



Living River of Words

Youth Poetry and Art Contest



Deer at Sunset

Evelyn Allen, age 10

Mesquite Elementary School – Janis Mortensen and Paula Maxwell

Grand Prize–Art–Category 3

*This book is dedicated to 2019 Living River of Words
Teacher of the Year:
Annie Tanner - Anza Trail 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 2019 – 2020 Traveling Exhibit Schedule

April 13 – May 31, 2019

Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr. Library • 7800 N. Schisler Dr.

June 4 – June 30, 2019

Joel Valdez Main Library • 101 N. Stone Ave.

July 3 – August 29, 2019

Murphy-Wilmot Library • 530 N. Wilmot Rd.

September 4 – September 29, 2019

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

October 2 – October 30, 2019

Mission Library • 3770 S. Mission Rd.

November 2 – November 28, 2019

Quincie Douglas Library • 1585 E. 36th St.

December 3, 2019 – January 2, 2020

Eckstrom-Columbus Library • 4350 E. 22nd St.

January 7 – February 27, 2020

Joyner-Green Valley Library • 601 N. La Cañada Dr., Green Valley

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 concepts of watershed and the water cycle, and explore local 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 study trips, school residencies, and independent study.



Photo: Doris Evans

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. The Living River Project, conducted by Pima County and the Sonoran Institute,



Photo: Juliana Romero, Manzo Elementary School

measures conditions of this valuable ecosystem and track the impacts of our community investment. 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. In 2017, we celebrated the return of the endangered Gila Topminnow to the lower Santa Cruz River!

Living River of Words plays a role in the broader Living River Project by introducing students, teachers and parents to the Santa Cruz River, Agua Caliente Park, and the pond at Historic Canoa Ranch, and other wetland habitats in Pima County. While at the field study site, students conduct water quality tests, 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 education opportunities.



Photo: Itzel Chavez, Drachman Montessori Magnet School

We hope you will enjoy the richness and wonder of these special places through the eyes of the Living River of Words 2019 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, Sonoran Institute, and Marana Parks and Recreation.

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, Matt Smogor, Eric Scheuering, Edie Price,

