



**Massachusetts
Science Poetry
Contest Winners
Inside!**

ALONG THE CHARLES RIVER
A BOOK OF POEMS AND WATERCOLORS

BY THE CONSERVATORY LAB
CHARTER SCHOOL
2010–2011 3RD GRADE CLASS



INTRODUCTION

Bostonians proudly call the Charles “the People’s River.” But the Charles River also belongs to hundreds of fish, birds, and other wildlife that live in its fresh waters and along its banks.

This book is a product our class created at the end of a 3-month learning expedition on the Charles River. Each student chose a Charles River fish or bird to research, using scientific field guides and internet resources. Students then listened to three mentor texts, *Water Dance* by Thomas Locker, *River of Life* by Debbie S. Miller and *Gleam and Glow* by Eve Bunting. They noticed the beauty of the authors’ language—the powerful verbs and the strong, specific adjectives. They noticed, too, the authors’ use of the first person voice and the repeating line.

With the minds of poets, students returned to their research notes and transformed them into poems. They

focused on using descriptive language and specific, accurate words to teach readers about their animal’s characteristics, behaviors and habitats. After completing first drafts, students experimented with writing in different poetic styles, including “I am” poems and cinquains. With new eyes, they then dove into the task of revising their first drafts. Finally, they evaluated their poems with a rubric and reflected on what they learned about writing.

During the writing process students drew detailed sketches of their birds and fishes. With the guidance of Museum of Fine Arts instructor Kristyn Novotny, they brought their sketches to life with brilliant watercolor pencils. We hope you enjoy our book and help keep the Charles River clean to protect the creatures that make it their home.

Ivy Delaney, 3rd grade teacher

BIRDS

5	America's Red Bird	Beatrice
6	The American Coot	Stella
8	Brown Thrasher	Kam'Rahn
9	Belted Kingfisher	Trayvon
10	Carolina Wren	Arianna
11	The Glossy King (American Crow)	Niya
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18	Mourning Dove	Anthony
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MA SCIENCE POETRY CONTEST AWARD WINNER (2ND PLACE)

MA SCIENCE POETRY CONTEST AWARD WINNER (1ST PLACE)

FISH

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BIRDS



Brown Thrasher

By Kam'Rahn

Sometimes, at sunrise, I soar through the air
like the ocean.

I join other brown thrashers.

Speedy.

I am a brown thrasher.

Sometimes I chirp
outside someone's window.

Beautiful.

I am a brown thrasher.

I gulp down earthworms,
my favorite food.

I bite through trees to capture insects.

I love fruit, snails and sometimes lizards.

I dwell in bushes and trees.

Sometimes you'll see me,
thrashing leaves out of the way.

I am the brown thrasher.

When farmers see me, they start planting.

At night, I fly as swiftly as the sun sets.

At nighttime, I gaze at the moon.

I am the brown thrasher.



Belted Kingfisher

By Trayvon



In the shiny lake I hunt for salmon.
Sometimes I am found near quiet waters.
On the foot of a wood log, I survey.
In between the trees, I sit perched.
I hover.

I spring.

I plunge

Splash

Down,

down,

Into a sparkly lake full of fish

I am a Belted Kingfisher.

A regal mother.

A caring father.

I show off my colors blue-grey and white.

I firmly beat my wings.

I bring my dinner to a high perch

I am a Belted Kingfisher.

Carolina Wren

By Arianna

I sit
Still
Not a noise
Quiet
I screech (chirp)
I clear the sky
Clouds,
I eat suet,
Sunflower seeds,
Sometimes I clear the
Foggy skies
I forage my
Food for the winter,
I eat moths
I'm smaller than a gardening glove
I like to nest in an old shed in an old tool box
I sit still—not a creak, as
Quiet as possible
I lay my eggs on the tippy top of the highest tree
On a nest
I dazzle at the sun
I dazzle at the moon
I am brown
I am small
I am the Carolina Wren



The Glossy King (American Crow)*

By Niya



I fly.
I am the glossy
Black King.
I shine in the sun
As I watch
Mice run
I scoop up my prey, then back to my
Home to feed my young.
I nest in a bush
Some nest in a tree
And some nest on top of a
Telephone pole
Some think I am nothing
But something Black is
Beautiful
I screech and
Cackle loud and proud
I like to eat
Nuts and fruit but sometimes
I crunch on young
Birds
And dive for mice
mmm. mmm. mmm.
I am the American Crow

