Honoring Our Rivers: 2010
A Student Anthology Collected From Throughout the Willamette River Watershed and beyond

10th Anniversary Edition

Celebrating Our Tenth Year!

Honoring Our Rivers: A Student Anthology was founded in 2000 by a group of educators and river folk who shared the belief that the health and prosperity of our river systems impacts our understanding of this place we call home. Over the past decade, local and international students have submitted thousands of whimsical, charming and often thought-provoking entries that stimulate an awareness of the fragility of our waterways and challenge us to reflect on how rivers connect us all. To celebrate our tenth year, we have compiled some of the most memorable and creative entries received over the years from both students and celebrated professional writers. Like the river, their words and images help us to see the energy and life that is flowing through the landscape and teach us to honor the intangible quality that connects us to nature, and ultimately, to one another.

Acknowledgments

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

Laurie Aguirre
Rick Bastasch
Quintin Bauer
John Femal
Travis Henry
Meghan Warren

Thank you to Graywolf Press for granting us permission to reprint William Stafford’s poem, “Climbing Along the River.” In addition, we would like to thank John Miller, Briana Pierce and Travis Henry from Wildwood/Mahonia for producing the anthology and guiding the process. Our thanks also to Tim Lawson from Epic Design Studios for the layout and Julie Schaum from EWEB for the beautiful cover design.

Our Founding Sponsors

EWEB

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 system 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
Eugene Water & Electric Board

WILDWOOD MAHONIA

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

John D. Miller, President
Wildwood/Mahonia
For more information on the Honoring Our River project contact
Briana Pierce at 503-585-8789 or email: info@honoringourriver.org

Please see the entry form in the back of the anthology.

www.HonoringOurRiver.org
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Student Works, Part I

A River’s Story
Serena Zhang, Grade 5
Lake Grove Elementary, Lake Oswego

The morning sun warms up my icy water, I sparkle and glitter. Dewdrops fall from the treetops, pitter, patter, pitter.

A mother frog jumps off a lily pad, croaking a wake-up call. Little tadpoles venture out, chasing each other, having a ball.

Gliding along the bank, I watch them as I go. Where is a mother of my own? Who will watch me as I grow?

The wind rustles through the trees, stirring up loose twigs. A lone leaf says goodbye to the branch, swaying gracefully across my face.

Where do I come from? Where is my resting branch? Do I have any kin? Or a loyal, kindhearted friend?

A young deer plays at the riverbank. His mother sends him a warning sign. He sprints into the woods, together, they run.

Could someone be waiting for me? To catch me when I fall? The turbulence gets stronger, the excitement makes me want to howl!

The scenes around me whiz by, as the current pushes me on. Rushing through rocks, I’m going, going, gone.

Day and night I run, towards something I cannot see. I’m not sure what I’m looking for, but I feel it’s a part of me.

Other rivers join me, all with different stories to share. Together we are bigger and stronger, with nothing to worry or fear.

BOOM!
Waves crash and grow tall. We jump off cliffs, laughing as we fall.

Finally, we join the big ocean. She hugs us in a motherly embrace. Listening to our stories, she smiles with pride and grace.

I found you, my mother, my destiny. Salty water becomes my tears. They fall like dewdrops, pitter, patter, pitter.

by Josh Hallquist, Grade 7
Rowe Middle School, Milwuakie (2005)
Rapid Water
Paul Smith, Grade 2
Chapman Hill Elementary, Salem

The rapid water goes down the waterfall,
Down,
Down,
Down,
Into the rushing water.

Legend
University of Oregon, Eugene

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.

The River
Willa Clare Truby, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School, Portland

The River is strong.
The River is beautiful like the shining pearl moon.
The River is flowing like the cool wind.
The River is smooth like fish in the waterfall.
The River is glistening like a thousand emeralds in a dark cave.
The River sings you a running song that goes over and over and over forever.
The River is an adventure of life.
And I love the River.

The River
Gabriel Colasurdo, Grade 2
Bridlemile Elementary School, Portland

I am the river.
I have travelled many miles.
I have watched trees grow.
I have watched fish come back every summer.
I have watched young birds learn how to fly.
I have watched the eagles soar into the sky.
I have felt people play in me.
I have felt boats go past me.
I have seen the snow fall.
I felt people ice skate on me.
I am the river.

Rapid Water
Gabriel Colasurdo, Grade 2
Bridlemile Elementary School, Portland

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I am the river.

The River
Willamette.
by Delaney Talovic, Grade 4
Forest Hills Elementary, Lake Oswego

The River
Gabriel Colasurdo, Grade 2
Bridlemile Elementary School, Portland

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I have travelled many miles.
I have watched trees grow.
I have watched fish come back every summer.
I have watched young birds learn how to fly.
I have watched the eagles soar into the sky.
I have felt people play in me.
I have felt boats go past me.
I have seen the snow fall.
I felt people ice skate on me.
I am the river.
Me and the River
Kate Bakken, Grade 2 (2009)
Yolanda Elementary, Springfield

Ever since I was a little girl, my dad has shared his love of the river with me. I feel lucky that the river is right down the street from my house. I have been able to walk, ride my trike, bike, or scooter there for the first eight years of my life. Me and my dad always seem to find something new to see and do when we go to the river.

Whenever we go down to the river, we see tons of animals. We have seen snakes, ospreys, bald eagles, ducks, deer, turkey vultures and kingfishers. We have also discovered a sneaky, orange fox living in a field by the river! We see her mostly in the evening, hunting for food. Once, when I was three, we even ran into a gross, smelly, dead raccoon! It was weird because there were ugly vultures waiting in the trees for us to walk away. It was funny, because I said, “Eew, dead raccoon,” in a voice that sounded like I was holding my nose! I wonder if I will ever get to see a bear at the river?

As long as I can remember, my dad has loved the river more than anyone I know (especially when he catches a fish). My dad teaches me tons of things on our trips to the river. He even taught me how to row our drift boat. I’m getting good at rowing backward but I am still dreadful at rowing forward. When we go down to the river, I love to fly fish. Dad taught me how to cast and now I can fish with him. One time I even caught the first fish of the day! On a very hot day last summer, I used a float tube tied to my dad! I sat with my legs in the icy water, ate snacks and watched the river, while my dad fished. That taught me a great way to keep cool on a hot day! A few times in each summer, I go down and swim in the river! I look for fish under the water with my goggles and when I see one, I tell my dad where to cast. My dad and I make a good team!

We go to the river all year round! In the fall, we pick yummy blackberries and wild hops. In winter, we walk in the snow, throw snowballs into the water and watch them float away. In spring, we pick flowers and watch the caddis flies hop along the water. In summer, we spend our time swimming and fishing. No matter what the season, me and my dad go to our super secret fishing spot. But that’s all I will say about that! Hey, I said super secret didn’t I?

Something that doesn’t make me so happy when we visit the river is the litter. Some people think they can just dump their trash there. I have seen tents, furniture, coffee cups and beer bottles dumped at the river. I wish everyone would help to keep the river clean.

That means, pick up your trash!

When I was little, I would always try to get wet at the river! I also loved to play with snails and bugs! Now that I am older, I explore the shore, read to myself and skip rocks. When I grow up and have kids of my own, I will bring them down to the river and teach them all the stuff I know. These are many, but not all, of the reasons why I love the river! In the future, I know I will find even more reasons to visit and love the river in my own backyard.
In the Noon
Sienna Barnes, Grade 2
Chapman Hill Elementary, Salem

Pebbles land in the fresh water at noon,
Making plop sounds.
And the water moves on.
The fish swim slowly by.
The crickets chirp by fresh waters
As the animals go to sleep at night.

The River
Haden Gillette, Grade 2
Forest Ridge Elementary, Keizer

In the stream is a tadpole.
On the river is a Water Strider.
Under the water is a Chinook Salmon.
Over the river is a bird.
Beside the river is a goose.
Around the river is a bunch of trees.
Through the river is a duck.
Until the moon came up.

River Flows
Susannah Cassell, Grade 7 (2009)
Talmadge Middle School, Independence

The river flows peacefully,
Laughing as it goes,
Tripping, slipping, sliding,
Everywhere it flows.

River of Ours
Bryn Hester, Grade 3 (2009)
Bridlemile Elementary, Portland

187 miles of a twisting
curving vein of water
Rainfall giving life
Native Americans discovered it
Clark mapped the valley with
coal on animal skin
...this is the Willamette River.

Life is not the same without our river
Our water makes Oregon
much more beautiful
Beauty of our river makes
people feel alive -
Refreshing
...this is the Willamette River

Water glistening, rippling tides
Cold air
Shiny and sparkling water
Musty, dusty and clear sometimes too
...this is the Willamette River

Musical River
Claire Lee, Grade 4 (2009)
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

The river holds a gentle current,
like a piano filled with music.

It flows on towards an ocean
Like notes course through a song.
Then and Now the Willamette River

Rob Amrein, Grade 8 (2005)
Waluga Junior High, Lake Oswego

It’s late in September and the nights are already as cold as the river we seek, which lies just beyond
the Cascade Range yet to our west, ahead just over the peak.
It seems that our journey has taken an entire year, though I know it not to be so. Our goal is to make
the great valley before winter, and get to the river below.
As the morning dawns our teams are hitched and we set off once again in hopes of catching a glimpse
of Willamette Falls before darkness halts our labors.
We press on to the summit and then descend into the valley where we hope to settle in a place filled
with rich fertile soils of our favor.
At the capital town of Oregon City, we trade some of our hides and Indian beads for tools we’ll need
to complete our home before the toils of winter are halted by freeze.
As the majestic Douglas Fir is brought to earth, the beginning of our homesteads take shape. It is the
elusive Roosevelt Elk who observes our progress, but assures himself a path of escape.
With our homes erected and our stores put up for winter’s passing, we embark on a hunt for meat, as
that which had been jerked is not a season lasting.
At long last we emerge into spring, time to plant our crops, and fence our stock. We go to town to
seek our letters from the east, and there the massive logs are tied at the dock.
In time the logs are milled, thus transformed into the framework for all that is yet to come. The river-
banks are now lined with settlers, their farms and futures are assured here for some.
It is a warm spring day when we take a mo-
ment to fish for the early run of steelhead that
make this river their home.
The colorful Harlequin and the muskrat feed
at water’s edge as the sharp-eyed Redtail Hawk
cries overhead, making his presence known.
In time, with the passing of many seasons, the
evolution of our society has brought to this
place many changes, some welcome, some not,
sometimes our neighbors feel much like strang-
gers.
The Blacktail Deer and the bobcat, so rarely
seen, are among those still living here today,
despite all that has come and gone... or are they... gone away?
It is the fate of some believed to be gone to
arise again in glory, so it is with the wolverine whose resurgence has itself begun a story.
Believed gone for over fifty years we’ve all sorrowed the loss of the wolverine, but in recent times
upon Mt. Hood we’ve proven his existence, though not often to be seen.
The river is home to so many things, the caddis, the crayfish, the frog, and also the beaver who con-
structs his home deep within the bog.
We take for granted that it will always be ours to fish in and boat in, to jet ski or float in. To travel
upon her waters for our simple pleasures, hopefully not forgetting to notice her simple treasures.
From the upper extremes of her contributory streams to the convergence of the mighty Columbia
River, her banks still abound with glorious autumn birches, the Deer Ferns, the Black Bear and the
beauty that makes artists quiver, each occupying a small place in the grand scheme of things, so im-
portant for a river.
**Colors of the River**  
*Hannah McLaughlin, Grade 6*  
*Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School, Salem*

What are the colors of the river?  
Blue like the shimmering ocean.  
Green like the fierce eyes of my cat.  
Brown like the coat of a deer.  
Silver like glistening granite in the sun.  
These are the colors of the river.

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**River Wonders**  
*Lexy Beyer, Grade 4 (2009)*  
*Rural Dell Elementary, Molalla*

I watch the river,  
as it flows.  
What lurks at its bottom?  
No one knows.

I watch the fish,  
as they swim about.  
They’re praying, the river,  
will never dry out.

I watch the ripples,  
as they wave.  
To hide the fish,  
is what they crave.

I watch the frogs,  
as they hop around.  
From lily to rock,  
then to ground.

I watch the cattails,  
as they sway.  
Doing the same routine  
as they did yesterday.

There’s so many wonderful  
sights you can see,  
so come watch river wonders  
here with me.

---

**Reflections**  
*Rusha Arramreddy, Grade 4*  
*Forest Park Elementary, Portland*

I sparkle in the bright yellow sun  
I move slowly and quietly under bridges  
And between the city  
Dividing it into East and West  
Small boats speed across me like a rocket  
Bigger ones slowly drift across  
I stare up at the light blue sky  
Clear white clouds stare back at me  
I keep flowing and watch the birds fly above me  
Leaves on trees sway back and forth  
A few inches under and above me  
I am very deep and very cold to the touch  
The day is over  
The sunset reflects off me  
As if it were looking in a mirror  
Soon the Sun looks like it is going under me  
I am a River  
The Willamette River

---

**Colors of the River**  
*Hannah McLaughlin, Grade 6*  
*Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School, Salem*

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Doing the same routine  
as they did yesterday.

There’s so many wonderful  
sights you can see,  
so come watch river wonders  
here with me.
The night was saturated with clichés as the wind blew through my hair and the ambient rush of the highway fell across the Esplanade. Beneath me, the ground would move with the unsettled water of the Willamette River. A skiff’s artificial current, just provoked as it docked from its twilight tour through the placid water. Roped to wood, the boat caused no ripple having become tethered to the world’s routines. Detached from life’s inertia the river moved with a lack of punctuality, barely a lap against the shore as it fell endlessly without anywhere to land or climb back to. And somehow, it was too punctual; the emblem of Portland’s center, hopeless subject of our memory’s lenses, courier of whimsical swimmers and sailboat romantics and echoer of our cityscape of lights and 4th of July fireworks. My father and I continue to ride, stopping "just one more time" at every matchless panorama of city street lamps and reflection. We found other people who came, like us, to this evening bravura, just to watch the water and the depth we saw in the mirage of a metallic surface. The depth the bridge cast and the depth of its belonging.
The River

Bridget Hall, Grade 2
Chapman Hill Elementary, Salem

At dawn I sit watching
The birds fly across the river.
The sun rises.
The waterfalls go slish-slosh
Into the rippling river.
I hear the river singing to me.

Gentle River Music

Grace Hertz, Grade 3
Forest Hills Elementary, Lake Oswego

The river current crashes against the rocks, as it hits a high note,
It flattens out again for a low,
The tri-colored fish jump as if for the climax,
Of the gentle river music.
It opens my ears,
To hear the other sounds that nature has to give,
And nature has so many sounds
But none are as graceful and gentle as the gentle river music.

The River We Seek

Anushka Nair, Grade 3
Oak Creek Elementary, Lake Oswego

The sun going down that made us sweat. But, you just run on ready to play. We sit on a moist rock watching you, and you stare back in our reflection. You are the Willamette River, the river we seek. We will never be done with our quest.
My Special Times at the River
Josh Kathrein, Grade 3
Warren Elementary School, Warren

River me shivers
I love the river.
Oh my river sweet
How I love you much.
I just wish you could be with me always.
So river sweet flow over so we may meet.
I love you so must make a wave or a tide
And I will come running all the way.
So love me much and I will love you.

Riding My Bike Over the Willamette
Cecilia Brauer, Grade 4
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

Passing over the Broadway Bridge
I ride my bike
Grain ships below me
Pigeons gurgling above me
People walking on the hot sidewalk
Fish swimming through the clear cold river.

Morning River
Pierce Horner, Grade 2
Chapman Hill Elementary, Salem

The river shivers,
From the mountain’s melted snow.
It splashes,
From the fish swimming with its muscles.
To hear the river better,
Get closer.