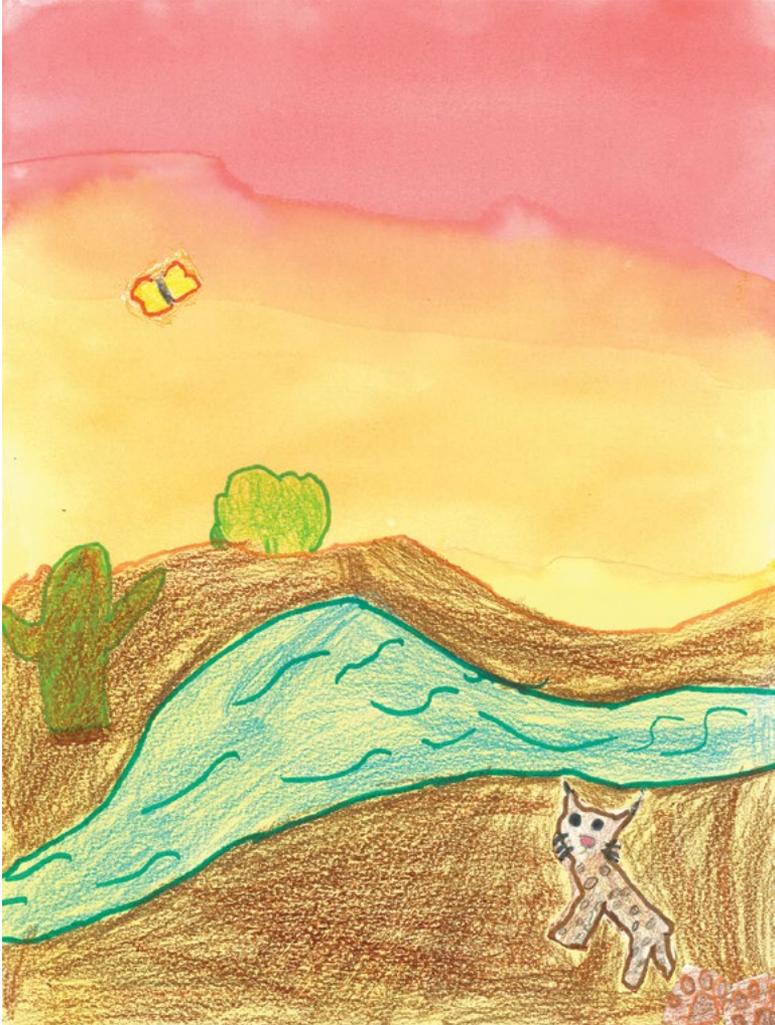


Photo: Angel Soto, Manzo Elementary School

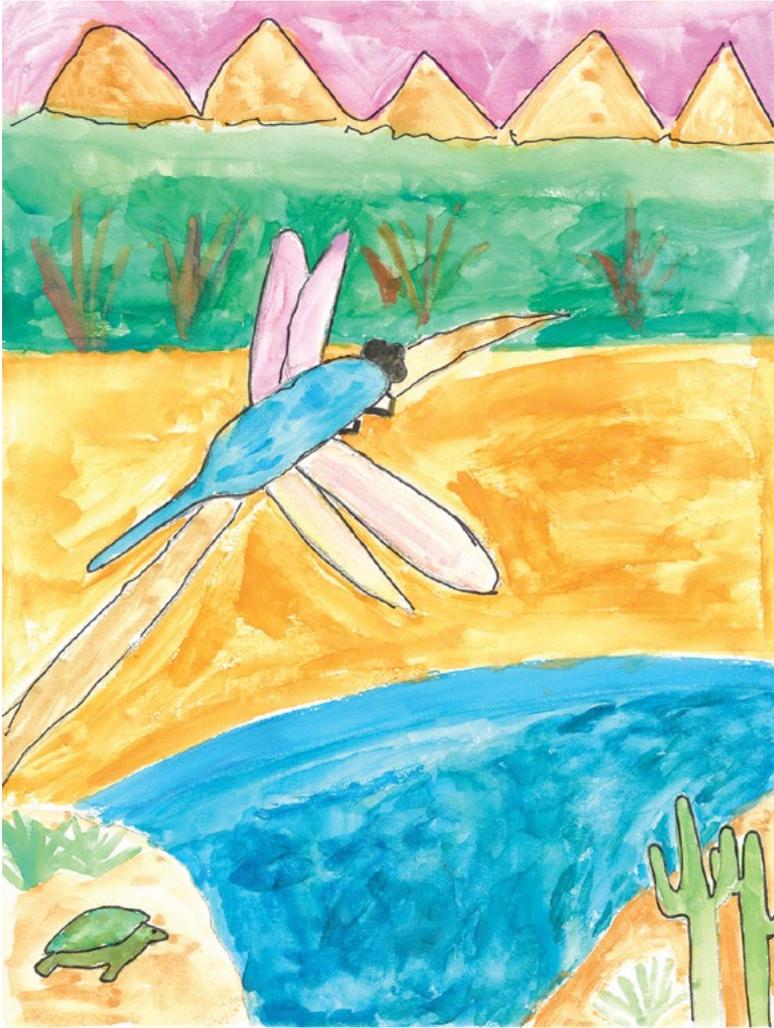
Helen Wilson, Noemi Zazueta, Neil Diamante, Doris Evans, Elizabeth Quinn, Dominique Sevi, Clel Howard, Mariana Caballero, Andrea Bennett, Miriam Aleman, Susan Knoll, Brian Powell, Bret Muter, Hazelle Gonter, Carol Brown, Kerry Schwartz, Elizabeth Wilkening, Tony Luebberrmann, and Tyler Meier.

Roadrunner at noon
Willows weeping from heat
Sweat pours down my face

Maria Robles, age 7
Miles Exploratory Learning Center – Rosalie Perales
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 1



Saryna Flores, age 8
Mission Manor Elementary School – April Brown



A Day at the River

Sierra Skye Milligan, age 12

DeGrazia Elementary School – Robert Mayer

So Pretty

Waterfall flowing

Rushing flowing crystal clear

Crystal clear water

Sydney Allen, age 8

Tanque Verde Elementary School – Kim Roh

The Wonderful Things I See

Look upon a tree, oh what wonderful things I see.
One big waterfall, two little butterflies,
One fox as orange as can be,
Five dandelions, four little chickadees,
One female cardinal that I can see.
One big woodpecker pecking at a tree.
Three little squirrels running into their hole,
And then what did I pull?
A root from the tree
That's home to all the wonderful things I see.

*Hannah Harrington, age 7
Tanque Verde Elementary School – Cheryl LaRose*



*David Reyes, age 14
Drachman Montessori Magnet School – Eric Flewelling*

The Calling

As I head home, I turn around to hear something
calling for me.

I turn around to see the beautiful moonlit sky.
In the distance, I can hear the coyotes
howling at the full moon,
and the soft sound of the running river that flows through here.

I take a whiff of the air and in the air,
I could smell the sweet mesquite seeds
that are scattered everywhere.

I turn around to see the desert calling for me.
And I answer.

Liam Diaz, age 12
Anza Trail School – Annie Tanner
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 3

The Deep Sleeping Rivers

The deep sleeping rivers
As free as the moonlight crossing
Mist and miles away of your dreams
And the death of the rivers
The stones are still and
The whistles of the birds.

Madelyn Hand, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary School – Jennifer Mansour



Owls

Alyssa Hackett, age 6
Gale Elementary School – Hannah Sainz

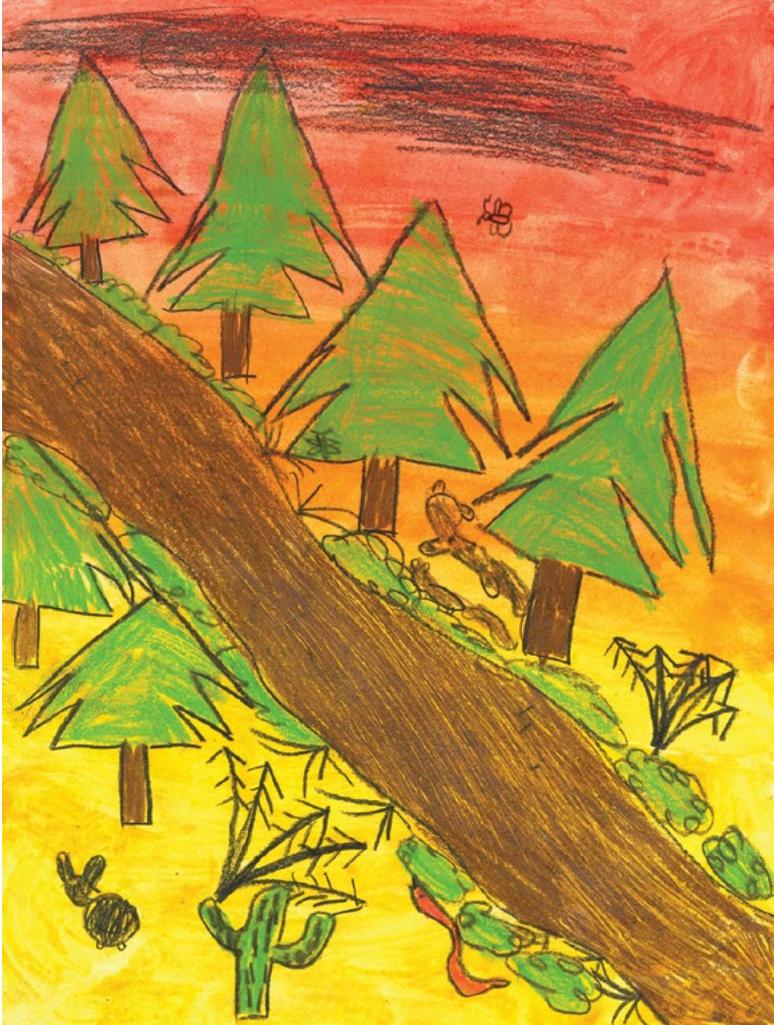


Outta the Wasteland

Diego Muner Hernandez, age 16
Tucson High Magnet School – Marea Jenness

Tortoise
Slow, reptile
Walking, drinking, eating
Brown, hard
Turtle

William Osborne, age 7
Tanque Verde Elementary School – Jill Vengelen



Ranando Josemaria Jr., age 8
Mission Manor Elementary School – April Brown
Grand Prize–Art–Category 2



