

2nd Year Pieces

2009-2010

Peaceful Landscape

by Mary Crowley

White-covered trees droop in late December;
hovering disks descend downward.
Dragging his red wooden sled
over the bleached surface,
the little boy slides,
relaxed, down
snowy slopes. Icicles
hang off roofs:
lazy snowflakes fall outside.

Swimming with Sea Lions

by Kathryn Egnew

Last summer I had one of the best summers of my life. My family rented a sailboat with plans to sail in the Gulf of Mexico and the Sea of Cortez. We stayed on an island the night before we were going to cross the Sea of Cortez but in the morning our engine wouldn't start, and we had to call the owner to come fix it. While we were stranded waiting for the boat to be repaired, my dad, my brother, and I took the dingy to an island called Los Islotes -- "Island of the Sea Lions".

Upon arriving, my dad dropped the anchor while I donned my mask and snorkel. Once my dad and I were ready, we slipped into the warm sparkling aqua water. There were sea lions crowded on the island: some small and cute, others huge and scary-looking. Other boats were anchored at the Island -- all from tour companies -- and as soon as people started jumping into the water, about fifteen sea lions joined them.

I was underwater watching a school of huge, brightly-colored fish when something bumped my foot. I whipped around, thinking it was just my dad wanting to show me something, but when I turned I saw a baby sea lion looking back at me! It swam a little ways off but then the baby came back and even let me pet it. The sea lion was so cute, swimming around in circles, doing flips in the water and rushing through schools of fish. It was a soft grey color with huge brown eyes that looked like melted

Money

by Betsy Sabala

Ocean waves migrate onto shore: abandoned
immigrants hope
for possible opportunities.
Crabs exchange old shells for new homes;
mother turtles lay their fragile eggs;
seals enjoy their playful youth.
Others craze to achieve the least bit of success:
fish circle and squirm, evading predators,
sharks search in blue water for a perfect, bloody bite.
All keep swimming,
providing and protecting sturdy homes, and rights, while
the struggling dart, and fight
for single scraps floating down to the depths.
Ocean water protects: indifferent to
the smallest of creatures. Every day waves
crash; washing the hopeless behind crumbled coral;
leaving no stones unturned.

Whitewater Anxiety

by Mary Crowley

I inhaled the fresh, damp scent of the river. Exhaling, I opened my eyes to find myself staring at a rapid. The current picked up, and in barely a second my kayak was immersed in the rapid's roar. Water washed over me as I rolled over boulders. Unexpectedly, I went under the foamy surface. It took me a second to figure out that I couldn't breathe. I broke through, gasping for air, and reached for the rubber kayak that was floating swiftly past me. Kicking my legs, I touched my kayak, then stood on a large rock that was in the eddy. I quickly sat in the wet seat and started to paddle towards the next roaring section of water.

Again I entered a wall of tumbling water and was soon drenched once more. The current was very strong in this part of the rapid; much more powerful than the last. I tried to paddle away from larger boulders, where the bouncing water was at its highest. My rubber kayak rolled over small rocks as I approached the worst part of the rapid. Before the kayak and I reached the torrent of water, I gripped my paddle in one hand and wrapped my arms

chocolate and really long whiskers.

After I watched the baby for about three minutes, a huge adult male started towards us so I swam back to the boat pretty quickly. Swimming with sea lions in the wild was one of the most amazing things I've ever done. Interacting with them in their natural habitat made me realize how unafraid of humans they really are.

Sleepy on Sunday

by Betsy Sabala

The warm, maple smell
of pancakes excites me:
sweet smells on Sunday remind me of old times.
Extremely lazy, I
slump down the stairs, and sit,
very relaxed, on the cushy couch.
Dragging myself to the fragrant kitchen, I
hurry to eat breakfast.
I slouch at the set table, slowly savoring chocolate chips
that melt
like icicles on the roof of my mouth.
I feel inept:
the dawn fever will not
escape.

Haiku

by Savannah Summers

Snowflakes slightly fall
outside on frosted windows.
Adios to fall.

