The Observations
Vanessa Verdugo, age 11
Challenger Middle School • Mrs. Oliver
Grand Prize—Art—Category 3
If there is magic on the planet, it is contained in Water.  

Expand your vision of water as you peruse the words and images of these young desert dwellers. This book contains the award winning selection of works submitted to Tucson’s River of Words 2011 Youth Poetry and Art Contest. Through classroom lessons, guided outdoor excursions, or by independent study, students ages 5-19 learn about water in the desert landscape and express their understanding through poetry or visual art.

**Tucson’s River of Words 2011-2012 Traveling Exhibit Schedule**

**April 13 – May 30, 2011**  
Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center • 1660 West Ruthrauff Road

**June 1 – July 19, 2011**  
Joel Valdez Main Library • 101 North Stone Avenue

**July 21 – August 18, 2011**  
Agua Caliente Park – Ranch House Art Gallery • 12325 East Roger Road

**August 20 – September 29, 2011**  
Martha Cooper Branch Library • 1377 North Catalina Avenue

**October 1 – October 31, 2011**  
Pima County Juvenile Court • 2225 East Ajo Way

**November 3, 2011 – January 2, 2012**  
Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr. Branch Library • 7800 North Schisler Drive

**January 4 – March 18, 2012**  
Valencia Branch Library • 202 West Valencia Road
Animals of the Desert

Rain crashing
The animals hide
Wild pigs rolling, rolling in the mud
Coyotes burrowing in their holes
Deer running into bushes
Animals of the monsoon
Mules running crazy

Kiara West, age 8
Desert Winds Elementary • Mrs. Nugent

Gila Monster

The Gila monster
Creeping in the sand
Darkness came.

Kiara West, age 8
Desert Winds Elementary • Mrs. Nugent

Water Cycle

There I go
I’m a water molecule.
I’m in the river.
I’m in precipitation.
Then I dive up more.
Then I get through evaporation.
Then I dive some more.
Then I’m in the water cycle.
I’m like a water drip on the mountain.
The sky is blue.
The more I dive the clearer it gets.
I flow and flow up.
Then I float down.
Then I go back up.
There’s a lot of little animals up there.

Lucas Borst, age 6
Carden of Tucson • Mrs. Ram
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 1

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Nicol Urrea, age 12
Challenger Middle School • Mrs. Prince
The Rainy Day

I opened the door
and went outside
Opened my mouth
stuck my tongue out
to catch the rain

James Marshall, age 7
Desert Winds Elementary • Mrs. Nugent

River Poem

I’m a water molecule
That travels far.
First I was in a river,
Next traveled to the north.
I end up in the glaciers.
I melted, going down a mountain like
I was going two thousand miles per hour,
And then I come up to a plant,
And then I follow the pistil,
And make fruit.
I fall and I hit the sand
And go under.
I get pumped in a pipe.
I go in a human mouth.
I get out from him
And end up
Back where I started.

Ricky Rodriguez, age 11
Challenger Middle School • Mrs. Prince

The Snow Feels Like Rain

The snow feels like rain,
The rain feels like a hammer,
Every day it makes a castle.

Evelyn Swarts, age 6
Carden of Tucson • Mrs. Ram
The Journey

I am water, nothing else (yet).
I’m trapped inside a glacier.
My movement is limited.
As the sun hits me,
this glacier slowly starts to melt.
Suddenly, I slide down,
down a mountain!
Wait, I’m sinking into a
fresh patch of soil.
Right now I feel like
a pipe under ground
Moving into a slow stream.
Up ahead all I hear is
the roaring of a waterfall.
I’m falling down.
CRASH!
Slowing down once again
into a river of freshwater.
Slowly, evaporating to the clouds.
I feel the surrounding of other
water molecules joining me
going up and out,
flowing with the wind and clouds.
Right when I pass by my glaciers,
I remember where I started.
My mountains are my glaciers.
My mountains are my glaciers.
Where will I go next?

Carissa Valenzuela, age 11
Challenger Middle School • Mrs. Prince
The Secret of the Bird’s Music

Before your life
the monsoon helped Mother Earth
to make the violets keep on growing
and the dewdrops cleaning the earth.
As I sleep, I dream to have a journey
as I wait for the sunshine to come.
In the grassland the hour’s heart
sings a song in their footsteps.
The secret of the bird’s music,
you do not want to know
in the long, long answer.
The moon is lost.
She sees the summer sand
half-open already.