*2011 MASSACHUSETTS SCIENCE POETRY CONTEST: 2ND PLACE—MOST ORIGINAL POEM (3RD GRADE)

Chimney Swift

By Antwanai

Sometimes I
Swallow insects
One group at a time
I fly fast
I am a
Fast flier
I am the Chimney Swift

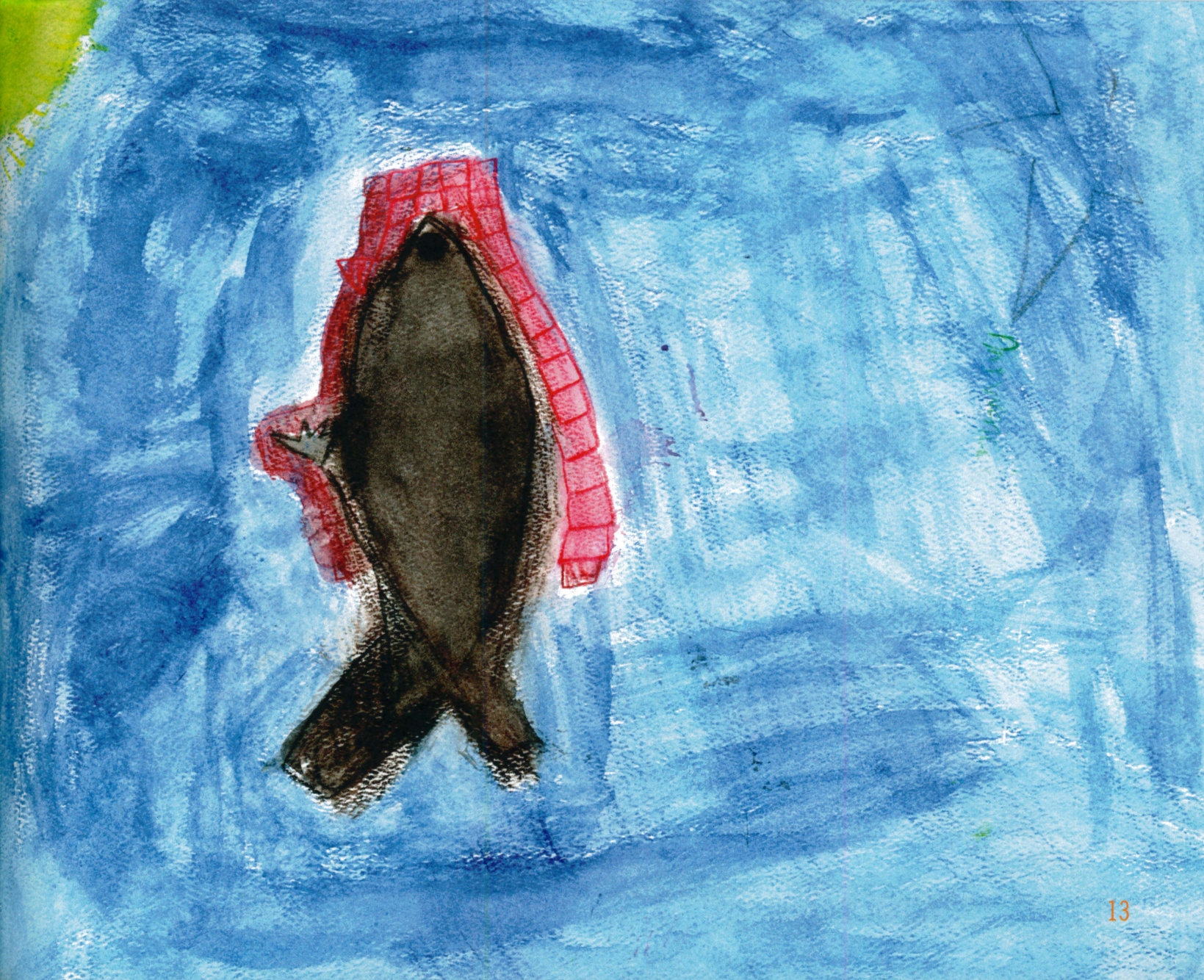
I do not
Eat other
Birds.
I am the Chimney Swift

