

HONORING OUR RIVER: 2008

A STUDENT
ANTHOLOGY
COLLECTED FROM
THROUGHOUT THE
WILLAMETTE RIVER
WATERSHED

Sponsored by Eugene Water & Electric Board, Portland General Electric,
Willamette Partnership, Wildwood/Mahonia and SOLV.

How to Say Kwakiutl

Imagine a grizzly bear
with frogs in its ears and a raven
perched on its head. It helps
to have watched a great heron
at the ragged edge of the sea

before it flaps and somehow
lifts off. Or if, in the dark,
you can make out a yellow cedar
bending to the water –maybe.
Like the wind, the rain, the rings

in the tree-trunk the great bear
was carved from, or a sound
you hear for the first time, so old
you know it tells more than one
story: Quawquawkeewogwah.

No use squinting at the scant
letters or sounding them out.
Listen to one who hears his name
without looking. Close your eyes.
Say what he knew by heart.

Honoring Our River: A Student Anthology began as an effort to stimulate awareness about an important but fragile resource, the Willamette River. 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. This project is designed to nurture respect and appreciation for the river system that connects all of us and showcase creative student writing that honors our river.

We would like to thank John Miller and Rachel Hart from Wildwood/Mahonia for producing the anthology and guiding the process and Julie Schaum from EWEB for the beautiful cover design. Thank you, invited Oregon writer's for your literary contributions and to all of the teachers who work, with dedication and determination, every day.

Sponsored By:

Honoring Our River would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors: Portland General Electric, SOLV, The Willamette Partnership, The Eugene Water and Electric Board, and Wildwood/Mahonia. Thank you!



Willamette Partnership

Looking at our river through the eyes of the young authors and artists represented in this year's *Honoring Our River* anthology is both refreshing and inspiring. Their willingness to share their perspectives - and the excellent work they have created - have resulted in this valuable gift to our community. As members of the Willamette watershed community, and as part of our commitment to a sustainable Oregon, Portland General Electric is pleased to sponsor this collection of literary and visual arts. We sincerely encourage you to read it for yourself, then read it with a child.

Carol Dillin
VP of Public Policy

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 Partnership is very privileged to have helped frame this youthful stream of words for your viewing pleasure.

David Primozich
Executive Director

Sponsored By:



When People Get Together,
Things Get Done.

SOLV, a 36 year old statewide nonprofit 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, essays, artwork and photography the rest of us can be inspired to preserve this treasure called Oregon.

Jack McGowan
Executive Director



The Eugene Water & Electric Board appreciates the value of the Willamette River watershed and the vital role it plays in providing our customers with water and electricity. The McKenzie River, a major tributary of the Willamette, is the sole source of clean, high-quality water for nearly 200,000 people served by EWEB, and the watershed provides reliable, low-cost hydroelectric power to our customers. For nearly 100 years, EWEB has recognized that the health of the Willamette River and its tributaries is vitally important to the economic and environmental success of our community. We're proud to support *Honoring Our River*. It provides a great stage for students to explore and share our common connections with the watershed.

Randy Berggren
General Manager

WILDWOOD MAHONIA

Wildwood/Mahonia is proud to be part of this wonderful publication. Our family of companies has a diverse range of activities: agriculture, urban planning and development, watershed restoration and international ventures, and all share a common commitment to sustainability. Our definition of profit includes benefits to people and the environment so we have a very active community service program that includes donating our time, dollars, materials and expertise to many community organizations and schools. Whether we are working in Oregon or Asia, we see the similarities in thought about our rivers that are found in this anthology. It reflects the growing awareness of our shared environment and shared future.

John D. Miller
President

INVITED OREGON WRITER

Don Colburn lives in Portland, Oregon, where he is a reporter for *The Oregonian*. He had two collections of poetry published in 2006. His chapbook, *Another Way to Begin*, won the Finishing Line Press Prize. His full-length book, *As If Gravity Were a Theory*, won the Cider Press Review Book Award. He has an MFA in creative writing from Warren Wilson College. A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in feature writing, he worked for many years at *The Washington Post*.

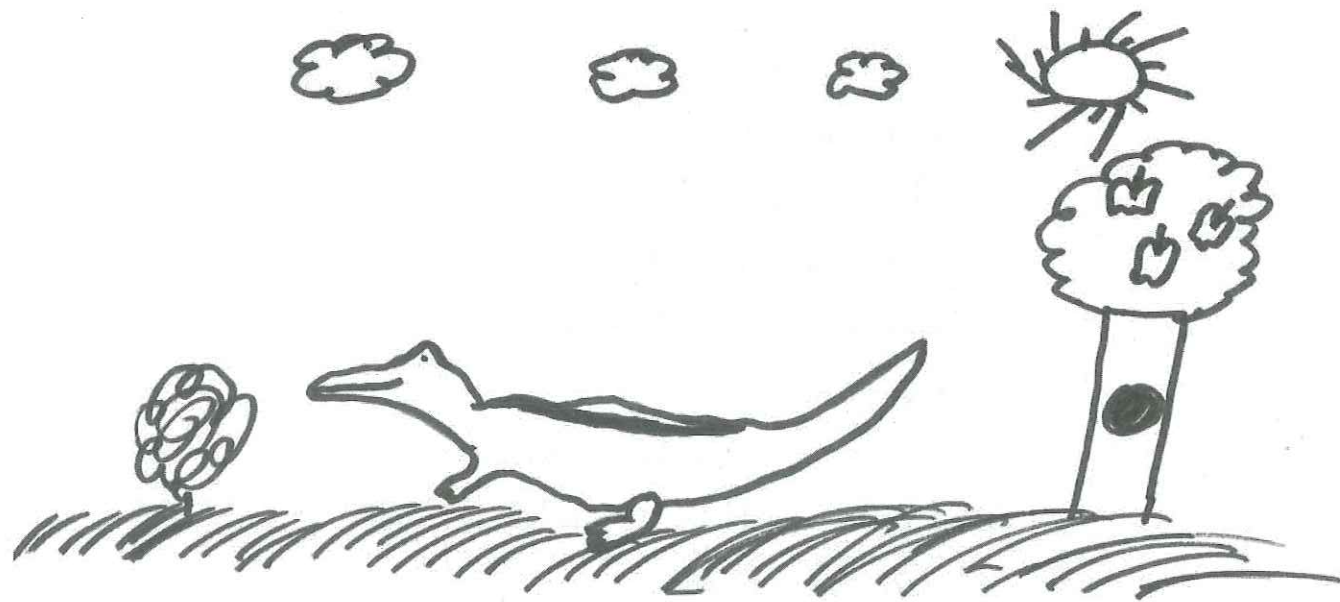
Wildflowers

Until I heard the names in my own voice
I never saw them whole: chickweed, toothwort,
May apple, Dutchman's breeches, Indian pipe.
A list was my father's way of witnessing;
it made a flower real. And this afternoon
in the weedy meadow by the towpath,
I'm jotting odd names on a scrap of paper
for no one in particular, myself maybe
or my father. Back then I let him teach me
to look down at the ground for stars,
bells, shades of blue. He was never happier
than when we looked up accuracy's myriad names
and he wrote them out in slanted letters.
Now, over and over, like a child,
I say *gill-over-the-ground, gill-*
over-the-ground, gill-over-the-ground,
and in the saying see it blossom again
inside its spilled blue name.

Elegy in March

I thought of you this afternoon
as I bent down under the old front oak
to pick up sticks. They were all over –
twigs, branches, whole limbs broken off
under the wet heft of a late winter snow
and broken again against the ground
with their own weight crashing.
Scabbed, cindery, riddled by insects,
the windfall snapped easily in my hands,
all its give gone,
and I gathered them,
thinking you would have too, and how to a child
this once seemed pointless,
like picking litter from a parking lot,
which you also insisted on. Now
six armloads of dead oak lie stacked
on the porch – enough to kindle
in the soft ash on cold stone
a month of fire.

STUDENT WORKS



Sophie Olson, grade 2

Peaceful River

Samantha Dale Guadagno, age 10

The water looks refreshing;

It's as calm as a lullaby.

The trees have many colors;

They are filled with yellow and red.

Birds fly through the air;

They have a story to tell.

The sound of leaves

shatter under my feet.

The squirrels munch on acorns;

It makes me giggle.

Birds chirp loudly,

deep in conversation.

The scent of water is fresh and clean.

The mountain pine is soothing;

A smell I can't forget.

The water grabs my hand;

It's as cold as a bag of ice.

The mud is slimy;

It squishes under my feet.

The grass drips,

like hair after a shower.

