



Living River of Words

Youth Poetry and Art Contest



The Water Hole

Nathan Fisher, age 6

Roadrunner Elementary – Ms. Carroll

Grand Prize–Art–Category 1

*This book is dedicated to 2018 Living River of Words
Teachers of the Year:*

*Valerie Selden – Ochoa Elementary School
and
Marea Jenness – Tucson High School*

*And all the teachers and parents/guardians that promote and support
the integration of science and the arts while creating opportunities
for children to connect with nature.*

Living River of Words 2018 – 2019 Traveling Exhibit Schedule

April 7 – May 13, 2018

Wheeler Taft Abbott Sr. Branch Library • 7800 N. Schisler Dr.

May 15 – June 14, 2018

Martha Cooper Branch Library • 1377 N. Catalina Ave.

June 16 – July 23, 2018

Murphy-Wilmot Branch Library • 530 N. Wilmot Rd.

July 26 – August 22, 2018

Agua Caliente Park – Ranch House Art Gallery • 12325 E. Roger Rd.

August 25 – September 27, 2018

Dusenberry-River Branch Library • 5605 E. River Rd., # 105

October 2 – October 30, 2018

Mission Branch Library • 3770 S. Mission Rd.

November 2 – December 2, 2018

Quincie Douglas Branch Library • 1585 E. 36th St.

December 4 – December 30, 2018

Joel Valdez Main Library • 101 N. Stone Ave.

January 3 – February 14, 2019

Valencia Branch Library • 202 W. Valencia Rd.

Living River of Words: Youth Arts and Science

Living River of Words (LROW) sets the stage for learning, inspires science inquiry, and excites creativity. The cycle begins with teachers who invite *LROW* arts and science instructors to their classrooms. Students are introduced to the concept of water cycle, Santa Cruz river watershed, and study wetland habitats through a multidisciplinary series of science investigations and the practice of poetry and visual arts. After exploring these topics, children ages 5–19 have the opportunity to share their impressions with entries of poetry and/or visual art to *Living River of Words: Youth Poetry and Art Contest*. In these pages you see the award winning youth poetry and art works that are the result of the field trips, school residencies, and independent study.



Photo: Helana D'Amato, DeGrazia Elementary

The Santa Cruz River has long been the lifeblood of the region, attracting the first humans over 12,000 years ago. In fact, the Santa Cruz River Valley has the longest continuous record of agriculture in the United States. Today, due to a variety of factors including groundwater pumping, many stretches flow only when it rains. Thanks to the release of highly treated wastewater into the riverbed the Santa Cruz River in northwest Tucson and Marana, the river is alive with perennial flows, lush trees lining the riverbanks, and diverse wildlife. Effluent in this reach of the



Photo: Brandon Taylor, DeGrazia Elementary

Santa Cruz River is not new; two wastewater treatment plants have been operating on this section of the river since the 1970s. What has changed is the quality of the effluent being released. In December 2013, Pima County completed upgrades to Agua Nueva and Tres Rios wastewater treatment plants. The upgrades significantly improved the quality of water released into the river. The river now attracts walkers, bikers, and is a popular birding

destination from the Sweetwater Wetlands to the Marana Flats.

The Living River Project, conducted by Pima County and the Sonoran Institute, measures conditions of this valuable ecosystem and track the impacts of our community investment. *Living River of Words* plays a role in the broader Living River Project by introducing students, teachers and parents to the lower Santa

Cruz River, Agua Caliente Park, and other wetland habitats in Pima County. While at the field study site, students conduct water quality tests, record wildlife sightings, study aquatic macroinvertebrates, and make vegetation observations, using methods that reflect the Living River Project indicator assessments. A visiting poet or artist spends time with the students by the river to guide their journaling, photographing, and drawing in preparation for poetry writing and artwork back in the classroom. The ever-expanding reach of *LROW* is promoted through a partnership with Arizona Project Wet during the annual Living River Academy where teachers are introduced to *LROW* and explore science education opportunities along the Santa Cruz River.



Photo: Jordan Gutierrez, DeGrazia Elementary

We hope you will enjoy the richness and wonder of these special places through the eyes of the *Living River of Words* 2018 award winning youth poets and artists.

Thank You!

