipation of flight. The red sea clings to it, successfully  
managing to hold the drop inside. A new swirling mass of red greets the drop, members  
of which are different and yet similar to the last sea. The drop rests in this cooler environ-  
ment and allows itself to drift along only to be drained out of the skin and wiped into  
a white rag. This rag is thrown into a heap with others of the same size, shape and  
smell. They are all loaded with drops the same as this one. It loses its grip on the  
white rag and passes through a dark metal cave until it reaches clean air and the sky  
it recognizes. It is surrounded by so many other drops like itself that it cannot  
even count them all. They are all rushing to the same conclusion. Yet, little by  
little, some are soaked into the soil, picked up by a cloud, or lost in the rush.  
The drop does not pay attention to its neighbor, for soon it will no longer be  
the same drop beside it. Eagerly, the drop races out to a large breathing  
tempest of drops. They heave as one and fall. Some are driven deep  
beneath the swell while others rush to the surface. The drop finds a  
calm spot on the surface and lays happily, enjoying the warm air  
around it. The warmth makes it feel light and happy. This  
feeling picks the drop out of its sea to be free for  
one moment in the blue sky nothing touching  
it but air on all sides, until it falls  
absently again.

*Rachelle Hasson  
College*

## The Unfinished Story

There is a strange gloom in the air of past and present like a story half written with an ending to yet come forth. That is the way that Mill Creek appeared on this January morning.

Along the bank rocks, water from Mill Creek splashes up to thaw the ice. As the water drips off the rock as if trying to rejoin his kinsmen before they leave him behind. The drop immediately is welcome and surrounded and pushed down the stream. Into rapid water bounding over rocks and around the logs which try and block their quest. A small leaf is caught upon the log after being pushed down by the soft breeze that hangs in the air. The leaf is alone on the log as opposed to the army of water-drenched leaves that gathered into a troop along the bank. While a greater force of blackberry bushes surround them on all sides. The army seems to be waiting their time before they have no choice but to flee into the water and go down the stream into an area much more appealing to the dirt they are piled on now. For down stream lies green plants along the banks at least to the bridge that impairs the view. It seems as if this army that surrounded them had come from up stream for their colors are all alike. Their dark faded brown looks as if they have been fighting to stay alive for years. The water is more turbulent as if an earthquake shakes with all its might shaking the water and frightening the plants. Now their hope is all but gone. The plants appear as if death is in their roots. Tall grass held under that water as if it is gasping and fighting trying to get above the water. The trees, bare of leaves hanging over the water like a tired old bitter man threatening to jump off a bridge. But his standards are thick, much like the roots that hold the tree from falling.

One leaf falls in to the water giving up the battle. It much like the drops of water is immediately thrown down stream. It drifts around the bridge and out of sight where it no longer knows what is to come. Thus the ending of our story has yet to be told. Of what life will control beyond the bridge.

David Earl  
11<sup>th</sup> Grade



## The River Runs Free

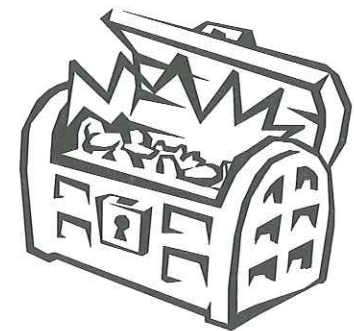
The river shines like the scales on a salmon  
Dashing through the currents of the river.  
The river represents strength and freedom pounding  
On the banks.  
Reflecting beautiful colors of the sky, blue and  
White waves.  
The River is a home.

Ashley Brugnoli  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## The Silence of the River

The water sparkles like a diamond,  
While it floats downriver to the wavy ocean.  
The salmon below are constantly  
Swimming on the most silent highway on earth,  
With no stopping lights,  
But there are warning lights,  
Like predators and waterfalls,  
On this highway below earth.  
There are no signs for services for the salmon,  
Like hospitals for them to go to when they get in an accident.  
Or signs to show them the way home.  
So they depend on the stars in the sky and  
Their homing instinct to guide them back,  
On the silent highway.

Matthew Fletcher  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade



## Salmon Jewels

Meandering among branches and rocks,  
the River is a flow of sparkling sapphires,  
Struggling to keep its scarlet and amber salmon jewels away from the deadly fishing nets,  
the River is a treasure chest,  
Warning its priceless silver, shining scaly gems of the flying, swift pirates over head,  
seeking a rich meal,  
the River is a protector,  
Providing homes, hiding places, abundance of food,  
the River is a mother caring for her children,  
and sometimes crying when a fisherman swipes a fine dinner,  
Tinkling of a rumbling waterfall, rushing sound of whitening crashing rapids,  
the River weeps for its lost salmon gems,  
The River loves and covets its salmon jewels,  
and only the luckiest and most patient fisherman can ever catch the wealth of the River,  
and discover its true riches.

Rebecca Gates  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Petals

She knew she was late and quickened her pace, not sure if she wanted to be here at all. Why had he asked her so sweetly to meet him here, after crushing her heart so long ago? She hadn't dared set foot along this bank of the Willamette for over a year.

Just ahead was the point where her trail broke free of the blackberry brambles and alders and spilled onto the bank. She paused briefly, then spotted him, pacing along the river with hunched shoulders. He picked up a small stone and forcefully skipped it across the river.

She left the shady trail and stepped into the light of the sinking sun. Still facing the water, his back became rigid and slowly he turned to face her. She did not know the look in his green eyes. Was it regret, longing, defeat? He lowered his head, breaking their gaze. Eventually there was a mumble, and she thought she heard "sorry," but couldn't be sure.

He gingerly bent to lift a single white rose from the rocks. She hadn't noticed it when she arrived. It was an older rose. She wondered if its delicate, slightly browning petals might be knocked loose from the long, thornless stem by a sudden gust of wind. It was lovely, nonetheless, and she almost chuckled as she reminisced about the time when he, low on money, bought her a bouquet of older cream roses. That was the day he confessed his love for her. The roses died the next day, and they had laughed about the irony then.

He offered the rose to her, and she stepped down onto the slick, mossy rocks to take it. Just as she grasped the smooth stem, her foot slid and she began to fall backward. He caught her, but the pale rose slipped from her fingers, falling into the current of the Willamette.

She watched as the old rose drifted slowly away from the bank, pulled by the river's flow. He had pulled her in years ago with late-night talks, flirtatious glances, and coffee dates. A petal broke loose and swirled freely to the center of the river.

...He loves me...

A thorny blackberry vine that stretched a few feet from the bank caught the rose and ripped off a petal, which the river soon discarded along the bank. She grimaced to see the torn, wilted petal as abandoned as she had felt.

...He loves me not...

Another petal broke off to glide peacefully down river and soak in the sun – love letters and kisses.