Ocean currents sway
from shorelines to far buoys --
swishing back and forth.

Encounter with the turtle

by Betsy Sabala

I splash around, exploring the Pacific. My cousins suddenly stop swimming and gasp, motioning me to turn around as if something is on me or behind me. I turn to see a living, breathing sea turtle right in front of me. Almost skimming across my stomach, right beneath me,

around the kayak. Still clutching onto my paddle, I entered the rapid. Water washed over me as I tried to climb onto the upside-down kayak and fill my lungs with air instead of water. I took a large gasp as the surface opened up. My body tried to balance upon the bottom of the kayak, but before I was safe, the kayak hit a submerged boulder disguised by a blanket of foam. I rolled over into cold water again. I took a breath, then I heard a loud sound. Extending my neck to see where the noise was coming from, I saw some water flowing over an edge.

I braced myself for the fall, taking large gulps of air. Right before my body fell over the edge, I took the largest breath of all. For about half a second I could feel myself not falling in water, but through air. When I hit, the water struck me hard. I was no longer holding onto my paddle. I instinctively reached and yelled for help but could not yell because my mouth was full of water.

Out of nowhere, two hands pulled me onto a large blue raft. A towel wrapped around me as I coughed a few times, spitting out water and attempting to breathe. I suddenly felt extremely tired, resting my battered body peacefully against the rubber seat and closing my eyes. I inhaled the same fresh, damp scent as earlier, but this time when I exhaled I did not open my eyes. I felt accomplished.

The Perfect Wave

by Kellen Crawford

Waves roar as they crash onto Beacon's Beach in San Diego. I stare out at the brutal surf, contemplating how to attack and ride the mightiest beast of all: the ocean. Scooping up my six-foot-two-inch board, I attach the sandy elastic leash to my ankle. I take a deep breath and sprint into the shallows. I position my surfboard in front of my chest as the salty water reaches my waist, and dive on. At this moment, the remnants of a large swell envelop me in a frothing white blanket. Bitter sea water singes my nostrils as I pop up, but I paddle out to sea nonetheless, brimming with confidence.

The second wave in a series of high-rolling swells is coming quickly, and it appears to be on the verge of breaking. On an impulse, I reflect on the brief surfing lesson I received two years ago from my dad, and press the nose of my board into the water, while my body follows suit. I slide soundlessly under the wave and pop up like a cork on the other side. Spitting the salty water out of my mouth, I doggedly paddle on. My arms burn with the

are sea turtles; so peaceful and carefree and untouchable, like feathers drifting away with the wind's gentle push. Their habitat and the rings on their shells reveal their old sense of knowledge.

In the Galapagos Islands, in June, our group went snorkeling numerous times. My favorite creatures were the sea turtles: their dark green shells and bodies flow with the ocean's currents. They are among the most majestic animals in the sea. That summer, I had an encounter with a particularly friendly sea turtle. It had a lighter green shell and it was uniquely small. It also had an unusual behavior compared to the others: this sea turtle was very playful and excited. I could tell that it wanted to play with me very badly, because the small turtle was twirling around and following me. Unfortunately, right as I was beginning to play, we had to leave.

I said goodbye, but the sea turtle was following me back to the motorboat. It wanted me to touch its shell. It is a rule that you don't touch or take anything from the islands, but I couldn't resist. My hand slowly slipped away from the protection of my body, to the rough slimy surface of the sea turtle's back. A sensation sped through my body, and trickled down my spine; the turtle finally seemed content. I left with a little excitement, happiness, and guilt, but most of all with a memory that would never be forgotten.

Why Me?

by Savannah Summers

I bolt for the rolling ball,
hard but quietly.
I plant my feet in the ground to wait for the ball.
The defensive player slumps:
without notice like a cheetah I run, chasing
the black-and-white sphere. Scared, rushed emotions
flow through my head as I shoot the ball,
missing the wide
open
goal.
My team's heads droop
with shame. One minute left;
one under. I feel awkward that
it could be my fault if
my team lost.