The River
Andrew Ness, Grade 4
Lake Grove Elementary, Lake Oswego

People jumping into my waters
Freezing cold against their hands
Fisherman catching the fish in me
Swift ripples running on top of their fingers
The water gently running through their scales
People walking into my waters
The feeling of sharp rocks makes them quiver
Children splashing around in me
The feeling of water against their faces
The river is my name
Moving River
Ariana McCready, Grade 7
Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School, Salem

Flowing, flowing, ever flowing, through wetlands and forests, over rocks and sand. Twisting, turning ever moving, past bears and birds. Down waterfalls and over rapids charging towards the sea. Through towns and under bridges past houses and office buildings. Twisting, turning, rolling, falling, a river is always moving.

by Ariana McCready, Grade 7, Salem

The River
Andrew Ness, Grade 4
Lake Grove Elementary, Lake Oswego

People jumping into my waters
Freezing cold against their hands
Fisherman catching the fish in me
Swift ripples running on top of their fingers
Scaly fish swimming swiftly through me
The water gently running through their scales
People walking into my waters
The feeling of sharp rocks makes them quiver
Children splashing around in me
The feeling of water against their faces
The river is my name

by Andrew Ness, Grade 4

The River
Brock Thomas, Grade 2 (2009)
Forest Ridge Elementary, Keizer

Whoosh!
The stream was jetting past the island.
It was clear, cold, rocky water.
And all of a sudden it was peaceful and quiet
As it approached the Willamette River.
And the stars were sparkling on the river and it was Gorgeous.

by Brock Thomas, Grade 2 (2009)

River is Home
Elizabeth Verhaeghe, Grade 2
Forest Ridge Elementary, Keizer

River is home, hooted the old owl.
River is home, whispered the sleeping bear.
River is home, chirped the feathery Red Winged Blackbird.
River is home, cried the fast Water Strider.
River is home, yelled the swimming otter.
River is home yelled everybody!

River is Home
Elizabeth Verhaeghe, Grade 2
Forest Ridge Elementary, Keizer

Rivers twist and turn
Some are fast and fierce
Some are calm and subtle
Some are rocky with rapids

None of them are alike
Except in one huge way
All the rivers in the world
Have no ending for sure

When they seem to have ended
No sight of them around
They are truly still flowing
As long as you believe in your heart

The loss of a loved grandfather
Is like the Sacramento River
His life may seem to have ended
But when you feel him in your heart

He is still there... living forever.

Rivers Twist and Turn but Never End
Haley Moss, Grade 6 (2009)
Lake Grove Elementary, Lake Oswego

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Some are rocky with rapids

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The River Is...
Riley C. Boyle, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School, Portland

The river is brave like a Viking.
The river is flowing like a song from a cello.
The river is adventurous like a wolf.

The River Is...
Riley C. Boyle, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School, Portland

The river is brave like a Viking.
The river is flowing like a song from a cello.
The river is adventurous like a wolf.

Shells and Water
Hannah Raschkes, Grade 2 (2008)
Abiqua School, Salem

Listen to the waves
That shell glittering in sand
Water splashed by rocks
Until the moon came up.

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Is like the Sacramento River
His life may seem to have ended
But when you feel him in your heart

He is still there... living forever.
The River

Emma Donchi, Grade 4
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

A beautiful streak
Of hues;
Green, purple, blue.
It looks like a whirlpool,
Like an amazing, perfect painting.

The trees hanging over it are
Shaggy, green, with
Wildlife everywhere
Flocking to the river like
The geese that roam its shores.

The Willamette River is a
Picture-perfect example of
Nature at its best.

Wintry River

Yancee Gordon, Grade 4 (2008)
Abiqua School, Salem

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 Calm Lake

Isabelle Rodriguez, Grade 2
Chapman Hill Elementary, Salem

Lily pads floating.
Fish swimming,
As the sun goes down.
The birds chirp
For their mothers to find them.
Then everything is still,
The animals are asleep for the night.

Ríver

Kila Ung, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School,
Portland

The River is...

As rapid as the beating wings of a bird.
As beautiful as the strum of a violin.
As vicious as a lion.
This is the River I love.
Flood
Elliot Goodrich, Grade 7 (2007)
Franklin School, Corvallis

Two inches of standing water in my back yard.
The river is rising.
The swing set at the playground is under water.
An old rusted bathtub floats down on the muddy river toward the Van Buren Bridge.
The First Street shops are closed.
And there is only one lane open on the Corvallis Bypass.
School is cancelled.
And we're having fun.
We go canoeing on the sports fields,
And we laugh as we try to jump the swollen ditches spilling murky
Water into my front yard.
We run into the house for hot chocolate,
And listen to the flood reports on the radio,
As the waters of the Willamette slowly rise.

photo by John Miller

Come
Audrey Rioux-Killoran, Grade 5 (2002)
Abiqua School, Salem

Come, come,
watch my shimmering surface
Come, come,
let me carry you,
carry you.
Let me sweep you into a still peace,
a still peace,
that you can share.
If you just take care of me,
of me,
take care of me.
And I shall slowly
Rock you to sleep,
to sleep.
Into that peace.

Beautiful River
Madelyn Hurst, Grade 3
Forest Ridge Elementary, Keizer

Ribbet, ribbet goes the frogs in the river at night.
The sound of the river will sing to you at night.
when you are hiking you might hear a rushing sound.
Follow that sound to find a waterfall.
When you've had a rough day find a quiet river to sit and think.
Salamanders hide in deep crevices of huge rocks.
So be thankful for the Native Americans for taking care of our rivers.
The Berries by the Stream
Bethany Christiansen, Grade 2
Chapman Hill Elementary, Salem

When the fish hide,
And the bear burrows,
Turtles go inside their shell.
It’s fall at the stream.
Ruby red berries survive the cold,
In the dead leaves.
They spiral down,
Down
Splashing into the stream.

Ashley Swartwout, Grade 8
Rowe Middle School, Milwaukie

She Who Watches
Lorian Gray
Marylhurst University, Marylhurst

The river flows over stones like love
pouring in and
smoothing over the rough spots.

The river, she loves me,
she caresses me,
she heals me.

She fills the empty spaces,
She polishes the jagged places.
She softens the edges.

The river breathes life
as it courses through the veins
of our earth.

I want to walk into the water,
and keep walking
until I am moving through it,
to swim like salmon.

The river journeys to the sea.
Wherever I want to be
the river will take me
where I am going.

Slowly,
over time,
carving a new way home.

The River
Sabri Freeman, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School,
Portland

The River is a calm and gentle place.
The River is like music to my ears.
The River flows like wind that carries wings.
Rivers of the World

Featured below are entries selected from students throughout the world. Our sister community this year is located in Pucallpa, Peru, in the Amazon Basin. Oregonian Jennifer Harris has lived there for 12 years working with the people and environments of Amazon tributaries. One of our sponsors, John Miller of Wildwood/Mahonia, has worked with Jennifer to establish sustainable farming and forestry practices in the area. For more information about Jennifer’s work, contact Wildwood|Mahonia at www.wildwoodco.com.

Title: Preservemos Nuestros Inmensos Ríos
(Let’s Preserve Our Vast Rivers)

Irian Elizabeth Orosco Campos
High school “Húsares del Perú”; 11th grade

Let’s join our efforts.
Let’s join our consciousness.
Let’s start caring for, preserving our vast rivers, our refreshing streams of clean water that give life to our soul.
Start by not throwing garbage into the rivers.
Love what God created!
If you take care of a river you take care of your life.
I had a dream or perhaps an illusion. I dreamed that the World was beautiful, full of peace and love, where there were no wars and forgiveness existed and there was no pollution.

I dreamed of a clean city where everyone persevered and believed in one God. That was the God of love.

If all of the planet loved one God, everything would be different. No more wars, and clean rivers, good-bye pollution.

Today I woke up at 5:30 a.m. and I realized that everything was a dream, that our planet and rivers are being polluted without scruples.

Perhaps we don’t feel the effects of pollution, but our descendents will suffer from it. Let’s think about the future and love our planet because it is a divine gift to have such a marvelous world and not kill it because of our obstinacy.

Let’s be conscious of the pollution and preserve our rivers. Let’s remember that in the rivers there is also life. Let’s take care of them.

He tenido un sueño o tal vez ilusión. Soñé un mundo bello, lleno de paz y amor, donde no había guerras y existía el perdón y todo estaba lejos de la contaminación.

Soñé una ciudad limpia donde todos perseveraban y creían en un sólo Dios. Ese era el Dios de amor.

Si todo el planeta amara a un sólo Dios, todo sería diferente. Ya no más guerras, y ríos limpios, adiós contaminación.

Hoy desperté 5:30 a.m. y me di cuenta que todo era un sueño, que nuestro planeta y ríos están siendo contaminados sin escrúpulos.

Tal vez nosotros no sentimos mucho el efecto de la contaminación, pero nuestra descendencia la sufrirá. Pensemos en el futuro y amemos nuestro planeta porque es un regalo divino tener un mundo tan maravilloso y matarlos por nuestra terquedad.

Tomemos conciencia de la contaminación, preservemos nuestros ríos. Recordemos que en los ríos también hay vida. Así cuidémoslos.

by Marco Antonio Chong Galán, Peru
Title: Verde Limón, Azul Cristal
(Lemon Green, Clear Blue)
Leonardo Dávila Reátegui
Peruvian Wings University (Pucallpa, Peru); sophomore

Paper rainbow,
Trash all around,
A circus of odors.

Injured birds,
Butterflies crying,
The fields hide
Their flowers.

The clouds cry,
The wind talks nonsense,
Where is the lemon green?
Where is the clear blue?

Who will go? Who will clean it up?
The river and the sea,
The field and the Andes,
Without scoffing, nor pain.

He did not tell me, “very soon,
I will go,”
The sun heated up, because the trees
Are gone.

It was not their fault
It was man’s fault,
Because of his ambition, because he did
not have lemon green in his heart.

“Do not worry,” I told him
After me, were born
Beautiful flowers and formidable
Hearts.

With steel hands
Ready to help
Green and more green
Air and more air,
The sun smiled at me
Upon seeing that the earth
Would not be burned anymore.
Nació un mundo,
Un mundo verde
Y azul.

Todos ¡viva ¡Viva!
Perfecta creación.

Las estrellas y las Constelaciones,
Todos llenos de emoción.

Ángeles y trompetas
Fiesta por el ser,
Un mundo lleno de ser
Llene, lleno de ser.

Un año, un cielo,
Solo faltó, el nuevo
Mundo viejo se volvió.

El gris y el marrón
Al mundo mezcló,
Smog y humo el cielo
Cubrió.

Viejo y marrón,
Seco y dorado,
Sin brisa volvió.

La fiesta en el cielo todo cesó.
Las estrellas y las galaxias,
Llorando vivió.

Porque uno de sus Amigos, de gris y marrón
Se volvió.

Un ángel dijo, “es que el hombre Ambicionó,” y el mar no sabió.

Ayúdame a salvar
El azul del mar,
El verde aliento de los Prados.

Y ayúdame a salvar la fiesta galaxial.

A world was born,
A green world
And blue.

Everyone alive! Alive!
Perfect creation.

The stars and the Constellations,
Everything filled with emotion.

Angels and trumpets Celebration for life
A world full of life
Full, full of life.

A year, a cycle,
The only thing missing, the new World became old.

The gray and the brown
Mixed with the world
Smog and smoke covered The sky.

Old and brown,
Dry and corroded,
The wind died out.

The celebration in heaven ceased.
The stars and the galaxies,
Cried.

Because one of their Friends, gray and brown
It became.

An angel said, “Man is overly Ambitious,” and the sea gave in.

Help me to save
The blue of the sea,
The green breath of the Fields.

And help me to save the celebration in the galaxies.
Title: Cuidemos la Quebrada Alcantarilla
(LET’S TAKE CARE OF THE ALCANTARILLA STREAM)

Nora Elizabeth Reátegui Herrera
Peruvian Wings University (Pucallpa, Peru); junior

In my town called Palcazu – in the district of Puerto Bermudez, province of Oxapampa, and department of Pasco, Peru – there is a stream called “La Alcantarilla”. A long time ago, this stream was the best place for housekeepers to wash their clothes and throw out their garbage without anyone seeing them or saying anything. Everyday, both in the morning and at night, people would bathe and wash their clothes in the stream. Some people would walk to the stream and others would travel by motorcar; it was very fun. When I first went to Alcantarilla Stream, the neighbors had just discovered the stream and the water was clean and safe to drink. However, little by little its beauty declined because the neighbors washed their clothes and bathed in the stream; they also left the plastic laundry detergent bags on the edge of the stream and some bags in the middle of the stream. This irresponsibility caused many people who lived near the stream to get sick when they drank the contaminated water.

At this point the neighbors decided to take care of the stream because their life depended on the water as well as the fish that lived in the stream. Therefore, they cleaned up the stream and made many improvements. They put a sign next to the stream that read, “LET’S TAKE CARE OF AND PROTECT THE ALCANTARILLA STREAM,” and below this it said, “The person who throws detergent bags or food products that pollute the stream will be fined...REMEMBER THIS!” Since then, the people of Palcazu and visitors began to care for the stream because it was the source of drinking water for their homes. It was also a big lesson that everyone in general needed to learn, given that the flora and fauna are beautiful resources that we need to care for and love.

En mi pueblo llamado Paleazu - distrito de Puerto Bermudez – provincia de Oxapampa y departamento de Pasco – Perú, existe una quebrada llamada La Alcantarilla. Esta quebrada hace mucho tiempo, era el mejor lugar para las empleadas del hogar porque aquí ellas podían lavar sus ropas y dejar la basura sin que nadie les diga nada o les exhorte. Todos los días, tanto en las mañanas como en las tardes, las personas iban a bañarse y a lavar sus ropas a la quebrada. Algunos venían caminando y otros en motocarros, era muy divertido. Cuando yo iba en aquel entonces, la quebrada Alcantarilla recién había sido descubierta por los vecinos que vivían alrededor de ella y el agua era limpia y buena para tomar.

Sin embargo, poco a poco fue disminuyendo su hermosura por el descuido de aquellas personas que iban a lavar y a bañarse en ese lugar, ya que dejaban sus basuras de los detergentes tirados a los costados de la quebrada aunque algunos en medio de ella. Este irresponsable hecho hizo que las personas que vivían cerca de allí se enfermaran por tomar aquel agua que ya estaba contaminada.

Fue entonces allí que los moradores del lugar decidieron tomar mucha importancia a la quebrada porque de ella dependía su sustento tanto el agua como los peces que había en ella. Consecuentemente, limpiaron e hicieron muchos arreglos para mejorarla y cuidarla. Así, pusieron un letrero al lado de la quebrada que decía: CUIDEMOS Y PROTEJAMOS LA QUEBRADA ALCANTARILLA, y más abajo había un aviso pequeño que decía: El que bote restos de detergente o algún tipo de alimento que contamine el agua tendrá que pagar multa... ¡RECUERDENLO! Desde aquel entonces las personas de Paleazu y los visitantes empezaron a tomarle más valor a la quebrada porque era de mucha ayuda para todos aquellos que no tenían agua potable en sus respectivas casas y además era un ejemplo muy grande que tenían que aprender todos en general, ya que la flora y la fauna son recursos muy lindos que tenemos que cuidar y amar.
Water is life
And life is water,
Without it we cannot live
Much less exist.

Water is our sustenance
We should not waste it,
It is the best food
And we should take care of it.

Alongside the rivers run
Spring waters;
Help us Lord! to protect,
Your heavenly creation.

El agua es vida
Y vida es el agua,
Sin ella no podemos vivir
Mucho menos existir.

El agua es nuestro sustento
No debemos desperdiciarla,
Es el mejor alimento
Y debemos cuidarla.

Por los ríos corren
Aguas manantiales;
¡Ayúdanos Señor! a proteger,
Tus creaciones celestiales.

by Jennifer Sarita Rategui Evangelista
Husares del Peru; Grade 1

by Debora Talita Rategui Macedo
Husares del Peru; Grade 9
The Yangtze River
No. 16 Middle School, China

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!