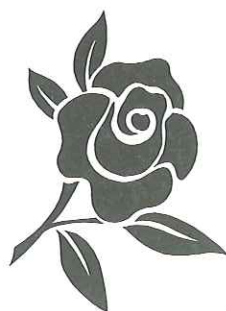
...He loves me...

Another caught on a rock – a broken promise.

...He loves me not...

Soon, the rose reached stronger currents that plucked petals from all directions. Some sailed gracefully down river. She knew they were meant for each other. Others sank. She wasn't sure. She had wanted marriage. He wasn't ready and left her for Europe. Correspondence stopped altogether, but she had never stopped loving him. And now...

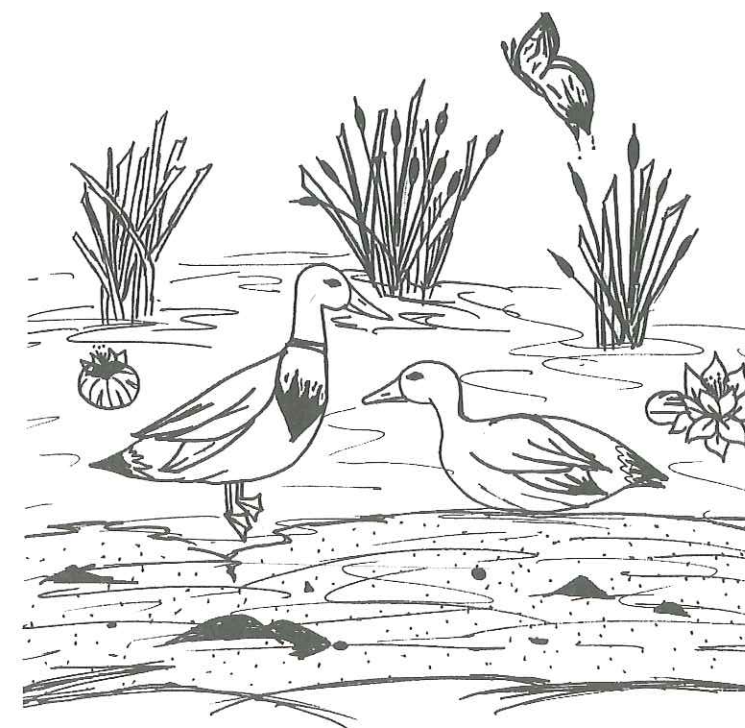
The rose's outer petals had all fallen off, exposing the fresh, inner bud. Was it waiting to bloom?



Courtney Gardner  
College

## Invited Oregon Writers

The Oregon writers featured in this section of the anthology were invited to contribute to our publication because of their passion for education and our river. They are people deeply connected to the river through their writing and storytelling.



Elona Botsyan  
8th Grade

**Barry Lopez** is an essayist, short story writer and author. He is a recipient of the National Book Award for *Arctic Dreams* and the John Burroughs Medal for *Of Wolves and Men*. His most recent books are *Light Action in the Caribbean* (2000), a story collection, and *About This Life* (1998), a collection of essays and memoirs. The following piece is from an early story collection, *River Notes* (1979).

## THE SEARCH FOR THE HERON

I see you on the far side of the river, standing at the edge of familiar shadows, before a terrified chorus of young alders on the bank. I do not think you know it is raining. You are oblivious to the *thuck* of drops rolling off the tube of your neck and the slope of your back. (Above, in the sweepy cedars, drops pool at the tips of leather needles, break away, are sheered by the breeze, and, *thuck*, hit the hollow-boned, crimson-colored shoulders of the bird and fall swooning into the river.)

Perhaps you know it is raining. The intensity of your stare is then not oblivion, only an effort to spot between the rain splashes in the river (past your feet, so well-known, there beneath the hammered surface like twigs in the pebbles) the movement of trout.

I know: your way is to be inscrutable. When pressed you leave. This is no more unexpected or mysterious than that you give birth to shadows. Or silence. I watch from a distance. With respect. I think of standing beside you when you have died of your own brooding over the water—as shaken as I would be at the collapse of a cathedral, wincing deep inside as at the screech of an overloaded cart.

You carry attribution well, refusing to speak. With your warrior's feathers downsloped at the back of your head, those white sheaves formed like a shield overlaying your breast, your gray-blue cast, the dark tail feathers—do you wear wolves' tails about your ankles and dance in clearings in the woods when your blood is running? I wonder where you have fought warrior. Where!

You retreat beneath your cowl, spread wings, rise, drift upriver as silent as winter trees.

I follow you. You have caught me with your reticence. I will listen to whatever they say about you, what anyone who has seen you wishes to offer—and I will return to call across the river to you, to confirm or deny. If you will not speak I will have to consider making you up.

Your sigh, I am told, is like the sound of rain driven against tower bells. You smell like wild ginger. When you lift your foot from the river, water doesn't run off it to spoil the transparent surface of the shallows. The water hesitates to offend you. You stare down with that great yellow eye, I am told, like some prehistoric rattlesnake: that dangerous, that blinding in your strike, that hate-ridden. But (someone else has insisted) you really do smell like wild ginger, and snakes smell like cucumbers. A false lead.

Cottonwoods along the river, stained with your white excrement, are young enough to volunteer complaint about you. They have grown so fast and so high with such little effort that they can understand neither failure nor triumph. So they will say anything they think might be to their advantage. I, after a somewhat more difficult life, am aware that they will lie, and that lies serve in their way.

(It was one of these who told me you were without mercy and snakelike.) One of them said something about your fishy breath—vulgar talk, I know. But I heard it out. It is, after all, in their branches where you have dreamed at night, as immobile as a piece of lumber left in their limbs, and considered your interior life. This idea attracts me. I know: this is not something to inquire into with impunity, but I did not start out on this to please you. And in spite of my

impatience I am respectful.

One dream alone reveals your grief. The trees said you dreamed most often of the wind. You dreamed that you lived somewhere with the wind, with the wind rippling your feathers; and that children were born of this, that they are the movement of water in all the rivers. You wade, it is suggested, among your children, staring hard, pecking in that lightning way your life from the water that is your child; and sleeping in trees that do not hold you sacred.

I know why you appear so fierce and self-contained. I can imagine fear in the form of a frog in your beak screaming and you, undisturbed, cool. When you finally speak up, feigning ignorance with me won't do; enigmatic locutions, distracting stories of the origin of the universe—these will not do. I expect the wisdom of the desert out of you.