Anika Burns, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Ratajczak

Rainy Day

Mild and damp beauty
Puddles all around
Everyone is playing
Before it soaks the ground
Lands on the earth
Pops when it hits
Picked up by car tires
All around town
Seeps into gravel
Filters underground
Other drops evaporate
Go up to the clouds

Sam Lolwing, age 10
Satori Charter School • Mrs. Gringrich
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 3
**The Journey**

Sound is finding branches
and a lake that is half-open.
I hear voices on the pathway.
There is more to the journey
to the clean lake where the fish are.

*Dylan Nye, age 7*
*Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Ratajczak*

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**The Beauty of the Stream**

Let me be free upon your palm.
Let me chirp upon some rocks.
Let me be clear and blue.
Let me be smooth under water with you.
Let me wander all around the world.
Let me look at the beauty of the fish.

*Noah Vigileos, age 9*
*Mesquite Elementary • Mrs. Urbalejo*

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**Summer**

In the summer,
the rattlesnake’s
half-open mouth
is ready to strike.
Star’s splash
in dew-drop whispers.

*Adrian Vasquez, age 7*
*Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Ratajczak*
Untitled

Cassandra Gonzalez, age 7

Gallego Basic Elementary • Mrs. Valentine
Animal Water
Christopher Bradford, age 7
DeGrazia Elementary • Mrs. Northrop

The Water Life
Daizette Carrillo, age 12
Challenger Middle School • Mrs. Oliver
Howling Wolf
Alexis Mohler, age 9
Great Expectations Academy • Mrs. Hunt
The Water
Leisey Trevillyan, age 11
Satori Charter School • Mrs. Dudas

The Rainy Desert
Andres Valdez, age 7
Gallego Basic Elementary • Mrs. Valentine
The Water Cycle
Bryon Laplander, age 11
Challenger Middle School • Mrs. Oliver

The Stream of Life
Cassie Everly, age 15
Independent Entry
Grand Prize-Art- Category 4
Desert
Daniel Ramos, age 7
DeGrazia Elementary • Mrs. Northrop
Desert Animals
Iman Lloyd, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Johnson
Spring Day in the Desert
Celeste Angelina Alvarez, age 8
Desert Winds Elementary • Mrs. Nugent

South West
David-Ray Prax, age 8
Fort Lowell/Townsend K-8 • Mrs. Metzler
The Desert With Animals
Davina Pham, age 7
Gallego Basic Elementary • Mrs. Posadas

Conserving Water
Jaqueline Acuña, age 9
Fort Lowell/Townsend K-8 • Mrs. Himes
Thirsty Desert
Elijah Schiff, age 6
Independent Entry
Grand Prize—Art—Category 1
Lightning, Rain, Monsoon Storm
Hailey Flood, age 7
Desert Winds Elementary • Mrs. Nugent
The Sonoran Desert
Gabriella Corona, age 8
Gallego Basic Elementary • Mrs. Posadas

Little Green City
Patrick McGhie, age 9
Manzanita School • Mrs. Hollm
Harvesting the Water
Keeley Venegas, age 10
Fort Lowell/Townsend K-8 • Mrs. Corcoran
The Desert
Karla Togawa, age 7
Gallego Basic Elementary • Mrs. Posadas
Grand Prize–Art–Category 2

Life in the Desert
Makenna Anderson, age 10
Harelson Elementary • Mrs. Koopman
Dirty Desert
Savannah Register, age 8
Borman Elementary • Mrs. Rhudy

Sonoran Cactus Garden
Juan Flores, age 9
Mesquite Elementary • Mrs. Flora
Sabino Falls
Logan Radomsky, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Johnson
Light
Surprise Dowayee, age 8
Fort Lowell/Townsend K-8 • Mrs. Fleck
Untitled

Frozen sunset
Set still in time
No breeze
No breath of calm
 Locked in iron grip
Everything awaits
Hardly daring to break silence
Somber grey, purple, blue, black
Nothing shifting
Tension settling upon skin
Breathe in
Twisting branches with confused minds
Swaying, whipping, bending, snapping
Tension snaps like a broken string
Silence no longer remembered
Anticipation
It’s almost here
Long mourning finally let go
The sky explodes
Letting the past soak into the ground
It’s a new start
The beginning of the beginning
Every drop containing a concealing secret
But alas no one will know, forever untold
All the sorrow swept away by the persistent water
Not giving up until every last thing is cleansed of
All oppressing weights.

