Does Nature Need Us?
By: Arden Isadora Carlsteen

People pollute it, people cut down it,
People build on it, People kill it,
People live in it, they ruin it for animals
that really need it.

When I am stiff it makes me feel soft.
It makes me feel as light as a feather.
When my breaths are heavy they seem
to feel light again. When I feel down in
the dumps I look at it and cheer up.

We need nature.
But does nature need us?

The Dream Project
Allison Kucia, 3rd Grade
High Tech Elementary

Why are we here if not to dream? In this project, students engaged in conversations with different members of our San Diego community to investigate the wide scope of dreams that an individual may have in his or her lifetime. In honor of April being National Poetry Month, students sought inspiration from various poets, and deeply examined their own lives and dreams for the future to create a piece of writing accompanied by a mixed media illustration. These poems were compiled into an anthology and published by a company selected by the students based on cost and time efficiency. Their co-created anthology acts as a "dreamcatcher," or legacy project, of the students' aspirations at that point in time.

Teacher Reflection
What I love about this project is that it provides students the opportunity to be creative through both artistic and written expression. It was powerful to see how beautifully students worked independently, as a classroom unit, and with project collaborators to critique and improve their work, and to ensure that their art and poetry captured their hopes and dreams correctly. I attribute much of this to the high involvement of students in all realms of the project. Having students learn and engage in the process of writing, illustrating, and publishing a book from start to finish (students ended their project by watching their book get printed and compiled at the publisher) gave them a heightened sense of pride and ownership over their work.

Student Reflection
The best part of the project was making our final drafts. It was pretty cool to go to the publishing company and see how they turn our work into a real book. Our book was made by a powerful machine with smart technology. It was neat to see how it worked and how the people at the company used it.   —Luca

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