DIGITAL POETRY

An Interdisciplinary Unit Combining Digital Photography and Poetry

Taught by:
Wayne Little
Bette Murray
and Steve Ratiner

Presentation designed by: Wayne Little
July 2005
PARTICIPANTS

- **Wayne Little**, Photography Teacher, Burlington High School
- **Bette Murray**, Literacy Specialist, Burlington Public Schools
- **Steve Ratiner**, Acclaimed Poet, Author-in-Residence
- **Students**, Ages 12 – 18 from Marshall Simonds Middle School and Burlington High School, Burlington, Massachusetts
PREPARATION

- Our course took place from August 2 – 6, 2004
- Two sections of (16) students each
- Instructed in the use of a MAC computer, PhotoShop 7.0, and the Olympus D70 digital camera
- Learned basic photography skills of previsualization, selection, and composition of a fine art photograph
- Introduced to “In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World”, by Eliot Porter, Renowned Photographer
- Studied several forms of Japanese poetry
- Wrote and discussed personal poetic expressions
The first day students learned basic MAC computer skills and their use with PhotoShop 7.
Composition and the Camera

- Previsualization
- Framing & Cropping
- Composition Techniques
  - Direction & Quality of Light
  - Viewpoint
  - Simplicity (*Center of Interest*)
  - Leading Lines & Shapes
  - “Rule of Thirds”
  - Natural Framing
  - Rhythm & Pattern
  - Mergers
Inspirational Book

Two great artists – Thoreau’s observations interpreted by legendary photographer Eliot Porter in Porter’s 1962 publication

“In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World”
Walden Walk (Wed, August 4)

- First, students gathered for an introductory lesson at the mansion offered by Kent Curtis and Jeff Cramer.

- Next, they were guided from the replica to the HDT home site.
Sauntering . . .

“Simplicity . . .

“. . . by their weight again bent down and broke the tender limbs.”

. . . a different drummer.
“The SITE”

“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”
Words ripen into images

... and images into words
COMPLETION

- Download images
- Construct and deconstruct verse
- Make and enhance images
- Synthesize verse and image
- Critique and revise
- Organize and Print
The ART

Watching the pond
From a place up above
Seeing it sparkle
It is like a
Million diamonds
It’s calling to me
Telling me a secret

Alyssa Taranto
CRITIQUE

✓ Leading Lines
✓ Perspective
✓ Natural framing
✓ Quality of Light
✓ Edge Integrity
New ones grow
as old ones fall,
the journey of life continues.

Praneetha Vissapragada
These flowers I am holding
Are no ordinary flowers
They are lonely petals
Tears from a woman
Crying about her child who was
Taken away in his sleep
Sleep of Neverland
In a dream
The Unknown Path

Where this path leads
I don't know
Where this path ends
I don't know
What I'll come to in this path
I don't know
What's that sound in the shadows
I don't know
But I'm curious to find out

Ed meleschk
SHOVEL

On a hot summer afternoon
It’s alone, small, and timid,
All its life it’s been hiding
Behind grass, leaves,
And plants in the cool breeze
Trying to find shade for its old and
rusty body
Searching for a nearby garden
Were it may be admired
Again...

~Gabriana De Sousa~
As the trees blew in the soft wind,
soft wind

I realized that life is more than I had imagined.
I

As I sat upon this rock,

I

This feeling, I couldn't quite describe.

How lucky I wished to be that rock.

to be that rock.

Too bad the rock could never wish to be me.

How envious I was of this rock.

So perfect, so carefree.

How lucky I wished to be that rock.

Too bad the rock could never wish to be me.
Rocks, Falling and rolling, Falling and rolling, Act like bowling balls, That mother nature, gave us. by: Katie Lorrey

- Humor
- Repetition
- Pattern
- Leading Shapes
- Texture
- Contrast
Winter Wood

In the spring
Winter is still to be seen

Its snowy white color
Wrapped around the Paper Birch
Like a warm blanket

The tree hides its heartwood
It’s inner soul
With a winter mask of ice and snow

Blue jays and Robins sing
In great harmony
And the leaves become greener
Than the greenest of greens

Shedding its winter blankets
Unmasking its true identity
The tree’s outer mask
Hardens and falls to the ground
In perfect ripples

Unleashing its soul
For all to see
Till the snowbelly ring
And the trees lose their leaves

Yet Again

By: Amanda Roncone
And
Erika Bojanczuk
BUSHES LINED UP LIKE SOLDIERS GOING TO FIGHT FOR THEIR COUNTRY

BY: LEIGHANN ELLIS
Sanctuary

The sound of the birds
Singing in the sky
The warmth of the sun
Burning on my shoulders
The color of the flowers
So bright and new
The sound of the water
So calm and smooth
This is my sanctuary
Walden pond