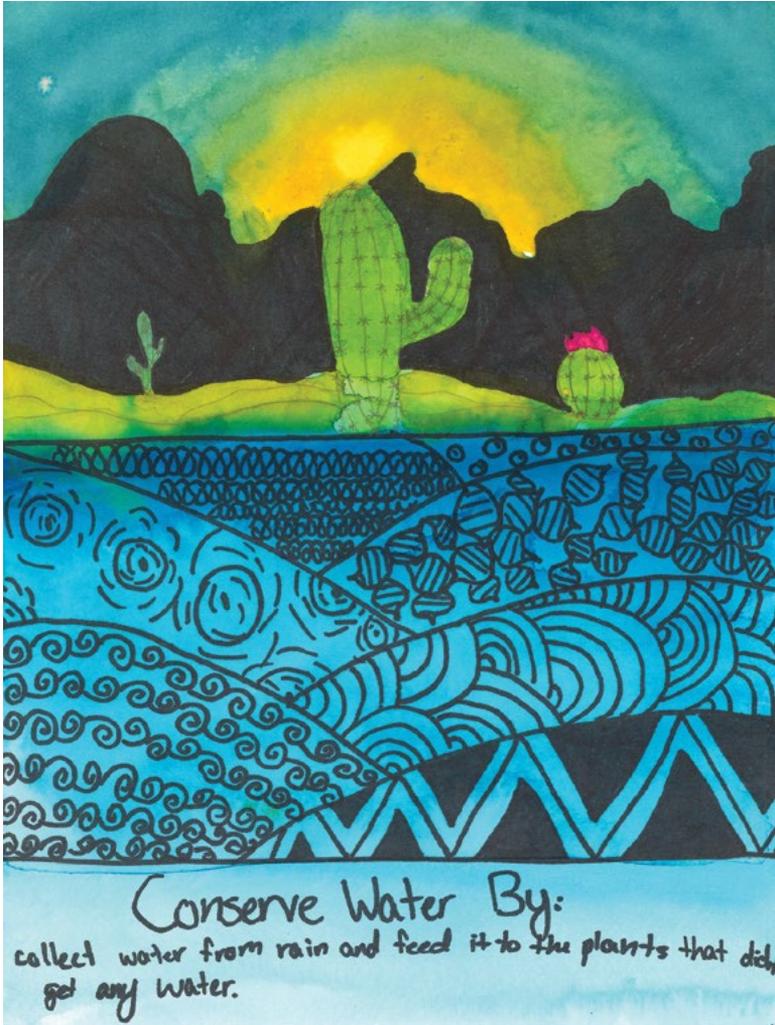
A Sunny Day

Corina Canchola, age 5

Sewell Elementary School – Sandra Payton

Black crows flying
Brown river moving slow
Green cactus

Camila Garate, age 6
Miles Exploratory Learning Center – Mary Hope Bergey and Jolene Terry



A Daily Sunrise
Hayden Hishaw, age 11
Basis Tucson North – Carrie Vonier



Sarah Haro, age 13
Drachman Montessori Magnet School – Jose Haro
Grand Prize–Photography–Category 4

When Water Moves

Water moves in many ways
Up and down and sideways
It goes up to form white fluff
Super white and super lush
It goes down and down and down
Into the wind and on the ground
Water sometimes falls as snow
As we wait for “Ho Ho Ho”
When the water filters it will link
To our home so we can drink
Water is used in many ways
Taking different shapes each day

Cedric Supomo, age 10
Mesquite Elementary School – Janis Mortensen and Paula Maxwell



A Storm

Cooper Stahn, age 6

Gale Elementary School – Jennifer Nguyen



Eli Graizbord-Michelson, age 15

Tucson High Magnet School – Marea Jenness

A Poem to the River

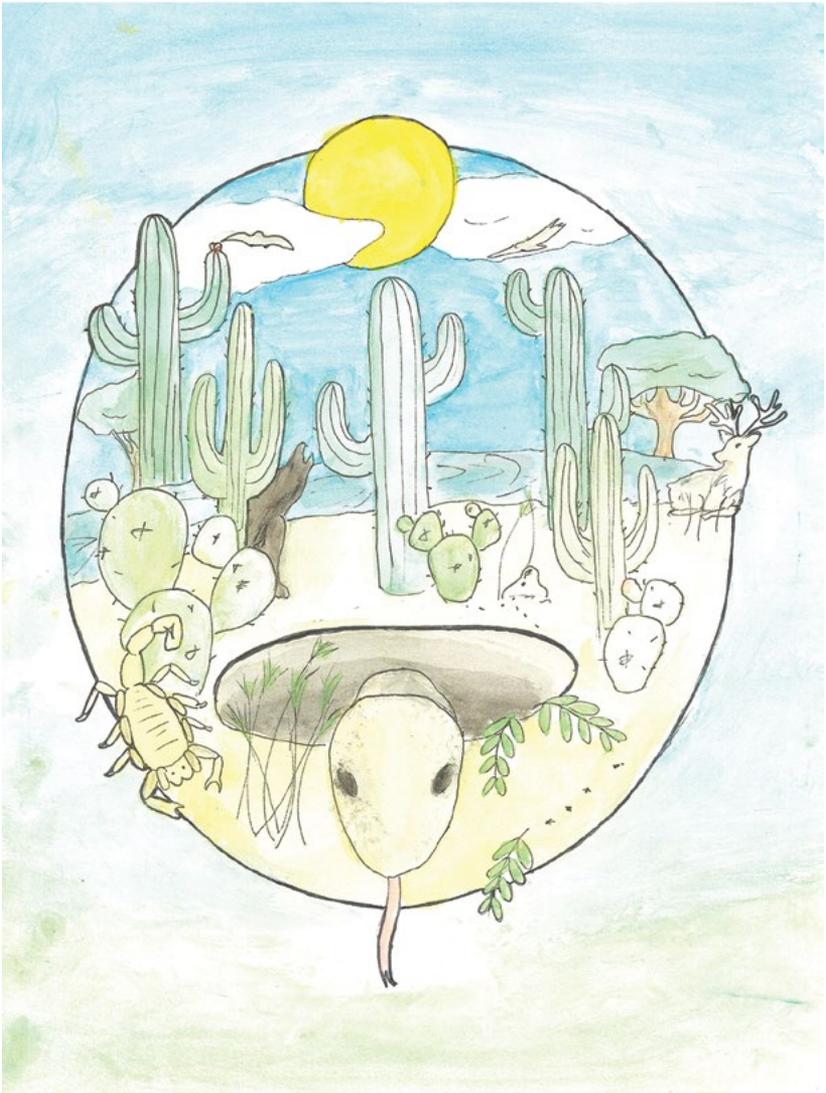
When It rains it pours
When it pours the earth roars
When the earth roars
The river is full
When the river is full
everyone is cheerful.