The cottonwoods also told me of a dance, that you dreamed of a dance: more than a hundred great blue herons riveted by the light of dawn, standing with wind-ruffled feathers on broad slabs of speckled gray granite, river-washed bedrock, in that sharp, etching backlight, their sleek bills glinting, beginning to lift their feet from the thin sheet of water and to put them back down. The sound of the rhythmic splash, the delicate *kersplash* of hundreds of feet, came up in the sound of the river and so at first was lost; but the shards of water, caught blinding in the cutting light (now the voices, rising, a keening) began to form a mist in which appeared rainbows against the white soft breasts; and where drops of water dolloped like beads of mercury on the blue-gray feathers, small rainbows of light here, and in the eyes (as the voices, louder, gathering on one, high, trembling note) rainbows—the birds cradled in light shattered in rainbows everywhere, and with your great blue wings fanning that brilliant mist, open, utterly vulnerable and stunning, you urged them to begin to revolve in the light, stretching their wings, and you lay back your head and closed the steely eyes and from deep within your belly came the roar of a cataract, like the howling of wolves—that long moment of your mournful voice. The birds quieted, their voices quieted. The water quieted, it quieted, until there was only your quivering voice, the sound of the birth of rivers, tapering finally to silence, to the sound of dawn, the birds standing there full of grace. One or two feathers floating on the water.

I understand it is insensitive to inquire further, but you see now your silence becomes even more haunting.

I believe we will dance together someday. Before then will I have to have been a trout, bear scars from your stabbing misses and so have some deeper knowledge? Then will we dance? I cannot believe it is so far between knowing what must be done and doing it.

The cottonwoods, these too-young trees, said once, long ago, you had a premonition in a nightmare. An enormous owl arrived while you slept and took your daughter away, pinioned in his gray fists. You woke, bolt upright, in the middle of the night to find her there, undisturbed beside you. You aired your feathers, glared into the moon-stilled space over the water and went uneasily back to sleep. In the morning—your first glance—the limb was empty. You were young, you had also lost a wife, and you went down to the river and tore out your feathers and wept. The soundlessness of it was what you could not get over.

The cottonwoods said there was more, but I put up my hand, tired, on edge at the sound of my own voice asking questions. I went into the trees, wishing to cry, I thought, for what had been lost, feeling how little I knew, how anxious I was, how young.

The big maples, where you have slept since then—I resolved to ask them about your dreams. No; they refused. I climbed up in their limbs, imploring. They were silent. I was angered and made a fool of myself beating on the trunks with my fists screaming, "Tell me about the bird! It is only a bird!"

Learning your dreams unnerved me. What unholy trespass I had made.

When I regained my composure I apologized, touching the maple trunks gently with my fingers. As I departed a wind moved the leaves of a low branch against my face and I was



embarrassed, for I was waiting for some sign of understanding. I walked on, alert now to the wind showing here and there in the grass. The wind suddenly spoke of you as of a father. The thoughts were incomplete, hinting at something incomprehensible, ungraspable, but I learned this: you are able to stand in the river in such a way that the wind makes no sound against you. You arrange yourself so that you cast no shadow and you stop breathing for half an hour. The only sound is the faint movement of your blood. You are quiet enough to hear fish swimming toward you.

When I asked, discretely, whether long ago you might have fought someone, some enemy whose name I might recognize, the wind was suddenly no longer there. From such strength as is in you I suspect an enemy. I have inquired of the stones at the bottom of the river; I have inquired of your other enemy, the pine marten; I have waded silently with your relatives, the bitterns, alert for any remarks, all to no avail.

I have been crippled by my age, by what I have known, as well as by my youth, by what I have yet to learn, in all these inquiries. It has taken me years, which might have been spent (by someone else) seeking something greater, in some other place. I have sought only you. Enough. I wish to know you, and you will not speak.

It is not easy to tell the rest, but I know you have heard it from others. Now I wish you to hear it from me. I took bits of bone from fish you had eaten and pierced my fingers, letting the blood trail away in the current. I slept on what feathers of yours I could find. From a tree felled in a storm I took your nest, climbed with it to a clearing above the river where there was a good view, as much sky as I could comprehend. Bear grass, pentstemon, blue gilia, wild strawberries, Indian paintbrush growing there. Each night for four nights I made a small fire with sticks from the old nest and looked out toward the edge of the shadows it threw. On the last night I had a great dream. You were standing on a desert plain. You were painted blue and you wore a necklace of white salmon vertebrae. Your eyes huge, red. Before you on the dry, gray earth a snake coiled, slowly weaving the air with his head. You spoke about the beginning of the world, that there was going to be no fear in the world, that everything that was afraid would live poorly.

The snake said coldly, weaving, yes, there would be fear, that fear would make everything strong, and lashed out, opening a wound in your shoulder. As fast, you pinned his head to the ground and said—the calmness in your voice—fear might come, and it could make people strong, but it would be worth nothing without compassion. And you released the snake.

I awoke sprawled in bear grass. It was darker than I could ever remember a night being. I felt the spot on the planet where I lay, turned away from the sun. My legs ached. I knew how old I was lying there on the top of the mountain, a fist of cold air against my breast as some animal, a mouse perhaps, moved suddenly under my back.

An unpronounceable forgiveness swept over me. I knew how much had to be given away, how little could ever be asked. The sound of geese overhead in the darkness just then, and all that it meant, was enough.

I leap into the jade color of the winter river. I fight the current to reach the rocks, climb up on them and listen for the sound of your voice. I stand dripping, shivering in my white nakedness, in the thin dawn light. Waiting. Silent. You begin to appear at a downriver bend.

**Clemens Starck** lives in Polk County, in the drainage of the Little Luckiamute, on land originally occupied by the Luckiamute band of the Kalapuya people. He has published three books of poetry: *Journeyman's Wages* (1995), *Studying Russian on Company Time* (1999), and *China Basin* (2002). A recipient of the Oregon Book Award and the William Stafford Memorial Poetry Award, he makes his living as a carpenter.

**"WILLAMETTE RIVER,  
MARION ST. BRIDGE:  
PIER 5, GENERAL DETAILS"**

The sun slams into us  
like one of the pile drivers  
down on the gravel bar. The crew I'm on  
is erecting forms for concrete piers.

Machinery roars. Earth shudders.  
Cottonwood leaves turn gray with dust.

Companions of duty,  
is this our assignment? Simply to be here, packed  
in these heavy bodies, dumbfounded,  
while time drags  
and the river slides quietly by?

I signal the sun to slack off a little,  
but nothing happens.  
I keep on signaling anyway.

**JOURNEYMAN'S WAGES**

To the waters of the Willamette I come  
in nearly perfect weather,  
Monday morning  
traffic backed up at the bridge  
a bad sign.

Be on the job at eight,  
boots crunching in gravel;  
cinch up the tool belt, string out the cords  
to where we left off on Friday—  
that stack of old  
form lumber, that bucket of rusty bolts  
and those two beat-up sawhorses  
wait patiently for us.

Gill is still drunk, red-eyed, pretending he's not  
and threatening to quit;  
Gordon is studying the prints.  
Slab on grade, tilt-up panels, Glu-lams  
and trusses...