I am about to
Fall.
I try and
Catch my
Self
Falling in
The tree
Then I
Spread my
Wings in
The air to
Fly back up.
I am the Chimney Swift

My colors
Are black
And gray
I am the Chimney Swift

I live in
A lot of
Nests to
Find
Food all
Around the
World
I am the Chimney Swift

I glide in
The woods
And look
Around
Then I
Hear something
Moving. So
I go down
In the woods
And catch it
I am the Chimney Swift





Common Grackle

By Benjamin

Sometimes I soar up,
Grab bats,
And eat them.
My bright feathers shine in the morning
light
Like a painting full of color

One place I live is Boston
I build my nest,
In the US,
or Canada.

I am many colors.
Yellow,
Blue,
Purple
Black.
I am
Glossy.
I am a Common Grackle.

Leaping, hopping, sprinting
I snatch food.
When I swiftly fly,
My colors flash brighter than my female friends.
But, in ways, we're all the same.

Drinking from a
Cool, crisp river.
I am a Common Grackle.

Then I go back,
To my nest,
With anything,
I could search out, maybe corn,
Or something else.
Maybe garbage.
I am a Common Grackle.

Downy Woodpecker

By Sofya

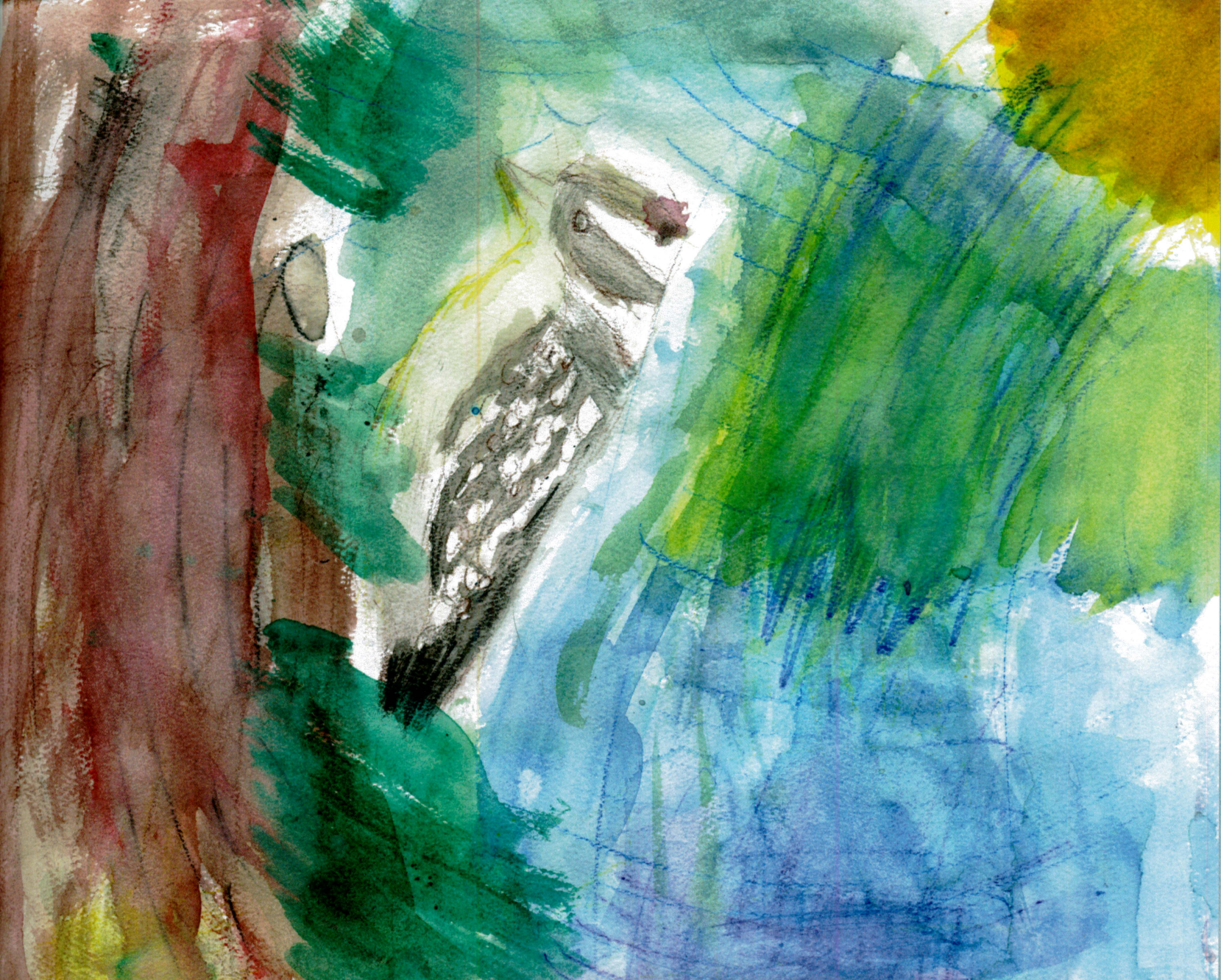
Sometimes I softly
peck
against the rough tree bark.
I love the woodlands
where I can search
for a lovely nesting area.
I am not a hibernating bird
because I enjoy the
North American weather, while
I zoom around looking for food.