The River

Jaren Guevara, age 9

The big, nice rocks on the side of the river
make me safe from the high tide I see.
The sight of grass and leaves:
I feel great from all the sights I see.
The water looks like the sparkling stars in Heaven.
Grass at my hands, water at my feet,
Touching all the things I can touch at the riverside.
The smooth rocks and the slippery ones,
or even the pointy ones, are my favorite rocks at the river.
Water, when you touch it, is as wonderful as
really smooth Heavenly water.
The fresh smell soothes me on the riverside.
Pine is around me with its great scent
stronger than a flower's great, great sweet scent.
When an early morning starts
mist spreads its cloak over us,
but I can only smell faint water.
The fast moving water is silent to loud.
Birds are babbling in the small tree.
Water in winter is frozen and
when it is broken to pieces
it makes a disturbing sound.
The sound of the river is peaceful.
Pure water is the sound of angels singing.
My favorite sound is my best friend,
The River.



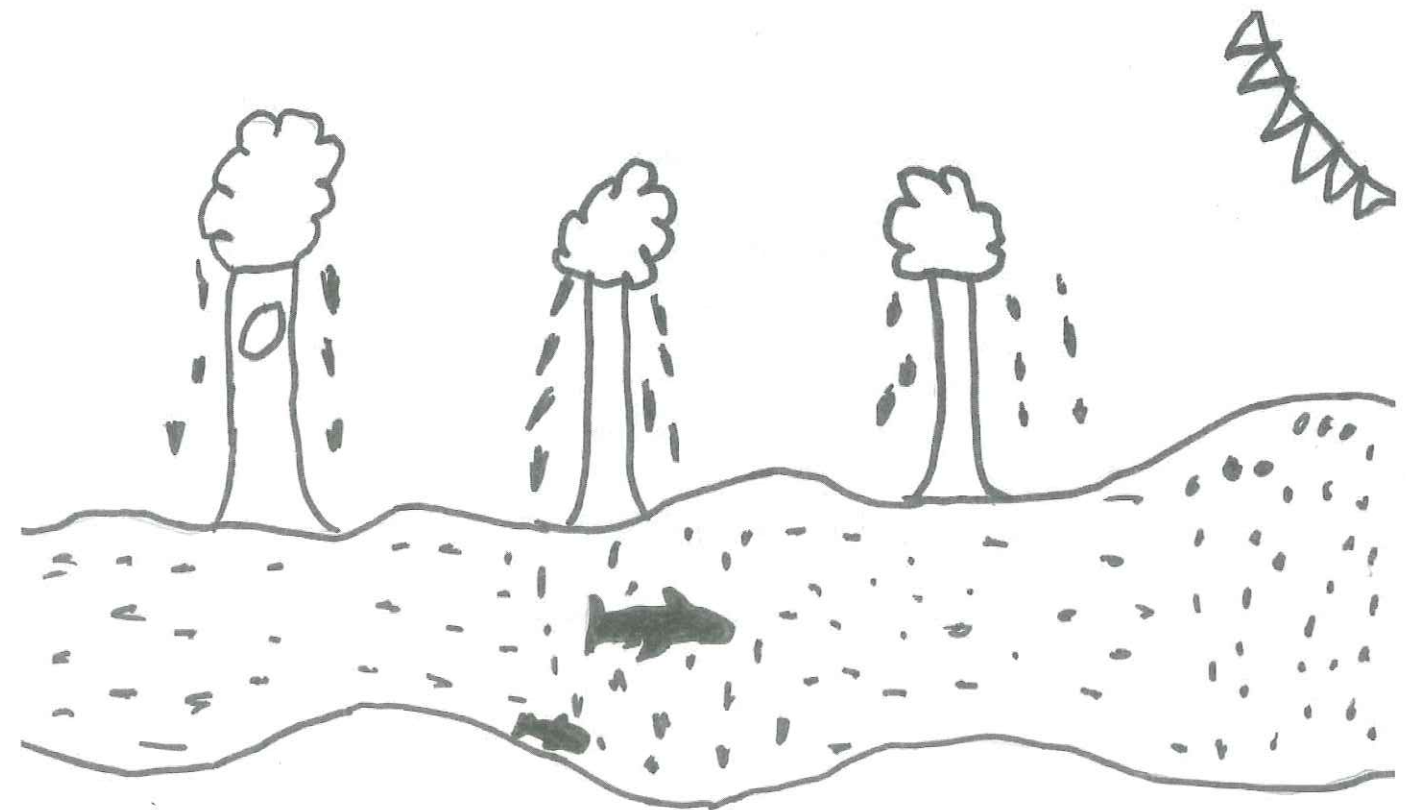
Ashleigh Saunders, grade 2

The Willamette River gets dark,
when it is night and very cold.

In the night,
the Willamette River gets very cold;

It is as cold as the arctic

Camille Blake, Kindergarten



Spencer Clements, grade 2



Gorgeous

Kala Bottineau, grade 7

Long stripes of blue

Purple sky floats above

As long currents ripple away

Downward

The River

Alex Martin, age 10

The river flows calmly,
As if soft clouds roll by.
Always peaceful
in the night.

I feel the icy cold water
It feels as if you were making snowballs
with no gloves.

The strong river reaches into the water
and throws the salmon around.
It sounds like huge cannons
shooting off into the forest

I smell the huge trees
They smell rich with a pine sent,
almost like Christmas.

Orchard Heights Water

Cameron Robinson, grade 2

In different textures

Biologists study fish

In steams and oceans.

My Pond and I

Madison Hall, grade 2

I sit by my pond

And look at the sky, a bird

Goes past, it was fast.

The river is very pretty

The river feels cold and smooth

The river is icy

The water is bumpy

I like the way the water is blue

Respect our river and don't litter

Keep our river clean

I like our river

Faith Hovenden, Kindergarten

The River

Grace Benson, age 8

I see the ice cold water dripping from a cave.

The river is as cold as ice.

The sun is shining all day like a nightlight shining through the land.

The wind is blowing really hard.

All the birds are talking.

Can you hear the water walking through the rocks everyday and night?

I can feel the slippery rocks and the water running through my toes;

All that water so cold and clear.

I can feel the wind. It feels like a fan on high.

It smells like winter

It smells so cold

I can smell the river too. It smells so beautiful and cool

The Stream

Erica Rosborough, age 10

In winter the icicles glimmer like sun rays, shining
the river flows gently—sings quietly,
rocks weave through her lovely hair and willow trees hang over her like parents,
leading her to the sea.

Snow feels cold on my wet hands as it melts into the raging river
The horrified stream rushes through my fingers like something is chasing right behind.
The cool breeze whistles over the stream, icy leaves rattle like a baby's toy,
the crickets of evening laugh a whispered melody, Birds toot the beat
and a lovely tune takes place.

The smell of minty pine trees remind me of Christmas
when I put candy canes on the tree.
The fresh water flows, waiting for the sweet smell of spring.

The Critters

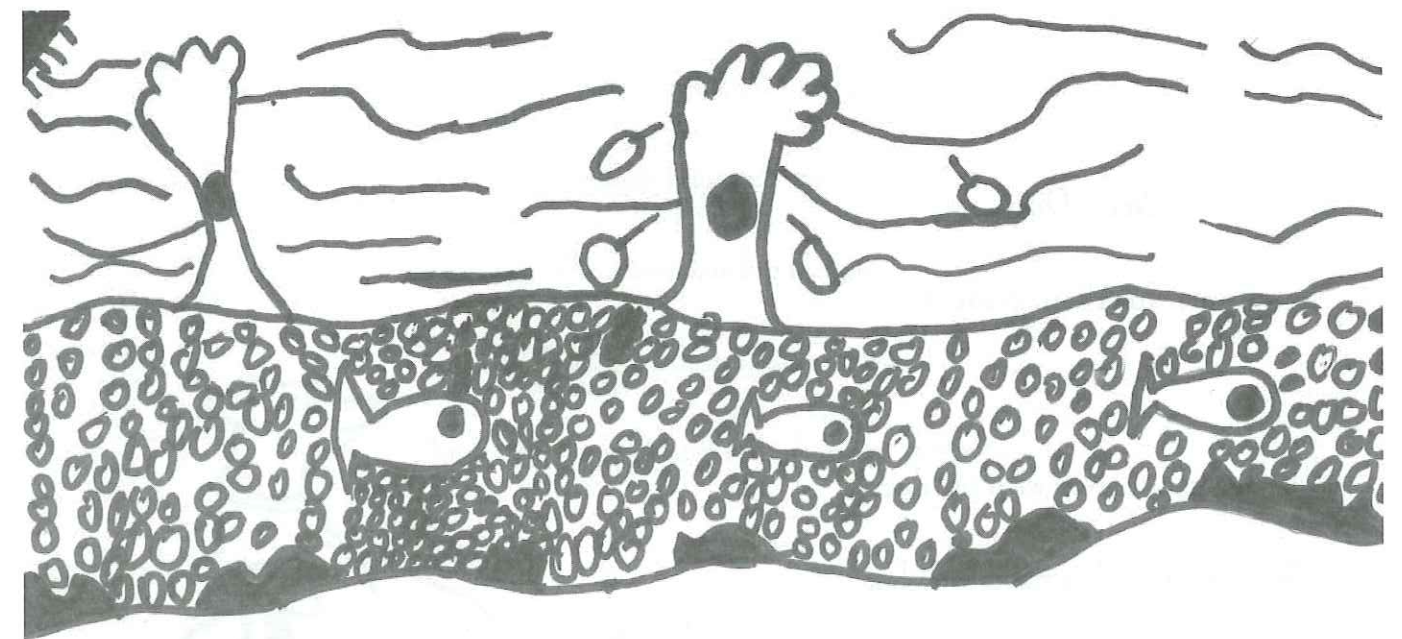
Grant Thies, grade 2

The water critters
Need clean, cold, rocky streams
Even salmon eggs

Streams

Nalani Muranaka, grade 2

Some streams are dirty
And some streams are shiny clear
Some fish play sometimes.