Boys, I've got an idea—  
instead of a supermarket  
why couldn't this be a cathedral?

**Joan Maiers** lives and works within view of the Willamette River. When not teaching writing at Marylhurst University, she produces poetry events in the Portland area. Her poetry appears in national publications, as well as those with Oregon roots, such as, CALAPOOYA, HUBBUB, FIREWEED and WINDFALL. She is completing her manuscript of poems titled SPECIAL GRAVITY. The following poem "When Salmon Take to Air" acknowledges the art work of Roger Long. (*Salmon banner shown below*)

## WHEN SALMON TAKE TO AIR

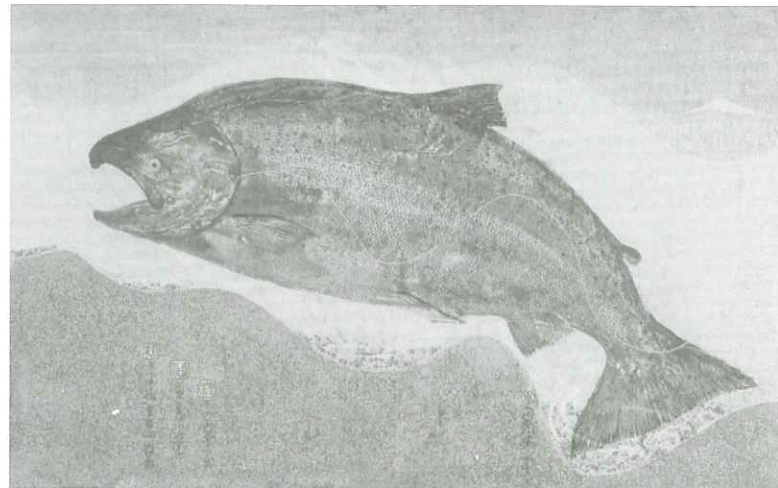
Their place in the universe  
is not matter  
for praising water alone;  
rather, a union of sun's glint  
harbored in river sand  
with heartwood from ancient growth.

Willamette Columbia Sandy  
McKenzie Rogue Klamath  
Metolius Deschutes Umpqua John Day

Names of these ten rivers mark  
the passage of sojourners,  
invite onlookers from the bank  
to pause, take inventory  
before the trail dwindles  
in a plume of rainbow.

## WILLAMETTE

Always on the river  
something happening:  
clouds foretelling  
sketch of light rain  
fiberglass shells hovering  
over swarms of salmon  
late morning vapor  
rinsing color from evergreen  
heights  
heron's alighting creases sky



by Roger Long

**Kathleen Dean Moore** writes about rivers and the edge of the sea. Her most recent books are *Holdfast: At Home in the Natural World* (the Lyons Press) and *Riverwalking: Reflections on Moving Water* (Harcourt Brace), winner of the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Book Award and an Oregon Book Award finalist. A philosophy professor at Oregon State University, Moore lives in Corvallis with her husband Frank, a biologist and flyfisherman. The following is an excerpt from *Riverwalking*.

## RIVERWALKING

For as many years as I can remember, I have walked in rivers. Each Sunday afternoon, through all the summer and winter Sundays of my childhood, my father led nature walks along Rocky River, a shallow, shale-banked stream fed by runoff from the hills south of Cleveland. Nobody swam in Rocky River because the *E. coli* count was formidable, but there was no harm in putting on a pair of old tennis shoes and walking through the brown water, through floating leaves piebald in broken light below the beeches, along towering shale banks, past teenagers washing their cars in shallow bays and families eating lunch. I remember the muddy smell of algae and the weight of the water—rich, resistant water pressed into a bow-wave against each shin.

All those years, I envied people who traveled down rivers in boats. Whenever we drove past the wrecked hulk of a rowboat washed up on the Lake Erie shore, I tried to get my father to stop and evaluate the prospect that, with a little paint and a little fixing up, the boat might float. Now, a continent away in the Willamette Valley in Oregon, our own little garage is stuffed with boats, while our car sits out in the rain and grows moss under its bumper. A Grumman canoe, a McKenzie River drift boat on a trailer wedged diagonally across the garage, a small wooden dory suspended from the ceiling and, in a bag in a corner, an inflatable kayak that looks like a banana. In all my childhood daydreams, I never imagined such great good fortune.

All the same, boats are designed to separate a person from a river and now, when I have a choice, I would rather travel down rivers on foot, walking along trails that run the length of the river or, best of all, wading through the river itself. When I walk in backwaters of the Willamette River, I move through a reflection of the landscape. The mudbank, the willow thicket, the mare's-tail clouds lie flat around me, upside down. The river bisects me at the waist—half observing, half immersed in the gently rocking image of the land. When I press forward against the current, the landscape folds and compresses. Next to my body, it breaks into patches of color that ride past me on a spreading wave. To my back, the willows re-form, bend as if in a high wind, then settle and reach out to the reflection of their roots.

Above my head is a world of light and air and swallows. At my waist, the transparent forest. Below that, vaguely visible through a wash of tree and sky, the round stones of the river bed and my own feet in tennis shoes. The laces flow behind, trailing weeds.

The river carries a history of the land and the people who live on the land, stories collected from a thousand feeder streams and recorded in pockets of sand, in the warm and cold currents, the smells of the water, the mayflies. The river carries my own history, swirls of silt lifted by my passage, memories so thick and slippery that I struggle to keep my feet. This is where I walk, sliding on river stones.

**Barbara Drake** is a published writer of poetry, creative essays, and fiction. Among her six books of poetry are, *What We Say to Strangers* (1986), and *Space Before A* (1996). Her nonfiction book, *Peace At Heart: An Oregon Country Life*, was published by Oregon State University Press in 1998. Her college textbook, *Writing Poetry*, is used at colleges across the country and her work has appeared in numerous poetry and prose anthologies. She is currently a Professor of English at Linfield College and lives on a small farm in the foothills of the Oregon Coast Range.

### UP IN THE MOUNTAINS

Up in the mountains, rivers are little pets.  
I know. I went once  
along the summit trail of the Cascades  
from Timothy Lake south.  
Even the lakes there were small shaving mirrors,  
silver spoons, icy and delicate as snowdrops.  
I saw the Breitenbush river where it poured  
no larger than rain from the downspout  
of my own house. The Clackamas  
was a ribbon of clear water I could step across.  
So many rivers, and each was just a thread of silver  
slipping through deep moss---  
we did our balancing act, as if we, too,  
were very young, on that road which was no road,  
along the summit, a tightrope strung  
between Clackamas meadows and the Santiam.  
When we came down I was unwary.  
Rivers which had been tame and small  
grew full and dangerous beside me,  
but I went in a dream like a maiden aunt  
who remembers only the pretty infant at the christening  
and doesn't recognize  
the deep and dangerous giant he's become.