The Race to Home Plate

warning signs of exhaustion, but my goal ushers me further.

Another large shape rises soundlessly out of the water -- the third wave. It threatens to unleash its full tidal force over my head, but turns out to be incredibly easy to drift over. A small breeze blows across the calm area where I paddle determinedly, and I thank God for my cozy wetsuit. Without it, I would be as frozen as one of the adrenaline junkies I had seen earlier, diving into the sea wearing only a speedo. Around me, watery hillocks rise and fall like the breathing chest of a large sleeping being. I suddenly realize I must be at least sixty feet from shore. I spin around and sit on the back of my surfboard, radiating excitement.

The moment of truth has finally come. I begin to paddle in the direction of the shore, constantly checking behind my shoulder, waiting for a swell. My heart skips a beat as a rise in the water forms slowly, and then gradually grows in size until it is the perfect height. It is then that I begin to catch hold of the wave's massive power. I clutch both sides of the board for dear life and rise up, quivering with anticipation. My right foot plants on the upper half first, and then my left foot solidly roots itself on the tail end of my board. I am up.

A sublime feeling of bliss floods into my mind, and I begin to carve slowly through the left side of the wave, speeding along at eighteen miles per hour. The fins on the underside of the surfboard cut through the wave and reward me with well-balanced steering. And then, all at once, the wave begins to lose its perfect form and crashes down upon my body, snapping me out of my pleasant reverie. My body is sucked under the surface and occasionally yanked where the board, currently tied to me, wishes to go.

I lie in soft sand, lapped by inches of water, spluttering and coughing. From the shallows, I catch a glimpse of another set of perfect waves curling over the once-calm ocean. I grab the drenched surfboard with its death grip on my ankle, and mentally prepare: paddle, wait, surf, repeat.

Pearl Harbor

by Betsy Sabala

Sweat
runs down an oval-shaped face,
as I step up to the plate.
My heart beats faster every second, indicating
anxiety. I dig my jumping feet into dry, thick dirt,
and settle into position for the upcoming event.
The pitcher throws a heavy, round object:
crack!
Ears ring as the pitcher's possession
meets a shining metal bat that I am
hardly gripping. Running to evade my fear of
getting out, I take a second to glance back at the
still-flying object.
Knowledge of time relaxes me as
whoosh! Bam! The other team seems just
to play a game of catch. I run like a
cheetah about to capture its prey.
Darn! They are too good.
Grief catches up to me.

by Savannah Summers

One, then two bombs dropped. After only ten minutes,
more than a hundred bombs had been dropped over the
Pacific Ocean. Sixty-seven years ago, the Japanese
attacked the Americans while the latter were in a night of
celebration. On December 7th, 1941, about 2400 lives
were taken. During battle, the *USS Oklahoma*, the *USS
Utah*, the *USS Arizona* and many other ships sank. The
USS Bowfin was one of a few submarines to survive the
attack. The whole battle started because the Americans
had cut the Japanese off from trading, causing both the
Japanese military and its economy to suffer. The sky over
Pearl Harbor on December 7th was so smoky, there was
no way to see anything for miles.

When I went to Oahu, Hawaii last summer, I visited Pearl
Harbor. While I was there with my mom and friends, we
went on a tour of the *USS Bowfin*. Inside we were able to
see sailors' quarters: where the sailors ate meals, where
they slept and where the sailors loaded torpedoes and other
weaponry. After the tour of the *Bowfin*, I went onto a
small platoon boat and was taken to a memorial on the
Pacific Ocean. This memorial was built over the *USS
Arizona*.

Inside the monument, I saw a stone slab inscribed with the
citizens' and sailors' names who had succumbed during
Pearl Harbor. There were about 1,700 names on the stone
carving. Maybe I was related to one of those "Summers"
up there. Going to the memorial changed my view of Pearl
Harbor. When I had first walked through the gates, I had
no idea of the history on that peaceful Hawaiian Island. I
left with a whole new education of war and the Japanese.
Pearl Harbor made me realize many people die to protect
their country.