Sammy Kerr, grade 2

The Beautiful Bright Fish

Grace Rieman, grade 3

The fish in the lake are so beautiful and bright

They shimmer like stars in the night

In the light they come out to play

I hope I see a big one today!

River Dog

Cameron Allen, grade 3

I went to the river with my dog

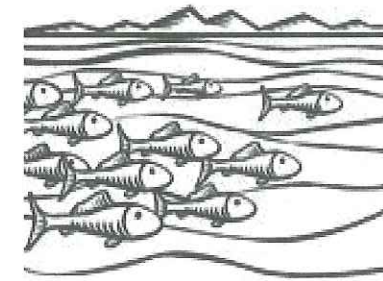
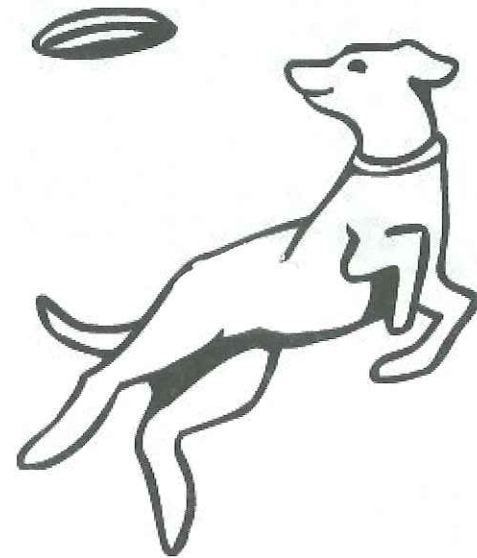
She dove in and jumped on a log

I throw a ball, I throw a stick,

but she never tires at all.

Bailey's her name,

the River's her game.



White-water rafting makes a groove in the water

When boats go by, the water is rough

The water is rocky and the water flows down

The water is blue with waves like hills

The water is dark blue and there are rocks

The water has big waves

The river has underwater tunnels

The river is orange and red when the sun sets

Allison Hmura, Emma Michaux, Kaile Reece,

Konrad Alexander, Braque Pike, Alaina Trudeau, and Tulsi Patel

The Rockin' River

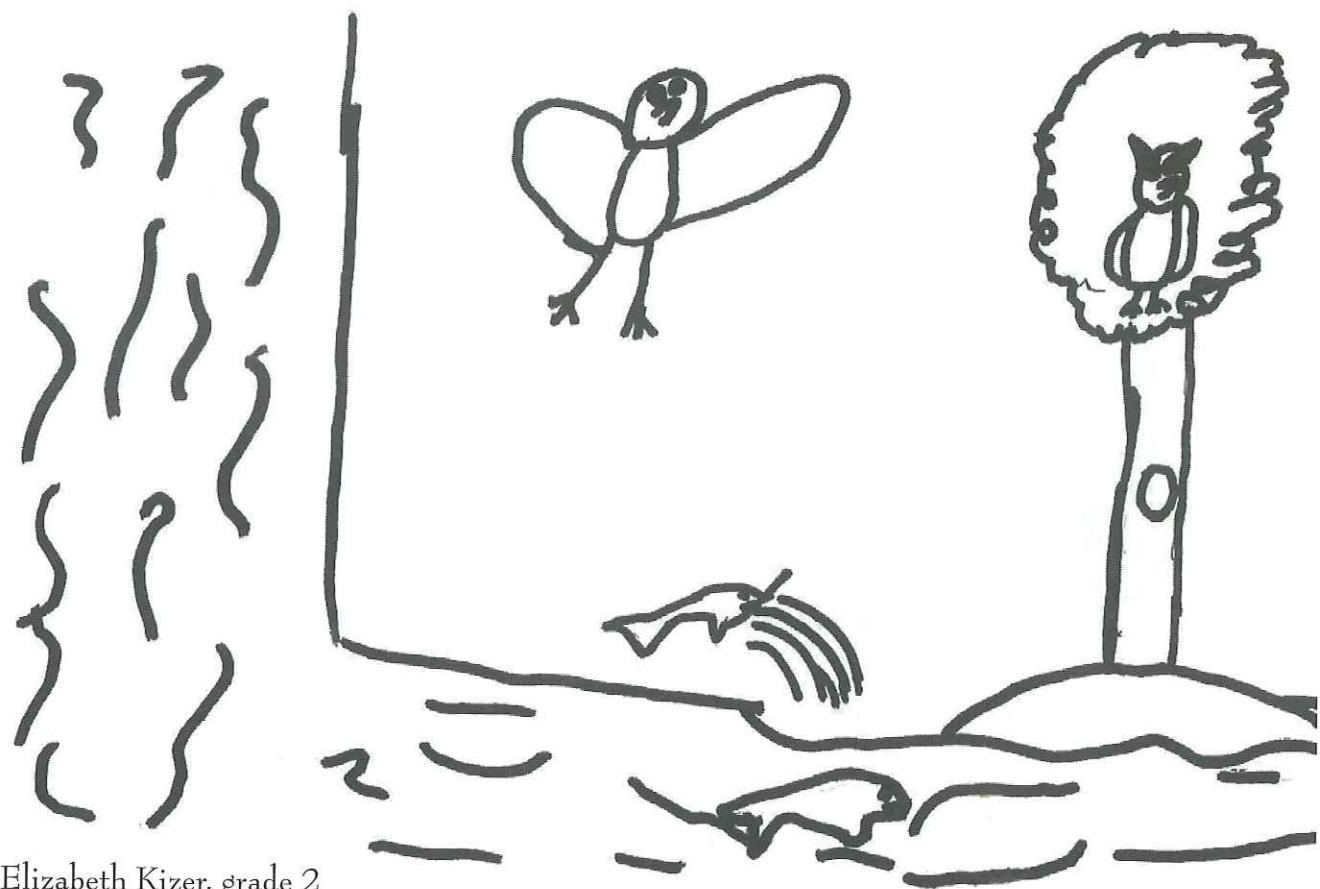
Brooke Jones, grade 3

I like the river because you can watch the waves as the sun goes down

You can pick flower blossoms on the rocky, bumpy riverside

When I swim I feel like a dolphin in the cool sparkling water

When I'm at the river I'm as happy as a fish jumping up and splashing in the air



Elizabeth Kizer, grade 2

The Sparkles in the River

Emily Marquardt, grade 3

When I look down at the river

I think of gems that got glued to the water

For the sparkling river, from the beams of the sun,

Reminds me of how special I am...

How special you are.

It gives me a flashback of the great time I have had.

That cheers me up.

So whenever you are sad,

look down at the river—

You won't be mad.

Beautiful Stream

Sammi Loomis, grade 2

Sun shadow on stream

Water glittering in sun

Lilly pads and frogs



The Stream

Sammy Kerr, grade 2

Water sprays around

Fish swim under mucky stream

Critters love the stream

Animals Playing

Sophie Olson, grade 2

Turtles play in greens

Water spiders play in waves

Animals are fun

Shells and Water

Hannah Raschkes, grade 2

Listen to the waves

That shell glittering in sand

Water splashed by rocks

Water

Emmett Davis, grade 2

Lakes are made from rain

And then travels to oceans

Returns to clouds



Swimming Critters

Bailey Hand, grade 2

Water striders glide

Shiny blue fish swim downstream

Critters love chemists

The Turtles

Shannon Connors, grade 2

Turtles go in water

By the fish and waves to play

And they walk on grass

Chemists

Phoebe Jacobs, grade 2

Chemists test water

Critters stay healthy and safe

Cold, clear, rocky stream

Wintry River

Yancee Gordon, age 9

You can see the rushing water rocking like wind in a young girl's hair.