Sometimes I have BLAZING
Fire red painted across my head
I have a slim, black body finished
With
White

P D
O O
L T
K S
A !

I am a systematic forager,
A fierce zoomer —
Pecking
leaving
Coming back later.
I am a Downy Woodpecker.

I peck furiously on the trees
Of North America finding sweet
Snacks, like beetles, wasps and moths.
On bushes,
In the woods
I find ripe berries to
snack on
I find perfect sunflowers to
crackle and munch on
I am the Downy Woodpecker.



Mourning Dove

By Anthony

Sometimes when I land
My tail flips up
Sometimes I eat from
The ground
I live in
A backyard
I come in pairs
Sometimes I slumber
Sometimes I sleep
In a bird nest
Sometimes
I drink water
I eat seeds and plants
From the ground
Sometimes I
Am cute
And I am brown
Pink
I am the Mourning Dove



European Starling

By Kyra



I eat black beetles
Worms
I enjoy living near humans
I am a European Starling
If you want to hear
Me
Sing, then listen
For a high pitched jumble,
Whistle and a tiny chatter.
If you listen closely, then you might
Hear some human words.
I'm a European Starling
I build my nest
With shiny things like shimmery
Coins.
Plenty of colorful things,
Bits of plastic
And other birds'
Feathers.
I am a lot of
Different dark colors –
Dark shimmering green
Black
Bright orange.
I'm a European Starling.

Goldfinch

By Jelitza

Sometimes I fly in an
Up and down pattern
Like a roller coaster.
Springing up,
Soaring down.
Swooping around
And around.
I am the Goldfinch.
Sometimes they call me
The wild canary.
I am
The state bird of
Iowa, New Jersey,
Washington.

I have a beautiful voice
Ti-dee-di-di,
Per-chik-o-ree
Sometimes I sing when
I fly.
I eat grass
Flowers and daisies
Berries and insects
When people have
Sunflower seeds
In their hands
I come and eat them.
In the winter I start
To look like the males.

I'm a petite bird
Yellow
My wings are like piano keys
Males look different
Than me
They are brighter
And look like they are wearing
a black cap.
I live in
Patches of thistles
Along roadsides
In the edge of woods.
I am the Goldfinch.



Great Blue Heron

By Kareem

Sometimes I gobble fish
Because I'm hungry.
I have a long neck.
I eat
Fish,
Crayfish,
Frogs,
Snakes
Insects.
My family lives at lots of rivers.
I'm cool.
I'm a Great Blue Heron.
In the shallow part,
we hang out.
I am watchful and alert.
I fly over healthy rivers
Swamps
Lakes
Wetlands
All over North America
I can call my home
I am the Great Blue Heron
My neck is not an
Ostrich neck.
My neck can bend into an S.