Living River of Words succeeds with in-kind services and financial support from Pima County Regional Flood Control District, Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department, Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, Pima County Public Library, Friends of Agua Caliente Park, Arizona Project Wet, Udall Foundation: Parks in Focus, The University of Arizona Poetry Center, and Sonoran Institute.



Photo: Rebecca Cruz, DeGrazia Elementary

Many thanks to the community partners, school administrators, teachers, science, poetry, photography, and art instructors, judges, volunteers, and graphic designers that worked diligently to bring *Living River of Words* through the annual cycle of activities: Yajaira Gray, Wendy Burroughs, Jeffrey Babson, Sandy Reith, Axhel Muñoz, Marsha Colbert, Neil Diamente, Doris Evans, Elizabeth Quinn, Cristina Cardenas, Jeanne Osgood, Mariana Caballero, Louis S. Shanley,

Edie Price, Helen Wilson, Noemi Zazueta, Brenda Rentfro, Susan Knoll, Brian Powell, Bret Muter, Kerry Schwartz, Elizabeth Wilkening, Tony Luebbermann, and Tyler Meier.

The Catfish

I dreamed I was a catfish
Swimming in the river with
My shiny scales

And my spiky tail
I rise with the sun
You can see me shine

*Joaquin Patricio Corella, age 8
Ochoa Elementary – Mrs. Peralta
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 2*

From a Seed to a Cactus

On a hot, dry day in the desert
A beautiful red fruit drops from a
green, spiky saguaro cactus.
It slowly opens on the dry desert floor.
Two thousand black seeds fall out.
Wind and rain comes.
Months, years, and weeks come,
and there is a beautiful cactus
waiting to be seen.

*Georgina Valenzuela, age 9
Borton Magnet School – Mrs. Bennett*

Rain and Animals

Rain is a flowing river
Right up in the sky
As you hear a snake slither
As you see a bird fly

*Alex Palma, age 10
Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Mortensen*

The Reflection of the River

The quiet light floats through the wind
as if it could go through
the walls of the earth.

Dreaming spirits whispers
blowing together.

Friends run along a starlit path
through the trees.

The sparkling stones fall
calling their names.

The reflection of the river water running,
seems to be making
a clean long path.

The clouds still white
in the peaceful desert.

If you listen closely,
you can hear the wind
saying, believe!

Noemi Celani, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Robinson

Tomorrow is Today

Tomorrow is today
And the words floating in the river
And the leaves floating in the sky
And the fish are like rocks in the river
And the spiders walking in the sun
The sky is purple at night
Blue in the day
And butterflies are flying
And birds are sleeping in their nests
Clouds like cotton candy in the sky

Lucas Aldeguer-Saenz, age 9
Independent entry

One Life

You have a chance
To change the world.

One world includes,
Love—it's perfect in the world
Imagination—it makes you
Hopeful when you are sad.
Kindness—it lets friendship
Into your heart.

An even better world awaits,
Where magic has love in its heart.
Friendship, brings you happiness.
Love in your heart, gives you a chance.
Friendship brings life to even the driest
Desert like water, it gives us life.

Brenna Yonkman, age 10
Borton Magnet School – Mrs. Bennett
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 3

Storm in the Desert

Water flowing
Trees blowing
Rushing waters
Rush rush rush
Lightning striking
Thunder booming
Boom boom boom
Sun comes out
The storm is done
Peaceful desert

Kyla Boxley, age 9
Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Mortensen

The Beauty of the Water

The sun hits the water and reflects gold light.
Wisdom of the water flows around me.
The river inspired me because the gold
metallic green combined together.
A river is like millions of hummingbirds flying around
the beauty of the river.
If a bird is flying they would see the
beautiful sight of brightness.
When it's nighttime the moonlight hits the river.
You can see black and white glowing.
The afternoon is when the purple mountains
come alive and the river turns orange,
green and red shininess.
When waves come water splashes the dark
and light blue river is in the sky.
When flowers grow right next to the river
the flowers would be rainbow colors.
The river is like a rainbow.
So many colors I can't even describe it.
The weather is cold like the water because
I feel like all of the water is on me.