Nakaia Kristof, age 14
City High School • Ms. Rude
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 4
The Wind

Feel the wind in the sky
Feel the wind when it moves
the water in the river
Hear the wind in the big blue sky
The wind makes you feel calm
The wind makes you get
one tear fall on your cheek
Most of all it is the wind

Sarah Donlan, age 8
Carden of Tucson Charter School • Mrs. Yecies

Anything But Me

I want to drop with a thunderous sound
from a dark, blue cloud.

I want to be as large as
a blueberry pancake twirling
through the sky.

I want to travel like lightning as
I fall through the upper atmosphere.

I want to not hurt people as
they dash to their destination.

I want glisten and twinkle
in the brilliant sunshine.

I want to be anything but myself.

I am just one itsy-bitsy raindrop
in a powerful, intense monsoon.

Christina Davila, age 9
Mesquite Elementary • Mrs. Flora
Spirit of the Turtles

So much depends
Upon
The spirit of
Turtles
Beside the green
Turtles
Glazed with the
Sun
On their
Shells
Eating the
Fish.

Nicky Wayne, age 6
Steele Elementary School • Mr. Scalise

Water Cycle

Crash, crash go the waves
I got lost looking at the sun
The clouds started to come in
I start to drift in the air
Slowly I feel hotter and hotter
Suddenly I’m in a white mist
I am in a cloud
I can feel a cold breeze
Boom, crash I fall hard
I fall on a plant
Slowly I slip into the roots
And get soaked in.

Savannah Imes, age 11
Challenger Middle School • Mrs. Oliver
**I am the Monsoon**

My clouds are like big stones.
My rain is like a good drink
for the cactus and trees.
My lightning is like big bolts of electricity.
But my rain to houses is like big boulders hitting the ground.
But when my lightening hits houses it gives it electricity and when I go to town I am the boss of the town.

Aidan Huber, age 8
Castlehill Country Day School • Mrs. Meyer

**Dry River**

Just a little water
Runs down me, just
Enough to save a tree
Dry river flow past me
As fast as a bumble bee
Dry river be cool
And make me shiver
Dry river, the water giver
Dry river
I watch you glimmer

Brian Watson Johnson, age 10
Satori Charter School • Mrs. Dudas

**Slip of Gold**

Toss time in
to this small wide world.
The sky is blowing
the grass is green.
A slip of gold
off the sun.

Jack Collins, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Ratajczak
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 2
The Desert

Hot, dry heat
Sun on my face
Ouch! Sunburn

Mackenzie Powers, age 7
DeGrazia Elementary • Mrs. Northrop

Water

Deep clouds surrounding us with smooth liquid
Warm in the sunshine
Tide pools dark and moody
Like music of water
Come and enjoy my beauty and stream
Edible always in nature

Jake Vogt-Martinez, age 9
Satori Charter School - Mrs. Dudas

The Move

I’m hanging to the edge of a leaf
I fall to the ground
The sun’s rays burn me
I start to float in the air
More water molecules appear
The clouds are marshmallows
Other water molecules cling to me
We fall to the ground
SPLAT! I hit the ground
I drink through and hit roots
I pop out into a lake
I’m adrift floating around
I’m caught in a current
I’m pulled toward a river
I land in an ocean
Were to next?

Alex Frisby, age 11
Challenger Middle School • Mrs. Oliver
Tucson Summers

The baked days drag on
The ground sobs
“Bring on the rain”

Then, it hits
You step out
Into the blue
Grasp of the morning
And you listen

A melody of
Drips, Drops
Pitters, Patters
High, staccato, sharp
It seems like the whole world
Is holding its breath
The leaves tremble
The sky cries “Don’t let go”
But then it does
But then it does

The rain comes down
In torrents pounding
On the cracked asphalt
Enveloping the dry, broken desert
In a misty embrace

Annamae Beeler Sax, age 14
City High School • Ms. Rude

Desert

Dry
Everywhere,
Sunny
Everywhere,
Riverbeds
Thirst.

Moriah Newhouse, age 13
Independent Entry • Mrs. Newhouse
Tucson’s River of Words is a community collaboration made possible with support from Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, Tucson-Pima Arts Council, and Pima County Public Library.

What is it?
Children ages 5 to 19 explore nature to learn about watersheds and life cycles and express understandings with original creations of poetry and visual art.

When is the contest?
Entries are accepted anytime. The submission deadline for the 2012 contest is February 1, 2012.

How do I enter?
Additional information and entry forms are available at Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation office.

3500 W. River Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85741
(520) 615-7855
eeducation@pima.gov

Online entry forms available at

www.pima.gov/nrpr
www.tucsonpimaarts council.org