I have long legs
To go in deep water
To catch my prey.
I stick my head
My strong beak
In the water
To see and gobble
A nice, nice meal.
I am a Great Blue Heron

Sometimes
You see
Me in a tree
Sometimes
I'm on a cliff edge
I'm a Great Blue Heron

I gather sticks for
My wife
So she
Can build a
Nest
For our
Chicks
I am a Great Blue Heron



The Great Egret

By Colby

Sometimes
I fly through
The misty air
I

Swoop

Down

To eat

Fish

Frogs

Fruits

And insects.

I can fly.

I have a very long neck,

It is white— plain

I like to eat, but not eat a lot.

I am mostly

Found in North, Central or South
America, Europe, Africa, Asia and
Australia.

I have a long bill as yellow as the
sun.

I am a bird.

I am the Great Egret.



Great Horned Owl*

By Jesus



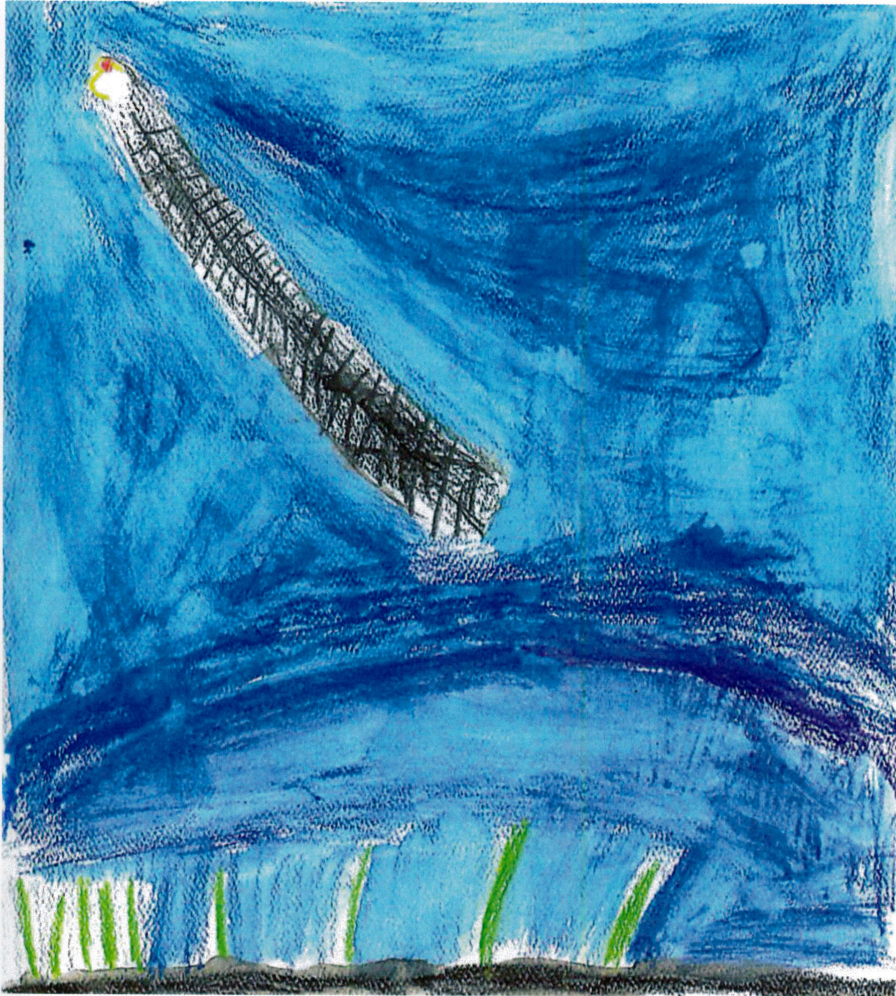
Sometimes I soar in the
Silence
Of air
I glide over tall trees
In the misty
Air.
I swoop down into the woods.
I land on the perch of a
Tall tree
And sit in silence till my
Prey comes to
Me.
Now that I caught a hare or two,
I head to
My
Nest.
I start to
Hoot in
The misty night as the autumn
breeze swooshes
With fright
As I close my giant
Eyes and start
To sleep
Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z
Who am I?
I am the Great Horned Owl.

