

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

Scott Skophammer
age 15
Fort Dodge, Iowa

Night Water Flight

IOWA WINNER

IOWATER

Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources
109 Trowbridge Hall
Iowa City, IA 52242-1319

www.iowater.net

2007

IOWATER

presents the

4th Annual

RIVER of WORDS

Environmental

Poetry & Art

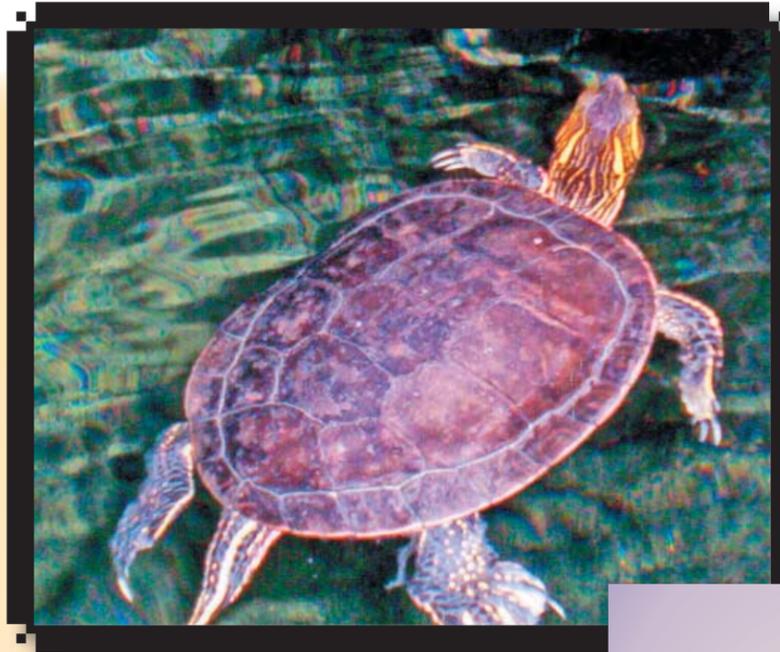


IOWA Competition 2007

River

I look down below me and see your murky
brown waters flowing gently, river.
I look beside me and see deer silently
lapping up water from your small pools,
river.
I look above me and see a clear blue sky
with the sun shining down warmth on your
mild waters, river.
Some days I come and see your muddy waters
rushing violently along your special road,
river.
And I watch sticks disappear into your murky
depths.
River, sometimes I watch you crash against
muddy banks and see soil being swept into
your violent waters.
When I watch, I wonder what you will be like
a hundred years from now, river.

Zoë Pritchard
age 10
Ames, Iowa
IOWA WINNER



Turtle Swim

Jenni Dryden
age 11
Marion, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

Raindrops

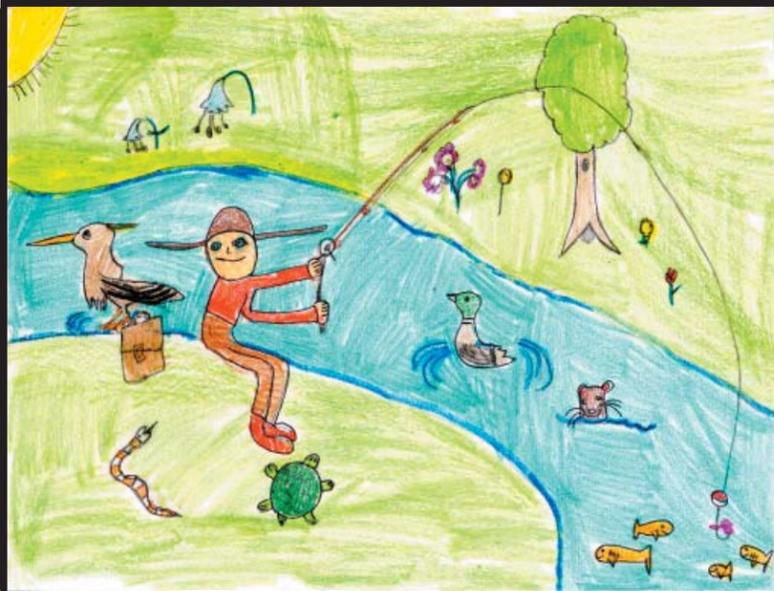
Banana thunder chessmen,
Tattling grey films,
Dreary supposed clouds,
And cowardly peek-a-boo moon,
The rain polka dots
Sidewalks, the cornfields
Veiled
In damp velvet evening,
But headlights
Swarm in parading ducks,
In grains of smoggy breath,
And slick reflections
Of silence.

Nadia Hlebowitsh
age 16
Iowa City, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

The Old River

It bends, flows,
winds
along the flat plain
Wise with many years
far from its youthful state
It expels history
depositing soil and rock
with a story of their own
The old river, my faithful friend,
flows onward

Teri Mueller
age 14
Delhi, Iowa
NATIONAL FINALIST



We Love Clean Water! Do You?

Liam Scheuermann
age 6
Stratford, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

Trance

The ripples form
as fish jump,
birds singing
sweet lullabies
my toes
tingle as they
submerge in the
surface of this
great creation – the river.
The cranes search
the water but
the fish are
safely
tucked away
in their
security blanket – the river.
I'm floating
on the surface
to where
you might ask,
I do not
know for only
the river
will tell you.
There are many
secrets
and answers this
river holds.
I start to go under
for the river
is sucking
me under like
a vacuum
sucking up
whatever
is in its way.
My feet
search
for the bottom.
My eyes search
for the top,
I'm in a trance,
in the distance
I hear you
ask me where
I'm going – the river.

Madison Walsh
age 14
Anthon, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

Kingfisher

Kingfisher sat,
watching the day go by.
Kingfisher saw,
hunting a fish to dine.
Kingfisher flew,
snatching the fish nearby.

Clayton Dryden
age 7
Marion, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

JURY for River of Words Poetry & Art Iowa Competition 2007

Michael Carey received an MFA from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop & is the author of five books of poetry. In October 2006 he was awarded the John Brigham Plaque Award for his "significant contribution to American literature."

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 designer for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Debra Marquart graduated from Minnesota State University, Moorhead with an MLA degree. She is a professor of English & the Coordinator of the MFA Program in Creative Writing & Environment at Iowa State University.

For entry forms for the 2008 River of Words contest, contact:

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