Marytza Catalan, age 10
Independent Entry

Sleepy Years

The sleeping years of the ocean's pearl.
The quiet sleeping river
Is flowing through the waves.
The branches are on fire
And I am in the dark alone.

Adam Nelson, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary School – Jennifer Mansour
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 2



Angeleeza Alvarez, age 16
Tucson High Magnet School – Marea Jenness
Grand Prize–Art–Category 4



*Christopher Martinez, age 11
Manzo Elementary School – Jessica Benites*

The Santa Cruz

I remember the wildlife
The sound of birds chirping,
I remember the food,
Sweet red wolfberries.

I remember the crane,
The big white bird flying sky high,
I remember the smell of rain,
The humid wet smell.

I remember the river,
The river of life,
The stream that moved like lightning,
The Santa Cruz River.

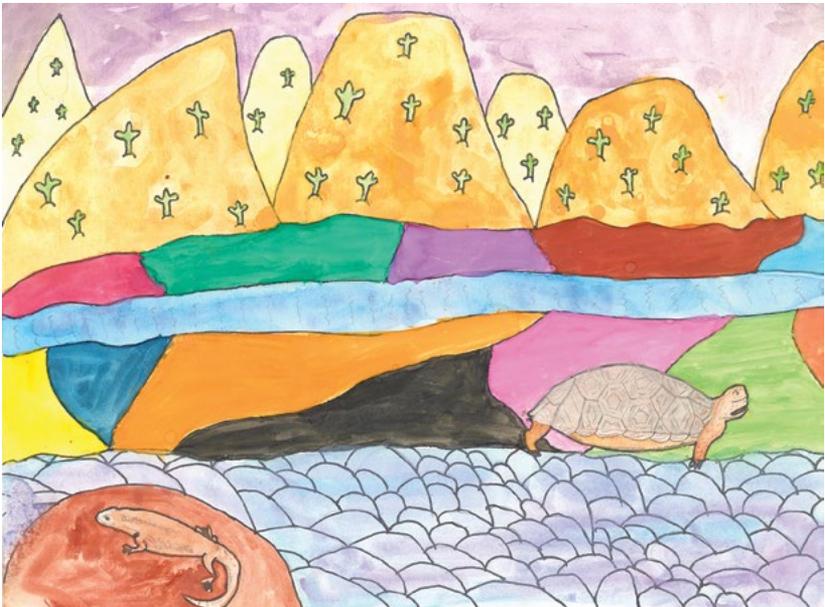
*Lucas Nguyen, age 11
Ironwood Elementary School – June Hall*



Desert Water

Isabella Vaughn, age 7

Tanque Verde Elementary School – Shelley Sanchez and Jenna Childers



Colors in the Desert

Alana Torres, age 11

DeGrazia Elementary School – Robert Mayer



*Leon Obezo, age 6
Cragin Elementary School – Heather Wenning
Grand Prize–Art–Category 1*