In the winter, the ice crystals shine in the illuminating sunlight.

You can hear the ice crystals melting

in the water as it rushes by,

raging

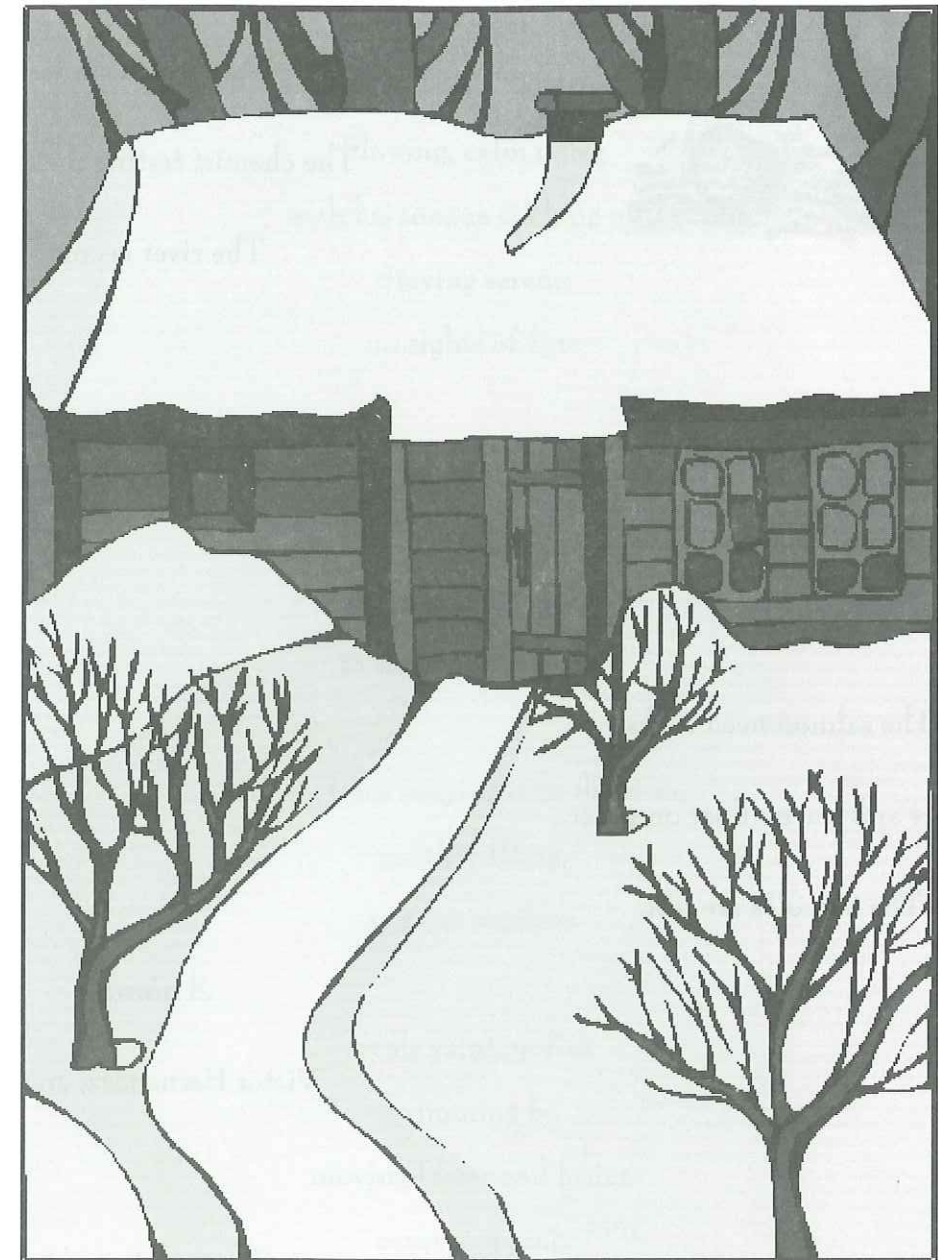
impossible to stop.

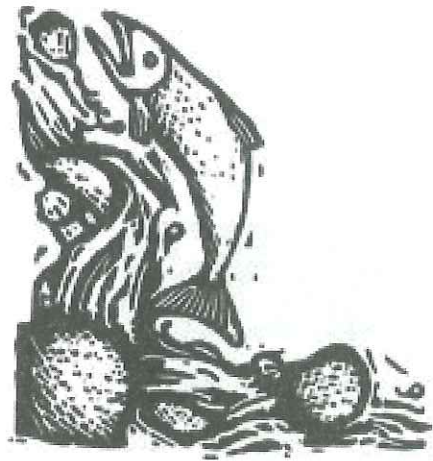
The birds babble on and on.

Fresh pines line the shore

like proud soldiers waiting.

The scented air is as fragrant as a spring meadow.





The Stream

Spencer Clements, grade 2

The salmon need rocks

Sticks and leaves float on water

The tadpoles are fast.

The Water

Jared Hoff, grade 2

Water the tadpoles

The chemist testing the stream

The river is cold.

Animals

Victor Hernandez, grade 2

Chemists test water

To keep critters much safer

Animals are strong.

The River

Katelin Gregor, age 8

Flowing, calm water,
with his tongue sticking out.

Staying serene,
no sights of fear.

Wind gently blowing
like a peaceful fan.
Rapids whispering
to the forest beyond.

Pine trees swaying over the river,
gently riffling,
as a car rumbles.

Scaly rainbow fish
swimming by,
moving faster and faster,
never stopping.

River

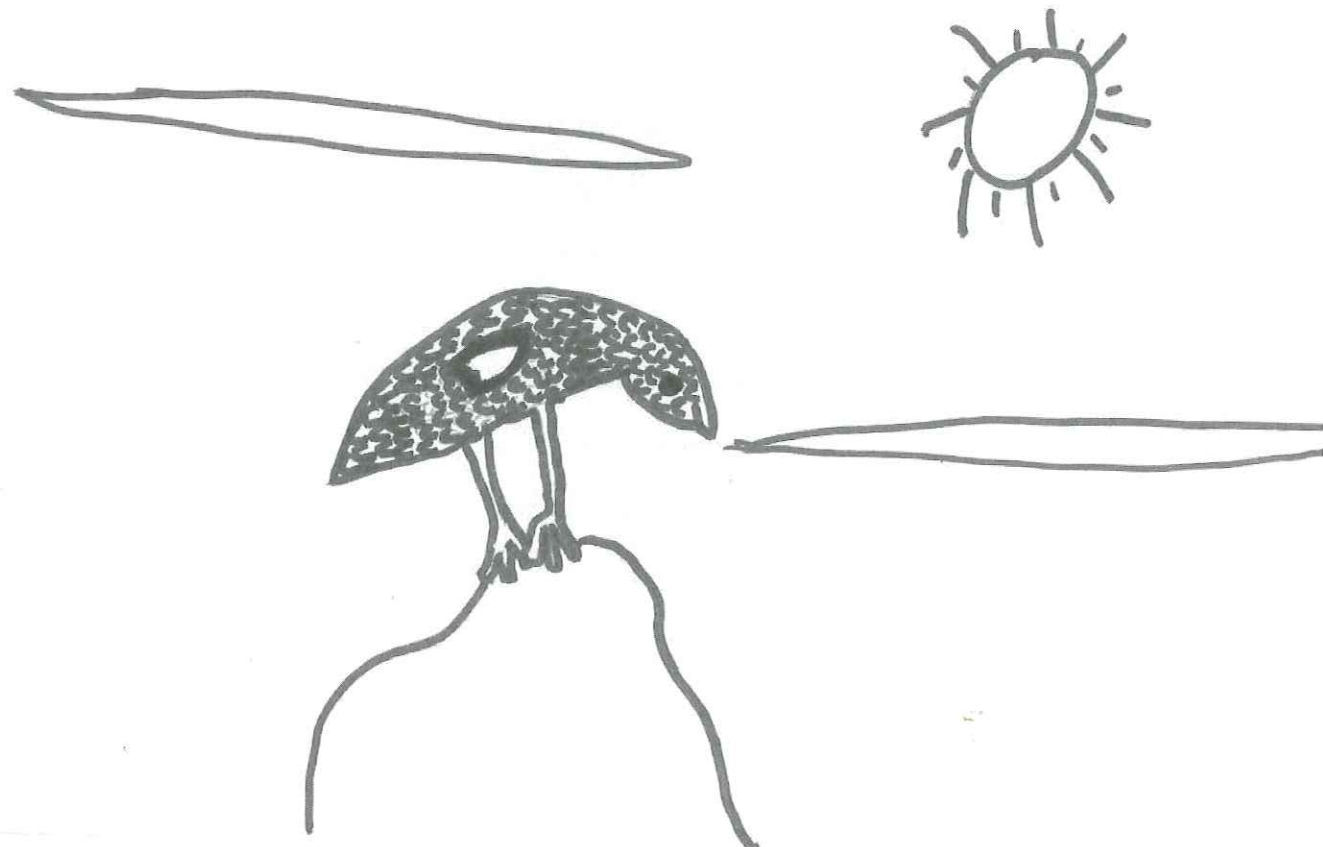
Jake Yates, grade 2

Leaves are floating fast
Sunshine on Willamette River
Salem diving down.