*2011 MASSACHUSETTS SCIENCE POETRY CONTEST:
1ST PLACE GRAND PRIZE—MOST ORIGINAL POEM (3RD—5TH GRADE)

FISH

The American Eel

By Anthony



I have razor sharp teeth.
And sometimes I
Chomp my delicious fish.
In the still water
I swim.
I zig-zag,
Speeding through the still water.
I lay eggs
And my eggs are called
Larvae.
And where do I lay them?
Sargasso Sea.
Near Bermuda is where I lay them.
And the water gently brings
Them to America.
My skin is like a crystal
I am the American Eel.

Brook Trout

By Alphia

I'm not dull
I am shiny and
Beautiful,
I gleam and I glow
Yellows, reds, everywhere.

I dart! I dash! I dive!
I am a brook trout
In the rocky shallows
I hide in the rocky
Caves—

Sometimes I mate with lake trout and brown trout
Out of the hatcheries come splake and tiger trout

I am the state fish for many places—
New Hampshire, Michigan, Virginia, New York,
North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Vermont and
West Virginia.

I can reach seven years of age—

I eat what I find
Snakes
I munch mice
I crunch little fish for lunch
Loving larvae—
Tasty larvae
Tasty crunch—guess who's for lunch
Up I fly past ice cold water

Into the air

Sometimes I'm for lunch
Sometimes I squirm—
off the hook



Carp

By Maya



Sometimes I grind my food with
The teeth in my throat.
Sometimes I swallow it whole.

I dart
Back

And
Forth

And
Back

And
Forth

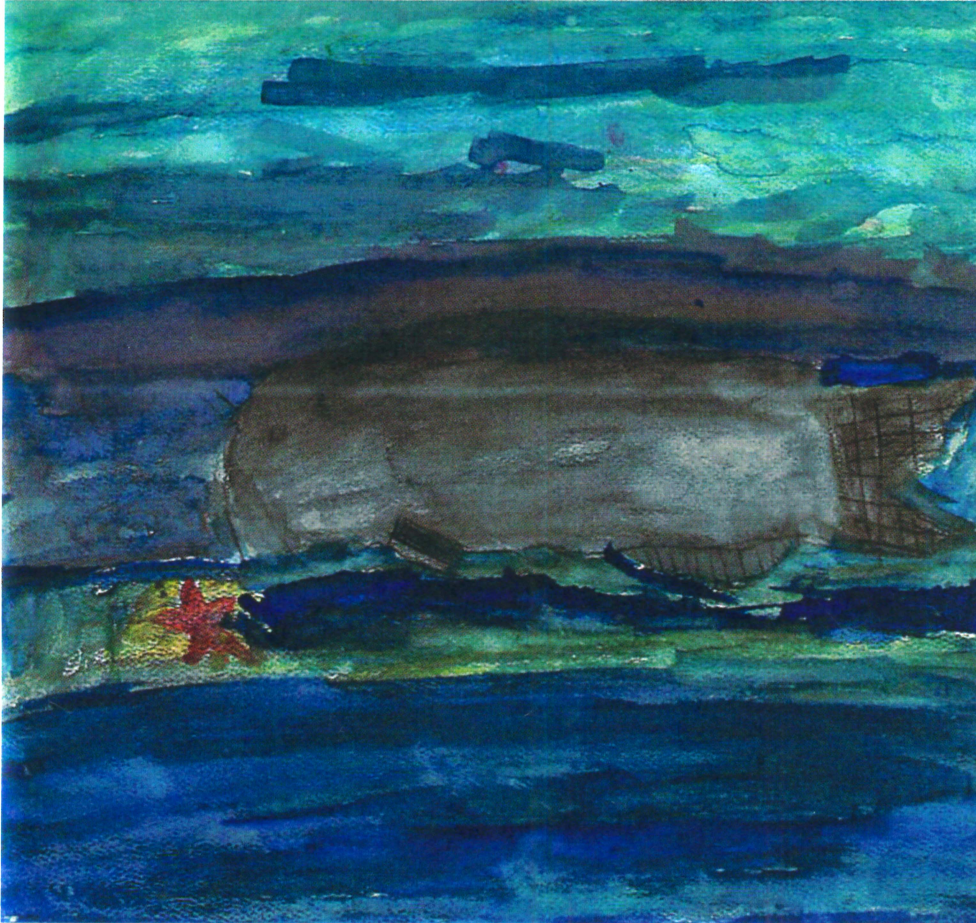
Through the deep dark water
I am the carp.