Waters Wind

Laila Roberts, age 11

Anza Trail School – Annie Tanner

Grand Prize–Photography–Category 3

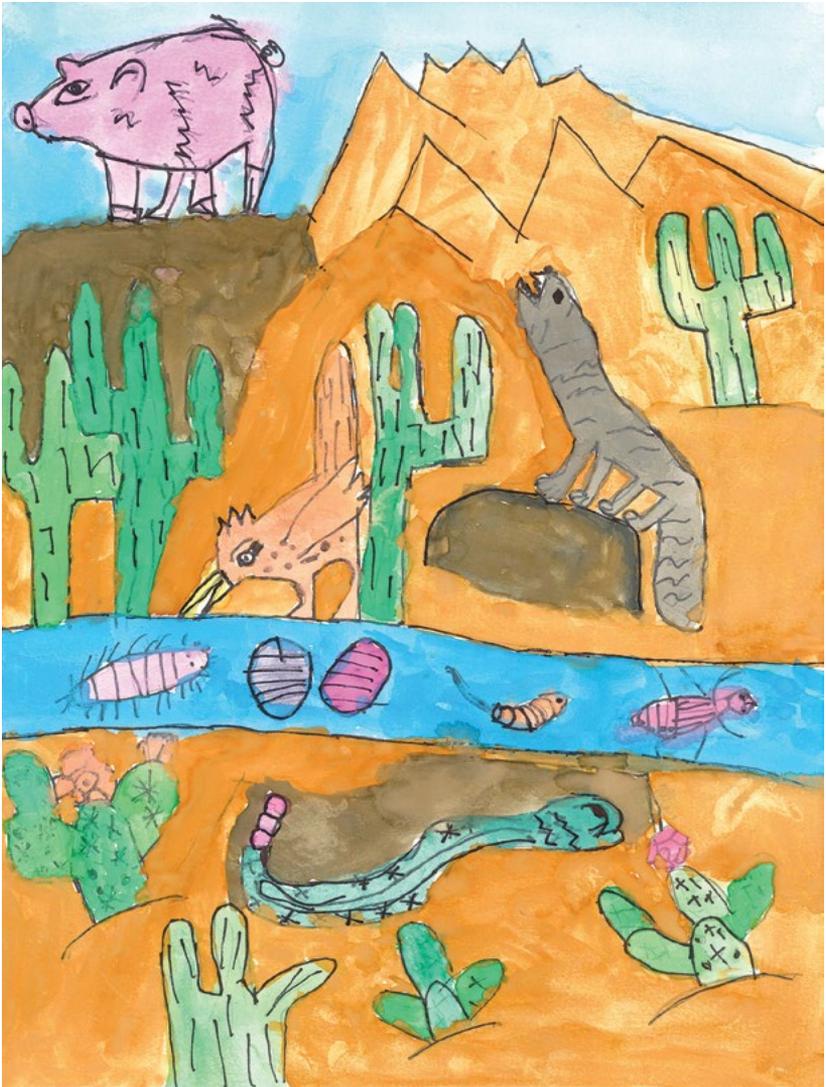
Remembering the River

I remember the Santa Cruz River
The cold, slow wind and the small grass
The water gave me a vision of soft, smooth glass
I remember the cold gravel beneath my feet
The air was fresh and sweet

I remember the soft, glowing sun
The clouds were dark and covered the light
It was so quiet, it seemed like night
You can hear the birds soft chirping as the river flows
I remember the red wolfberries that were
Vibrant against the deep green leaves.

Sadie Chintis, age 11

Ironwood Elementary School – June Hall



*Yoana Romero, age 15
Tucson High Magnet School – Marea Jenness*



Sunrise

Madelyn Pertile, age 5

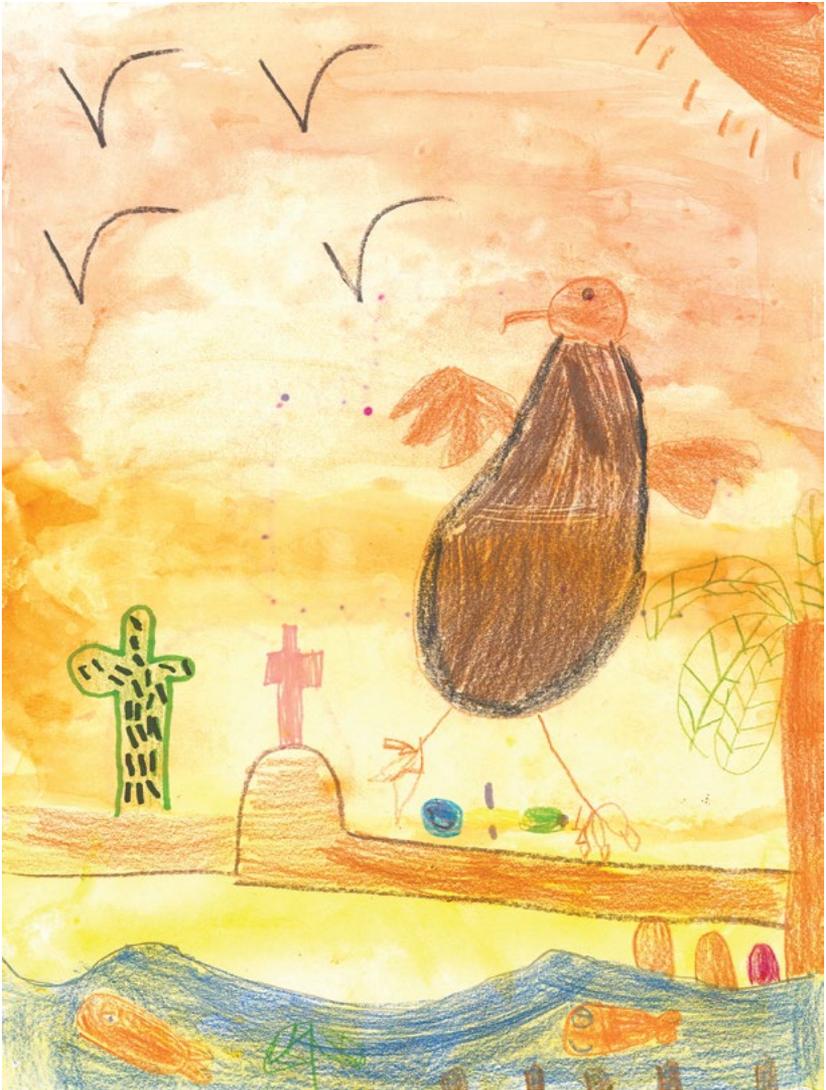
Gale Elementary School – Briana Gryzynger



