

As the day's last sliver of sunlight dances westward across the land, it reveals in each wetland, lake, & stream a reflection that cannot be described with earthly words. Perhaps these visual reflections are what draw us to lakes & rivers for our emotional reflections – the sights, the sounds, the serenity – there's something about water that captivates us & sets us free.

These reflections reveal our physical connections with water – our actions on land are directly reflected in our streams, rivers, & lakes. If we manage our land wisely, we can protect, preserve, & enjoy our aquatic resources forever. The first step to understanding the interconnectedness of our world is gaining a profound respect for the resources found within it, & the first step in acquiring this respect is spending time in & around our streams, rivers, & lakes – paddling, swimming, fishing, monitoring the quality of their waters – letting their reflections lead us to our own.

Each year, in affiliation with The Library of Congress Center for the Book, River of Words® conducts a free international poetry & art contest for youth on the theme of watersheds. The contest is designed to help youth explore the natural & cultural history of the place they live, & to express what they discover through poetry & art. Entries not chosen as finalists or grand prize winners in the international contest are returned to the IOWATER program, where they are judged in an Iowa statewide River of Words contest.

Printed on recycled paper using private donations.

COVER ART

Crystal Cramer
age 16
Cedar Rapids, IA

Water Flow

IOWA WINNER

IOWATER

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2005

IOWATER

presents the

2nd Annual

RIVER of WORDS

Environmental

Poetry & Art



IOWA Competition 2005



Water: The resource of life

Heather Gray
age 14
Burlington, IA
IOWA WINNER

Springwater Hill

In the stillness of summer
warm waves of sunlight rippled against my face –
I was the first that day to feel them.
The field waved with the breeze,
the tips of the tall grass swept my arms.
Smelling pine, I tasted sap in my mouth.
Walking through the field, I felt the milkweed pods
brush up against my legs;
miniature Pandora's boxes, waiting to ripen.
Light shone off the creek and danced
amongst the leaves above me.
I laughed to myself. The busyness of spring was gone,
and the slow of fall was in the distance.

Becky Miller
age 17
Decorah, IA
NATIONAL FINALIST

Feelings

On the river I wait for the sun to go down,
I wait for the brilliant
colors to wash over me,
to blend,
to fade.
As I wait I throw stones,
black,
gray,
white.
As I throw stones I think,
What would happen if there was
no river?
What would happen if there
were no stones?
What would happen if there
were no colors to wash over
me,
to blend,
to fade?
What would happen if there
was no.....me?

Alec Balmer
age 11
Peosta, IA
IOWA WINNER

How I Wish...

How I wish my heart sang like the dawn...
Comforting the soul with every beat.
How I wish my mind glistened like the stars...
Creating wondrous dreams while I'm fast asleep.
How I wish my love flowed like a river...
Bringing life to all that it may meet
How I wish my life echoed like a forest...
Telling its story for the world to keep.

Catherine Porth
age 17
Burlington, IA
NATIONAL FINALIST

Swimming at my Grandma's

Swimming at my grandma's
Is better than it sounds,
Especially in the summer time,
When the sun is going down.

Dunking, making swirling waves,
My cousins, so much fun,
That when it's night and time to go,
We wished it never done.

The water is so very cool
When a breeze is passing by,
I wish the day would never end,
And time would never fly.

Sammantha Smith
age 13
Sabula, IA
NATIONAL FINALIST

River

The river is
shiny like
the sun.
Rough like
the surface of
a jagged rock.
Quick like
a cougar.
Shiny like the surface
of the ocean.
Deadly like the
mouth of a wolf.
Slow like a
sloth.
Windy like
a tornado.

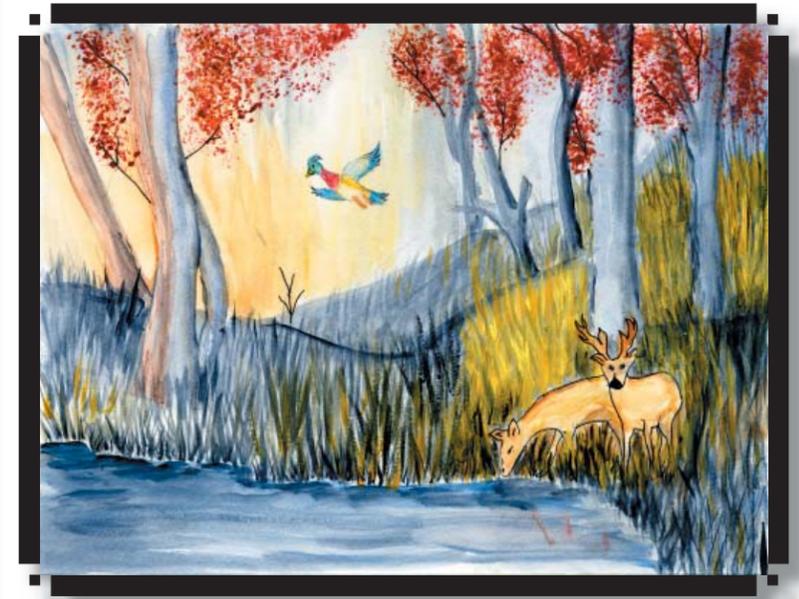
Joe Morehead
age 14
Oto, IA
IOWA WINNER

All artwork & poetry
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Elements

Water,
A life giving force.
It is a
Never ending source.
Air,
Holds great power.
It can escape
Past the highest tower.
Fire,
Such a beautiful light.
It will shine
On a cold dark night.
Earth,
The soul of all life.
It will stick with us
Through all of our strife.
Water,
Earth,
Fire,
Air,
They're in our hands.
They're in our care.

Chelsey Sugars
age 16
Fort Madison, IA
IOWA WINNER



A peace pond

Samantha Brus
age 11
Dubuque, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

Fishing

Fishing, fishing,
It's a wonderful thing,
To sit in the sun,
And have lots of fun.
My grandpa and me
Together all the time,
If we catch our own bait
It won't cost a dime.

Curtis Koch
age 13
Sabula, IA
NATIONAL FINALIST

Hurricane

I went outside to feel the chill
I looked up and saw
Dark clouds
Falling rain.

I felt
Squishy mud
Chilly rain
Hurricane wind.

I heard the raindrops falling on my hood
Roaring wind
Splashing water.

I smelt
Dead worm smell
Rain.

Jordan Kaiser
age 7
Eldridge, IA
IOWA WINNER

For entry forms for the 2006 International contest, contact:

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Send entries by Feb.15, 2006 to:

River of Words
PO Box 4000 J
Berkeley, CA 94704 USA
Phone: 510-548-POEM (7636)

JURY for River of Words Poetry & Art Iowa Competition 2005

Michael Carey received an MFA
from the University of Iowa Writers'
Workshop & is the author of five
books of poetry.

Liz Christiansen graduated from
Cornell College with a BA degree in
botany. She is the Deputy Director
of the Iowa Department of Natural
Resources.

Pat Lohmann received an MFA
in painting from the University of
Iowa School of Art & Art History.
She is an artist & publication de-
signer for the Iowa Department of
Natural Resources.

Debra Marquart graduated from
Minnesota State University, Moor-
head with an MLA degree & is an
associate professor of English &
coordinator of the Creative Writing
Program at Iowa State University.