Natalie Vega, age 8
Ochoa Elementary – Miss Selden

Water Fun

A saw a hawk fly over as I lay on a rock.
I was soaked from the stream.
I lay there looking at the green bushes around me,
remembering the feel of the nice cold water
as it crashes around my legs.
I see birds eating berries,
and wonder how they taste.

Aiden Rooney, age 9
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca

Rain

Water drops to the ground
It makes a splash
It makes me happy
Happy animals get a drink too
Water gives a mountain life
It gives life to everything
Water is my hero

Sloane Black, age 6

*Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Mortensen
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 1*

Empty Trust of Endless Wild Ocean

Moonlight belongs in the swirl of stars,
waterfall in the sunrise,
the ocean of crystals
where the diamonds shine
in the rainbow

Wild path of sandy shadows
in the shining desert,
the empty trust
of the endless breeze.

In the pure dust between life,
the sign in the sky
is an answer.

Ella Knuese, age 8

Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Mansour

Almost Heaven

Snow shimmering in the sunlight
Footprints trailing in the delicate powder
As I step into the inner dome of the cave
 Heaps of icicles hang
 Almost like it's heaven
It burns when the cold tickles my face
I watch little horses gallop from my breath
Their hooves beat against the withered flowers
 I know winter is here
I dream of what it's going to look like in the spring
 The flowers return
 A new generation of life is born
My eyes perceive crumbs of crystals
 conquering the ground
I will never forget the beautiful cove
 of glass sculptures
 Almost like it's heaven

Abigail Rose Wann, age 13
Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Castro

Rain

Cold as snow
Old as time
Lighter than sun
Roars like thunder
Air like waves
In the desert
Water rain sun

Frank Andriopoulos, age 8
Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Mortensen

River Song

I walked by the stream and
could see fish in the water.
Birds chirped happily.
Lily pads floated on the water,
waiting to be dunked by a frog.
The bees are buzzing,
creating a humming song.
The birds join in the lullaby,
as the trees sway in the breeze.
I can feel the humidity
as I approach the water.
There's a sweet vanilla scent from
the flowers that just bloomed.
The hot sun burns my skin
as it shines down on me.
My palms are sweaty,
and there is a salty taste on my lips.
My mouth is dry, but my feet are wet.

Alana Torres, age 10
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca



Rain Drops from Sky

Alana Torres, age 10

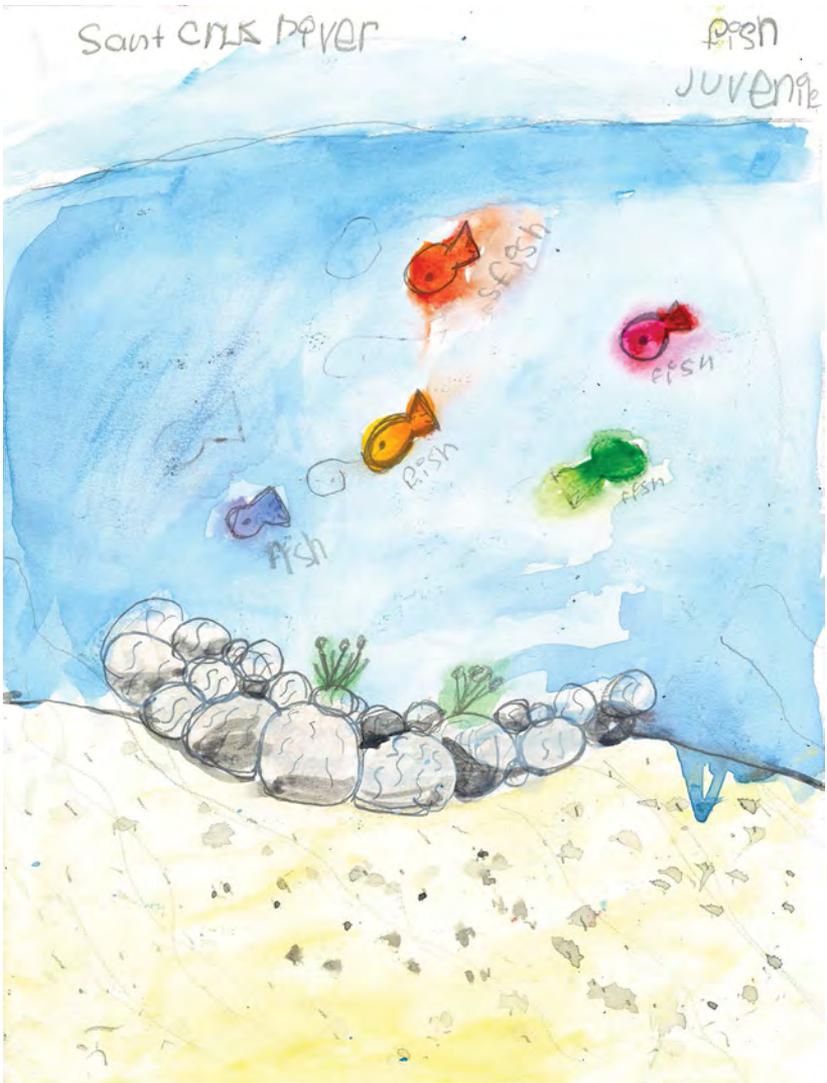
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca



Eliza Smith, age 15

Tucson High School – Ms. Jenness

Grand Prize–Art–Category 4



The Living River

Dana Paola Gamez, age 9

Walter Douglas Elementary – Ms. Powers



*Andrea Sampson, age 15
Tucson High School – Ms. Jenness*



The Moonlight

Audree Jenshak, age 8

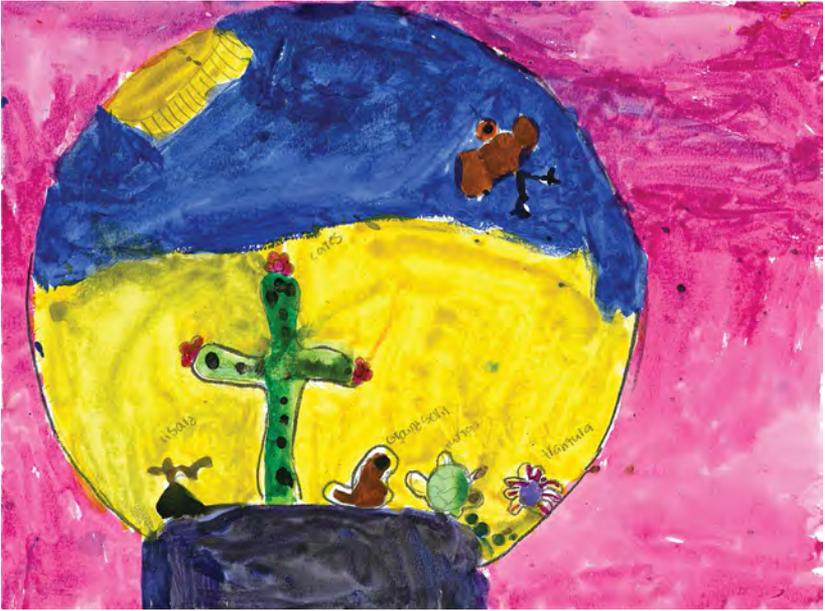
Agua Caliente Elementary – Ms. McKinney



Relaxation

Evelyn Grace Brandon, age 8

DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca



Life or Desert

Annabelle Pizzi, age 8

Walter Douglas Elementary – Ms. Powers



Rocky Island

Trent Alexander, age 8

Agua Caliente Elementary – Ms. Mansour



Juan Cardenas, age 14
Flowing Wells High School – Ms. Pechuzal



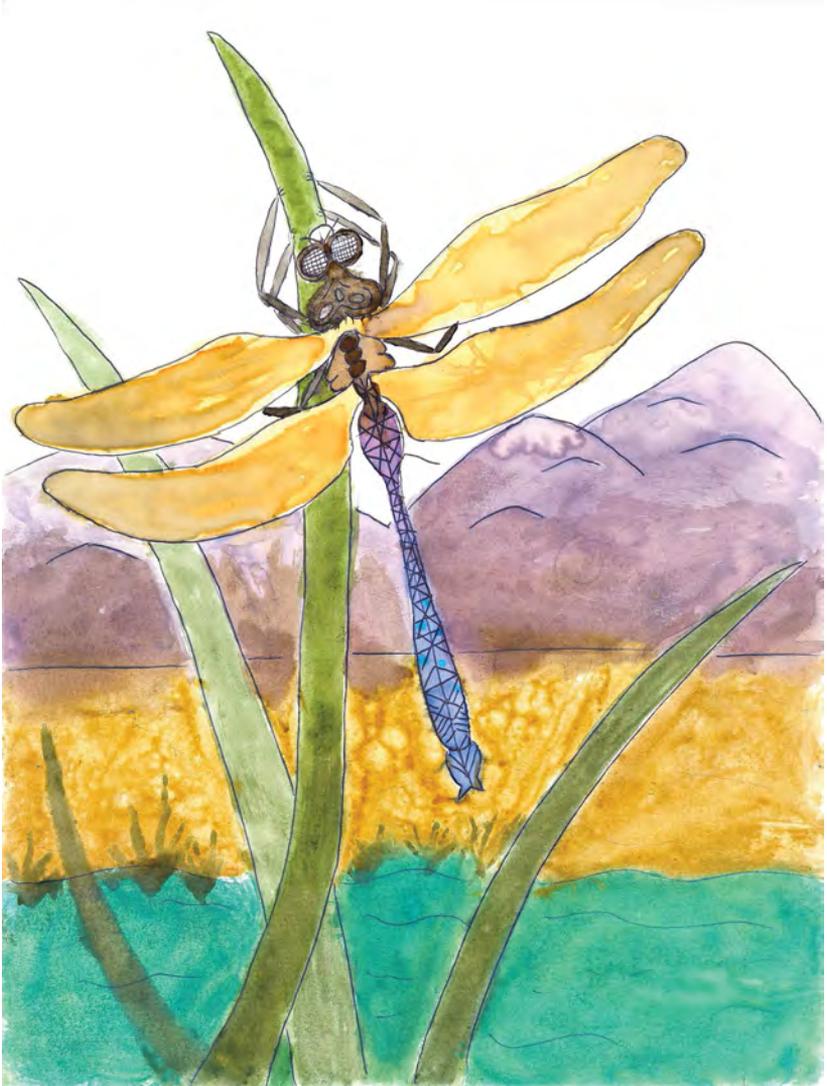
Delilah McPherson, age 6
Sewell Elementary – Ms. Payton



*Eyvindr Leavenworth, age 10
Hendricks Elementary – Ms. Slingerland*



Desert Perspective
*Isabella Milan Valdez, age 10
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca*



*Kestrel Weyant, age 14
Tucson High School – Ms. Jenness*



Daytime

*Isabel Madero, age 7
Roadrunner Elementary – Ms. Gary*



Waterland

*Sean Mergenthaler, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary – Ms. Mansour
Grand Prize–Art–Category 2*