杨子江流过我的祖国，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

Waterfall
Rica Imafuku, Grade 3 (2004)
Hokkaido International School, Japan

Waterfall Waterfall
come down come down.

If the Mountain cries, the waterfall will come down.

But if the Mountain stops crying, the waterfall will go back to its home.
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**

_Yuriy Bodnar (2003) 5th Grade_

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 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.
Playing with the River
Kasper Watanabe, Grade 3 (2004)
Hokkaido International School, Japan

I tried to cross the river, but it was too far.
My feet splashed into the quiet river.
The salmon licked my feet.
It tickled.
I was patient waiting until the salmon stopped and swam away.

The Way The World Started
Anushka Nair, Grade 3
Oak Creek Elementary, Lake Oswego

CRASH! A meteor strikes splashing everything. It floats in you. Not sinking. Out comes fish. Lots of fish. Who are people in disguise. Now those little people swim in your waters. And the meteor is a log. Is that how the world started?

(by Norita Elizabeth Reategui Herrera
Peruvian Wings University (Pucallpa, Peru); Junior

(In Hindi)
Practical Strategies for Preserving the Jungle in the Ucayali Region of Peru

International Baccalaureate Essay by

Sarah Miller, Grade 12
South Salem High School

As a candidate for the International Baccalaureate Program, I was required to write a 4000-word analytical research paper. After extensive research, I decided to focus my thesis on the search for sustainable and practical strategies to help address the urgent global issue of rainforest destruction in third world countries. To collect primary data, I traveled to Peru for two weeks in August, 2009 to conduct research on a 200-hectare area of land in the Ucayali Region of the Amazon jungle. This land is a mixture of pasture, farmland, and untouched rainforest. Historically, a primary factor driving the clear cutting of rainforests has been farmers' need to create subsistence farms in order to feed and support their families. Therefore, I expected to develop recommendations related to providing monetary incentives encouraging farmers to preserve the forests.

Through my research in Peru, I came to a conclusion that I found both interesting and encouraging. After interviewing countless farmers, engineers, and directors of agriculture, the theme that emerged was a lack of education and information. The landowners were not aware of the significant direct benefits that rainforests provide to them such as food sources, shaded areas for crop growth, wood for household needs, and plants that contain medicinal value.

It is encouraging that various educational approaches such as periodic visits by professionals to educate landowners about research-based farming techniques could be made available to local farmers. Fortunately, because the regional government currently supports agricultural extension services, this strategy could be implemented at relatively little cost. An education-based approach appears to be a practical strategy that could significantly promote preservation of rainforests.
Our Beautiful River

Caresse Smit, Grade 4
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

The beautiful river, shimmering and shiny
A nice white bridge sitting above it
Little fish diving here and there
High and low
What a beautiful view!

Cars driving across the Fremont Bridge -
"Beep! Beep!"
Speed boats racing, like a competition.

It's sometimes just so nice
Here in the city, even just
Driving and looking at the views.

by Hayden Hopkins, Grade 6
Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School, Salem

The Images of Nature

Jonathan Huang, Grade 4 (2009)
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

The winter snow reveals a soft white painting,
With icicles hanging everywhere.
The deer are now gone,
Leaving the trails empty and bare.

As spring comes and the snow melts,
The river regains life from the mountain.
Fishes return along with birds, while
Flowers bloom and trees awaken.

The river is lazy in the summer,
Like the willow trees that sway over the water.
The air is filled with festivals and laughter,
Fireworks, hotdogs, and hamburgers.

Fall is brilliant with all kinds of colors.
The leaves are now golden,
With hues of red and orange and yellow.
Soon winter will be back with a new painting.

by Hayden Hopkins, Grade 6
Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School, Salem
The River and Ocean

Ava M Bean, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School, Portland

The river is connected to the ocean.
The ocean is connect to the river.
They are like brother and sister, river and ocean.

Untitled

by Elizabeth Mendez, Grade 7
Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School, Salem

This is the way I want my grandchildren to see it. Many other generations will come, and they too, will see it the same way. Children of all shapes and colors will come, and they will see how it shimmers like pixie dust in the sun. It will be almost white because of how clean it is. Even the rocks will be colors that make them seem surreal. And we will all laugh at the pleasure of such a wonderful thing. Beavers and ducks greeting us and each other. Travelers will come speechless, as if in another world. It will be so wonderful; it will have an aura of awe. This is my fantasy, when we will all wake up one morning, and be determined. Everyone will be excited and eager to help. Together, we will make a difference. We will clean up the Willamette River. What we do today shall affect us tomorrow. It’s not easy, but our love for this masterpiece of nature can overcome any barrier. Because we all want to live that feeling of pride, that we can all experience something beautiful.

The River is a Home

Madeline Bielby, Grade 2
Forest Ridge Elementary, Keizer

River is home, hooted the old owl.
River is home, chirped the Northern Mockingbird.
River is home, said the rascally raccoon.
River is home, replied the stinking skunk.
River is home, howled the sneaky wolf.

Salmon Jump Fish Ladder

Josiah Rubie, Grade 3
Adams Elementary, Eugene

Salmon jump ladder.
Little salmon have yolk sacs.
Hide in dark water.
untitled

Emma Dudley, Grade 4
Forest Hills Elementary, Lake Oswego

Soft waves along the shore,
Flowing through parts of Oregon, door to door.
Like a butterfly in the spring
Here melancholy there is no such thing.
No incredulous thought crosses my mind,
That the Willamette River is so divine.
Flowing towards the great big ocean,
Using just a little motion.
To its wonderful beauty.
Forever flowing through my heart,
The Willamette River is a big part
Of Oregon and will be forever.

my friend

Caroline Lee, Grade 4
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

The river is so beautiful,
it makes paintings in my mind
The river is so quiet,
I can sleep by it for hours
The river is so peaceful,
fish make it their habitat
The river is so smooth,
it dances everywhere
The river is my friend,
I love it anywhere!

the forest

Amanda Le, Grade 11
Oregon City High School, Oregon City

I am the kind of gal whose spirit is lost outdoors, who wanders forests, campsites and parks, as if I were to find a secret stash.
I think of it as an adventurous hike where I'm on a hunt to find my buried treasure.
I touch leaves and notice how droplets are placed upon them; I observe the droplets rolling off of the stems and the arms of the plants.
I notice how the dirt is colored; there seem to be more birds chirping, and I hear the slight water flowing from somewhere I cannot see.
I hear the sound of running water but I cannot see it.
So I search to try to reach for that water, I have to find the water!
I find myself divided by walls, guards that separate me from the river.
They thrash, they splint, and they spike; some call them thorn barriers and some call them sticker bushes.
So I dodge and hop, weave and seize my way through. With a few wounds, I finally find one of nature's finest qualities.
A scene where I find myself at peace and touching mother nature's holy water.
Rivers

Martin Hill, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School, Portland

Past many bridges tall and long.
Past many ridges high and strong.
By animals and people by and by.
Then to the ocean beside the sky.

A Single Stream

Claire Brown, Grade 4
Forest Hills Elementary, Lake Oswego

A single stream,
A string, a line,
A bit of water,
Small, so fine.
But then the hearts
Of many lives,
Turned a dying river
To one that thrives.

The River

Avery Haines, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School, Portland

The river is full of life and adventure.
The river is beside us when we are sad.
The river will sing to us in our dreams.
The river will spread life throughout our body.

Jonathan’s Investigation Keys to Our Nature

Jonathan Sosa-Orta, Grade 7 (2009)
Agnes Stewart Middle School, Springfield

The Jasper Slough is located in Springfield, Oregon behind Agnes Stewart Middle School. The water in the slough is polluted most of the time. However, you can see tons of birds, turtles, and frogs. Also, my stepdad said this, “A slough can be stagnant like the Dead Sea.” A slough can also become stagnant when an area of land becomes land locked. (Land locked is when there’s no inlet or outlet).

Poem by Jonathan Sosa-Orta
Sometimes at the slough, the sky is gray and blue. There could be a bird sitting on a log and singing nearby a frog.
In the distance you can hear a slow moving train and watch the flight of a gray crane.
I watch a playful deer, these are the sounds I enjoy to hear.

I thank my stepdad for teaching me all about the Jasper Slough!
The River

Greta deBoer, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School, Portland

The flowing river is like a gentle breeze rippling the trees.
A rough river is like a knight at war.
The gentle river is like a mother rocking her baby to sleep.

Untitled

The Alder Room, Grade 3
Franciscan Montessori Earth School, Portland

Clouds swirl in the sky while playful osprey fly high.

Plants below wave "Hi!"

Ducks paddle along singing a song all day long.

The Willamette River

David Young, Grade 5 (2005)
Ashbrooke Independent School, Corvallis

The Willamette River is important to my dad and me because it provides a place to ride our bikes side by side and see the river’s beauty! When the wind blew over the Willamette River, we could feel some of the spray on our faces. Some of the birds, like swallows, swooped down to the Willamette and took a sip of water. The peaceful sound of the river gave my dad and me a chance to talk to each other without someone interrupting. When I think of all the special times with my dad, the bike ride along the Willamette River is a wonderful memory. Someday, when my kids learn how to ride bikes, I will take them on the same trail!

River of Life

Samantha Keller, Grade 6 (2005)
daVinci Arts Middle School, Portland

A river is simply
A reflection of life
You start as a stream
Young and weak
Slowly you speed,
Into a teenager
Struggling
Through the rocks of life,
Once past the rocks
You calm into a steady adult
Into the bends
And forks
Of life
Into the ocean
Of choices.
Recalling Home

Nathan C. Warner
Marylhurst University, Marylhurst

I remember
The golden disarray
Dancing across sparkling
Ripples of the river

I remember
Seeing children play
With castles of sand
With knights of the ocean

I remember
Hidden oases
Burrowed in the
Shore’s forest

I remember
Flocks of citizens
Swarming the banks
In wilting summer air

Disturbed by
Flashing steel
Swimming up and down
The flow of water

We fight upstream
Up Hwy 20
Towards the peaks
Towards the source

Glaciers dominate
Our vision, snow
Freezes our feet
Inside our sneakers

The skies peppered cloudy
Begin to powder the land
With the freezing bite
Of winter’s night

No longer
Brown in color
But red, yellow
Pink, and purple

With stalks
Of green
The tulip’s fifteen minutes
Came and went

I remember
Round inner tubes
Of burning black rubber
Carrying me in stupor

The shore side
Faded with
Piles of smiling
Smolders of soot

From fireside
We sang choruses
Of merriment.
Celebrating,

Summer’s Heat.
Dancing with salted sweats
Cleansed only
By Mt. Baker’s tears

I remember
The faint lines
Of murky blue
Squiggled through green

Dragging their own
Cold memories
Of harsh snowfall
And dense isolation
From the peaks
Still bathed in white
I behold the valley’s glory
From Park Butte to Padilla Bay

A majesty
In full gamut of
The enchanted power
Of Skagit River

My Home
My Valley
Our land
Our Soul.
As I Walk

Emma Young, Grade 5 (2004)
Abiqua School, Salem

As I walk along the riverbank,
I hear the soft lapping of waves against the shore.
A pair of birds soar above the treetops,
Singing.
I see the green, lush forest.
I feel peaceful.
And I smile.

Pollution

Laura Jameison (2005)
Marylhurst University, Marylhurst

I turn a corner into a small asphalt lane
bordered by short spring grasses,
- I think it used to be a boat ramp -
concrete slabs, two feet tall, block its path to the river,
the smell of McD’s french fries fill my car,
- These lunches used to come in styrofoam packages,
now wrapped in paper, an environmental gesture -
Rolling my window down,
the sound of rushing water floods
away noise in my mind.
The waters are near breaching point,
muck brown and determined.
A sky-blue square sign reads
“River mile 0.0, Tualatin River Watershed.”
A blue heron standing,
looking at the number as if,
as if, he really knows what it says.
Out on the Willamette River, there,
a tiny boat, putting, serene.
A round domestic duck flies just above
the storming water, a pair of mallards
bob on the waves unconcerned.
Looking at them - the birds are coming back! -
I suddenly realize winter is over,
though it seemed as if it never arrived.
- Do the trees know? -
I notice the grass in a way I had not noticed
before reading Grassland*.
Stabbing up from the shortened green
are brown spears and little oriental fans of last
summer’s growth.
It’s peaceful here, except for the river song, not far away I can see a small parking lot,
there are two school buses, one postal truck, and a couple of smaller
cars. The people inside all eating the same lunches with
their windows rolled down, watching the rivers and dreaming.
Like me they seek solitude, to stretch their hopes and try
to find balance within the world, though the Earth’s song.
And yet there’s too many of us packed together,
styrofoam packing peanuts, too much static, they explode
away from each other, again, and again, no solitude,
no balance.
Invited Writers

The authors 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.

Pine Island Paradox

by Kathleen Dean Moore

In this passage, Ms. Moore writes about her visit to Davis Lake after a fire devastated a forested area by the lake that her family had camped in for twenty years.

I’m a philosopher by trade, so I should know how to be philosophical about loss. The world is in flux, and change is the only constant. Forests are no exception; they grow and burn and grow again. I know this. Everybody knows it. Almost three thousand years ago, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus acknowledged the necessity of change: You can’t step into the same river twice, he said. But why not, I want to know. Why can’t what is beautiful last forever?

In Heraclitus’s world of constant change, don’t we all yearn for some pause in the river, an eddy, where the water slows and circles back upstream for a long, calm time before it rejoins the flow? This is what Davis Lake was for me – a quiet circle of the seasons, a place where the world seemed to come to rest. A place my family could return, year after year, as the cranes returned, as the water returned, and the yellow blooms of the bitterbrush. The constancy of the lake had reassured me, the reliable circle of life.

But in this greening place of ashes and springs, I began to understand that time cannot move in a circle, coming again to where it was before. Time sweeps in a spiral, going round and round again – the cycles of the seasons, the flow of the cold springs, the growth of a forest or a child, but never returns to the same place.

And shouldn’t I be grateful for this! That birds will nest in the Davis Lake basin, even though that particular pair of owlets will never fly again. Trees will grow beside the creek, as my grandchildren will grow on the green-banked stream. Willows thickets will tremble with morning ice, the songs of red-winged blackbirds, the slow unfolding of a dragonfly’s wings. And we who love this world will tremble with the beauty of the spiral that has brought us here and the mystery of the spiral that will carry us away.

Kathleen Dean Moore is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and the founding director of the Spring Creek Project for Ideas, Nature, and the Written Word. Her current work is in the areas of environmental ethics and philosophy and nature, where she has published three award-winning books of essays: The Pine Island Paradox (Milkweed Editions, 2004); Holdfast: At Home in the Natural World (Lyons Press, 1999, 2004); and Riverwalking: Reflections on Moving Water (Harcourt Brace, 1996). She is co-editor of a forthcoming collection of articles about Rachel Carson’s legacy and challenge and the co-editor of How It Is: A Native American Philosophy, the collected papers of the late Viola Cordova.
River Poems


Ursula K. Le Guin grew up in Berkeley, California. She went to Radcliffe College and did graduate work at Columbia University. She married Charles A. Le Guin, a historian, in Paris in 1953; they have lived in Portland, Oregon, since 1958, and have three children and three grandchildren.

Ursula K. Le Guin writes both poetry and prose, and in various modes including realistic fiction, science fiction, fantasy, young children’s books, books for young adults, screenplays, essays, verbal texts for musicians, and voicetexts for performance or recording. She has published six books of poetry, twenty novels, over a hundred short stories (collected in eleven volumes), four collections of essays, eleven books for children, and four volumes of translation. Few American writers have done work of such high quality in so many forms.


drawing by Tom Ahn
Sprague High School, Salem (2002)

Noisy
I knew a creek once full of singing children, children singing loudly, spring nights, way upstream.
This river now, over the knock and rumble of rocks deep in the rush of the current,
is full of women’s voices, conversations
I almost understand, but the wind whispers in the leaves in the opposite direction and cancels what they’re saying, the women in the river gossiping and grumbling, easy and urgent, and the distant laughter.