## Student works, part III

### Passing Me By

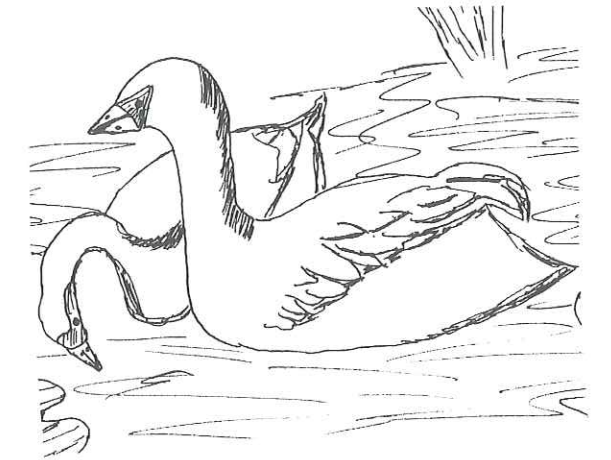
My feet firmly planted  
On the river's edge,  
I feel the cold, rushing waters  
Wash past my ankles.  
The river passes me by.

I stand and look,  
Awaiting what lies beyond the horizon.  
Expecting something more  
Anticipating, waiting.  
The river passes me by.  
It comes and goes,  
Every second different,  
Every molecule worthwhile.  
It continues, neverending.  
No one moment better than another.  
The river passes me by.

It's here and it's now.  
It's where I am.  
There's a future  
And a past  
But this is the river at my feet.  
The river I let pass me by.

It's my time  
To float  
To sink  
To swim.  
No need to wait  
Or anticipate.  
Embrace the river  
Right here.  
So the river won't pass me by.

*Tammy Blumhardt*  
College



*Julia Mitrik*  
7th Grade

### River

As quiet as a mouse  
As fast as a cheetah  
As cold as ice  
The river

*Stormy Joy*  
3rd Grade

### The River

The river runs deep strong  
rough as it goes down  
the rapids, the fish fly  
free, the wind howls, the  
water reigns free  
it goes, goes as far as the  
eye can see!

*Harrison Freeland*  
4th Grade

## Listen

Listen...  
can't you hear it?

The waves...?  
The tossing and turning...?

Holding secrets  
as old as time?

The water...?  
Rushing up shore...?

Can't you hear it?

The grumbling  
of the waves?

The sound of  
the birds...?

Why can't you  
hear it?

Listen...  
the waves...,  
the birds...,  
the ships...,  
listen...

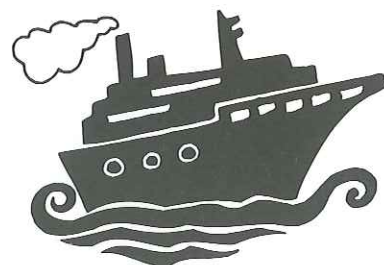
*Becky Michels*  
9<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Mighty Ships

The ships sail like the  
mighty kings of the river

The draw bridge seems like  
old castle gates protecting  
the city  
As the massive ship passes  
it turns the river from a  
gentle friend into a  
crashing beast

*Erik Clinefelter*  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade



The river  
dragged me in  
yesterday's bright day  
in the woods  
it was too strong for me.

*Patricia Soto*  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade

## "Something Fishy"

Something's very fishy  
I can feel it in the air  
Something's very fishy  
Look out beware!

Someone's hiding something from me  
I wonder what it could be?  
Something very fishy  
Is going on beneath the sea!

*Candice Spring*  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade



*Katie Hinkle*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Light Bright Breeze

When the clock strikes three  
It's when the light, bright breeze  
Is here with lots and lots of ease.  
The trees are tickling me with the breeze  
Along with the leaves.  
I love the salmon nibbling at my toes,  
So much that I would live there forever you know.  
The frogs are croaking like a broken clock,  
As I stand here on the river dock.  
I see a duck chewing on a sock,  
I know it's mine because I left it on the rock.  
The breeze helped me get to the rock  
And finally I reached my sock.  
The day has been long,  
I'll always remember the breeze song.

*Erin McNab*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

## The Happy Salmon

Once I saw a Salmon  
It looked at me  
I looked at it  
It splashed its fins  
I wiggled my nose...  
That's how we said hello!

*Jasmine Pfau*  
kindergarten

## Scenes of the Willamette

A drip,  
a trickle,  
a sprinkle of rain  
from a small little cloud in the morning sky.  
Then,  
oh,  
what a song,  
what sweet melodies are heard  
as they peep around the tiny cloud to ride  
down the rays of sun  
to the lush trees below.  
A splash  
as the notes hit the dew  
on the leaves  
of a large and majestic old oak tree,  
who sighs in the wind  
as if to say,  
"Please,  
sing your song  
and light up the day."  
Then a tinkling is heard  
as though of small bells,  
from the breeze  
off the feathers of a winged bird.  
She swoops  
and she spins  
through the cool morning air  
awaiting a meal from far  
down below.  
Behind the cloud  
and under the sun,  
covered by the large leaves  
of the oak that shield her prey from  
the tears of the sky.  
She dives  
down,  
down,  
down to the stream,  
down to the river so long  
and so wide  
like crystal  
flowing across the pebbles and stone  
amongst which  
small beings ripple by.



And a splash  
as the feet of the beauty grasp  
hungrily  
at the large meaty fish,  
shattering the crystal  
and sending thousands  
of glimmering gems  
into  
the heavens.  
As the bird raises flight  
with prize in her clasp  
the waters below  
return to their calm,  
of clear  
shining crystal  
in the brilliant sun.  
The fish  
swimming round,  
as calm as can be,  
return to their places  
between the cool stones,  
basking  
in the start of day  
who wakes  
to bring life  
back to this river of beauty.  
The mighty Willamette,  
peacefully flowing,  
bring life,  
through the heart  
of Oregon.

*Katie Pearson*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Stones from a River

The year my father died, the theaters were playing "A River Runs Through It". It was the last movie he saw. Having loved the woods and fishing on the river, he had been happy to have the chance to see the movie. He enjoyed the feeling of being outside in the fresh air and the sounds of quiet. When he died I imagined him somewhere outside, swirling in the wind.

April 17, 1993 at 3:15 PM on a chilly spring day he died. We had talked about gardening and apples over lunch. His morphine level had been so high that conversations on a very philosophical level were common. I knew he was dying, but sitting and eating together felt like it postponed death, even as it waited patiently.

After he died that afternoon, we were all faced with the future, and the need for courage to cope in the way we knew he would expect of each of us. That began the tender discussion of what to do with my father. Where should we lay his final remains? Where would he want to be?