Sometimes you will find me in
A lake or pond
Sometimes you will find me at a
Beach or in a canal.

My scales glimmer as I cut
Through the water.
I am the carp.

Catfish

By Kathleen



Deep down in the salty water
My silvery gray scales glimmer
A deep silvery orange fish
Shiny, scaly
Darting, jumping
I am a feline
I have fleshy barbells
I am a catfish
I have V i B r A t I n G drumming
muscles
I gulp down shellfish's flakes
And sinking food tablets
I have a broad head
I have dorsal fin spines
I am a catfish
I dive deep down in the rippling
river
As the river whispers, I sparkle

Perch

By Giuseppe

I look like I have a Mohawk.
Sometimes I jump.
I am a Perch.
I eat worms,
Crustaceans,
Mollusks,
Bugs
And small fish.
I am a Perch.
In the semi-clear Charles River,
I swim—
And wiggle in the water.
I am a Perch.
I sneak up on a small fish
moving slowly.
I get it with my sharp teeth.
I am a Perch.
I have bones in my fin.
I have large eyes on top of my
head.

I am a Perch.
I live in high water.
I am a Perch.
I swim away from big fish
I swim faster than the big fish
I am a Perch.
I jump out of the water to have
some fun.
I am a Perch
I am also an omnivore.



Rainbow Trout

By Nora

Sometimes I glide past
Pebbles
Sometimes I race the water
I can be as small as four inches
I am a Rainbow Trout

I live
 deep
 deep
 deep

in fresh water
I gobble up plants.
I am a Rainbow Trout

I live in murky, muddy
Streams
I run the water
I am a Rainbow Trout



The Sharp Looking Sunfish

By Nahshon



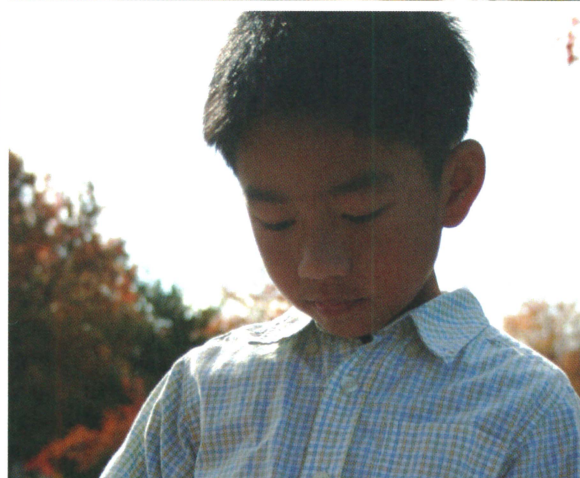
Sometimes
I'm gold and shiny
I would prefer a slow quiet stream
I would like
some shallow water, sometimes
In the shallow comfortable water
I show up
And dash to a
Crustacean –
With my sharp,
strong teeth I devour
Chop! Chop!
I'm a Sunfish
I don't know why but
I eat
my own family
When I spot an insect I
Go as fast as I can
I come back up
gulping down my food
I'm a Sunfish.

OUR EXPEDITION

PHOTOS BY TONI JACKSON
AND RHONDA BERKOWER

Scientists from the Charles River Watershed Association brought a watershed model to our classroom to demonstrate how the oil cars leak, the fertilizers we use on our lawns, and the garbage we throw on the ground end up in the Charles River.

We went to Herter Park in Brighton to test the water quality of the Charles River. Matthew Greenberg, a volunteer with World Water Monitoring Day helped us.



Know Your Water Quality Flags!

Probable Health Risk Possible Health Risk Safe Boating Conditions

The map shows the Charles River from Watertown to Boston. It includes labels for Newton, Cambridge, and Boston. Various flags are placed along the river to indicate water quality. A legend at the top explains the flags: a red flag with a white cross for 'Probable Health Risk', a yellow flag with a black border for 'Possible Health Risk', and a blue flag with a white sail for 'Safe Boating Conditions'. The map also shows the locations of several boat clubs and the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA). A north arrow is located at the bottom center.

CRWA Charles River Watershed Association

Watch for them this summer at participating boathouses!