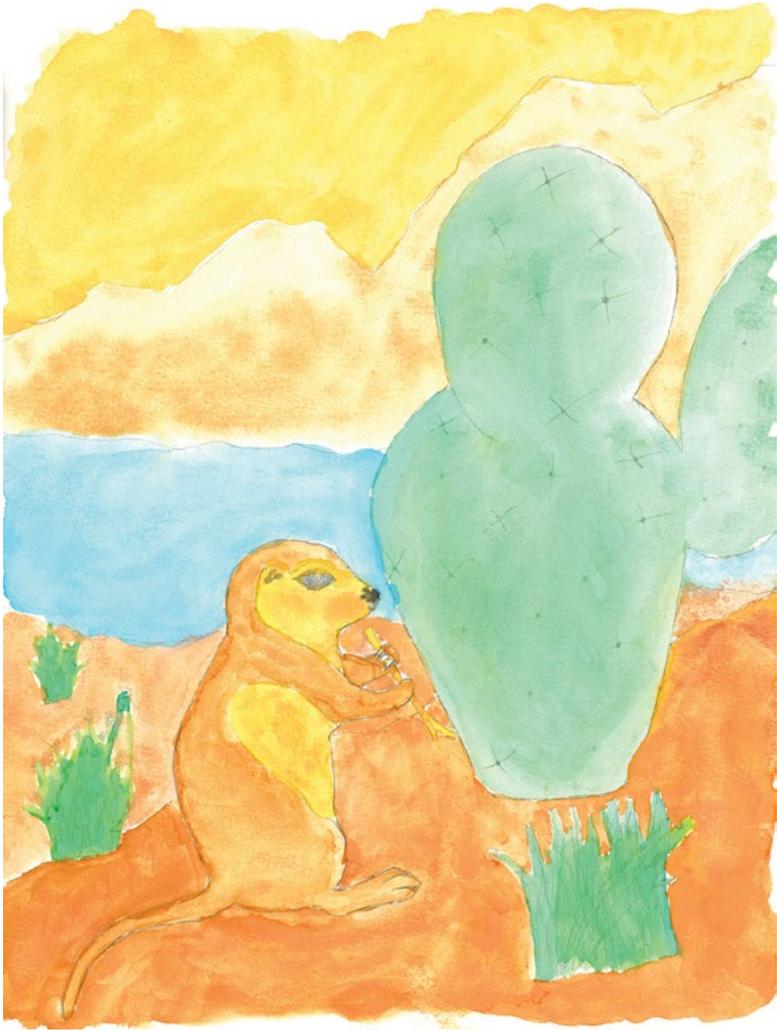
Desert Javelina Walks on Rocks

Trevor Jensen, age 7

Roadrunner Elementary School – Elizabeth Gary



*Reyna Blanca Santillanes, age 7
Mission Manor Elementary School – April Brown*



*Xia Hendricks, age 14
Tucson High Magnet School – Marea Jenness*

The Wolfberry

The wolfberry
Was red and little.
It was good and smooth
Like a baby turtle.

*Valerie Flores Machado, age 8
Miles Exploratory Learning Center – Mary Hope Bergey and Jolene Terry*



Noah Fish, age 7
Safford K-8 School – Callista Radloff

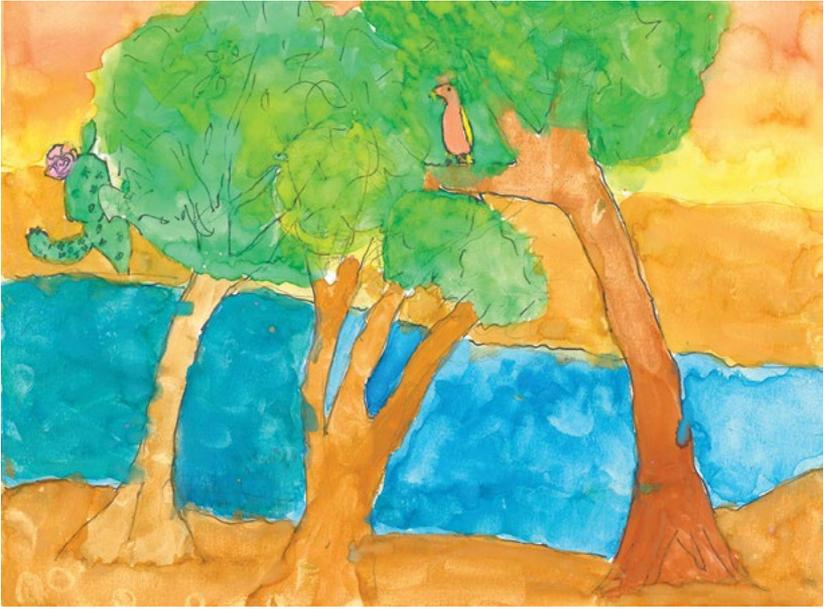


*Melanie Hout, age 11
Manzo Elementary School – Julie Elvick*

Time

It is of the dragonfly, souring.
It is like a snail, sliding.
It is the emerald of creative and useful imagination.
It is a sly fox, keep in mind.
It has no beginning.
It has no end.
It is the Good Samaritan.
Yet still the robber passing by.
It assumes many shapes.
It assumes many sizes.
It is a creator,
Yet also a destroyer.
And still,
It is time.

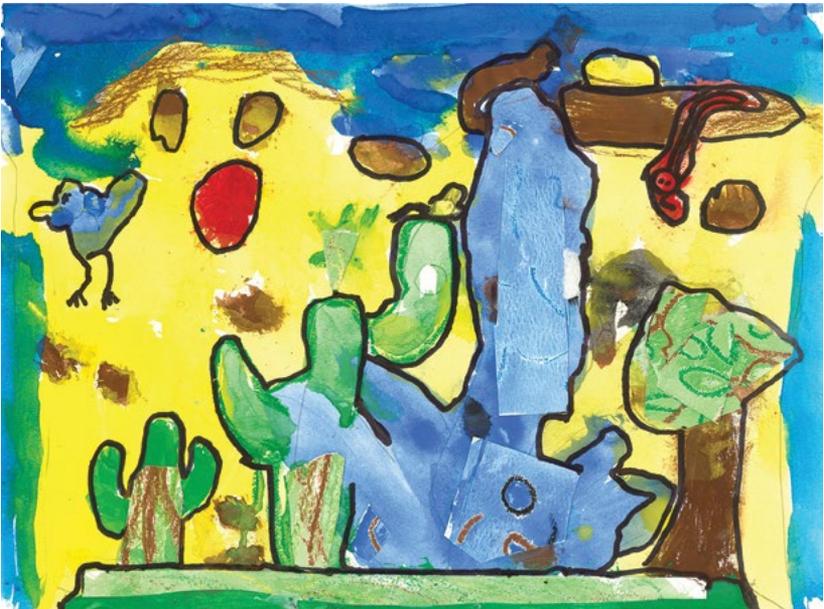
*Devon Meeker, age 11
Anza Trail School – Annie Tanner*



