

Wesley Wood
Pinellas
1st Place Junior

In the Florida Swamp

In the swamp
Catfish romp.
They play in the knees
of the cypress trees.

The vultures sit
watching the pit
below

Where alligators hide
up to their eyes
making an occasional bellow

While mosquitos whine
and dine
on orchid nectar

Sarah Weis
Manatee
2nd Place Junior

St. Johns River

I watch the lumbering manatee,
He's gliding through the water.
He's swimming all around,
Looking for a place that's hotter.
His buoy bobbing up and down
Reminds my mom of Jaws,
And when his gray back slowly appears,
We both watch in awe.

Skye Ashlen Burgos
Duval
3rd Place Junior

NIGHT

Nocturnal creatures
Illuminate the gloom
Glowing eyes
Hiding in
Trees painted with shadows

Kiri Kamiya
Manatee
Honorable Mention Junior

Turtle's Life

A small hatchling crawls from an egg,
drawn to the moonlight.
Many of her siblings follow, but some are attracted to other lights.
They reach the sea and dive in.

Swimming out to a clump of jellyfish,
She reaches out to take a bite...
the jellyfish get scooped up by divers,
wiggling like jello.

Other turtles swim by as she struggles against the current,
to the beach she knew from so long ago.
Five small eggs in a sandy hole,
soon to be turtles themselves.
She swims away, leaving them to the care of Mother Nature.

A tiny hatchling is drawn to the moonlight,
jumping into the ocean to start the journey all over again.