Last of August
In what meter does the wind blow on a river? Can I know the clear feet of the water? An older measure, longer yet suddener.
Boulders under the bright flood mutter of the mountain, imitating thunder. A dead tree on the other shore falls in one slow drumbeat.

Drouth
Many people have put their heads up out of the river to look at the year with no rain. They have tufts of dry hair and look surprised, but peaceful.

Quiet
There is a river above the river like the dreaming or the breathing of the river. Only as the sun rises over the cedars can you see the spirit river flowing slowly, but listen as you will, you will not hear it.

The Molsen
I made a river, braiding together the Rhine and Seine and Hudson, weaving the grey with green, water and weather, bridges and reeds, another reflecting flood downrunning forever towards – Ah! to what sea?

Out of wet meadows rising in rivermist, the city spire over roof over bridge, distant stands; the streets are full of men; children gaze from windows at the river. What matter? All seas are bitter.
Cascade Rapids, with Fisherman
by Kim Stafford

A man stands by the river.
All that was flows away.
A woman sits by the river.
All that will be is coming.
A child in shredded cedar bark gazes.

At the portage, the people are traveling.
The elders have learned to be still.
The river is teaching, remembering prophecy:
Salmon goes upriver. Fine bones tumble down.

Is the wind a different fluency than water?
Is a child’s long cry the river disguised?

The river, going down, turns over.
All flows toward another place.
Those who are gone stand here.
I will await you at the crossing.


Clifford Edgar Stafford (January 17, 1914 - August 28, 1993) was an American poet and noted pacifist, as well as the father of the poet and essayist Kim Stafford. A long-time resident of Oregon, he and his writings are sometimes identified with the Pacific Northwest.

Climbing along the River
by William Stafford

Willows never forget how it feels to be young.
Do you remember where you came from?
Gravel remembers.

Even the upper end of the river
Believes in the ocean.

Exactly at midnight
Yesterday sighs away.

What I believe is,
All animals have one soul.

Over the land they love
They crisscross forever.


Kim Stafford grew up in Oregon, Iowa, Indiana, California, and Alaska, following his parents as they taught & traveled through the West. He is the author of a dozen books of poetry and prose, and the director of the Northwest Writing Institute and the William Stafford Center at Lewis & Clark College, where he has taught since 1979. He holds a Ph.D. in medieval literature from the University of Oregon, and has worked as a printer, photographer, oral historian, editor, and visiting writer at a host of colleges and schools. He lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife and children.
How to Say Kwakiutl
by Don Colburn (2008)

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 treetrunk 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.

Don Colburn lives in Portland, Oregon, where he is a reporter for The Oregonian. He had two collections
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.
Steelhead Almost
by Henry Hughes (2009)

Too dark to retie,
they walk fishless over the bridge,
break-down rods and unboot
for the dry drive home.
Oh well, one man says. That’s fishing.
The other doesn’t want to talk. There’s a barbecue tomorrow.
If you catch something, she said. That’d be wonderful.

Following headlights, he feels again
that strike behind the stone--
cherry-blushed chrome, leapsilver and dive.
Then gone. Canyon pouring river,
swallows spading air. The trees shrug
as if nothing happened.

In a hole deeper than sleep, the steelhead
undulates fragrance and flow, nudging forward
three thousand orangey eggs
in her bright sleeve.

A native of Long Island, Henry Hughes has made Oregon his
home since 2002. His first collection of poems, Men Holding Eggs,
received the 2004 Oregon Book Award; his poetry and essays have
appeared in Harvard Review, Northwest Review, and Seattle Re-
view. He is currently an Associate Professor of English at Western
Oregon University in Monmouth, Oregon.

Tapwater
by Charles Goodrich (2007)

On a hot day that first cold sip
is electric. The tongue wakes up
and wags its tail.

Now nose and hindbrain
detect an aftertaste:
chlorine, alum,
and the cerebellum interjects
sad history,
river sewer.

Another swallow, a pause
to smack lips, watch bubbles
rise like thoughts
And now comes affluence -
glugging down the entire glass

ah, tapwater! From mountain snow,
to river, to ocean, to sky. And back
to the heat of the day.

Charles Goodrich is a poet, a gardener, a father,
a husband, a neighbor, a tinkerer, a builder of
houses. He makes his home in Corvallis, in the
Willamette Valley of Oregon, located on the con-
ffluence of the Willamette and Mary’s Rivers.
Take a River
by Ellen Waterson (2007)

Take a river and bend it, a dream and transcend it. Take adventure and seek it, an idea and build it.

January 1905. In light and city years, Bend, you’re so young. Stop for a moment to run a finger along the dusty shelf of history, step in the footprint of cork boot, leather brogan, beaded moccasin to see where we have been, where we might go.

Ta-ma-no-hus chuck, this magical river. Skoo-kum sah-gah-lee ill-a-hee: mighty mountains.

To-ke-tie: so pretty. Pol-ak-lee: this night. Chief Chinook, Chief Paulina, you fished along this heron-priested shore, hunted deer and elk on stealthy feet. Did you not see the greed of trappers reaping a Deschutes fat with fish and beaver? Did you not hear the alarm of ox-cart wheels? Homesteaders, thousands, crossed a continent in wagons and carts for land that is one third rock; for a chance to stake their claim to hope, pulled behind horse-drawn plow and rake.

Farewell Bend, Thomas Clark named it -- 1851. A place for these prairie schooners to port, to clear land for dreams, to write ambition in thin, blue flumes of river water Alexander Drake channeled across this dry land.

Life then hard on proper women. Canned all scorching summer over wood stoves. Tended children, milk cow, garden, bonnet brims blown backward by thirsty wind. They’d lift their skirts to dodge dirt or boardwalk splinter; never showed more than two inches of ankle; never walked on Greenwood and Bond -- especially when buckaroos or herders tangled through town, chasing down sheep, driving cattle through the streets. It was said the dust didn’t settle for days. When it did the ladies of the night paid cash for their new shoes.

Bend, an outpost of hope, from range through world wars. Before 1911 was the biggest empty in the whole country with no railroad. Shaniko -- as far as you could go. From there a wagon-road south, nothing but rut-holes and boulders. Passengers would lay hold to help push Cornett coaches stuck in a bog. Seven hours to Bend on a good day.

These same downtown streets platted according to wagon widths: Bond and Wall three across, Oregon and Minnesota only two. Folks scrambled for seats on the rickety stage, heady with the sense of going to…who knew? Ah, the intoxication of: “Who knew?” Who knew what lay between sleeping volcano, high prairie and bright water that traced the shores of this high desert island adrift in Central Oregon’s starry deep.

_A New Englander who married and now lives in Bend, Oregon, Waterson grounds her writing in both of those cultural and geographic landscapes. Her award-winning essays, short stories and poems have been published in numerous journals and anthologies and reviews._
The Wetlands Conservancy works in partnership with others to conserve, protect and restore wetlands. Sponsors and contributors to the Honoring Our River anthology such as Portland General Electric, SOLV and Clean Water Services are great examples of the fine organizations that TWC works with. The following story highlights one of The Wetland Conservancy’s many public and private business partners.

Willamette Valley Wine, Wetlands & Wildlife
by Merrilee Buchanan (2005)

Nestled between Oregon’s Coast Range and the Willamette River, at the confluence of two meandering creeks, the Buchanan Family Century Farm is accustomed to the influence of water. In fact, during the rainy season almost half of the farm disappears under water. As the rains come, the streams rise, overflowing across the farm’s wide floodplain of native wetlands and woodlands.

For five generations, our family farmers have left natural processes uninterrupted to preserve fish and wildlife habitat. To date, the farm boasts more than 200 acres of land protected under a Wetland Reserve Program with ponds and habitat for diverse native plants and animals including over 100 species of birds.

Commodities grown and raised at the farm in recent years include sheep, hazelnuts, grass seed, hay pasture, and wine grapes. The farm also operates Tyee Wine Cellars, a small winery open to the public for tasting and sales, hiking and picnicking, concerts, community fundraisers and special events.

Ongoing projects in the wetland and riparian zones include planting and encouraging native trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges and other wetland plants, discouraging invasive plants, and maintaining a low impact, 1.5 mile interpretive trail through diverse wetlands and woodland habitat, open to the public during winery tasting room hours through the dry season.

At Beaver Creek Vineyards and Tyee Wine Cellars on the Buchanan Family Century Farm, we continue to promote Salmon-safe farming practices. Our vineyard, with its perennial grass cover crop and mature riparian border, is certified under the Salmon-safe ecolabel. In the vineyard we use only organically acceptable sulfur dust for pest control. We provide habitat and nesting boxes for native bird species, allow wide and well established riparian buffers to protect nearby creeks, enhancing habitat for native trout and other salmonids.

We continue to study, learn, and share more about our dynamic wetlands habitat.

Story by Merrilee Buchanan. Wetlands, Winter 2004
Aeolian
by Amy Klauke Minato (2005)

Breath of dawn, river
of smooth light. Earth turns up
her belly for your caress.
Tree boughs bend
and shake. Bird song
you bring. Seeds. Tremulous
shadows. Bright jeweled leaves
ring at my feet.
Splash me with blossoms.
Lick my cheek and hair
with your pollen tongue.
My body opens and your voice
enters my heart. I leap
into your swift passage. Embrace
of sweet rain, of flower scent,
of curdled sky. Touch me,
and my skin quivers
like the moon
on the water.

Amy Klauke Minato received a 2004 Oregon
Literary Arts Fellowship for her poetry and a
Walden Fellowship for her prose. Her publi-
cations include pieces in FROM HERE WE
SPEAK: AN ANTHOLOGY OF OREGON
POETRY, and in the following journals: Madi-
son Review, Cottonwood Magazine, Cimarron
Review, Wild Earth, Fireweed Magazine, Wil-
derness Magazine and Seneca Review among
others. Amy holds both an MFA in Creative
Writing and an MS in Environmental Studies
from the University of Oregon.

Elegy with Mallards
by Elizabeth McLagan (2005)

August held Grandpa to the wheel
of his tractor, hat clamped down
against the haying sun.

Behind him, thickets in the grip
of blackberry, the river called
and ducks circled, looking
for stubble and rain.

He loved the winter land, flattened
and resting, the river let off its leash,
fog so low it might be cloud-walking.

Leaving the house, he picked up
the gun, called the dog, and in those flooded
fields found what mallards know:

breath tight, heart like a fist,
the flapping of wings.

Elizabeth McLagan is a free-lance writer and instruc-
tor at Portland Community College. In addition to her
book on African Americans in Oregon, A Peculiar Para-
dise: A History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788-1940, she has
written and contributed to several books on women and
minorities in Oregon.

Return to the River

The rain had stopped and the sun was out, not a strong sun but enough to make the mild day
comfortably warm. The old man liked the light of it among the alders; it was on the leaves, not
slipping through the frail green of them as it did in springtime-less lovely now perhaps, less delicate,
less promising, but still a good thing, with its reminder of frost and ruffed grouse and the winter
strength of the river. He walked slowly, looking about him, drawing the last sap of pleasure from
the familiar things, the blue of sky between the living leaves, the brown of last year’s leaves under-
foot, the sound of the river, the dusty purple of the Oregon grape clusters against their stiff and
glossy leaves. But his mind was still on the chinooks. One must love them for their fine strength
and beauty, for the simple complete pattern of their lives, for all they are and all they represent. But
more than anything else is the mystery of their movement, the carrying of the river out into the un-
known parts of the sea, the long slow return, straining back to the source that bred them, bringing
the fullness and might of the sea to the clear confining channel of the river.

Roderick Haig-Brown was born in England but lived his adult life on Vancouver Island, along the banks of the
Campbell River. He is the author of To Know a River, A River Never Sleeps, and Silver. The following excerpts
are from Return to the River: The Classic Story of the Chinook Run and the Men Who Fish It. Copyright 1997 by
Valerie Haig-Brown. Reprinted by permission of The Lyons Press.
Waiting for Salmon

by Barry Lopez

Over the decades I’ve lived here and watched these fish spawn, I’ve witnessed three major changes in the woods around me. The populations of some species of birds—Swainson’s Thrush and MacGillvray’s Warbler, for example—have dwindled and the range and intensity of birdsong have declined. The probable cause is the elimination of these species’ homes in the neotropics, where they overwinter. Fewer now survive to return north.

A second change, more obvious to those for whom news of the loss of birds brings only a philosophical shrug, is that our winters are milder. Thirty years ago, winters here were marked by four or five snowstorms, a couple of which might have made the forty-mile drive to town too risky to chance. I can’t recall the last time we had a snowfall that accumulated, that amounted to more than a snow shower, or the last time the temperature dipped into the teens Fahrenheit. The probable cause—a recurrent and natural event likely accelerated this time by the hand of man—is global warming, a phenomenon now so widely reported and documented it makes America’s official stance of equivocation look deliberately, cabalistically ignorant. How global warming will affect the fate of Chinook salmon, and all that’s tied to them, is one of the many Gordian knots in natural history blithely dismissed by Americans still trying to pull Charles Darwin’s pants down. Meanwhile the problems—the wholly unanticipated secondary effects of mega-engineering projects, for example—continue to arrive like horsemen on the dawn horizon.

The third change has been confounding—a seeming reversal of the popular assertion, tedious to some, that the natural world is falling apart. Here’s what, confoundingly, happened: after years of decline, the number of salmon spawning on the McKenzie suddenly went up. The year I moved here, 1970, I counted sixteen adult Chinook salmon on the gravel flats in September. During the thirty-two years following, that number fell, slowly but steadily. In 2002 only three turned up. Then, in September 2003, thirteen appeared. That fall, scientists later told me, four times as many spring Chinook arrived on the upper McKenzie as had come—on average—in any of the previous fifteen years. Since the mid-Eighties the total number of returning natives (so called to set them apart from hatchery fish) had hovered at around 1,000. In 2003, 5,784 reached the upper river. A further speculation, at the time, was that these elevated numbers of returning salmon might be just as high in 2004 (they nearly were—4,789 came in) and that they might well be again in 2005.

Biologists at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other concerned historians of the natives’ fate, speculated that increased upwelling in the eastern Pacific Ocean (the North American side) caused a sudden improvement in feeding conditions at sea, which accounted for an increase in the rate of survival for three, four, and five-year-old springers. A greater-than-usual number, then, would have survived the familiar gauntlet—hundreds of miles of commercial fishing, toxic spills, dams, gravel-mining operations—to swim up the river and spawn.

Fisheries’ biologists, staring at these numbers, have at least two important questions still to address. With feeding conditions at sea suddenly improved, would freshwater conditions show a similar improvement? And, how many smolts born of these larger adult populations would return to spawn?

The sudden recovery of 2003 and 2004 is statistically striking, but it’s finally insignificant as a sign of overall health in the ecosystem of which the fish is a part. Biologists did not see ‘improvement’ in 2003 and 2004. They saw an anomaly, a not-quite-comprehensible ‘perturbation’. 
I phoned my younger brother in coastal Maine when I learned of the high count of returning salmon in 2003. He told me it had been another bumper year, there, for lobster; but the explanation for Maine's recent record harvests, he told me, was nothing good. Biologists, I learned, attribute them to 'dysfunction' in the near-shore ecosystem.

A partial explanation they offer is that stocks of wild fish that feed regularly on lobster larvae, such as coastal cod and rock bass, have declined sharply. In other words, there are more lobster because the predatory fish population has collapsed.