No funeral, no fuss, that's what Dad had wanted. Just cremate him and that was it. My father didn't care for all of the unnecessary cost and chaos that goes with death. He just wanted it simple. There wasn't any question for my mother, my brothers and myself. We would just follow what he wanted. But that left the question of his ashes. This was no simple task for a family left without its anchor. Who was in charge now, and where could he rest in peace? Daunting questions for a family in shock. So we waited for a new season.

It was already hot on the summer morning when we loaded into the cars, heading for the mountains. We wanted the connection of life and death to be part of our releasing ritual, and we all thought a river would be ideal. Now our journey of saying goodbye began. A river was perfect. Up the McKenzie River was our destination. A quiet and private spot was what we were searching for. Peachy and Madeline had gathered roses from the garden that morning, and a few of us prepared poems or quotes to share. It was to be a ceremony of life along a flowing river. My dad would have appreciated the effort we were all taking, and the thoughtfulness we each had shown. My oldest brother led us through some brush on a very worn path towards the sound of water. There was a small, sandy beach with larger rocks protecting that vulnerable spot. We each quietly unfolded our paper to read, open a basket with our fragrant roses, and began to form a circle. We were busy preparing to say goodbye. We each took longer than necessary getting organized, but the moment needed to linger for each of us. Dave carried the wooden box containing my father's ashes. It looked as if it once had held jewels, or something precious. Inside was a clear plastic bag with chunky, gray contents.

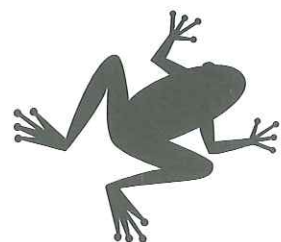
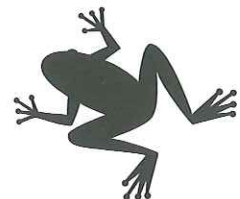
"This is it? This is my father?"

*Janice Priebe*  
College

## River, River

River, River you're long and wide,  
River, River you're such a delight,  
River, River you have fish and frogs,  
River, River you have lots of logs.  
There are large and small rocks,  
And sometimes big hawks,  
You are very, very fast,  
And have taken me to the past.  
River, River flow free at last.

*Samantha Engesether*  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade



## The River is a Piece of Flowing Silk

The river is a piece of flowing silk  
It nurtures the environment like a glass of milk

The salmon are its intricate designs  
Wipe out of salmon is a dangerous sign

The trees and shrubs are its border  
It gives the river a methodical order

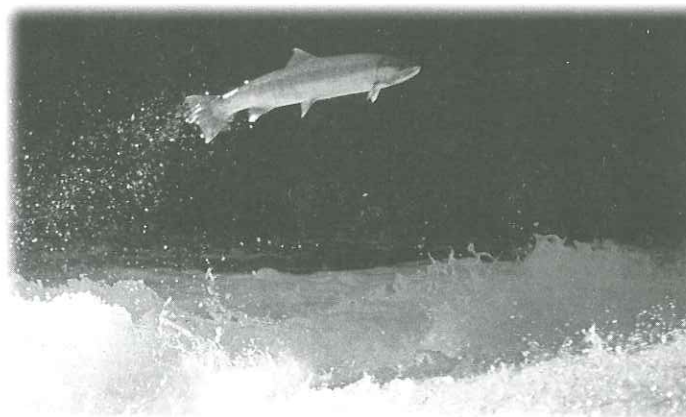
The animals on its bank make it look alive  
The responsibility is on us to make them survive

As the wild winds blow  
It helps this piece of silk flow

The wetlands are its finishing touch  
Don't think of them bad, they are useful as much

Mother nature has a wild taste  
She made the river in no haste  
It turned out to be the most beautiful thing we ever faced

*Nevedha Rajan*  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade



## The River and I

The river and I  
are not separate  
We are of one consciousness  
flowing as one  
Breathing  
the same depths.  
I feel its pain  
when it is choked with debris, when it is drained.  
The water lives in me  
like blood in my veins  
And when it bleeds, I bleed.  
And when it cries, I cry  
For its blue clarity  
destroyed.  
For the animals who were once its beautiful children  
and I am one of them.  
It feeds me to see its azure dancing, rushing form  
tangoing with the rocks, leaping with the fish.  
We are one, the river and I.  
Dancing the dance of life, together.  
Feeding the world's soul.

*Fazilee Buechel*  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

## The Willamette River

Water

Important

Living

Loving

Animal

Matter to all

Energy

Tight

Tough

Excited

Rough

Incredible

Very interesting

Earthy

River

*Kennedy Morgana*  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

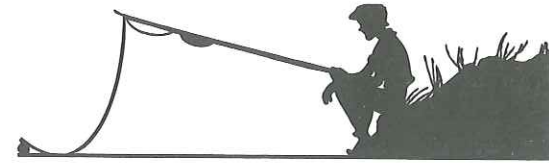
## The Willamette

Blue, fast  
astounding whitewater  
thundering music  
refreshing, icy, wet  
sweeping, flowing, cascading  
washing, tumbling  
never-ending  
nature at its most beautiful and wonderful best!

Fishing spots  
picnic spots, shady spots  
peaceful and romantic spots.  
Quiet, cold, soaking  
graceful, everlasting  
music: trickling and tingling  
nature at its most beautiful and wonderful best!

The best river in the U.S.  
something to be very proud of,  
Eugene's masterpiece,  
The Willamette!

*Aaron Honn*  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade



## Still I Float

What am I but a life in the land  
And with me only my eyes, my hands  
The air with its warmth, no need for a coat  
And still I float, and still I float  
On the water, on this day and the wind takes mass  
And the river mirrors the sky, as eerie glass  
While the little fish swim by, to the sea devote  
And still I float, and still I float  
The shrubbery on the rocks glow emerald green  
One can go low enough to view what is unseen  
Around the bend the hues make their way  
Green, blue, clear gray  
Where holograms and sea turtles appear the same  
Coral too beautiful to be given a name  
Vibrating like a melodic note  
It is there I float, and still I float  
And the prince stays in its way with orange and yellow stripes  
A blue, big-eyed baby with a mouth not fit for pipes  
On its floor, the deep footnote  
And still I float, and still I float  
And occasionally another life will come by  
Although nothing could take my attention away from the sky  
Where oceans stand still, and in deepness die  
The river lives, its flow is its sigh  
And again who am I, just a thought, just a quote  
A life I am, and still I float  
And still I float

*Kelsey Campbell*  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

## A River Means Life

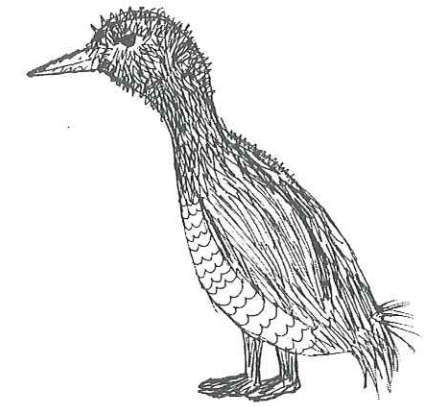
A friend said, "Love water, love life."  
I think that's true,  
Without water there would be  
No me, no you.