The Stream

Sarah Calvin, grade 2

The wet crashing stream
Has rocks and is glistening
Like my bright, blue eyes.



Makenna Merriss, grade 2

River, Ashes, Rainbow, To Rest

Angel McLain, grade 3

Here we lay you to rest
On the river you loved to fish
With the sun high and the rain light
A rainbow is over you today
Where the birds rest, hunt, and fly
and the otters play and swim
with the beavers and the fish.



Peaceful River

Avery Pike, age 9

The carefully winding blue water slithers,
Gracefully moving, ready to dip and turn
Yellow sand fills the land,
Covering the ground like a moving blanket
Plants leap in happiness for water
The beautiful world rests in peace

The tranquil river lazily whispers
Plants of all types satisfied for water;
They quietly babble with pride.
Sand whips the air like pelts of hail,
Making loud, moaning, constant howls

The dry fresh air fills the world
The water's sweet smell is refreshing
Plants take root and make the air fresh
The world's natural smells blanket the land

The cool water runs through my hand,
Peaceful and pleasing
The silly sand,
Like a warm blanket,
Covers the impeccable scene
As if everything that matters is here.



The River

Hannah Clark, age 9

The river flows gently,
Like if it was brushing its hair.
Gently, as if it was stroking a dog,
The river flows with gentle might.
But don't have fright.

I felt the freezing water,
So cold it could freeze any second.
I was rushing past very fast,
Almost how you'd never want to see it again.

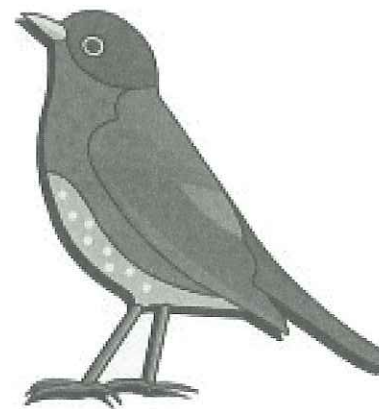
We smell the soft smell of pine,
As the softness of the smell spreads,
Like it was the ocean spreading.
The grace of the water everywhere.

The water full roars with laughter,
As if someone told it a joke.
Its laughter thunders with kindness and freedom.
Its freedom never ends.

Whispering River

Lily Robins-Deville, age 9

The fish jump out of the water,
Like a dog jumping for a treat.
I see a rainbow climbing the mountains.
The rocks are like soldiers,
Standing against the strong current.
The water is whispering to the flowers.



The pebbles falling into the river,
They sound like a ghost's footstep.
The river is hitting the bank,
The water is a furious giant.

The water smells like the sea:
So fresh and natural
The air smells almost like,
Nothing at all.
The pine overwhelms my senses.

I touch the algae.
It is like slime that is stuck.
The water caresses my bones and skin.
I touch the muddy bank.
It is like a sea anemone—
So delicate and soft.

The River

Sara Togstad, age 9

I see the calmly flowing water,
With smooth rocks all different shapes.
The bridge stretches like a bundle of
Lined-up sticks.

I smell fresh pine trees
Like the smell of Christmas.
The pine scent is surrounded
With the smell of fresh air in the morning.

I hear the water trickling.
It makes the sound
Of a hundred scampering mice
Running down the hallway.
Pitter-patter goes the mouse feet.

I feel cold rushing water
Running over my feet
Making my feet oh so numb.

The Cold Winter Stream

Ashleigh Saunders, grade 2

Leaves float, salmon swim
Turtles green go down the stream
Silver fish are cold.



O' Mighty River

Tanner Kramer, grade 3

Hey river there you go.
It's so beautiful how you flow.
Then one day, you release your pain
and remind people of your power.

The Rushing River

Laurel Evans, grade 3

When the river is low it is calm
When it is raining it is wild and rushing,
High, and flooding onto property.
Then it stops raining and everything is calm again—
Back to the nice, peaceful, normal river

The Columbia River

Josh Wills, grade 3

The Columbia River has a little bit of gas
A little bit of pollution and a great big mass!

Studying the Stream

Elizabeth Kizer, grade 2

Water falls in streams
Chemist's study streams all day
The stream is rocky.

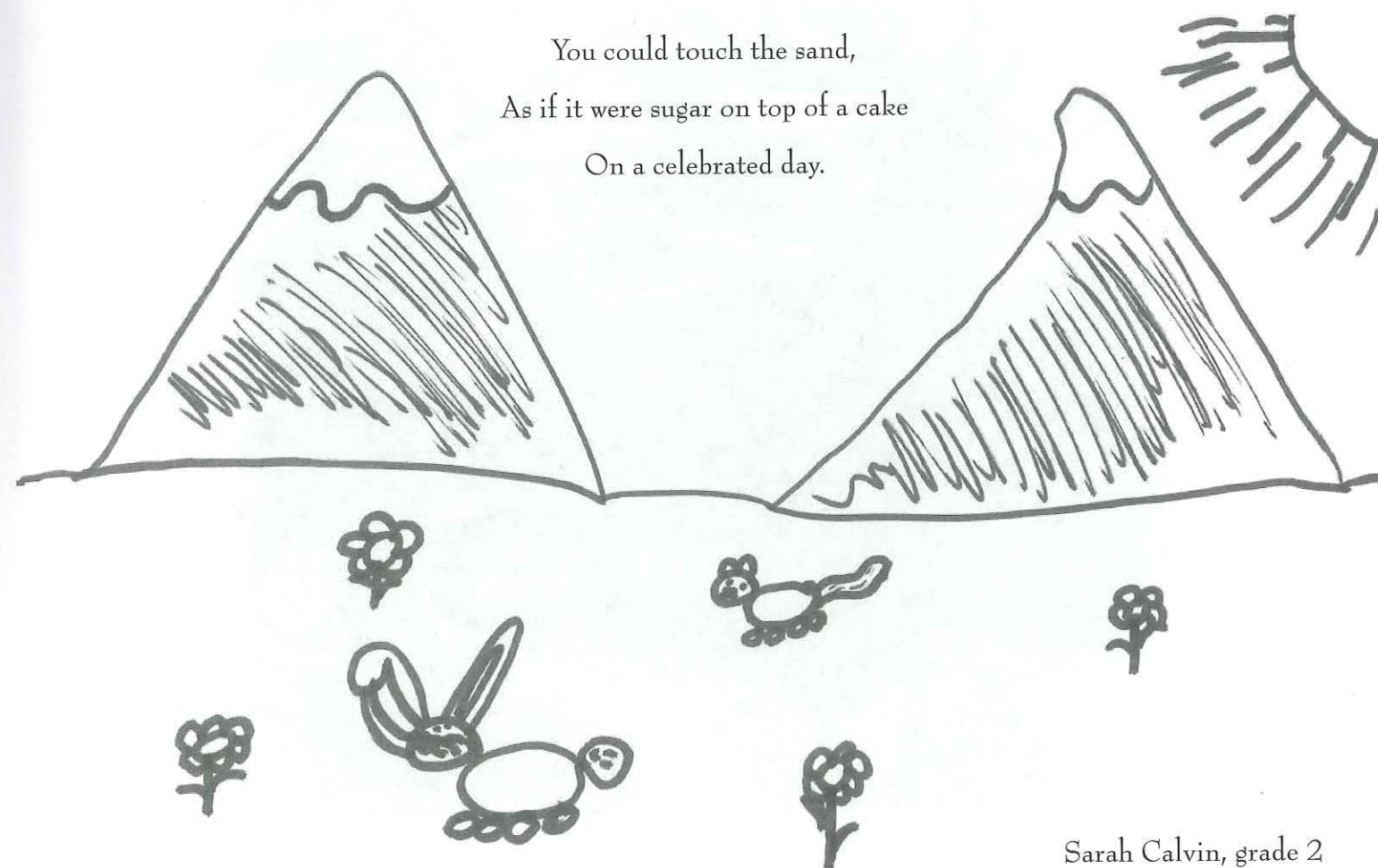
The River

Emily Hewson, age 9

The shiny blue ice
With a tasty frozen frosting on a hot fudge sundae.
Sprinkles on the very top of the sundae.
Crickets crick like birds on a wedding day,
As the groom lifts away the beautiful bridal veil.