This more complex story—in which global warming again is suspected of playing a definite but unspecified role—has a depth that fits it poorly to television news, with its penchant for summary accounts. Such natural events—when they're reported—are normally rounded up into breezy, upbeat bulletins, suggesting, in this instance, the irrepressible economic strength of the lobster industry. The good times, many people in Maine are encouraged to believe, have returned. Difficult times are too hard to explain.

Maine's huge lobster harvests are an unstable process, one without an end point. We can't 'fix' the 'lobster problem'; it has no solution. And, knowing that its components—warming water, biochemical fluctuations—have some bearing on the biology and ecology of Homo sapiens, it is hard to characterize the accompanying news reports as anything but irresponsible. News reporting is a commercial endeavour, and it has no budget for deliberation. It is economically untenable for mainstream news to be too deeply reflective.

To get some better sense of what's behind Maine's huge lobster harvests you have to search out, to take an example, Ecosystems, a technical journal, specifically the issue that went online on April 27, 2004 and read 'Accelerating Trophic-level Dysfunction in Kelp Forest Ecosystems of the Western North Atlantic'. This is news of a different sort. It is deeply researched and carefully wrought, it makes references to supporting and dissenting opinion, and it shows some elegance in its logic and conclusions.

Politicians, the men and women who decide domestic and foreign policy where lobster harvesting is concerned, do not read Ecosystems. And television news is the common ground politicians share with their constituents. Scientists, like the ones writing for Ecosystems, are treated on television (and by many politicians) with a measure of amusement. Offering their vetted reports on dysfunctional ecosystems and global warming, scientists tend to claim, justifiably, an expertise superior to that of politicians and newscasters. The politicians, for their part, bring out their own experts, especially to refute any report that threatens any section of the vaunted economy. These individuals might have no scientific training at all, but they possess credentials (or motives) of some other sort—a talk-show celebrity, a clergyman, say—which serve convincingly to contradict the expertise of the scientist in the eyes of those who have yet to turn the programme off.

This warfare between experts—which began in earnest in America with the simultaneous emergence of computer modeling and a general awareness of the economic threat posed by environmental problems—is as much a menace to human survival now as the natural catastrophes that ignite the arguments. Traditionally, the focus of expertise in the face of catastrophe is solution. It may
be, however, that within the grand cycles of the planet earth, its warming and cooling periods and magnetic-field reversals, within the disjointed sequence of its hyper-millennial events, such as the bolide impact near the Yucatan Peninsula 65 million years ago which helped wipe out seventy-five percent of Cretaceous life—it may be that, on the rough seas of these long-term events, there are no solutions. A lifeboat, instead, may be required.

Expertise with no measure of humility is of no use to us. No one knows why there are suddenly more salmon in front of my house, but their coming and going is more than incidental scenery. It’s a sentence in a story about human fate.

During several years of exposure to different societies of traditional people—remnant Ainu on Hokkaido, Inupiaq Eskimo in Alaska, Pitjantjatjara Aborigines in the Northern Territory—I’ve encountered individual men and women who possessed what seemed to be a staggering expertise in natural history: a knowledge of the ecology of fire and the signs of coming weather; an ability to predict when a particular creature might be found at a particular place; an understanding of the links between plants, insects, humidity and temperature; an ability to decipher the very recent past, revealed, for example, in faint scribes on the surfaces of snow and sand.

What I learned from this welter of examples were two things. First, to endure as a people you have to pay attention. Second, no individual exclusively possesses this expertise. It’s the community’s collective creation. The long-term stability of the community depends on the regular and uncalculated sharing of empirical information by close observers. The individuals most impressive in their local knowledge to an outsider (like me) are often merely the most adept practitioners of community knowledge. The response among such people to changing or dire conditions is not to call on experts, as that term is commonly used in the cultural West, but to gather the best minds, those that not only observe but listen, that see something else at stake in life besides a professional reputation.

Barry Lopez was born in 1945 in Port Chester, New York. He grew up in Southern California and New York City and attended college in the Midwest before moving to Oregon, where he has lived since 1968. He is an essayist, author, and short-story writer, and has traveled extensively in remote and populated parts of the world.

He is the author of Arctic Dreams, for which he received the National Book Award, Of Wolves and Men, a National Book Award finalist for which he received the John Burroughs and Christopher medals, and eight works of fiction, including Light Action in the Caribbean, Field Notes, and Resistance. His essays are collected in two books, Crossing Open Ground and About This Life. He contributes regularly to Granta, The Georgia Review, Orion, Outside, The Paris Review, Manoa and other publications in the United States and abroad. His work has appeared in dozens of anthologies, including Best American Essays, Best Spiritual Writing, and the “best” collections from National Geographic, Outside, The Georgia Review, The Paris Review, and other periodicals. His most recent book is Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape, a reader’s dictionary of regional landscape terms, which he edited with Debra Gwartney.

In his nonfiction, Mr. Lopez writes often about the relationship between the physical landscape and human culture. In his fiction, he frequently addresses issues of intimacy, ethics, and identity. His first stories were published in 1966. He has been a full-time writer since leaving graduate school in 1970 but occasionally accepts invitations to teach and lecture. He has been the Welch Professor of American Studies at the University of Notre Dame, has taught fiction at the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, and travels regularly to Texas Tech University where he is the University’s Visiting Distinguished Scholar.

Mr. Lopez is a recipient of the Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the John Hay Medal, Guggenheim, Lannan, and National Science Foundation fellowships, Pushcart Prizes in fiction and nonfiction, and other honors. In 2004 he was elected a Fellow of The Explorers Club.
The Willamette is one of the few American rivers of any volume flowing north. It is the largest river contained wholly within the state of Oregon.

“Lying like a cupped leaf dropped on the map of Oregon, with its veins the tributaries and its stem the main artery,” wrote Verne Bright, the Oregon poet, in 1941,

“The Willamette drains twelve thousand square miles of territory. Precisely confined by the snow-tipped Cascade Range, the ancient Calapooyas, and the newer elevations of the Coast Range, it gathers moisture from the east, south and west, and in one tremendous north-flowing stream, pours it toward the Columbia. From the stem of the leaf where the Willamette enters the Columbia to the distant tip where the least faint stream fades in a mountain-side trickle, the veins are numerous and varied. Some, like the Tualatin, the Pudding, and the Long Tom are deceptively sluggish much of the year... Other branches, like the Clackamas, the Santiam, the Molalla, and the McKenzie are as unruly as the sound of their names...”

Along the tributaries, in the evergreen wilderness from which the Willamette emerges, are occasional waterfalls. But on the main river there is only the one great overleap, known as Willamette Falls. As early as 1838, in his Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains, the Rev. Samuel Parker wrote in somewhat romantic vein of this geographic feature:

“The river above spreads out into a wide, deep basin, and runs slowly and smoothly until within a half mile of the Falls, when its velocity increases, its width diminishes, eddies are formed in which the water turns back as if loath to make the plunge; but it is forced forward by the water in the rear, and when still nearer it breaks upon the volcanic rocks scattered across the channel, and then as if resigned to its fate, smooths its agitated surges, and precipitates down and almost perpendicular... presenting a somewhat whitened column... The rising mist formed in the rays of the sun a beautiful bow.

Boats

Perhaps the strangest river craft that ever appeared on the Willamette River was the cattle-powered boat Hay Burner. Steam vessels had been plying the Willamette and Columbia rivers for fully a decade when, in 1860, a “genius” at Corvallis decided that they were too expensive to operate. So he rigged a scow with treadmill machinery, using cattle and hay for motive power. Coming downstream on its first trip, the vessel ran aground - or, rather, walked ashore - at McGooglin's Slough, where the boat remained until the cattle had devoured nearly all the fuel. It was finally pulled off by a steamer appropriately named Onward and then continued down the river to Canemah. But once there the Hay Burner lacked sufficient power to return to Corvallis against the current. The skipper sold his oxen and abandoned his enterprise.

Howard McKinley Corning was born in 1896 near Lincoln, Nebraska, grew up on a farm near Columbus, Ohio, and moved to Oregon in 1919. He had little formal education, having dropped out of high school, and claimed that he got his education in the downtown branch of the Multnomah County Library. A prominent regional poet, he published in a variety of newspapers, national magazines, and anthologies, produced three volumes of poetry, and served as poetry editor of the Oregonian from 1965 to 1976. He died in 1977. Corning's work as an editor and supervisor with the Oregon Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s resulted in the development of two important regional books, A Dictionary of Oregon History and Willamette Landings. This excerpt was taken from the third edition of Willamette Landings, republished in 2004 by the Oregon Historical Society Press with a new introduction by Robin Cody.
What the River Thinks
by Brian Doyle (2004)

Salmon and steelhead and cutthroat trout. Fir needles. Salmonberries dropping suddenly and being snapped up by trout who think them orange insects. Alder and spruce roots drinking me always their eager thin little rude roots poking at me. Rocks and pebbles and grains of stone and splinters of stone and huge stones and slabs and beaver and mink and crawdads and feces from the effluent treatment plant upriver. Rain and mist and fog and gale and drizzle and howl and owl. Asters and arrowgrass. Finger creeks feeder creeks streams ditches seeps and springs. Rowboats and rafts. Canoes and chicory. Men and women and children. Dead and alive. Willows and beer bottles and blackberry and ducklings and wood sorrel and rubber boots and foxglove and buttercup and rushes and slugs and snails and velvetgrass and wild cucumber and orbweaver spiders and that woman singing with her feet in me singing. Baneberry and beargrass. Thrush and hemlock and coffee grounds. Thimbleberry and heron. Smelt and moss and water ouzels and bears and bear scat. Bramble and bracken. Elk drinking me cougar drinking me. Ground-cedar and ground-ivy and ground-pine and groundsel. Sometimes a lost loon. Cinquefoil and elgrass. Vultures and voles. Water striders mosquitos mosquito-hawks. Dock and dewberry. Moths and mergansers. Huckleberry and snowberry. Hawks and osprey. Water wheels and beaver dams. Deer and lupine. Red currant. Trees and logs and trunks and branches and bark and duff. I eat everything. Elderberry and evening primrose. Bulrush and burdock. I know them all. They yearn for me. Caddis fly and coralroot. I do not begin nor do I cease. Foamflower fleeceflower fireweed. I always am always will be. Lily and lotus. Swell and surge and ripple and roar and roil and boil. I go to the Mother. Madrone and mistmaiden. The Mother takes me in. Nettle and ninebark. Pelt and peppergrass. She waits for me. Pine-sap and poppy. I bring her all small waters. Raspberry and rockcress. I draw them I lure them I accept them. Salal and satinflower. She is all waters. Tansy and trillium. She drinks me. Velvetgrass and vernalgrass. I begin as a sheen on leaves high in the hills, a wet idea, a motion, a dream, a rune, and then I am a ripple, and I gather the small waters to me, the little wet children, the rills of the hills, and we are me and run to Her muscling through wood and stone cutting through everything singing and shouting roiling and rippling and there She is waiting and whispering her salty arms always opening always open always.

*Brian Doyle is the editor of Portland Magazine at the University of Portland, and the author of six books, among them Leaping: Revelations & Epiphanies and The Wet Engine. His work has appeared in The Best American Essays, and in Atlantic Monthly, American Scholar, Harper’s, Gourmet, Orion, Sydney Morning Herald, and the Times of London. He is also an essayist for Eureka Street magazine and The Age newspaper, both in Melbourne, Australia.*

*photo by Ron Cooper*
To Water Drawn

To the silence of thistles and blackberries edging the island, I have come to the river alone, seeking the solace of water where ospreys nest in tall cottonwoods and wind caresses the grass.

At road’s end, on the bank of the backwater channel, an old woman fishes. Among green teasels and tall wild parsnips, she is sunk in the sand, her bent chair a miracle of mended webbing.

In stretched-out sweatpants, worn and comfortable, bunion holes cut out of old canvas shoes, she sits easy, does not move, her bamboo pole drawing deep peace from the placid water.

With large-knuckled hands, uncombed hair a mat of gray wire, she has come here as I have to settle her spirit in the summer blue of afternoon.

In my mind’s eye I see Varanasi: a thin man sits cross-legged on the steps of the ghats, erect as a ladder, clothed only in a dhoti, praying to the sunrise over the sacred Ganges.

His hair is swirled in the turban of Sikhs, his black beard combed over his chest. The river, dyed red by morning, is flat and calm, as he is, his still hands at rest on his knees.

Are we not all drawn to water, pulled by the ultimate mystery?
Are we not all desert travelers, thirsty for deeper and deeper drafts, calmed by the lap, lap of water?

Jane Glazer lives and writes in Portland, Oregon. She taught English and Humanities for over twenty years and has also taught adult classes in poetry. Her poems have appeared in numerous literary magazines, including Antioch Review, Berkeley Poetry Review, Calyx, Fireweed, Sojourner, etc. She was awarded the William Stafford Award from the Washington State Poets Association in 1990, and her first collection of poems, Some Trick Of Light, was a finalist for the Oregon Book Award in 1994.
As a kid, I pulled catfish off the bottom of Spoon River near Edgar Lee Masters’ Lewistown and dangled them in front of grown-ups for the taking off the hook and the dumping into the bucket.

I played along the Illinois River with cousin Danny while his dad, my lazy Uncle Gene, fished there.

Mom and Dad were gathering muskmelons in nearby fields oddly called “the river bottom.”

We kids snickered that the river had a bottom.

Those melons had flavor a wine taster would call “big,” and, after sniffing, might add, “with a hint of river.”

My Cambridge and Boston years flowed by the Charles. I nurtured children by the Scioto and the Olentangy and called from our porch down to Paul fishing the Big Darby, “Checking!”

“I’m Okay,” he’d patiently shout back.

I taught where the Mississippi starts in La Crosse and where it ends in New Orleans and in view of the Snake and the Red. On my weary walks in European cities I’d find a river, the Reine, the Seine, the Thames. Nowadays I live between the Columbia and the Willamette.

Some years ago my teenagers and I scattered the Scioto riverbank with nine heavy boxes of fossil rocks so that younger children could find them and gather them as we had done years earlier, as I am doing now with chunks of fossil self.

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Barbara Conable is author of the DVD Move Well, Avoid Injury (movewellavoidinjury.com) and of several books about musicians’ wellness available from GIA Publications, Chicago. She is founder of Andover Educators (www.bodymap.org), a network of music educators. A life long poet, Barbara lives in Portland, Oregon, where she writes, gardens, enjoys being a grandmother, and serves on the Board of the Sabin Community Association and the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods.
Ricochet River - Chapter 18
by Robin Cody (2004)

Of the three thousand or so salmon eggs that hatch from a single spawning pair, maybe half escape the jaws of trout, birds, and streamside feeders. Then they have to make it past turbines at the dam. At the Columbia River mouth, where the smolts feed and adapt to salt water, gulls and pelicans take their toll. In the ocean lurk bigger feeders and the nets of trawlers. If a salmon survives three or four years out in the ocean, he then has to pass seals and fishermen at the mouth before fighting back up the river - in our case from the Columbia into the Willamette and the Calamus - to the dam. And up the fish ladder.

If only two - of the original thousands - make it back to Tom Creek to spawn, the salmon are breaking even. Say five or six get back, from three nests, nine thousand eggs. Pretty slim odds.

One thing in a salmon's favor, though, is coloring. Because a salmon is dark on top, he's hard to see against the dark background of watery depths. Because he's light and silvery underneath, he's hard to see from below, against the sky-lit surface of the water.

Which is no big deal, I guess. you take any wild animal, he's going to blend with the surroundings. But it depends on your angle, with salmon. I don't know. I just thought it was pretty slick the way that works.

Robin Cody was born on the Columbia River at St. Helens and grew up in Estacada, Oregon. A graduate of Yale, he taught at the American School of Paris and was Dean of Admissions at Reed College in Portland before taking up freelance writing in 1984.