From the lowest flower to the highest tree  
And all that thirsts in between,  
Precious water feeds everything  
We must keep it clean.

It gives oxygen to fish,  
Trees new leaves.  
Then the trees clean our air  
So we can breathe.

Don't pollute the rivers  
Or you will suffer, too.  
Don't harm the water  
Because it does good for you.

*Laura Houlberg*  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade



*Helen Lebedeva*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Our Watershed

Mother Nature created the Watershed,  
Native Americans respected the Watershed,  
Explorers traveled the Watershed,  
Settlers used the Watershed,  
Cities polluted the Watershed,  
And now ...  
Mother Nature  
And her people  
Are trying  
To save  
Our Watershed.

*Mandy Armstrong*  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade

## How the River is Important to Me and Portland

The river is important to me, because I run and walk near it with my family and school class. I boat on it and practice skipping rocks in it. Another reason why I love the river is because it is beautiful and it has many varieties of wildlife living on and in it. The river is also important to a lot of companies, because they use it for transportation. The river helps our economy, our industry, and it provides lots and lots of recreation opportunities. If the river became unusable our economy, our industry, our wildlife, and our recreation would all suffer. That's why the river is important to me!

*Clara Gustafson*  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## The Columbia River

The Columbia River is a great place to play.  
The cold rushing water is flowing all day.

In the river we find otters, beavers, and frogs.  
While the people on the beach, play with their dogs.

The rivers are filled with all sorts of fish,  
Perfect when cooked up and placed on my dish.

While all the salmon swim upstream,  
The fishermen in their boats cast for their dream.

The water will fall or rise with the tides.  
While the sun moves across the big blue sky.

Our rivers help make power at the dam,  
So in the summer we can use our fan.

The night will fall and it will be dark,  
All that will be left will be the people at the park.

*Justin Bates*  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Blue, gray, green the color  
palette of the Pacific Northwest.  
The blue is water fresh  
and cool the gray  
is stern and strong.  
The green is organic, it comes from  
the earth around the rivers.  
We know giving shelter  
to the fish and nutrients  
to the water that flows  
deep and wide from  
Portland to Eugene  
the blue, gray and green.

*Bethany Gentry*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## There Once Was A River

There once was a calm, clean, happy, sandy river in the beautiful forest on the bright green earth.  
There once was pollution in the sandy smooth river in the beautiful forest on the green earth.  
There once was a dirty, brown, sad, green river in the cut down, ugly forest on the dark, cold earth.  
There once were some people that helped clean and protect the river in the forest on the earth.  
There is a calm, clean, sandy, happy river in the beautiful forest on the warm, bright green earth,  
and there still is.

Because if we don't keep our river waters clean, it's hard to survive.

*Marisa Szapiel*  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Ripples & Eddies

Ripples and Eddies are small snippets of larger entries that contained language that was too exceptional to pass up. ENJOY!

When I get in the river,  
I quiver.

*Kylie Armstrong*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

I slept well that night to the music of the river.

*Katharine Rose*  
College

Lightning is no evil thing,  
Just something that follows the rain on its big journey across land and sea

*Ben Corum*  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

The Willamette used to be a place where you could swim and eat  
the fish. But now, even after decades of clean up and millions of  
dollars invested, the Willamette River is still threatened by water  
pollution.

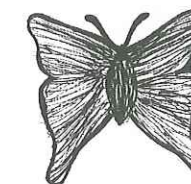
*Alisha Garner*  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Close your eyes and hear a splash  
Then the fish is gone in a flash

*Sandra Bailey*  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Rushing through valleys and mountains  
Carving canyons to show your might  
O Daughter of great Oceans  
Sparkling like glitter in daylight

*Shilam Patel*  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade



*Andrea Bowlin*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

We need rivers so we can grow wheat. We need rivers so we can have cake and pancakes.

*Justin O'Rourke*  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade



Rivers don't judge; all that flows is welcome.

Mike Adams, Brian Allen, Helene Boyer,  
Tyler Coats, Rodger Fickel, Shelly Johns,  
Pat McConville, Kassie Olivera, Kristin  
Smith, Matt Voisine, Laina Yetter  
11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Grades

The creatures aren't the only ones  
Who use the river, oh no,  
The people in the big cities,  
Use it to make things go.

Shannon McCauley  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade

There was a pattern to the water's noise and I could almost make out its words.

Katharine Rose  
College

Of course, we should know that the human beings should  
no longer build their wealth upon the river's gifts.

Xue Na  
Grade 3, No. 2 Senior Middle School, China

The river was my flawless majestic brother.

Kassie Olivera  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade



It is as if the river itself is a lonely child  
Searching, wandering away like me,  
Away from home.

Lydia Stanford  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

It amazes me how rivers never judge or gossip. I am fortunate  
to live a stone's throw from such a great listener.

Kaci Nalum  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Even though the Willamette River has gotten better over the years we still have  
a long way to go to make it even better than we found it.

Alisha Garner  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade

A lot of rain will make a storm.  
Rain in Oregon is the norm.

Tori Bonaventura  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

It's amazing how you've come so far,  
and it's you who never complain  
about the way the humans treat you.

Shelly Johns  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

My family tree is rooted in the river. It runs through my  
ancestors' veins like blood. But how can blood flow freely if  
pollutants clot it?

Kassie Olivera  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Drip drop, then drop drip,  
Across the river I skip

Kelly Thomson  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Save the river, my friends  
It's home to many animals  
It's home to beavers, otters, and golden retrievers

Kelsey Lance  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade

We should protect the river as our mother and not  
forget her.