The Dragonfly

*Eva Fregoso, age 8
Walter Douglas Elementary – Ms. Powers*



Desert Blossoms After Rain

Maryanne Allen, age 10

Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Ms. Mortensen

Grand Prize–Art–Category 3



Desert Sunset

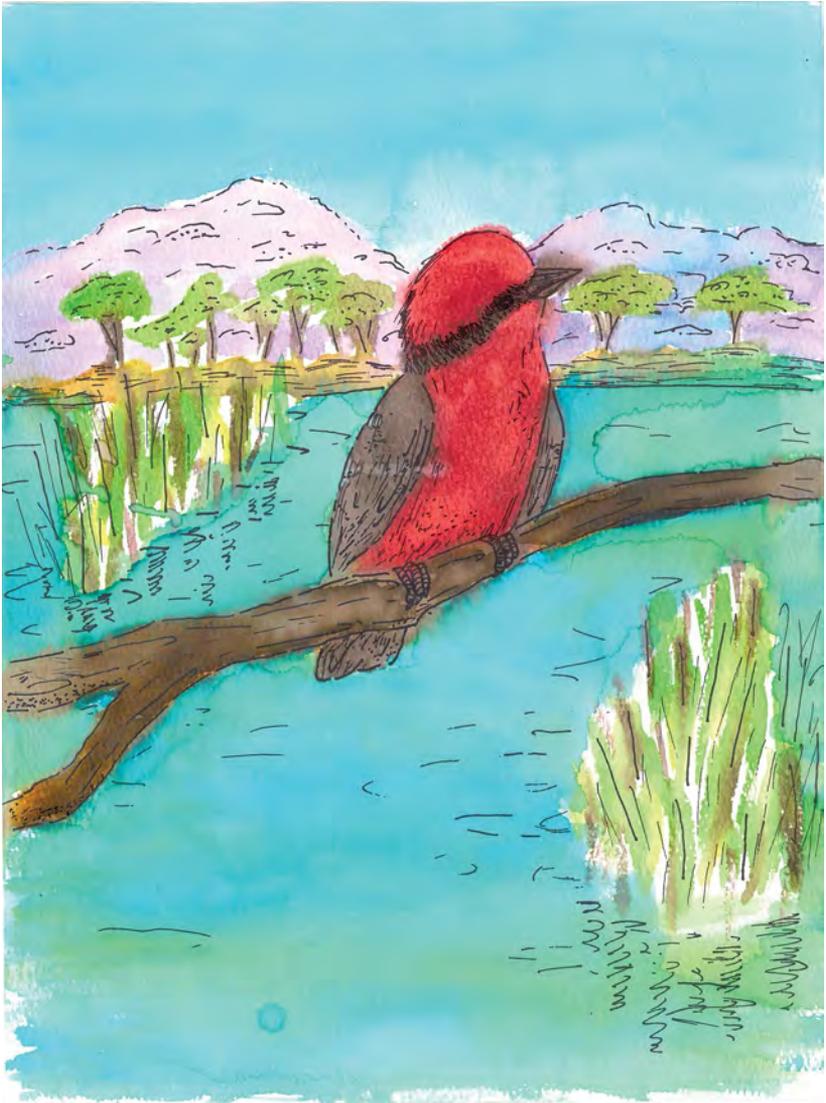
Regina Mei Guinanao, age 8

Agua Caliente Elementary – Ms. McKinney



Artist

*Omar Kardouf, age 6
Sewell Elementary – Ms. Dolan*



Vermillion Flycatcher
Riley Egan, age 12
St. Michaels School – Mr. Haves



Warm and Cold
Saul Moreno, age 11
Independent – Valencia Library



Jayden Velez, age 9
Walter Douglas Elementary – Ms. Powers



*Sydney Knoll-Grass, age 15
Tucson High School – Ms. Jenness*



Fox in the Desert
Taylor Dull, age 7
Roadrunner Elementary – Ms. Carroll



Wyatt Nickell, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary – Mr. Hart
Grand Prize–Photography–Category 3



Bella Ho, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary – Mr. Hart



Kamiryn Ward, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary – Ms. Bushe



*Mario Gonzalez, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary – Ms. Bushe*



*Vincent Lujan, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary – Mr. Mayer*

Dirty Water

think of a body of water
this is a strange request,
but trust me, do it
I bet you thought of the beautiful,
flowing falls of Niagara
or sailing the seven seas
mysteries, never solved of sailors down deep
but when I think of a "Body" of water,
I don't think of something natural
I think of contaminated life that has been
stored in restoration plants
I think of the lies and secrets that are hidden within the murky streams
all the things we think we can wash away with liquid and soap