Cody is the author of Ricochet River, a novel, and Voyage of a Summer Sun, both published by Alfred A. Knopf in hardback and currently available in paperback. Voyage is the account of Cody's 82-day solo canoe trip down the Columbia, from its source in Canada to its mouth at Astoria. With Voyage, Cody won the 1995 Oregon Book Award for literary non-fiction, and the 1996 Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Book Award.

He lives with his wife, Donna, in Portland. This is an excerpt from Ricochet River (1992).

Willamette River
by Clemens Starck (2003)

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.

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.
Riverwalking
by Kathleen Dean Moore (2003)

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.

By combining personal narrative with natural history and philosophical inquiry, Moore brings environmental philosophy to a general audience in journals that range from Orion, Discover, Field and Stream, Audubon, and Wild Earth to the North American Review, the New York Times Magazine, and Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment.
The Search for the Heron
by Barry Lopez (2003)

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.

Barry Lopez is an American author, essayist, and fiction writer whose work is known for its environmental and social concerns. Lopez has been described as “the nation’s premier nature writer” by the San Francisco Chronicle. In his nonfiction, he frequently examines the relationship between human culture and physical landscape, while in his fiction he addresses issues of intimacy, ethics and identity. Lopez makes his home on the McKenzie River in western Oregon.
The Spirit of Rivers
by John Daniel (2002)

Anything in nature reflects the viewer, but of all the natural forms, rivers give back the fullest reflection of the human. They are lives in motion, bound up like ours in time and consequence, steadily being born and steadily dying. They stir in their sleep, they laugh and mourn, and - like us at our best - they are true to themselves under all conditions, changeful and changeless, free and constrained, a resurgent presence of past and future made one. To see a river’s source is to seek our own, to turn and turn and always return - to snow and mountains to sea and sky, and always to water, always to the soul’s deep springs, always to the flowing ungraspable image that forever runs free of all names and knowing, singing the story of its own being, bearing forth from distant passages its mortal and infinite nature.

John Daniel lives in the watershed of the upper Long Tom in the Coast Range foothills west of Eugene. Two of his books, The Trail Home (nature essays) and Looking After (memoir), have won the Oregon Book Award for Literary Nonfiction from Literary Arts. His next book, Winter Creek: One Writer’s Natural History, will be published in July by Milkweed Editions. Daniel is at work on a book about a sojourn of four and a half months in complete solitude in a remote Rogue River cabin.

When People Turned to Pebbles
by Steve Jones (2000)

The Kalapuya tell how the first myth age ended when the earth turned over—stars were born. People became pebbles in the second, and the third age brought a flood—changed two-leggeds to whales, beaver and fishes. Finally, when the world was ready, the Kalapuya came. Then after ten thousand verdant years, white-eye fur traders pushed them back into earth, rock and valley sweet grass—back to an earlier age. One day, the Kalapuya will reemerge, birthed from boulders and flowing water, living myth that rests out of sight.

Just as the Great Spokane Flood drowned the mountain spirits, Tcha Teemanwi, reversed the Wallama, scoured the valley, so the Kalapuya were driven into the earth. Someday, these camas-gathering, story-telling people will be reborn from the valley floor. Till then, the Wallama soothes Kalapuya souls in fresh water. This valley holds Kalapuya ways in trust. The river waits. The Kalapuya wait. The myth rolls on.

Steve Jones writes daily with Sprague High students, co-directs the Oregon Writing Project at Willamette University, keeps a thirty acre tree farm and currently serves as Oregon Council of Teachers of English president. He is also a reconfirmed “dimple-head”, relentlessly chasing a small white ball about the links.
The Spirit of Rivers  
*by Craig Lesley (2002)*

When we cross the Willamette on one of the bridges in Portland or Salem or Eugene, we don't see it as a mythic being. We don't toss handfuls of grass as a sacrifice, as do the Masai of East Africa when they cross their rivers. Looking down on the workaday river with its tugs and barges and dry docks, its riprapped banks, we aren't likely to think of it as sacred or alive, a gesture from another world. We aren't moved to perform baptisms in it. We of the modern world have sought other kinds of value in our rivers. We have subdued them and turned them into channels of commerce. We have diverted them to water our fields, loaded with sewage, torn up their beds and banks for gold and gravel, blockaded them to control their floods and extract their energy, stripped and mud-died their basins for timber and pasture, poisoned them with industrial wastes, and reduced their abounding runs of wild anadromous fish to fractional remnants.

We have treated rivers as convenient perpetual motion machines, mere volumes of dutiful water at our disposal, yet even our tightly harnessed industrial rivers still beckon us. Whatever we have done to them, a mystery still flows before us. We walk and rest beside them, gazing, listening. When the docile waters rise, we flock to see the wildness in them, the wrack and foam, the intent sweeping power. Despite the damage floods do, it reassures us in our depths to know, with Wordsworth, that “The river glideth at his own sweet will.” All of us have touched and been touched by flowing water. Our ancestors have eaten and loved and raised children by rivers for as long as we have been human, and longer. We have known the music of living water for the entire evolutionary saga of our coming of age on Earth. “It seems to flow through my very bones,” wrote Thoreau of a brook he knew. “What is it I hear but the pure waterfalls within me, in the circulation of my brook, the streams that fall into my heart?”

Spiritually we understand rivers far less well than the ancients did, but even in the rational light of our science, the creative and destructive nature of running water remains wonderful enough. We know that it began its work as soon as rains first fell and traveled the face of the young volcanic planet, and if not for the continual tectonic uplift, it would long ago have erased the continents into a global sea. Through that tireless attrition, that primordial youthful energy, water carves out runnels, clefts, ravines, hollows, valleys, chasms, canyons - the intricate inworn branching of watersheds, the aging face of the land, the very places we know as home. And in that web work of water, in and around and gathered together by its flexuous body, a labyrinthine ecology connects our human lives to the least and greatest of the lives around us, an ecology we are only beginning to fathom and are unlikely ever to understand in its wholeness.

And of course we are connected historically to rivers. They led us into the continent and eventually across it. They showed the way into the Oregon Country for Lewis and Clark, for trappers and missionaries, for the pioneers of the Oregon Trail, Columbia, McKenzie, Illinois, John Day, Sprague, Smith, Deschutes, Powder, Malheur, Rogue - you can hear the history in the names, you can glimpse the stories we have spun around Oregon's Rivers. But listen to more: Klamath, Imnaha, Sycan, Umpqua, Elk, Salmon, Snake, Wenaha, Wallowa, Clackamas, Nestucca, and Chewaucan. There are other and older histories here, interwoven with the flowing of rivers for thousands of years before Europeans set foot on American Land, And there are hints in those names of a truth beyond history or human culture, hints of primeval vitality, hints of original voices sounding in the land before any human being was alive to listen.

Danny and Jack stopped in Enterprise to fill the thermos with hot coffee and gas up the pickup. While the waitress filled the dented thermos, Danny and Jack sat on counter stools eating big pieces of apple pie à la mode. They were the only Indians in the place, but no one seemed to notice. The elk hunters, tired-faced men in plaid shirts and dark wool pants, bent over platefuls of steaks and potatoes. Their camp beards and haggard appearances made them seem old.
“You sure our stuff is all right in the pickup?” Jack asked.
“It’s fine,” Danny said. “No one will bother it out there.”
“I wouldn’t want to lose my new rifle,” Jack said. “My door doesn’t even lock.”
“Everyone around here already has a rifle. Now finish that pie. We don’t want Jones shooting all the elk before we even get to camp.”
“We should have started sooner,” Jack said. “I was ready way ahead of you. How come you got to be so slow?” “Practice,” Danny said out the corner of his mouth. “When you get to be my age, you won’t be half as perfect as you are now. Anyway, you forgot half the gear, so it’s a good thing I double-checked.” “That going to do it for you fellows?” the waitress asked as she put the dented thermos on the counter. She tapped it with her pencil. “Thermos looks like it came out with Lewis and Clark.” “It’s an old one, all right,” Danny said. He liked the waitress and another time he might have tried to pick her up, but now he just left her a dollar. “See you next trip,” he said as they left.

After driving the seven miles to Joseph, Danny passed through the center of town without taking the turnoff to the Imnaha River and their elk camp above Indian Crossing.

“Hey! Didn’t you miss the turn?” Jack asked. “That sign said Imnaha. Want me to drive? Are you sleepy or what?” “Just hang on to your pants. There’s something I want to show you.” Danny passed the last lights of Joseph and went over a little rise.

Wallowa Lake stretched before them, its waters black and silver in the moonlight. A low fog bank hovered over the south shore, partially obscuring the timbered shoreline. To the west, the densely wooded foothills seemed to rise out of the lake, and behind them, snow-covered Chief Joseph Mountain towered against the background of black sky. Even with the moonlight softening the definitions of its ridges and canyons, the mountain peaked as sharply as a dragon’s back.

A slight knoll rose to their right and sloped to the lake’s southern shore. At the top of the rise, a stone monument, twice the height of a man, rose from the rustling grasses. Tall sentinel spruces surrounded the monument.

“Let’s take a look from up there,” Danny said.

A swinging gate placed between two posts held a sign:

GRAVE OF OLD CHIEF JOSEPH MAINTAINED BY WALLOWA COUNTY JUNIOR WOMAN’S CLUB

When they reached the top of the knoll and stood next to the monument, they had an even better view of the lake. A light breeze silvered the little ripples.

“It’s incredible,” Jack said.

“Nez Perce country,” Danny said. “At least it used to be.”

Jack tried to read the works on the monument by moonlight. “Old Joseph is buried here, huh?”

“It’s a grave,” Danny said. “There are probably some bones. A lot of Nez Perce and Walla Wallas are buried on this knoll and by the water.”

“This place gives me a strange feeling,” Jack said.

Danny smiled. He felt it too, just as he had when Red Shirt brought him to the Wallowas for the first time. “It’s the Nez Perce in you coming out.” “There must be dozens of stories about this place.” “Probably hundreds,” Danny said. “The explorers and anthropologists came here and collected as many as they could, and the Indians didn’t want to disappoint anybody so they just kept making them up.” “That’s pretty good,” Jack said. “Back at Timbler, some of the kids used to talk about their tribal legends. A lot of them sounded the same, but no one really knows if they’re true or not anymore.” “It’s hard to tell,” Danny said. “Red Shirt told me this story the only time we stood together at Wallowa Lake.” Danny half-closed his eyes, gazing at the moonlight dancing on the water and trying to remember the words and tone his father had used to tell the story.

Then he began.

“One winter, a large herd of elk, thirty-five or perhaps forty, tried to cross the frozen lake during Elkmoon. Somewhere near the black cliff face, the ice was thin and the herd broke through. No one saw them flailing their hooves and cutting their legs on the shard of ice, but one by one they sank, their hot breath extinguished by the black water. Two days later an old Nez Perce hunter, one of the Dreamers following their trail, came upon the spot where they had fallen through. New ice had formed by then, so their tracks disappeared in the middle of the lake.
“Many stories about that lost elk herd were told around Dreamer campfires in the Wallowas. Some said they had gone into the world below the water. Others said they were ghost elk that had disappeared during Elkmoon. Sometimes, looking over the frozen lake in winter, the hunters thought they saw the elk herd crossing the lake. Their hides were white as ermine, and their eyes glittered like diamonds. The breath from their nostrils came so thick it formed a fog.

“The old men who first told the stories eventually died, but versions of the story were well known around the lake for many, many years.

“Then one summer a rich doctor from one of the cities lost his motor overboard near the black cliff face, and he offered any diver one hundred dollars to find the motor and pull it out. A young diver searching the area found the water to be deep and cold, but with the aid of an underwater light, he located the motor. When he came up, he told a strange account of seeing the skeletons of elk down there. But everyone around the lodge laughed at him because the elk bones would have been buried by silt or washed apart many years before. Still, he insisted, claiming these skeletons were of the largest elk he had ever seen, standing maybe seven feet tall at the shoulder. The men laughed harder, and some suggested he was crazy, for no elk is that tall.

“A businessman from Portland heard of his discovery and offered him twenty dollars for every elk tooth he could bring up. He planned to have them made into watch fobs, tie tacks, and the like, then sell them as curiosities at the lodge.

“One of the old Nez Perce guides tried to stop the young man from diving after the elk teeth, but he got the help of a friend, and the two took turns diving off the cliff face. All morning, the first diver was perplexed because he could not find the skeletons, for he had marked the place well when he went down after the doctor’s motor. They moved the boat out farther into the lake that afternoon, and he dived again. When he didn’t come back up in twenty minutes, his friend went after him.

“At the coroner’s inquest, the second diver said the water was much deeper than he would have expected, and extremely cold. He went through two thermoplanes before he found the lake bottom. There, the diver claimed, he saw the most unusual sight he could ever imagine – the bare-boned skeletons of the entire herd of elk. The bones were not weathered but gleamed white in the light from his underwater torch. The legs moved slightly in the deep current of the lake. The legs moved slightly in the deep current of the lake.

“He found his friend at one of the larger skeletons. His weight belt had somehow fouled in the antlers of the elk, and in trying to twist free, he had pulled loose his air hose and drowned. The diver was perplexed as to how his friend’s belt fouled, for this elk’s antlers were tilted at a different angle from the others, and its head was lifted, perhaps from his friend’s struggles. He cut the body free and began swimming to the surface. But when he switched off the underwater torch, he swore he saw the elk bones still gleaming in the black water, and a light-red flowing where their eyes should be.

“As the men on the dock helped unload the body, they found two elk teeth in the sack the dead man clutched. Those who saw the teeth claim they were exceptionally large and white and seemed to glow – even in the afternoon sun. But by the time of the inquest, the molaris had disappeared. Some think they were stolen and worked into cufflinks, but others believe the old Nez Perce guide rowed them out by the cliff face and threw them into the deep water to appease the ghost elk.

“In any case, several other divers tried for the next few weeks to find the skeletons again, but no one could. The coroner ruled death by accidental drowning, and the stories about the ghost elk go on. Those who believe there actually were some elk molaris think they must have come from an elk that drowned the winter before in a similar spot. Sometimes at night, though, if someone is brave enough to try fishing near that black cliff face, they say they can see something glowing way down in the depths of the black water. But others just think it’s the reflection of the moon dancing on the waves.”

“When Danny finished the story, he looked across the lake at the hovering fog bank. On the far shore, the lights of cabins glowed like campfires, and he imagined the old Dreamers telling their stories. He wondered how Red Shirt had felt telling the story to him.

“I’ve never heard a story like that one,” Jack said.

“Neither had I, until Red Shirt told me.”

“Do you think it really happened?”

“That’s the way Red Shirt told it.”

Craig Lesley is a lifelong resident of the Pacific Northwest. He has received the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award for Winterkill and for his third novel, The Sky Fisherman. He is also the author of Riversong. He lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife and two daughters. This is an excerpt from Winterkill (Picador USA).
How to Love a River
by Kathleen Dean Moore (2002)

. . . . Love brings with it a set of moral obligations—the obligation to care for the object of love, to honor and respect it, to treat it well. So the worst thing a person can do to a river is transform it into something impossible to love.

When engineers straighten the Willamette—blocking the oxbows, draining the marshes, mining the gravel bars, making the river run straight and narrow and lethal between steep banks—they take away the shallow places where children can wade after crayfish or stalk fish, slow as a heron. When agribusiness owners spray pesticides on fields that drain to the river or mill owners dump effluent, mysteriously stinking, they make the river into something to fear. When people in the cities allow human waste to flow into the river, they make it into something to abhor.

We need to learn again how to love the river.

Go to the headwaters of the Willamette, up by Emigrant Butte high in the central Cascades, where springs stir the sand in aquamarine lakes, up where the river is born, as perfect as a newborn child. Go to the high tributary rivers, places of bright water and bright fish in fir-darkened forests. Go to the braided backwaters, where osprey dive and red-tailed hawks will answer a whistle made from a blade of grass. With your shoulders in warm sun and your feet in cold water, sit on rocks whitewashed by herons. Let the children chase the shadows of minnows.