As the water was fresh,
It went flowing as a girl runs through the wind;
With trees all around her and birds.

You could touch the sand,
As if it were sugar on top of a cake
On a celebrated day.



The River Helps Animals

Mason Meredith, grade 2

Elk drink from rivers

Water is cool on his tongue

More animals come.



Over, On, and Below

(Sky, Heron, and River Rock)

Hayden Liao, grade 3

I'm the river's roof

The river runs below me

My tears create rain

Wading by the shore

Long neck, stick legs, white feathers

Delicious salmon

I'm underwater

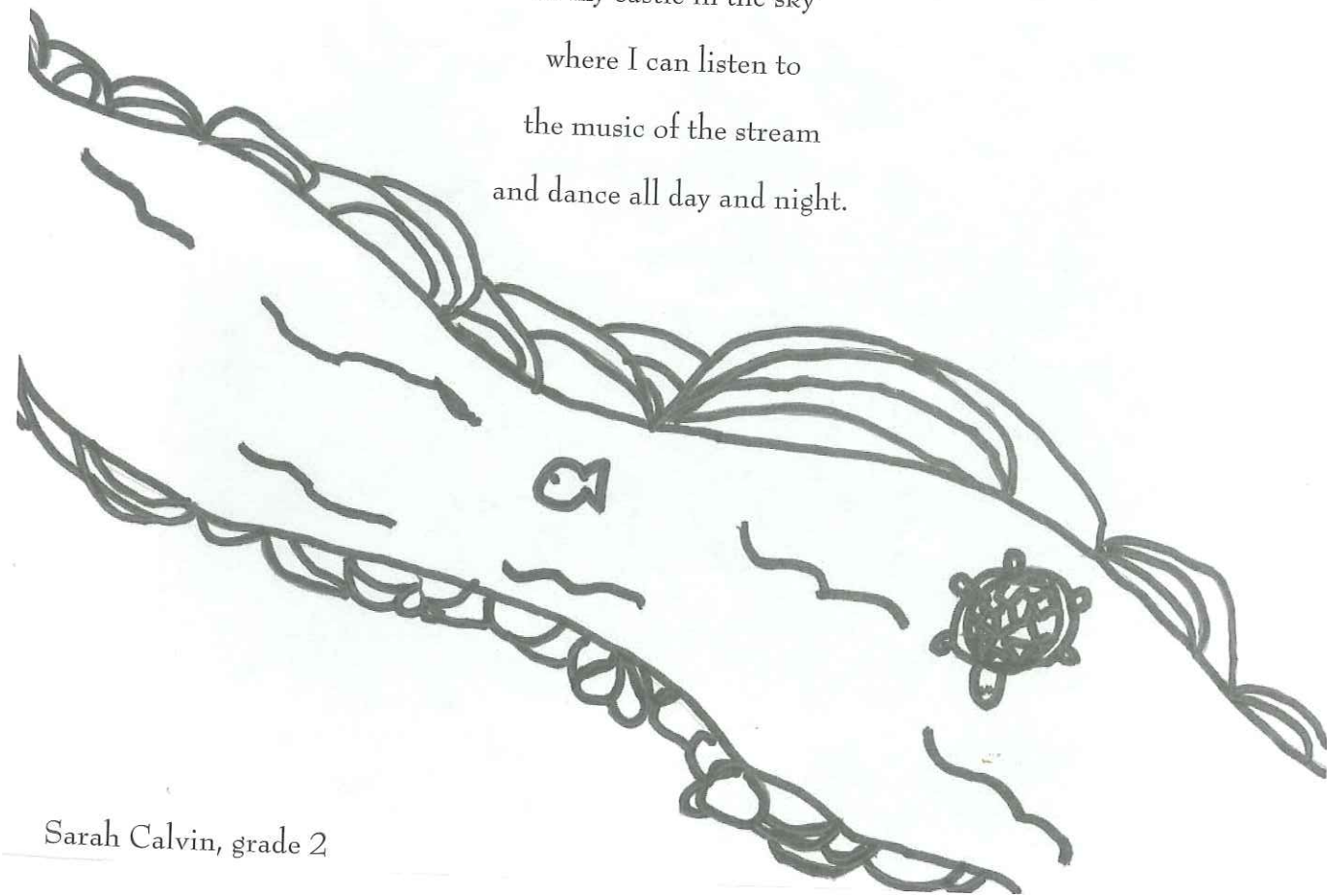
I sleep on the river bed

I live forever

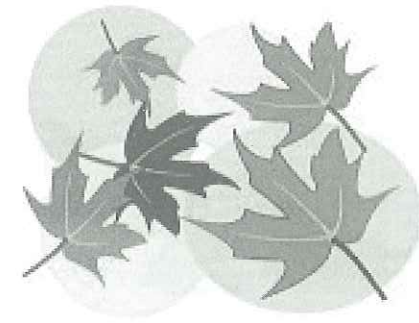
Sounds of the Stream

Kilee Sofich, grade 3

I go to the stream
when I want to dream.
Sit down beside it
close my eyes and listen.
I can hear the ripple of water,
crickets singing, frogs croaking,
and the shifting of rocks.
The melody carries
my dreams away
to my castle in the sky
where I can listen to
the music of the stream
and dance all day and night.



Sarah Calvin, grade 2



Brave River

Bailey Taylor, age 9

Beautiful colors of the rainbow

Following the rain

The powerful wind,

Like a plane going by,

Grabs my hair

Massive clouds rush by

Crunchy leaves rolling by

Following the wind as it howls

The wind circles around me

And picks me up

I can smell the fresh pine trees

As the perfect breeze blows

Baby birds chirp

The brave water flowing between my toes

Leaves my knowing summer is here

The slime of the algae caresses me



The River—My Feelings

Emily Hay, grade 3

When I hear water running and crashing against the river,
I feel mad inside.
When the river is but a trickle,
I nearly cry.
Fish tickle my toes and water hits my nose.
Water falls against the window knocking for a way in.
Water, water, water from the Ocean,
To the river,
To a puddle
Water is important—
Something for you and me and the earth to drink.

The River

Oliver Anderson, age 9

The wind is yelling in my ear with constant anger.
The birds are singing with a sweet melody.
The smell of fish is drifting up my nose.
The smell of water is like a fresh dollar bill.

The water cascades down the hill,
like a boulder from a volcano.
The rocks are slicing through algae, and
the fish are jumping high.

The trout's silky smooth body is
like a dress made of velvet.
The water is soft and light,
like cream.

Playful River

Athena Paraskevas-Nevius, age 9

The trees fall over the glassy water
Leaning like old housewives doing their chores
The leaves swirl above my head
Falling in a blanket of color
They are gold and silver in the morning light

Crash, boom and then it's silent
The rushing, tumbling, falling river passes me
Spraying mist on my face
The wind covers me with a chill
Making me yearn for warmth