The River

Brianna Brock, age 11

DeGrazia Elementary School – Aaron Hart



The Ways of the Desert

Jack Fletcher, age 8

Tanque Verde Elementary School – Cheryl LaRose



*Gabriel Norris, age 7
Cragin Elementary School – Laura McIntosh*



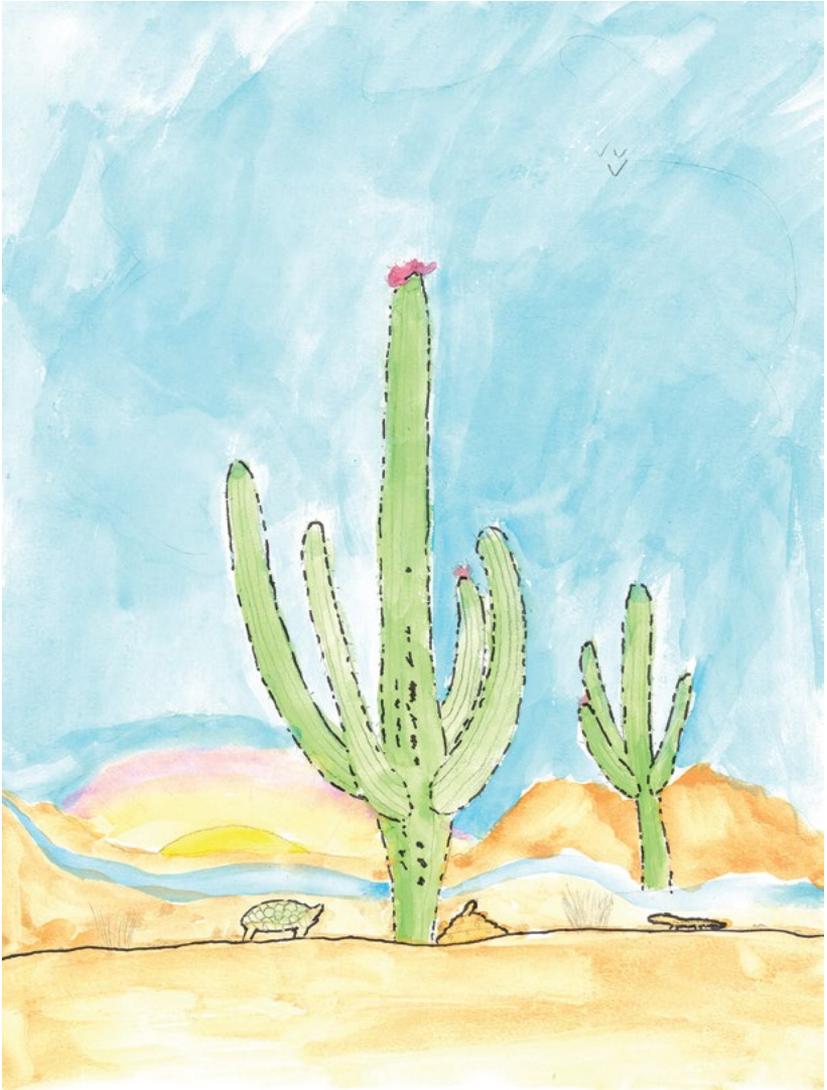
The Busy River

Ian Romero, age 7
Safford K-8 School – Tracey Burton

The Awesome River

I hear the splash of the fish.
The train was roaring
The river was soaring.
The small bugs were in my face
The small bugs were moving at quiet pace.
Were the bugs in a race?

Peyton Puls, age 8
Presidio School – Kelli Aliperti



Noah Huth, age 15
Tucson High Magnet School – Marea Jenness



*Britzeyda Delgado-Arias, age 13
Drachman Montessori Magnet School – Jose Haro*



The Sunset Desert
*Raven Wherry, age 8
Tanque Verde Elementary School – Cheryl LaRose*



*Brianna Baden, age 7
Roadrunner Elementary School – Ashley Haines*



Pretty Lonely Lizard

Olivia Hitchings, age 10

Hendricks Elementary School – Janet Slingerland

Sweet Desert Rain

Rain pouring down
Rivers start roaring
Animals drinking
Plants growing
I wish it would stay
Sweet desert rain