Then go to your home water, the river in your neighborhood, and learn again a simple truth: The river at your feet, the river in the mountains, the river in the valley, the moistness in your mind, the blood in your heart—it is all one river. The Willamette doesn't end where it joins the Columbia River, or where the Columbia meets the sea, or where the seas rise in fog banks and curl back toward the land, tucked by westerlies into the valleys and turning to silver drops on hemlock branches. For that matter, the Willamette doesn't begin at Emigrant Butte.

Like all rivers, the Willamette creates and re-creates itself every moment, pulling water from storms and filtering it through mountain meadows, a continuous process of healing, an act of forgiveness.

With rivers, as with everything else in life, where there is love, there is always a second chance.

Kathleen and her husband Frank, an OSU biologist, have two grown children, Erin, an architectural designer, and Jonathan, an aquatic ecologist. They are all wild for anything wet—big rivers, small boats, desert canyons, and the edges of the sea.
Willamette Truths and Consequences
by Rick Bastasch (2002)

The Willamette is a consequent river. By that, geologists mean it did not carve its valley, but—like the rest of
us—found it. The Coast Range and Cascades rose up in a tectonic wrinkling over 20 million years ago from a
warm sea, dried themselves over millennia, and slanted rain down their slopes, forming the Willamette. So the
Willamette is first a song of the land.

And to paraphrase the words of an old song, thirty million years is a whole lot of rollin’ along. And this River,
both knows somethin’ and says plenty. Th’ Willamette has tumbled, ambled and glided past frame after frame
of nearly unimaginable Disneysian realities.

First, imagine Eugene as a clearing in a tropical forest,
steam rising to the cacophony of Willamette birds we’ve
never met. This scene lasts a few million years, as lava
flows and volcanoes glow. Next, envision Salem as Death
Valley, with the bony Cascades disgorging huge alluvial
fans, filling the Valley with gravel. Fast-forward another
few million years, and paleo-Woodburn is a tawny savanna
with saber-toothed tigers and four-ton sloths. Picture a
young mastodon mother, trumpeting for her calf some
spring evening, with a popsicle sunset melting into the
swEEP of a Willamette River bend—the last evening before
the first of 40 great floods. The flood that broke loose
from an Idaho ice-dam, rushed down the Columbia, up the Willamette, smacked against the hills, and rocked
itself still as a massive Willamette lake stretching from present-day Eugene to Portland. A lake whose bottom
rippled in an icy black, hundreds of feet below turquoise-hollowed icebergs spinning slowly in the sun.

Today, it’s mere thousands of years after the floods, and people have never stopped coming. For most of that
time, it was people of deer skin and digging sticks. People who fired the prairies to keep game fat and meadows
blue with camas. Later, just yesterday really, different people came, and a lot of them. People of denim and ‘doz-
ers who changed the landscape utterly—as much as any flood or lava flow, and just as fast.

Above Salem, the Willamette had too many braided channels to float sternwheelers. The people plugged sloughs
and side channels, creating one big river-course. The dry prairies grew only grass. The people plowed them
under to grow wheat. The wet prairies grew mosquitoes, so the people drained them. The River flooded. The
people built dams. Their cities prospered and grew. The people milled lumber, shipped grains, canned beans,
made ships, built roads, raised glass towers and brick schools.

Whatever they ate and whatever they drank and whatever they didn’t use from what they made found its way
to the River. And salmon runs dwindled. Meadowlarks disappeared. Fish suffocated in a bacterial brew. The
amazing alchemy that created a modern economy at the same time turned many treasures to lead. And not in a
million years; not ten thousand; not one thousand; but in just one hundred—the blink of a divine eye.

Half a blink (or about sixty years) ago, it’s possible another change began. The youth of Portland demanded
clean rivers. The State of Oregon required cities and industries to treat their waste. Parks and natural areas were
set aside along the Willamette. Communities found the River again and marked the rediscovery with floating
walkways, carousels, fountains, and trails. People began changing their tune about the Willamette. It became
less a thing and more a neighbor.

In a 20 million-year-old river, 60 years is too short a time to know if this latest approach to living with the River
is a trend. Or, if it is a trend, whether it will last long enough and be strong enough to withstand swings in econ-
omies, shifts in climate, or the doubling of our Willamette basin population by 2050. That’s anybody’s guess.

But if we want to take some of the guesswork out of it, if we want to shift the accumulating weight of our ac-
tions so that time is on the side of a healthier Willamette River, we need to do little—but do it seriously over a
few decades: a little less fertilizer on a little smaller lawn; a little more shade along streams; a levy (the money
kind) here or there; a letter to legislators now and again; a few more walks along the River’s banks. These will
add up, all our individual and community actions. And the River will respond with clean water, fish runs and
birdsong. It has to: the Willamette is a consequent river.

Rick Bastasch has worked with the Oregon Water Resources Department for over a decade, specializing in river basin planning,
tergovernmental coordination, public information, and legislative analysis. He has also led recent efforts to conserve and restore
the Willamette River, and is now program director for the Portland’s new Office of Healthy Working Rivers. A lifelong Oregonian,
Bastasch lives near Salem, where he works on water and environmental issues.
A Thousand Friends of Rain
by Kim Stafford (1999)

I want to be rain scattering everywhere, licking
Down the long bamboo of a ryegrass stem to the Dark Oregon earth.
I want to be rain's drum on barn roof and oak leaf,
On juniper and windshield and salal.

I want to be a filament of Owyhee and Grand Ronde,
Molalla, Nehalem, and Rogue. I want to throng
The canyon they call Umpqua, and thunder
Deschutes to Columbia.

But I want to be the unnamed rivulet, too,
The silver thread a child finds with fingers
And tongue. I want to start there, with the
Little ones, and school them to my cause.

I don't want to be a tyrant over my children,
Stealing their world before their hands are
big enough to touch it gently, leaf by leaf.
This place must remain.

I want to learn from the sun to be generous, unafraid.
I want to travel through trouble untroubled,
To plunge down the sewer drain, bubble in
The dark turmoil of grease and soot, the grief
And confusion of daily work, and then flow on,
Spread out, rise up clear in mist and return to my
native ways.

They say Republican and Democrat, I say the
People of rain. They say cityfolk and
Redneck (my neighbors Alonzo and Sunny).
I say hospitable tribe of rain. I say rain
Today in the gray of Portland and the dusty
Green of high desert walking rain. They say for
And against. I say friend and friend, friend and
Friend in midsummer Oregon rain.

So vote rain. Spend rain. Save and squander rain.
Teach your children rain. Oregon rain will be
Our shrine, our grotto.

At Kiger Gorge, I want to ask you to stand at
the rim and listen. At Oneonta, I want to
ask you to remember what you love.
At Perpetua, I want you to tell someone
What you love, but not with words, with what
You do. At Applegate, I want you to witness
For something bigger than the feast of all you
Have felt and known. It is here, before you,
At an empty place, where water gleams
In the meadow, and last light touches the
Mountain. At Fort Rock, and clear on down
To Hart Mountain I want to ask you to be
In the shine, the chill and dizzy spin of
Midsummer Oregon rain today. Be friend.
We have everything to gain. Be native in
The way you take the wet wood hand of rain.

Haiku

Placid crystal pool
Resting place for the river
Tomorrow, the falls

Jim Nicholson, long-time Sprague High coach,
Haiku poet, AP history and writing teacher, proudly
admits he's the "world's oldest teenager."
Waterways
by Dori Saffron (1999)

From approximately 1930 to 1935, a group of teenage Salemites formed a kinship with the Willamette River. It was a part of our lives.

On summer days, we journeyed to a particular spot along the Willamette to swim, splash, flirt, drink homemade lemonade, and as night fell, to picnic by the bonfire, cuddle with objects of our affection, and sing songs. This enchanted locale called Riverdale was just a few miles south of Salem, out South River Road, on the east side of the Willamette. It was our place and our river.

We always assembled at the Bluebird Cafe on State Street, right next to the Capitol Theater, where we fortified ourselves with Short-and-Thicks and washed them down with Green Rivers. If we happened to forget to pay for these delicacies, we would be pursued out onto the sidewalk by Mae, the Bluebird’s ample, maternal waitress.

In front of the Bluebird, we would pile into Jim Burrell’s Model-T Ford which, with the rickety canvas top peeled back and the rumble seat fully utilized, could hold an astonishing number of boisterous teenagers. Harvey Quistad would crank up the engine, and we were off to Riverdale. Or some days, we would venture forth by foot, with the certainty that before long, somebody else on his way out to swim would drive by and give us a ride.

Our destination was the public dock owned by a woman who let us get away with paying the standard 25 cents per car, even though that fee had clearly not been designed for a carload like ours. We never knew the name of this patient soul, so we called her Mrs. Riverdale, in honor of the domain over which she presided. Out of respect for Mrs. Riverdale, we refrained from picking the peaches in her orchard, except once in a while.

Mrs. Riverdale’s facility had dressing rooms where we excited chattering girls would change into our one-piece wool bathing suits and strap-on rubber swim caps. My suit was white, calculated to spotlight my tan and, like just about everyone else’s, sported the logo of the Jantzen diving girl.

From Mrs. Riverdale’s 40-square-foot dock, we would dive, jump, get pushed, or best of all, swing from an 80-foot rope and splash down into the bracing Willamette. Margaret Bell, our crowd’s resident daredevil, was always the one to dive from a high cliff or swing the furthest out on the rope.

The big challenge of each day was to cross the river, bucking the current. Some would ensconce themselves in big black rubber inner tubes and paddle their way across. The more intrepid would forego that safety and comfort in favor of a vigorous Australian crawl. I remember the day Jim Burrell, the Model-T driver, helped his eight-year old sister Jeanne-Belle work up the courage to swim across for the first time ever. Their brothers Bill and Bobby and the rest of us cheered them on as the timid little girl made it to the other side. Once across, we would get out, walk further up river, along the bank in the shade of the fir trees and pines. We would continue on, beyond the pungent aroma of the John J. Roberts Hop Yard, and then... and here was the greatest treat... We would dive back in and float the two miles back to Mrs. Riverdale’s.

Clouds must have occasionally appeared on those summer days, but our memories are of drifting along, contemplating a perfect blue sky.

“Waterways” is the recollection of Dori Saffron, a fourth generation Northwest resident. She attended Salem high School and the University of Oregon before marrying James Nicholson just prior to World War II. He died in 1969. She later married longtime Salem resident Morrie Saffron. Mrs. Saffron’s family includes her two children, James Nicholson III and Elizabeth Brooke, her stepson, John Saffron, and her three grandchildren. She enjoys oil painting, exercising, traveling and spending time at their Oregon coast beach home.
Student Works, Part III

Minto Brown Jog

John Harvey, Grade 12 (1999)
Sprague High School, Salem

As I jog along a paved trail that shadows the Willamette’s every move, my mind fills with curiosity. I try to imagine the first to navigate these waters. Was it a Native American in a dugout canoe, fashioned from a mighty cedar that grew up on the banks of the Willamette? Or perhaps the vessel was constructed of supple deer hide and steamed maple limbs. Where is this explorer going? I hope he’s not lost. He strokes with a marvelous paddle, sculpted in the shape of an eagle’s clenched talons. The kayak-like craft cuts the swirling current like a delicate obsidian shard across the belly of a fresh salmon. His paddling is steady and powerful, and I can almost hear the commanding drum beat he is listening to in his mind. I have so many questions for him, but know I mustn’t disturb him or his journey. His intense dark eyes are focused downstream, and he fails to notice my presence. The path leads me into the woods, and I glance back one more time to see if he is still there. He has faded away.

McKenzie River Paradise

Aaron Wells, Grade 6 (1999)
Roosevelt Middle School, Eugene

River, liquid sliver flowing from snowy mold through huge stars of leaves, thick mattresses of moss, mixing its mumbling whispers of logs, stories, trees with the fluid song of fluttering avian acrobats.

Trail winding through majestic cedars and gay maples, twisting along shattered lightning-struck remembrances of former life, down, down deep into the river valley, ferns and mossy branches hanging over the water where I, a maple leaf, sit and meditate upon Paradise.

In autumn -
my green song’s notes are changed to red,
but I remember my beginnings in spring -
when as a young bud I awoke, nurtured by the rain and glistening sun; in summer I grew and grew on the green boughs above the lazy river;
I learned the forest ways - the rich smells, the cautious animals, the birds flitting to and from my tree. Now in autumn I love to see the woods alight with color: a festival before winter’s solitude.
River Edge
Heather Moore (1999)
Western Oregon University, Monmouth

I.
This is how you love:
Lay back in stiff, wild grass and listen to roots swell
in warm moist soil, river clay cut away.
Listen to the river slide along the bank,
lick up leaves, clay, ripe seed pods dropped.

Summer summons odors - from afternoon, crushed grass,
dust, blackberries, the Willamette, his hair, her skin -
smells that push them together, to the edge, feet dangling
over the slow, bank-suckling current.
They watch the river an hour. He catches a fish arching
its spine twice - it slices muddy blue water, splashes
a flash of sunlight - but she misses it, watching water curl
around a smooth root that’s thrust itself into the river.
The eddy sucks in a poplar leaf - it twirls and twirls.

II.
So this is how you let go.
Stroll the first mild spring night through Riverfront Park.
Breathe fresh-splayed cherry blossoms hanging heavy, and hear
new-paired frogs croak till they echo your pulse: rough, warm.
Hear the dark river murmur paces away.

After turbid flood sludged through winter, swollen,
dragging debris, they meet; tonight’s warmth and odor
remind him, he calls her, she comes.
Dewy air clings in her hair, fills his nostrils
with memory of blackberries boiling on the vine.
Across water they see the island’s lanky, naked poplars,
hushed under glow of a yellowing crescent moon.
The river ripples yellow gleams to its dull edges.
They can tell, even now, where land runs out to see if he is still there.
He has faded away.
Waiting in Cherry Tree Valley

by Ariadne F Lewis Grade 6
Homeschool, Salem

Waving pink tendrils of fragrance, the cherry trees surround her: the little, lone girl. She sinks into the grass by the small, burbling stream, wishing the moment to be prolonged. Balmy breezes are playing with her hair, laughing and laughing. The grass is so thick, so soft, and so smooth. The sun gently smiles down on the girl and the girl smiles back. “This must be ecstasy,” she thinks aloud. The roaring of the river in the distance fills the dell with wild and gentle music. Then a white cloud is in the air, covering everything in soft whiteness and the gentle sound of beating wings. Graceful, lovely birds fly up as one, leaving the girl staring up at them, in a field of soft, white feathers. They fly in intricate designs, one after the other, perfectly symmetric. The girl smiles widely, ardent joy on her face, and she breathes a sigh of wonder and amazement. Now they are gone, over the curve of the earth. The girl still holds joy on her face, though, for she knows this lovely aperture is but a shadow, a prediction of the awe-inspiring and greatest sight of all. The girl knows that she will see it one day in heaven and she can hardly wait.

My Living River

Marcella Swartzendruber, Teacher (2009)
Talmadge Middle School, Independence

I have dipped my baby’s toes into the river,
Fished for memories alone and together with little boys gleefully baiting hooks.
I have canoed, kayaked and rowed,
Myself through the ripple of time
That has changed everything
Yet nothing is truly altered.
I have witnessed the murky water scream in protest,
To flooded shores dripping with debris.
I have been enveloped in clear blue
Water and come up sputtering in laughter.
I have floated the dream on an inner tube from Les Schwab’s given joyfully by memory laden men.
I have camped near the glory, driven its line on a map. And been a part of its ebb as it is a part of mine.
My river.
My Willamette.
My home.
There's a River

Ashlie Gonzales, Grade 5 (2003)
Cummings Elementary, Keizer

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 the 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 the river with
The birds and the dove
Oh yes! It's that river that river I love.