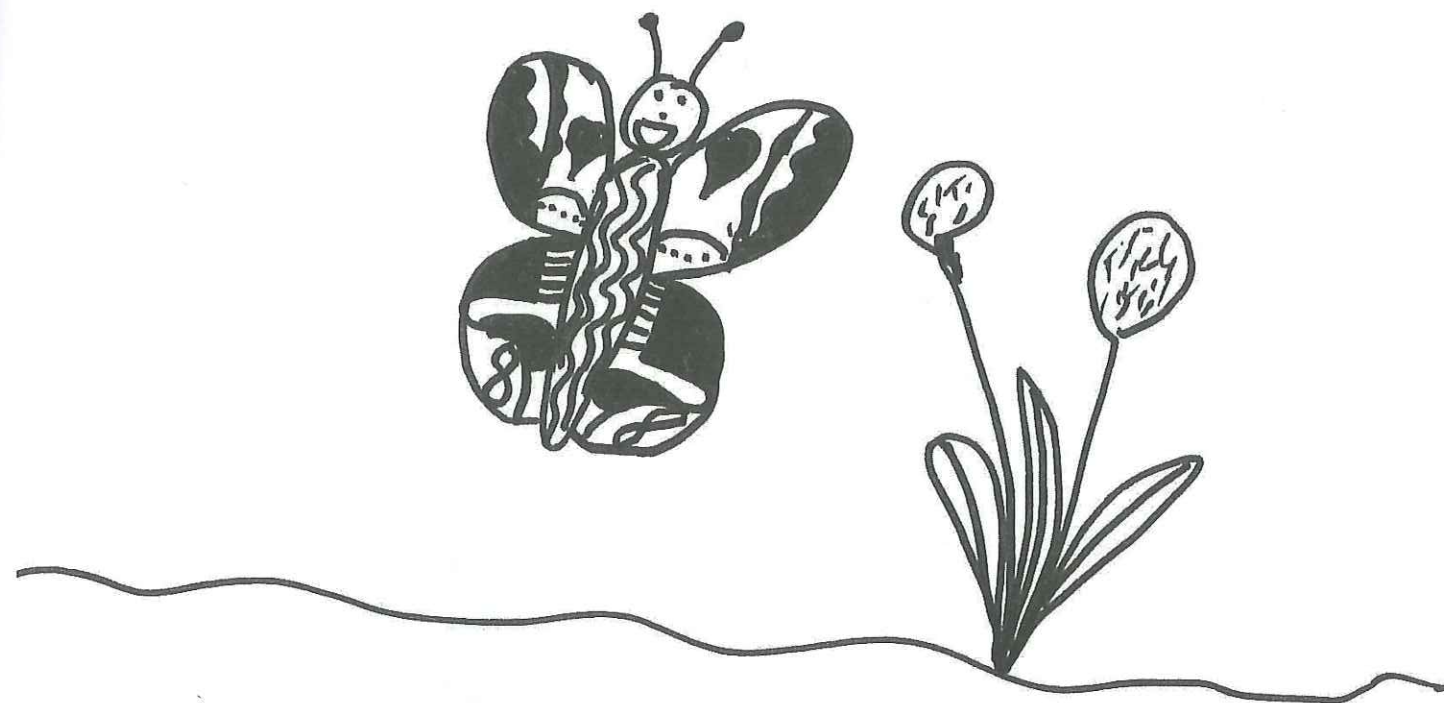
The distinct smell of cedar fills the air
Making me want to stay here forever
The flowers smell fresh and new
Like blueberry pie

The trees feel uneven to the touch
They remind me of small, smooth, bumpy rocks
The water jumps and tickles my face
Like an excited friend

Downstream

Christian Mathews, grade 2

The fish swim down fast
On the beautiful blue stream
On the waterfall.



Sophie Olson, grade 2

Raging River

Ian Bryce Hoyt, age 9

The violent river flows,
like a stampede of angry horses
Pine borders the shore with beauty;
The rock as rough as the mighty current itself



The river's overpowering beat
echoes through the canyon walls
All the birds around sing a song of peace and calm,
which nurtures the river to life

All the smells embrace me
The aroma of pine fills the air
without solemnity or despair
the smell of the water is pure delight,
which always stays there day and night

The silky water rushes through my finger;
With every ripple there is a woven strand
The jagged rocks swallow my feet

Tranquil River

Alexandro Bernardo Burrows, age 9

The water flows by,
smooth as glass.
The rocks stand proud,
keeping their position.
Mist coils around my feet,
like snakes ready to strike.

I hear an eagle cry,
strong and proud.
I hear the water playing
at my feet.
I hear a lonely cry;
A distant coyote.

I smell the air, so rich,
so wispy.
Scents abound,
like fresh water on a damp day.

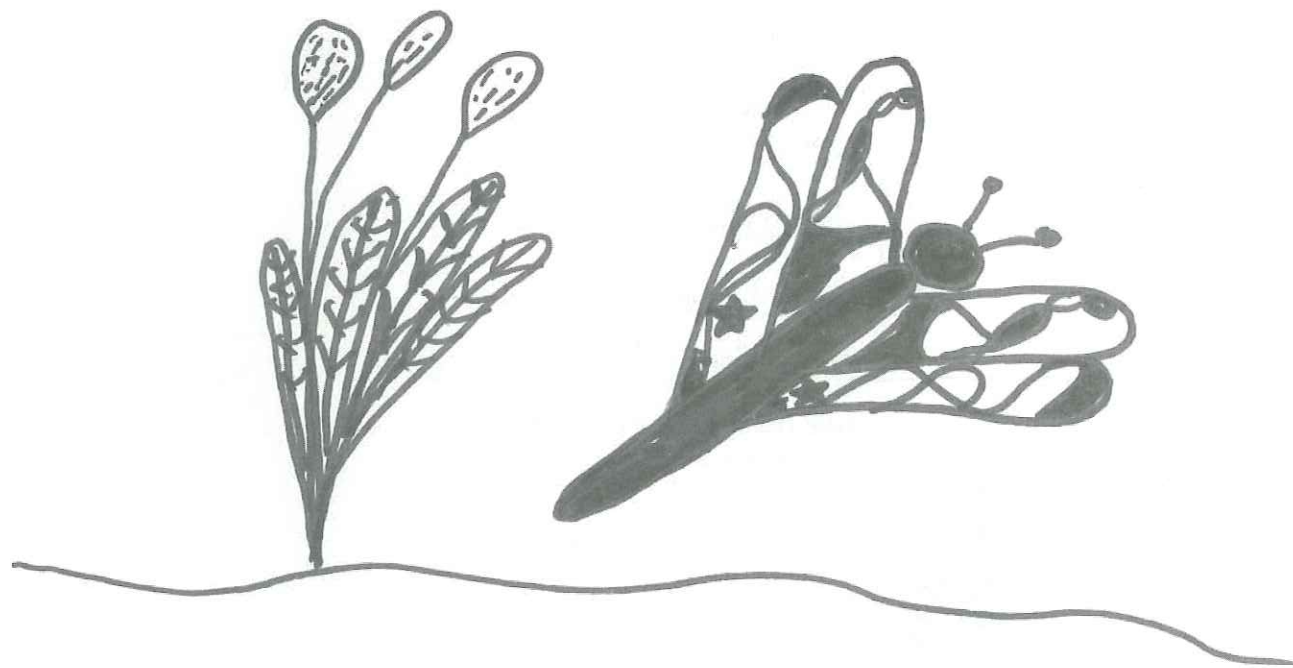
I touch the water;
It is icy cold,
like a window on a winter day.
I feel a tree;
It stands as proud as a man.



The Shimmering Water by the Riverside

Lillie Grau, grade 3

Water reflects the sun
On its way to the ocean
On a beach by the riverside
Pompom trees and white sand
And water shimmering across the river



Sophie Olson, grade 2

The River

Charlie Kimball, age 10

The waterfall looks like a big blue tongue;
It sounds like an airplane at take-off.
A log goes downstream;
It gets smaller as it goes.

The pine tree smells like nature's perfume.
The flowers smell so beautiful;
Their fragrance fills the air.

The wind makes the trees sound like the ocean.
The Kingfisher sounds like a baby bird chirping.

The fish feel like slimy, gross monsters.
The rocks feel like turtle shells, but slippery.

The River

Gabby Torgerson, age 9

Icicles hang over the water like frozen daggers.

The frigid fluid swiftly runs:

It passes the surprised pines and they drop their snow like a girl would drop an egg.

It runs after the wolves: "Wait for me!" the mountain stream yells.

It starts to sob and floods the banks where the willow trees are
staring up at the stars.

The willows bow their branches as they feel the cold, clear water.

Their roots burrow underground like hands in a jacket pocket.

The river trickles through the rocks.

Geese watch the dancing fish swaying to the music
of the blue jays and canaries just starting to build their nests.

The little minnows bubble and the river starts to sway
because suddenly, as the new day dawns, they know

the trees

the birds

the water

all know...

and in one joyful clamber they all cry,

"Spring is coming!"

Wintry River

Haley Hmura, age 9

I see the river covered in ice
Like cubes in someone's drink.

Wildlife surrounds me

While the sun streams
Through the billowy clouds.

I hear birds chirping,

Leaves rustling,

Wind dashing,

Through my hair

Like it's on a mission.

Pine trees are pungent,

Flowers so sweet.

The air grabs my senses

With the freshest scent.

Algae massages my feet

Like wet mud.

The silvery fish tickle my toes.

The River

Sebastian Ward, age 7

Nice calm water,
Like a sweetened honey pot
Rafts as heavy as elephants
Birds always can be seen

Calm water flows
Like a swimming pool
Always babbling with her delight
With beautiful animals in her sight

Whistling wind blowing
Soft like a pillow in your bed
Animals howling like a baby
Crashing bashing with delight
People playing in her light

Rushing by, cool water
Dirt always gets in between your toes
You can feel rocks on the bottom
Slippery, splashing fish in the water
Always babbling with people.