but water is clear,
it cannot keep secrets,
it will always show what you have done
the Arizona water can tell you stories
of crime and terror,
but you need it to stay alive
that is why it is your enemy and your friend

Alexandra Knope, age 11
The Gregory School – Mrs. Cain
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 4

I Love Trees

A tree is like my grandpa
drying leaves, bent over
limbs in the winter of
his life deep thoughts
and roots.

Jocelyn R. Sepulveda-Cocio, age 9
Presidio School – Mrs. Nelson

Water in the Desert

The sky is overcast
A sea of gray

Distorted reflections of diving ducks
Are visible on the dark pond

Turtles turn in the turbid water
Searching and scanning for food

Outside of the water
Butterflies and birds fly in a rainbow of colors

I am happily hoping
For the rare sight of desert rain

Then the dull sky clears up
To reveal the bright sun

Yellow light washes over Agua Caliente
As an artist washes paper with watercolors

Turtles drowsily climb out the water
To bask in the sun's warm rays

Riley Egan, age 12
St. Michael's School – Mr. Hawes

Hear the Noise of Nature

Hear the bobcat feasting
Hear the wildcat hunting for food
Listen to the soft sounds of the river
Listen to the dragonfly zoom past you
Hear the javelina eating a cactus
Listen to the wind blowing past you
Smell the grass on the ground
Feel the sand through your fingers
Feel the grass tickle your legs
And smell the flowers blooming

Luis A. Linares Jr., age 8
Borton Magnet School – Mrs. Edelman

A Tree is Like

A tree is like a shelter,
It provides home for animals.
A tree is like a home,
As it is safe and firm.
It holds many animals.
Think you can name some?