781-788-0007 x301

www.charlesriver.org

twitter.com/cleancharles

Boston







At the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation in Waltham we learned how the Charles River helped industry grow in Massachusetts and how industry polluted the Charles River. We saw a fish ladder that helps the fish migrate.



Ms. Levi leads us in a medley of river songs.

THANK YOU

We want to thank the many experts who helped with our Charles River expedition.

The **Charles Riverboat Company** gave us a wonderful introduction to the river during a cruise around the Charles River Basin.

Eivy Monroy and **Julie Wood**, scientists from the Charles River Watershed Association, brought a watershed model to our classroom to demonstrate how what we do on land affects the health of the Charles River. They taught us what we each can do to protect and take care of our river.

Hydrogeologist **Matthew Greenberg** from the engineering firm of **CH2M Hill** taught us how to test water

samples from the Charles River for temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, and pH. **CH2M Hill** is one of the many organizations and companies that support **World Water Monitoring Day**, an international education program to protect water resources around the world. Thanks to **Meg Tabacsko** of the **Massachusetts Water Resources Authority** for connecting us to **Matt and CH2M Hill**.

Elln Hagney, Acting Director of the **Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation**, gave us a fascinating tour of the Waltham factory that began the Industrial Revolution in America and taught us about the impact of pollution on the wildlife that live in and along the Charles.

We are very grateful to **Kristyn Novotny** from the **Museum of Fine Arts** who taught us the art of painting with watercolor pencils, and to our music teacher, **Rebecca Levi**, who taught us a medley of river songs to celebrate our river.

ALONG THE CHARLES RIVER

This book of wildlife poems and watercolors was created by the third-grade class at the Conservatory Lab Charter School during a three-month science expedition on the Charles River in the fall of 2010. Students discovered how pollution endangers fish, birds, and other wildlife and what we can do to keep our river clean and protect the creatures that live in its waters and along its banks.



JOIN US ON THE WEB AT WWW.CONSERVATORYLAB.ORG

Book design by goodgood / www.goodgoodland.com

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ABOUT CONSERVATORY LAB

Conservatory Lab is a K1 – 6 music-infused charter school in the heart of Boston. We believe in the power of music to transform the lives of children and adolescents.

We use **Expeditionary Learning** as a framework for our unique, interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates music and other creative processes. Our learning expeditions are discovery operations. They start from scratch and travel light, relying on courage, compassion, and creativity as much as on intellectual acumen. We cherish active, hands-on situations where what we are doing matters to us and has consequences.

To encourage deeper learning, our expeditions demand fieldwork and assistance from experts. The photographs at the end of this book feature the fieldwork experiences and experts who guided third graders

during their Charles River expedition. As you can see from the children's faces, when you have a need to know, when you are driven to do something, a different level of energy kicks in.

Our interdisciplinary academic curriculum deepens students' appreciation of the role of music in the world and promotes opportunities for the students to create and perform music and to achieve scholastic benchmarks.

Conservatory Lab is also the only school in the country to incorporate **EI Sistema** Program and Methods into its core school day. **EI Sistema** is a unique program designed to effect social change and nurture promising futures for underserved communities through intensive, ensemble-focused music education. Music at **Conservatory Lab** is like a heart that pumps and beats to infuse vitality into all aspects of the school community.

Our students will remember their experience at **Conservatory Lab** with stories about problems they solved, ways they helped the community, performances they participated in, and exciting projects they worked so hard on. They will remember how one idea led to another and how they followed those ideas like true detectives until they understood them and made them their own. They will remember being challenged to push themselves to accomplish things they didn't think they were capable of accomplishing.

Diana Lam, Head of School

America's Red Bird

By Beatrice



You'll hear me chirp
Peep
I look for my wildberries "yum"-
I am flappy tweety buzzy
In the safety of the tree
I sing
Sing
Sing
Sing
I am the king of red feathers
I land swiftly in the big tree
I love to soar, eat, sleep
As I go back to my home in the
woods
I rest, as I go to fly again ...
I am spotted
Quick hide,
My bright red did it again
Eyes hop like a trampoline to me
My female friends are orange and
Brown they get all the luck
I am a Northern Cardinal