The River

Stella Lawson, age 10

The flowing water is graceful
It is like long blonde hair
Flowing in the wind

Rocks tumbling in the breeze
Fish sing with glory
Birds squawking
Rocky rapids move like galloping horses

I feel the water's heaven
As it grazes along my hand
I feel Chinook Salmon
Softly rubbing against my hand

The smell is a rainbow trout
Splashing with color in the sweet water



A Gathering of Herons

Pru McDonald, Marylhurst University

Driving east across the Ross Island Bridge on a blue-sky,
bright September day. Crowning the far horizon, Mt. Hood
reigns in brilliant majesty. A casual glance upriver—
and memories are instantly there, nostalgia crowding my view
of the quiet scene below. Dreamlike, I recall

another dazzling, golden day, long ago—September, 1990.
Husband, son, and I stole away one afternoon, bringing our boat
to this still and sleepy river channel here behind Ross Island
below the bluff, for a few waterski runs free from wind and wakes,
the Willamette still bathtub-warm, ending an ideal summer.

Pleasant nights so late in the year promised perfect days
like this. Most people in school, at work, and unaware, perhaps,
of hidden coves and slack times. Between runs, we relax, luxuriate
in the boat—savor the day, the sun, our great good fortune,
until the swaying silence is broken by the flat, slapping

sound of pounding wings against the autumn sky—
Great blue herons in slow motion, flapping their prehistoric wings.
A few. A flock. *Dozens* of flocks—from every direction,
flying *here*, to this island. Clouding the sky, they fill the air
with the wild applause of a thousand beating wings.

In awe, we watched this singular sight—who knows how long?
Feathered riches kept gliding in, to settle gracefully in the trees, along
the shore, having somehow arranged this astonishing avian event.
We three—lucky to witness it. Waterskiing, forgotten.

The gathering of herons—*unforgettable*.

Fireworks Over the Willamette

Catherine Conrad-Dixon, Marylhurst University

On a blanket, wrapped
against the mild mid-summer chill
Supine in a small square space
staked out. To my left
the churning carnival, bright lights,
monotonous, mechanical music.
The smell of elephant ears and hotdogs,
and the squeals of mingled delight and fear
waft on the buzzing evening air.
We await the closing dusk, the first bang
and shimmering shower
of light dripping downwards
toward its own reflection in the deep
black stillness of the river.
Against the gasping, gaping silence
of the crowd, again and again, loud cracks
and freely falling flame.
White, yellow, green, blue, they melt away,
spread across the vast dark backdrop
where sky and river meet and the last
few weeping sparks cascade
into the calm, cold waters of the Willamette.

---*Riverfront Park, Independence, OR*

Fishing with Daddy

Amy Seabrooke, Marylhurst University

The Columbia River has cut its path deep into the land. Rose loves this drive. She focuses on the trees in hopes of seeing a Fairy. Spotting a deer would be special too. Today Rose is fishing with her Daddy. The old Volkswagen turns north toward Trout Lake Creek, across The Bridge of the Gods to their secret fishing hole as if by memory. "Daddy, can you tell me the legend about the bridge again?" Rose questions. "Once upon a time, a long, long time ago before white people settled here, the Gods spoke from the mountains and streams to the people. According to the placemat at the Char burger in Cascade Locks, Mount Hood was called Wyeast and Mount Adams was called Klickitat and Mount Saint Helens was called Loo-Wit. They were sons and daughters of the God, Tyhee Sahle. One day, Wyeast and Klickitat were arguing over who Loo-Wit would marry. Tyhee Sahale overheard this disagreement between his sons and got angry. When Loo-Wit's spirit was crossing the land bridge that once connected Oregon and Washington, Tyhee Sahale destroyed both his daughter and the bridge," Daddy explains. "I don't understand, even though you have told me this story a bazillion times." Daddy pats her leg and then ruffles her hair. "Rose, I don't understand it either."

The highway snakes along through Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine and rhododendrons. Small outcroppings of rock coated with bright yellow and green lichen catch Rose's attention as they drive up the White Salmon River. "Look sweetie, there's Mount Adams." Daddy points through a break in the trees. The mustard yellow Volkswagen bus turns off the main road. Rose quickly rolls up her window before the over-hanging tree branches start playing tic-tac-toe on the side of the bus. The Volkswagen bounces down the forgotten logging road. "Yeah Daddy! We are finally here!" Rose squeals, just like the brakes. "Can I go to the creek? Can I, can I? Please!" "Rose, remember you must respect this stream, even though it's small," Daddy warns with a smile and a wave. Off goes Rose, skipping down the trail toward the river. The branches of huckleberry bushes sag with the weight of little neon blue berries. She stops to pick some and notices the air has gotten cooler here in the trees. This is hard work, picking huckleberries. Daddy says bears like to eat them too. Just then she sees her Daddy walking down the trail wearing his smelly fishing vest and carrying two fishing rods in his hand. Rose knows her Daddy is going to stop and eat huckleberries too. They are his favorite berry. Rose smiles and waves, then she continues running down the trail toward the creek.

The narrow trail curves to the right before it drops down to the bank: Our secret spot. Rose goes straight to the water and sticks her hands in its chilly shallows. The footsteps coming down the trail must be her Daddy but she looks over her shoulder anyway, just in case it's a bear. Daddy calls out, "This is beautiful. The water is crystal clear! Rose did you know this creek is spring fed? That's why rocks look like jewels in the water." Rose knows his next move. Daddy will put the fishing poles down, walk over to the closest bush and start smelling it. "Rose, come here honey, smell how sweet this is," Dad says as he breaks a twig off to put in his smelly vest pocket. "Now, let me show you how to rig your line. I'm going to use one split shot for weight with a single egg hook. We are going to knock 'em dead today."

Dad's fingers dance across the line. "Here," he hands Rose her rod. Rose sets it down with a smile and proclaims, "I'm going to throw rocks." "That's great," he says as he picks up his rod, moves upstream and casts his line to the far side of the creek. Meanwhile, Rose searches for a rock to fit in the palm of her hand like a silver

dollar pancake. Then she spots the best skipping rock ever. Rose picks it up in her hand and runs toward her Daddy. "Please skip the rock, Daddy!" Rose loves counting how many times the rock skips. "Okay, are you ready?" Dad sets the rod down and rests most of his weight on one knee. With a quick flick of his wrist, he sends the rock dancing across the stream. "One, two, three, four, five... Yeah! Five times, Daddy!" Rose yells out. Then, looking at her father Rose asks, "Daddy, how come you don't catch any fish when I come with you?" He smiles at his daughter, "Why don't you find me another skipping rock?"



INVITED OREGON WRITER

Nita Countryman lives and writes in the foothills of the Cascade range, on a forested homestead settled by her Finnish ancestors. She holds an MALS degree from Reed College. During the school year, Nita teaches at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon. Nita's poetry, which often reflects a human connection to the near-pristine beauty of the Pacific Northwest, has appeared in a number of journals, including *Windfall*, *Avocet*, *The Portland Alliance*, and others. She has received three awards from the Oregon State Poetry Association, and has also been a finalist for the Willamette Award in Poetry.

On the Path to Shingle Creek

The robin knows the trail but scurries
 underneath the Queen Anne's lace.
You'll have to find your own path
 through the prickle of evergreens.
They try to grip you with their stories;
 tear away.

Now look for the coyote paw-prints:
 hollow mud-casts in the dirt
 that lead through the jumble
of thimbleberries. I don't remember
the trail. I recall the old way—
here, somewhere—past the rustling

 thicket where that black bear
 spooked Tuffy to barking
and Mama yelled *scream kids scream*
 while the juice dripped purple
and the blackberries tumbled like marbles
 from the Folgers tin.

Summer Concert

The downspout vibrates:
a tuning fork
for the frog who waits—
voice cracking—
inside his washbasin.

With the rain-song
forgotten
after a six-week lapse,
two rabbits review their lyrics
behind a curtain of hemlock.

No one called
the chickadees:
their calliope will sit empty
for the first movement.

As the rhythm section
ceases its pitta-pat
over the leaves of the walnut tree
(silence before the downbeat),

the Steller's jay,
hauteur-in-blue,
squawks
into the side yard.

Ripples & Eddies

You see the rocks, they are still,
Yet the water rushes like a man missing a bus.

Taishi Neilsen, age 8

Wildlife is all around.
Birds chirp like a singer,
beavers grind trees, and
water chats with me.

Josh Navarro, age 9

The river flows like a scared soldier stands
A bridge goes over the river like a rope holding it down.

Ben Geyer, age 8

I see the great blue water raising its hands,
Grabbing the branches and pulling them down
Into the water

Michael Ghalili, age 9

At the creek, I see the icicles,
Like a lion's gleaming teeth.
The water rests for a time,
But very brief,
As though it needs to go.

Michael Bryant, age 10

The wind ruffled my hair
And danced a waltz with me.

Jessa Miller, age 9



The End

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