*Chelsea Bolding, age 8
Presidio School – Mrs. Aliperti*

Senses of Beauty

I see
Stripes playing tag around me
I feel
As if I should kneel to its majesty
I smell
The ripeness of the city of creosote after the bestow of the clouds
I taste
The juiciest of the prickly fruit
I hear
The clouds talking with each other o so near
I think
I am with the wildest things at the end of who gave as life
I love
The powerful wings of the Inca dove
I am aware
Of the hare that comes to my knees

*Bryce Drummond, age 11
Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Anderson*

I Enjoy the River

I can almost taste the sweet smell
of the flowers in the air,
and the sour juice from
the berry on my tongue.

A small fish darts
as if playing in
the water as it swims by.

I hear the frog croak
and the birds chirp.

I see a purple flower blossom
drift by in the wind,
and I feel soft leaves blowing
against my face as
I walk through the tangle of trees.

There is soft sand under my feet
as I enjoy the river.

Paisley Gardner, age 8
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca

The Stars Powder

I dreamt I was an elf owl
Under the night sky
Breathing in the dust
That the stars gave me
A white powder dancing away
Carried out of my lungs
Through the air
Fallen on warm sand underneath
Broken by the steps of my tiny friends
Taken in and breathed again

Kaitlyn Garber, age 14
Flowing Wells High School – Ms. Pechuzal

Crystal Rivers

Crystal rivers in the desert,
the diamonds are rainbow.

The rain flows in the streams.

I walk on the sandy path by the stream,
moonlight shadows through the trees,
tiny waterfall.

I can see stars in my dreams,
in the water find open leaves,
imagine a bright ending.

Emma Miller, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. McKinney

The River of Words

Take heed as you stand among the reeds
Your mind may get lost in the Waters of Thought
The water lays still, until an idea sparks
Sending a ripple
Feel the wind hugging your cheek
Embracing it in the cloak of nature's welcome
Sit down by the River of Words
Sit down and think
Then write some poetry

Alyssa Thompson, age 11
Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Johnson

Sonoran Song

Scared saguaros stand like statues of the honored
Monstrous mountains above all
with beauty like towers
Peregrines dashing in the sky like runners racing
Delicate doves fly like graceful floating flowers
Gila monster crawl on the floor with poison in their saliva
But beauty in their presence
Rattling snakes slithering on the desert floor
Flowers blooming on ocotillos glowing from the harsh sun's beat
Red-tail hawks spread their wings and they soar
Arizona's arid climate
Leaves little to change
But when different
There's something so beautiful
and gloriously strange
Rain like dewdrops of sugar and water
The petrichor, sweet and like no other
The smell wraps you in love and joy
As if being held by your mother

Chloe Pesqueira, age 13
St. Michael's School – Mr. Hawes

Mt. Lemmon

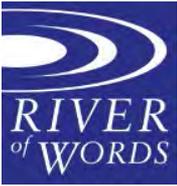
As I walked by the lake on Mt. Lemmon,
I saw fish leaping – creating an arch of water.
There was a small waterfall making noise
along with the croaking frog.
The air smelled sweet like marshmallows
from the campfire nearby.

Abbey Engebretson, age 9
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca



Photo: Allie Lopez, DeGrazia Elementary

For more information about *Living River of Words: Youth Arts and Science* contact:
Pima County Natural Resources,
Parks and Recreation
Environmental Education
Phone: (520) 724-5375
Email: eeducation@pima.gov
Website: www.pima.gov/nrpr



Shaping the Future of the West
www.sonoraninstitute.org



parks in focus
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Friends of Agua
Caliente Park



Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
Regional Flood Control District
Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department
Pima County Public Library



PIMA COUNTY

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