Sacred Song

Jordan Prasniewski, Grade 4 (2003)
Charlemagne at Fox Hollow, Eugene

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 the 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.

by Josh Hallquist, Grade 7
Rowe Middle School, Milwaukie (2005)
Rivers are roads of water.
Rivers rock and rivers roll.
Rivers hold food, water and shelter for living things.
Rivers carry life and bring adventure.
Without rivers, fish would have no place to swim.
People use to mine gold in rivers; when it’s gone they can fish.

Usually dogs prefer river water to toilet water.
Rivers keep land healthy.
Trees drink from rivers.
Without rivers, everything would go haywire.
Rivers often define borders.
Rivers bring fresh water.
Without rivers, life would be no fun.
Rivers helped Huck Finn escape from home.
Rivers give bridge builders work.
Rivers inspire artists; French rivers have artists sitting and watching them at all times.
We share long lives, journeys and troubles with rivers.
Rivers give life and death.
Rivers provide a great place to ditch incriminating evidence.

Without rivers, fish would have to live on land, where they would surely overpower and enslave the human race.

What else would old timers do if they couldn’t feed the ducks?
Rivers carry millions of tons of cargo.
Rivers accept whatever is offered.
Rivers carry our history.
Fish spawn in rivers.
Rivers give us hydroelectric power.
Without rivers, Oregon would be brown and sere.
Rivers are relaxing and entertain old men fishers.
Rivers treat all equally.
Rivers are God’s mirrors.

Where dream-givers wait - just around the river bend.
Rivers, salmon sweep their crystal floors.
Rivers are a world unto themselves.
Rivers provide a soft, trickling lullaby.
Rivers provide natural boundaries in a disorderly world.
Bears eat from rivers.
Rivers provide a breath of life and source of creation.
Lastly, rivers irrigate farms so people thrive and survive.
The Willamette
Nicholas Olszyk, Grade 7 (1999)
Zion Lutheran School, Corvallis

The Willamette.
A life-giving river and
A source of industry,
The center of this land.

Swifly, quickly it flows
Onward, onward like fire.
Racing, racing toward its destination
With determination, it seeks its desire.

The Willamette, the river,
The awesome power, the quiet giver.
The greatest honor is the silent one,
And its humble path has just begun.

Memories
Anna Alvarado, Grade 8 (1999)
Jefferson Middle School, Jefferson

Summer memories of
Laughter and Swimming
Float by on the
River

Autumn memories of
Dried leaves and Fishing Trips
Drift past on the
River

Winter memories of
Snow and Hot Chocolate
Glide by on the
River

Springtime memories of
Sunshine and Lilacs
Fly past on the
River

All of my memories of
Seasons gone by
Intertwine in the
Ocean

Things I Know About Rivers
Matt Farmer, Kendra Farrand, Karla Schack (2000)
Sprague High School, Salem

Rivers show age and power,
A quiet dignity that can erupt
Into a playful dance.

The reflecting sun makes the river look
Clean and brisk, though I know the truth.

It’s widely known that anything dangled
In the Willamette turns mud-brown.

The Willamette twirls around like
A treble clef through the heart of Oregon.

The Willamette learns to find its old paths
During flood, seeking by feel the ancient oxbows
That the Army Corps tried to iron out,
Refusing to remain “channelized.”

Spring river roars instead of sings.

by Stefani Schanze, Grade 11
Triangle Lake, Blachly (2009)
The River
Kim Ross, Grade 12 (2000)
Sprague High School, Salem

I sit on the bench and watch the river flow past
So calm and peaceful it pulls me in.
The river talks to me as it flows by,
Telling me about its journeys and all the places it’s been.
I once heard somewhere that Willamette River means river with no sides,
And that this river and its tributaries are the threads that hold our community together.
I believe this. After all, what would our state be without the Willamette River?

Unofficially Mine
Macy Maughman, Grade 9 (2000)
Oregon City High School, Oregon City

The stream behind my house was known to my family as the Creek, or the Woods. But it was really called Beaver Creek. Was there anything extremely special or interesting about it? No. Just regular stream and creek life. And the memories. Too many to count really. Though three come to mind right away.

My two dogs, Ike and Tina, always went with us to the creek, every single time. We would wrestle with them in the water. Then race back up for a barbeque dinner.

My first kiss was just short and sweet. It happened on the island between the banks. Patrick and I had always been best friends. One day, we went down to the creek, just to hang out. When all of a sudden he asked if he could kiss me. It was so cute, the way he asked permission like that. I had said sure, why not? But it took awhile. We were both giggling too much until we actually kissed.

On the way back up to my house, Ike and Tina literally ran into me, and I slipped on a rock. I went headfirst into the freezing cold January water. When I surfaced, I was soaked to the bone, and I had to have been blue. Patrick was just laughing and laughing. That date was one of my favorites! I will never forget it.

The whole creek really isn’t much. It’s just a few trees and bushes. I mean, bugs are everywhere. How great could it be? I guess that if you’re really into nature and the outdoors, you might like Beaver Creek, but I love it. Not because I love the woodsy atmosphere, or anything like that. Believe me, I don’t. I don’t even consider it a body of water, really. It’s more a part of me, and my family, and my home. The creek is unofficially mine.

by Rachel Jordan, Grade 8
Rowe Middle School, Milwaukie (2004)
Spirit
Janice Brendlinger, Grade 6 (2003)
Abiqua School

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

by Christopher Todd, Grade 4
Forest Hills Elementary, Lake Oswego

Water
Yahsolait Frazier-Gorby, Grade 4 (2000)
Adams Elementary, Eugene

Swiftly flowing
Water, splashing
Faster than lightning
Fish dance in water.
Trees shading.
Insects floating
on the water.
Air blowing
in the trees.
Everything
calms down.
It’s night.

I Am
Sujung Lim, Grade 6 (2002)
French Prairie Middle School

Nourishment for life,
A safe haven for animals,
I am Nature’s sister.
I provide life,
My meaning is vitality.
Chuckling and roaring
Merrily I come.
I am the seasons,
In winter, I am silent, sleeping,
In spring, I reawaken
And return to roaring depths.
In summer, I am a
Giver of life for all.
In autumn, my sister,
Nature, paints the trees
Scarlet and showers me with leaves,
In preparation for the long winter’s sleep.
I am ageless. Since the world began,
I have existed.
Now, I may cease life.
If I am banished by the world’s
Greatest threat, Man,
Then all of the animals will cease to exist,
Like I will.
Help me!
Protect me!
Do you know who I am?
I do, and so do all the
Animals who have lived in me.
Through me they live.
I am the river.

by Marie Tempels, Grade 12
JFK High School, Mt. Angel (2009)
Fishing For Salmon

Hayden Overstreet, Grade 3
Warren Elementary School, Warren

I fish in the river, land or boat
With my hook and float
The river provides us many fish,
but I like the ones that end up on my dish!

A River Poem

Kalisa Gentlesnow, Grade 5 (2000)
Adams Elementary, Eugene

Flowing liquid
Rocks sleeping in water
Sun and rain create rainbows
Sun melts
Moon arises
Stars peek through a curtain of blackness.

The Willamette River Through the Seasons

Tommy Anderson, Grade 4
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

Summer through Fall, Winter through Spring
the river shines and gleams.
In Summer the bees buzz and flap their wings fast,
In the Fall squirrels come hiding acorns in trees.
In the Winter steelhead fish swim,
and in the Spring birds fly through the air.
There are many animals on the river in the
Different seasons.

If I Were a River

Kyle Fisher, Grade 6 (2002)
Applegate Elementary, Applegate

If I were a river
I would make it easier on fish
and harder on fisherman
so my fish would be safe
I would let deer, elk and wolves
drink from my crystal clear water
on an early foggy morning
I would let osprey swoop down
and take fish from my ice-cold water
on a late sunny evening
and trickle over log jams
If I were a river
The Elixir of Life
Nikita Lalwani, Grade 4
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

The quiet river lazily flows,
While birds chirp and leaves rustle gently in the breeze.

I see my reflection shimmering in the current,
As crisp scent of foliage wafts through the air.

The river bubbles frantically between the rocks,
And the sounds of the forest fill my ears.

Born in the mountains, guardian of the plains,
A silent witness to history.

It twists and turns, carrying its load of liquid life,
To scorched fields and parched mouths.

So seedlings can rise from the ground,
And feed the world.

I Have the Will and Admit
Dove Miller, Grade 12 (2003)
NW Youth Corps, Eugene

I have the will and admit,
That my intenseness 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 drop 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.
Playful River

Athena Paraskevas-Nevius, Grade 4 (2008)
Abiqua School

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

The River

Anna Smiley, Grade 4 (2009)
Forest Park Elementary

Winding through the endless fields,
I am the river.
Swirling past fisherman's feet,
I am the river.
Sleek and slender fish swim through me,
I am the river.
Deep crevasses I soon form,
I am the river.
Thundering down a steep rock path,
I am the river.
Sturdy metal bridges loom over me,
I am the river.
Ancient stones are my bed,
I am the river.

by Aileen Lee, Grade 5
Crest Drive Elementary, Eugene (2004)
Ripples & Eddies

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

Running wildly through Oregon.

*Amber Mills, Grade 4*
*Forest Hills Elementary, Keizer*

Many people make careless mistakes and lose their short or long lives.

*Jena Burrus, Grade 3*
*Forest Ridge Elementary, Keizer*

Rivers are dying people trying to help and it can be fixed.

*Ric Ortega, Grade 7*
*Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School*
*Salem*

The river has years and years of water.

*Fiona Pond, Grade 3*
*Forest Ridge Elementary, Keizer*

The orange hues of autumn leaves fall on the river’s banks.

*Julia Patridge, Grade 4*
*Forest Park Elementary, Portland*

Something, something I can do to help save the river and save fish too. Let’s plant a tree and hurray ‘cause we just saved a fish today!

*Ellie Nelson, Grade 7*
*Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School*
*Salem*

The river gives us life.

*Max Castillo, Grade 4*
*Portland Village Public Charter School*
*Portland*

*Photo by Ron Cooper*
Stop polluting, stop littering if we do so we could save blue herons, fish and many more creatures. Think about these things and keep them in your head. You could be real helpful. Give a helping hand!

Phoebe Walsh, Grade 3
Forest Hills Elementary
Lake Oswego

The River splashes me to be happy, Most importantly, the River is Always there for me.

Maya Caulfield, Grade 4
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

The fisherman’s stories get longer and better and change all the time. Just like the river.

Blake Sofich, Grade 3 (2004)
Warren Elementary, Warren

Lazy people pollute.

Rachel Polacek, Grade 3
Abiqua School, Salem


Eric Frazer, Grade 2
Chapman Hill Elementary, Salem

Please oh please help these fish.

Sarah Egbert, Grade 7
Jane Goodall Environment Middle School
Salem

I know that long ago, an Indian boy walked the banks of the Willamette River. He thought that it was the most beautiful river he had ever seen.

Connor Webber, Kindergarten (2002)
Montessori Discovery Center, Salem

by Ryan Luis, Grade 8
Rowe Middle School, Milwuakie (2005)
Also bees buzz and humming birds hum, fish splash and there’s no place like the Willamette River.

Olivia Coberly, Grade 3
Forest Ridge Elementary, Keizer

The Willamette flows as the busy day goes by.

Peter Krenek, Grade 4
Forest Hills Elementary, Lake Oswego

So let the animals sing and dance
And the river will forever last

Alisha Dietz, Grade 8
Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School
Salem

The deer jump
The otters swim
The beaver work
The elk pounce
The salmon flow
The coyote hunt
The eagle’s fly
The osprey makes a nest

Berritt Heinz Morris, Grade 4
Forest Park Elementary, Portland

The river is cold and you can get purple lips.

Kaila Hiddleston, Grade 1 (2003)
McKenzie Elementary, Vida

Nymphs are dull so they can hide in the sand from predators like frogs or fish.
Sometimes I wish I could blend into my room so I wouldn’t have to go to school.

Andrew Dane, Grade 4 (2004)
Abiqua School, Salem

Rivers are alive,
a simple fact,
Rivers are alive,
and they deserve that.

Shelby Lewelling, Grade 7
Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School
Salem

Rivers give life or take it away.

Wade, Grade 4
Portland Village Public Charter School
Portland
BECOME A PUBLISHED AUTHOR

HONORING OUR RIVERS:
A Student anthology
Showcasing exceptional literature & artwork by students & guest contributors living within the Willamette River Watershed... and around the world!

"The river is a slithering serpent, winding in rock caves and crevices..."
Sean Harlan, 10th Grade

Showcasing exceptional literature & artwork by students & guest contributors living within the Willamette River Watershed... and around the world!

Designed to nurture respect & appreciation for the water, land, plants, animals & habitats that make up this beautiful and fragile river system.

"I know that long ago an Indian boy walked on the banks of the Willamette River. He thought that it was the most beautiful river he had ever seen."
Connor Webber
Kindergarten, 2002

Manuscript & Artwork Guidelines

- Written work must be typed (double-spaced) or printed clearly; 3 pages maximum
- Digital entries are encouraged - please see website for detailed instructions
- Artwork: B&W only, camera ready or digital
  - One entry per student
- Check spelling and punctuation carefully
- Keep a copy of your work. It will not be returned

- Free copies of the anthology will be mailed to all selected contributors and participating schools
- Foreign language entries with English translation are strongly encouraged

ORDER YOUR FREE WATERSHED TOOLKIT
Toolkits include educational information on the Willamette River Watershed, a copy of the Willamette Legacy video, a previous edition of Honoring Our Rivers, and supplemental curriculum materials. For more information, please visit www.HonoringOurRivers.org

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HONORING OUR RIVERS ANTHOLOGY APPLICATION FORM

Please submit your work along with this completed application form to:

Honoring Our River, 4985 Battlecreek Rd SE #200, Salem, OR 97302

Digital entries are welcome - please visit www.honoringourriver.org for more details!

Entrant’s Name __________________________ Year(K-College) __________ Check here if teacher ________

School ___________________________ Instructor’s Name ___________________________

School Address __________________________________________________________________________________

City/State/Zip __________________________________________________________________________________

Home Address __________________________________________________________________________________

City/State/Zip __________________________________________________________________________________

If you want updates & resource tips, please provide your email address ________________________________

Title of your submitted work: ___________________________________________________________________

I certify that this is my own original idea and work (student’s signature) ______________________________

I am satisfied that this is an original work (instructor’s signature) _________________________________

Please indicate type of work being submitted:

___ poetry       ___ essay       ___ fiction

___ my artwork is included       ___ artwork only

___ foreign language with translation

DEADLINE: entries must be postmarked by January 31

For more information, call 503-585-8789

Email: info@honoringourriver.org
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Ten years ago, author & educator Kathleen Dean Moore joined us in selecting the works that would be published in the 2000 Honoring Our River. Following is an excerpt from her review of the first issue of Honoring Our River:

“Spread across the floor in neat rows were hundreds of poems and essays about the Willamette River, all written by Oregon students. Some of the students had painstakingly penciled poems in block letters on lined paper and illustrated them with crayons. Others submitted short stories or sent essays shaped by a computer into the curl of a jumping trout. Our job was to choose, from these, the fifty-eight written works that would appear in Honoring Our River. The finished book is now in local bookstores. It is a tribute to the wisdom of children, and to the vision of a committee of adults who - in the middle of all the clamoring, competing voices - decided to ask the children to speak for the river.”

Invited Writers

Kathleen Dean Moore
Ursula K. Le Guin
Kim Stafford
William Stafford
Don Colburn
Henry Hughes
Charles Goodrich
Ellen Waterston
Merrilee Buchanan
Amy Kluwe Minato
Elizabeth Mclagan
Roderick Haig-Brown
Howard Corning
Brian Doyle
Jane Glazer
Barbara Conable
Robin Cody
Clemens Starck
Barry Lopez
John Daniel
Steve Jones
Craig Lesley
Rick Bastasch
Jim Nicholson
Dori Saffron

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