Braden Irwin, age 9

Mesquite Elementary School – Janis Mortensen and Paula Maxwell



*Michelle Ley Mar, age 15
Tucson High Magnet School – Marea Jenness*

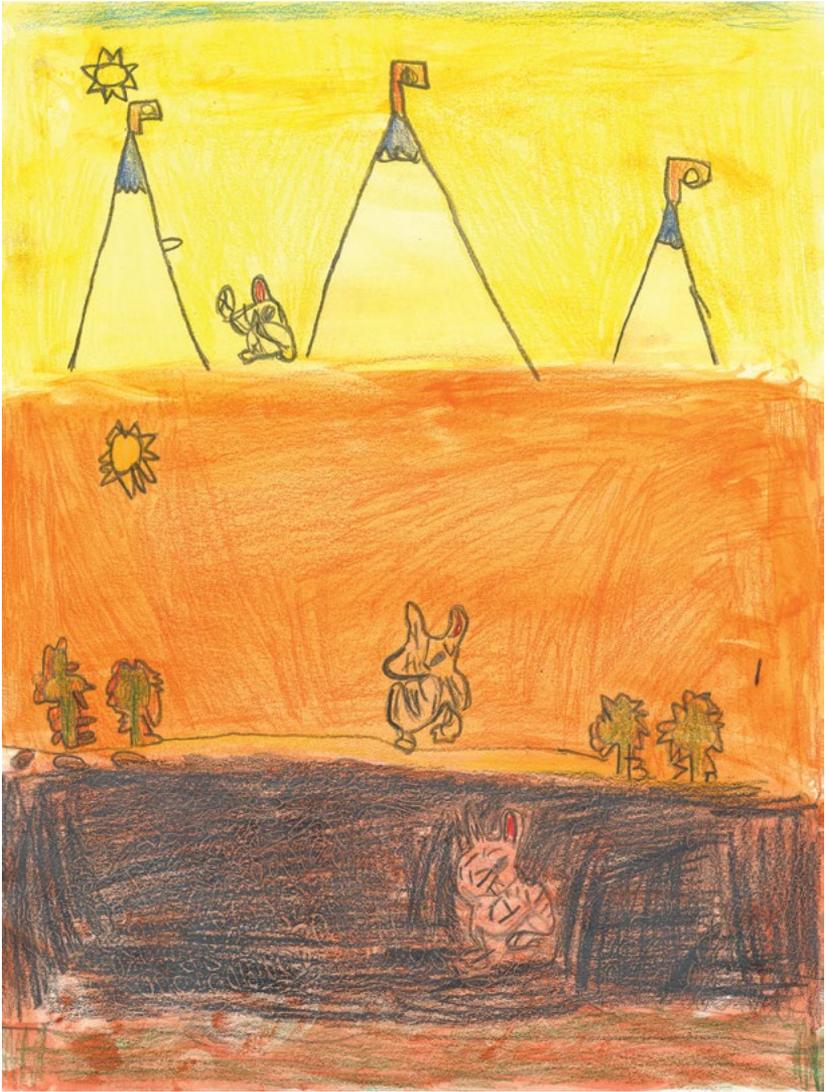


Anya Kaldonski, age 7
Roadrunner Elementary School – Alissa Montminy

Stars

Once there was a tadpole
looking up at the stars then
he saw the reflection of his
Eyes off the surface of the
Water and saw the inner
frog in him.

Martin Suarez, age 11
Anza Trail School – Annie Tanner



Sonic Sunny
Edgard Luna Jimenez, age 7
Safford K-8 School – Callista Radloff



Animals

Ryleigh K. Bailey, age 6

Sewell Elementary School – Maria Alvarado-Wells

Puddles

Splash, fun

Running, jumping,

Stomping

I was running in the puddle

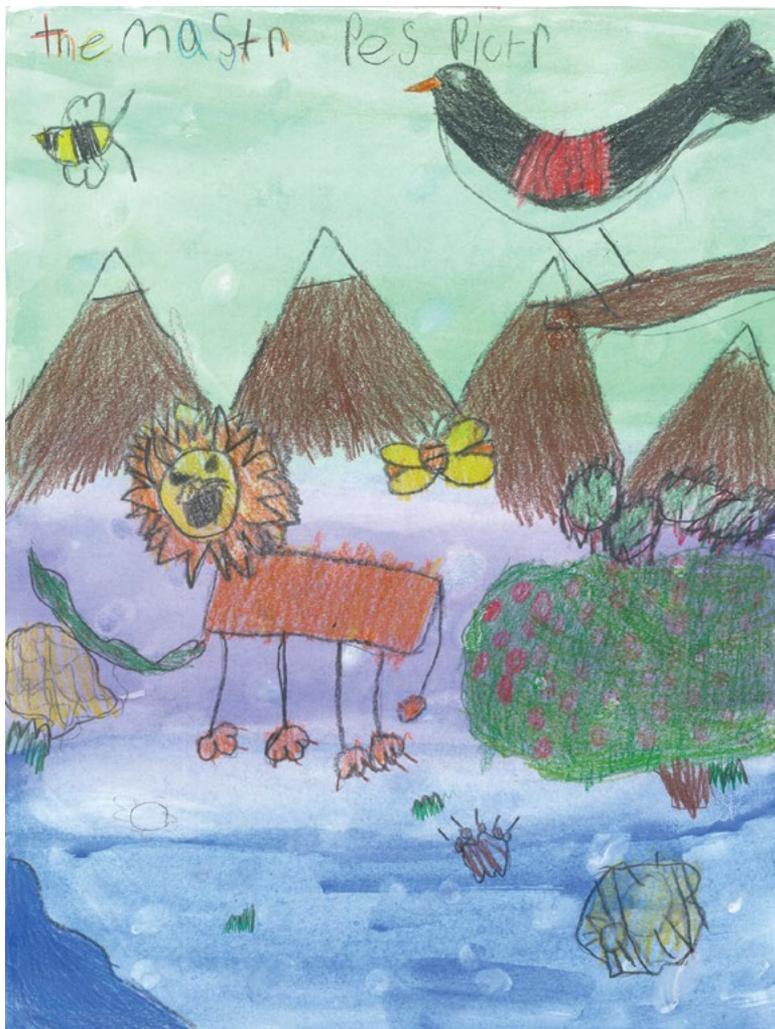
Splashy Hole!

Juniper Dorr, age 6

Mesquite Elementary School – Janis Mortensen and Paula Maxwell

Lizard hunts.
Morning.
Fallen wolfberries around
My tracks in the sand.

Nicolas Meschino Earle, age 8
Miles Exploratory Learning Center – Mary Hope Bergey and Jolene Terry



The Masterpiece Picture

Jessini Siqueiros, age 7
Safford K-8 School – Robin Gilbert

Local Winners in International River of Words 2019

Living River of Words is a regional coordinator providing local support for *River of Words*: a project of The Center for Environmental Literacy at Saint Mary's College of California. *River of Words* is its own watershed: a linked network of people throughout the United States and the world who are committed to teaching the art and poetry of place to young people.

In the pages to follow we honor local student finalists from *Living River of Words* 2018 who were selected as finalists in the *River of Words* 2019 Youth Poetry and Art contest.

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
2019 Poetry Winner in Category 1

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
International River of Words Finalist

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
2019 Poetry Finalist in the "On Writing" Category



Desert Blossoms After Rain

Maryanne Allen, age 10
Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Ms. Mortensen
International River of Words Finalist

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
International River of Words Finalist



Andrea Sampson, age 15
Tucson High School – Ms. Jenness
International River of Words Finalist



Waterland

*Sean Mergenthaler, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary – Ms. Mansour
International River of Words Finalist*



Relaxation

*Evelyn Grace Brandon, age 8
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca
International River of Words Finalist*



Photo: Jolicia Sutton, Drachman Montessori Magnet School

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



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