Zeng Zhipeng  
No. 1 Senior Middle School China



Derek Richwine  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

# The End

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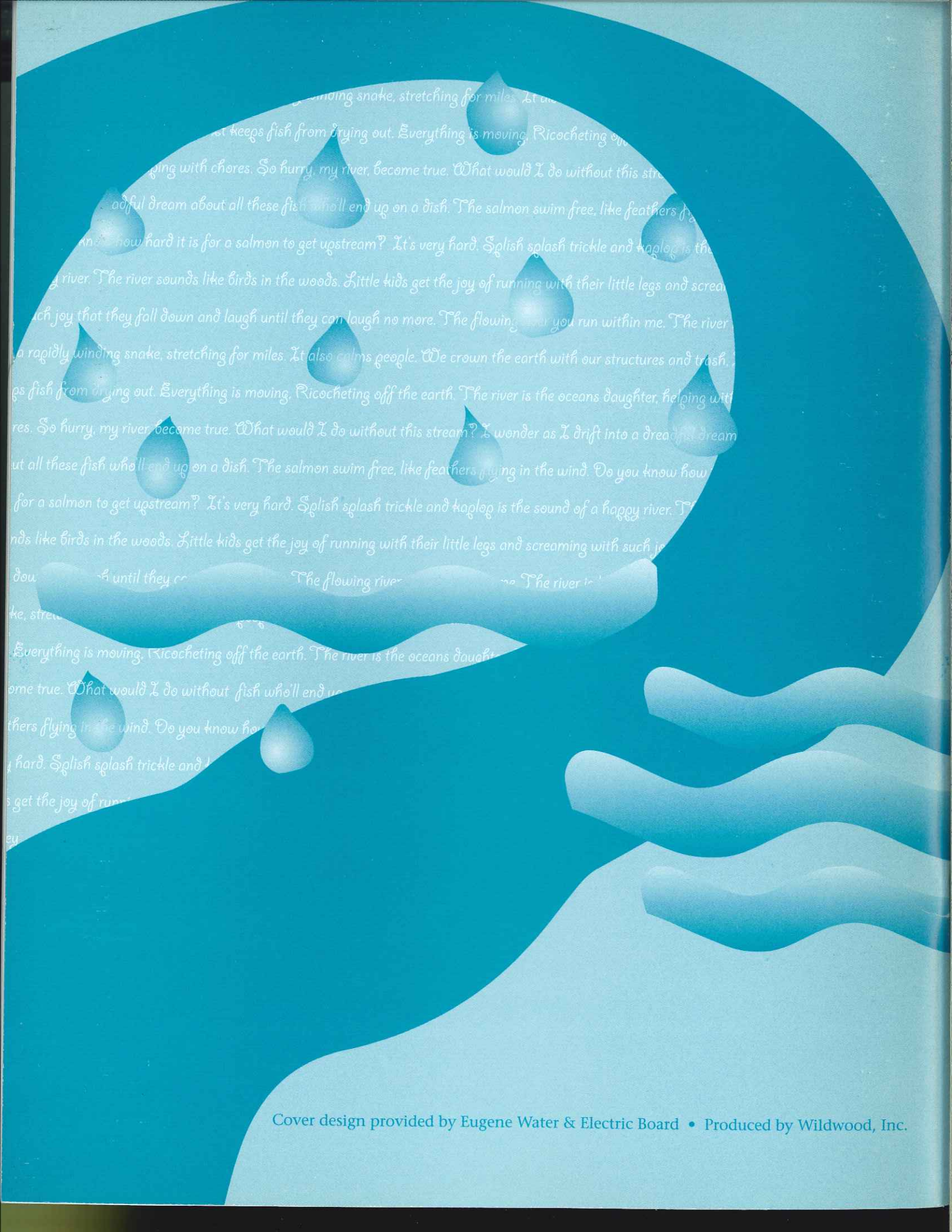
Zhipeng, Zeng 46

# Participating Schools

A special thank you to all the schools that participated in the creation of **Honoring Our River 2003** by submitting student entries to our contest. Your contribution was crucial to building this wonderful collection of literary works from throughout the Willamette River Basin.

Abiqua, Salem  
Arbor School of Arts & Science, Tualatin  
Auburn Elementary, Salem  
Blanchet, Salem  
C. S. Lewis Academy, Newberg  
Cal Young Middle School, Eugene  
Chapman Hill Elementary, Salem  
Charlemagne At Fox Hollow, Eugene  
Crow High School, Eugene  
Cummings Elementary, Keizer  
da-Vinci Arts Middle School, Portland  
Dayton Middle School, Dayton  
Edgewood Elementary, Eugene  
Edwards Elementary, Newberg  
Elmonica Elementary, Beaverton  
Estacada High School, Estacada  
Forest Ridge, Keizer  
Franciscan Montessori Earth School, Portland  
Glenfair Elementary, Portland  
Grant Middle School, Salem  
Gregory Heights Middle School, Portland  
Home School, Corvallis  
Jesuit High School, Portland  
Judson Middle School, Salem  
Lake Oswego Junior High, Lake Oswego

Liberty Elementary, Salem  
Lincoln Elementary, Woodburn  
Linn-Benton Community College, Albany  
Marylhurst University, Marylhurst  
McKenzie Elementary, Finn Rock  
Milwaukie High School, Milwaukie  
Montessori Discovery Center, Salem  
Myrtle Crest School, Myrtle Point  
North Salem High School, Salem  
Northwest Youth Corps, Eugene  
Oregon City High School, Oregon City  
Oregon School For The Deaf, Salem  
Oregon State University, Corvallis  
Perrydale Elementary, Amity  
Petersen Elementary, Scappoose  
Roosevelt Middle School, Eugene  
Rowe Middle School, Milwaukie  
St. Pius X School, Portland  
Sunset Elementary, West Linn  
Tualatin Public Library, Tualatin  
University of Oregon, Eugene  
Waluga Junior High School, Lake Oswego  
West Salem High School, Salem  
Whitford Middle School, Beaverton  
Yichang Senior Middle Schools, China



...winding snake, stretching for miles. It also  
...keeps fish from drying out. Everything is moving. Ricocheting off  
...ping with chores. So hurry, my river, become true. What would I do without this stream  
...adful dream about all these fish who'll end up on a dish. The salmon swim free, like feathers flying  
...and how hard it is for a salmon to get upstream? It's very hard. Splish splash trickle and kaplog is the  
...y river. The river sounds like birds in the woods. Little kids get the joy of running with their little legs and scream  
...ch joy that they fall down and laugh until they can laugh no more. The flowing river you run within me. The river  
...a rapidly winding snake, stretching for miles. It also calms people. We crown the earth with our structures and trash.  
...ps fish from drying out. Everything is moving. Ricocheting off the earth. The river is the oceans daughter, helping with  
...res. So hurry, my river, become true. What would I do without this stream? I wonder as I drift into a dream, a dream  
...ut all these fish who'll end up on a dish. The salmon swim free, like feathers flying in the wind. Do you know how  
...for a salmon to get upstream? It's very hard. Splish splash trickle and kaplog is the sound of a happy river. The  
...nds like birds in the woods. Little kids get the joy of running with their little legs and screaming with such joy  
...dou... until they c... The flowing river... no The river tr...  
...ke, stre...  
...Everything is moving. Ricocheting off the earth. The river is the oceans daughter  
...ome true. What would I do without fish who'll end up  
...thers flying in the wind. Do you know how  
...y hard. Splish splash trickle and  
...s get the joy of run  
...eu