By: Stacy Early
Little Tree

alone
but still
surrounded by
rough limbed giants
spring passes and
comes again and again...
now I am not a mere sprout
but a great towering tree
I am still one of the youngest
but now look down at
the immature saplings

by Sara
Martin
WALDEN

SITTING ON THE DAMPNESS
OF NATURE'S FLOOR
WILD LIFE ALL AROUND ME,
A SNAKE CAMOUFLAGES ITSELF
AS HE SLITHERS INTO A PILE OF LEAVES,
A STEALTHY HAWK
GRACEFULLY CIRCLES
IN THE BEAUTIFUL AZURE SKY,
THE SUN SHINES DOWN
ON THE STILL WATER,
A GENTLE BREEZE DRIFTS BY MY FACE
AS I GET UP
AND WALK DOWN ONE OF NATURE'S PATHS

- ANDREW JOHNSON
- Dynamic Diagonals
- Light Quality
- Contrast
- Text Separation
As the trees blew in the soft, soft wind
I realized, that life is more than I had imagined
This feeling I couldn’t quite describe
As I saw this rock sitting as still as I
As I saw this rock sitting as still as I
How envious I was of this rock
How envious I was of this rock
How carefree
How perfect, so carefree
So perfect, so carefree
How badly I wished I could be that rock
How badly I wished I could be that rock
Too bad that rock would never wish to be me
Too bad that rock would never wish to be me
A Human Mind
The echo from the forest
Feels the sorrow
Of every echo before.
The passer-by sees this in the
Trees, the plants.
He observes, studies the forest.
He finds its pain
From himself, his past.
Memories waste his mind with sadness.
He goes crazy.
His mind trapped, no way out.
He inflicts pain on the forest,
Taking away its beauty, its meaning.
He sees what he has done.
Devastation
He sees the fallen leaves.
He remembers happiness.
He starts to see the forest build.
Taller than before.
He discovers,
He is the forest.
His mind, the trees.
His soul, the plants.
Memories, the animals.
He sees his life
Flash before his eyes.
His memories,
The good, the bad.
He finally knows,
He must live
To grow again.

Of every echo before.
The passer-by sees this in the
Trees, the plants.
He observes, studies the forest.
He finds its pain
From himself, his past.
Memories waste his mind with sadness.
He goes crazy.
His mind trapped, no way out.
He inflicts pain on the forest,
Taking away its beauty, its meaning.
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Devastation
He sees the fallen leaves.
He remembers happiness.
He starts to see the forest build,
Taller than before.
He discovers,
SAMURAI,
DELVING INTO HIS INNER SENSES,
COOL BREEZE RIPLEING ACROSS HIS SKIN.

FALLEN BROTHERS CRY OUT,
NATURE'S WHISPY BREATH AS THEIR VOICE,
ANCESTORS CARESS HIS ARMOR,
ITS WOVEN BAMBOO A SYMBOL OF THEIR PRIDE,
A CHAMPION'S SOUL.

NOW THE TOP WARRIOR,
A MAN OF GREAT POWER.

BEFORE HE WAS ONE WITH THE GRASS HE KNEELS UPON,
A SINGLE BLADE,
IN A GIANT FIELD,
NO LONGER A CHILD,
BUT A COMPLETED WARRIOR.

A MAN TO LEAD THE CLAN,
IN THE NO LONGER GIANT FOOTSTEPS,
OF HIS FATHER.
Source of Light

A street lamp there,
In midday,
A pole with its purpose gone.
But at night,
It’s art in itself.
Light playing against the shadows of dark.
moss covers a tree
hiding its true identity
like me

by Erika Bojarczuk
The Lightning's Warning

Boom, Crash, Bang
The lightning is drawing near

Caution!
Run Away!
It's here to crush the plains

Boom, Crash, Bang
It's telling you
Beware!

Animals scurry back
To safety
Storm clouds threaten to
pour down
Trees bend and sway in the winds
violent wrath

Boom, Crash, Bang
Crash, Bang
Bang...
And then nothing but the
rain drizzling down

by Amanda Massey
Wonder if Thoreau was quite thorough when telling of the beauty of Walden. What a naturalist -- but look what it's gotten him now. Bet he'd be surprised by his sacred pond today: a swimming pool with wire fences, a list of forbidden, with too many signs. Where did nature go?
Burlington Staff Members:
Katie Spinos, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum
Bette Murray, Literacy Specialist
Steve Ratiner, Author/Poet

Our Friends at Walden Woods:
Kent Curtis, Past Director, Walden Woods
Jeff Cramer, Thoreau Library Director
Luba Zhaurova, Current Director, Walden Woods
Steve Carlin, Reservation Director

And of course . . .
Henry

Eliot Porter for his inspirational book
“In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World”
A Sierra Club-Ballantine Book, 1962