

*Intermediate First Place – Skye B., Duval County*

## **RYTHYM RECURRING**

### **WINTER QUIESCENCE**

Gather, gather, manatees gentle, rendezvous in warmer waters  
Welcome, welcome, little calves, newborn right whale sons and daughters  
Hatch, hatch, eagles bald, in your massive nests, atop the trees  
Bloom, bloom, red maple flowers, send a wake-up call to the sleeping bees

### **SPRING AWAKENING**

Flower, flower, redbuds of east, an explosion of pink adorns bare trees  
Nibble, nibble, swallowtails of young, on tuliptree leaves that sway in the breeze  
Come out, come out, bobcat elusive, begin your quest to find a mate  
Weave, weave, hummingbirds, webs, moss, and twigs into a nest ornate

### **SUMMER ABUNDANCE**

Peek, peek, armadillos four, venture into the cool left by recent rain  
Paddle, paddle, sea turtle hatchlings, follow light of the moon to a new domain  
Flutter, flutter, butterflies atala, lay eggs amongst coontie's points, green fronds  
Drum, drum, pounding rain, storm lightning flashes—thunder responds

### **AUTUMN PREPARATION**

Flee, flee, butterflies royal, follow the sun to groves of fir  
Scurry, scurry, squirrels so grey, seek and hide food in a blur  
Wake, wake, bears black, eat night and day, then next season digest  
Open, open, violet sweet, late blooming snack before winter's rest

*\*Intermediate Second Place – Sienna B., Duval County*

**A plastic world**

Hills of plastic bags,  
Beaches of straws,  
An ocean of sea turtles' gags,  
All things plastic cause.  
Mangroves of bottles,  
Forests of plastic scrap,  
Rivers of manatee it throttles,  
A huge plastic trap.  
A hurricane of styrofoam clouds,  
Birds caught in fisherman nets,  
The sky covered in a plastic shroud,  
Fix this before we have more regrets.

*\*Intermediate Third Place – Anabelle Scarlett B., Okaloosa County*

**Crickets at night**

I walk outside  
Early in the night  
I'm all alone  
Not a creature in sight  
I ran into some trouble  
But I'm here because I know  
It will soon all go away  
I cross my fingers  
And shut my eyes tight  
I begin to hear the heavenly sound  
Of crickets at night  
Sweet chirps remind me of better days  
A beautiful noise like pattering rain  
A sound like a spell  
That makes life stop hurting  
I hope you find peace  
When you hear the crickets chirping

*\* Intermediate Honorable Mention – Katherine R., Duval County*

### **Ecosystem Engineers**

**Alligators**, digging down during a drought,  
Creating sources of water so fellow animals do not go without.

**Bats**, covering the cave floor with guano, keeping others alive,  
Eating gobs of insects, enabling farmer's crops to thrive.

**Beavers**, creating dams, offering more species a home,  
Then caring for that space so its inhabitants can roam.

**Bees**, facilitating the production of the foods we grow.  
We must do what we can to ensure they don't go.

**Black bears**, ranging far and wide across the state,  
Conserving space for them safeguards many other animals' fate.

**Coral**, serving as an underwater home for so many things,  
Supporting a wide variety of life, but who knows what the future brings?

**Goldenrod**, protecting vegetables, friend to the gardener,  
And key to the survival of the pollinator.

**Gopher tortoises**, excavating burrows deep in the earth,  
A wide range of species grasp this neighbor's worth.

**Panthers**, prowling through the night,  
Desperately need out help to overcome their plight.

**Manatees**, possessing the ability to sound the alarm,  
And letting us know when our waterways face harm.

**Mangroves**, reaching with distinctive roots and Floridian would know,  
Essential to the coastal intertidal zones where they grow.

**Parrotfish**, consuming the algae coral have collected,  
Demonstrating how so many different creatures are connected.

**Sea stars**, keeping populations of barnacles and mussels in check,  
Insuring their home remains balanced, and isn't a wreck.

**Sharks**, patrolling the waters, vital to the equilibrium of the ocean,  
To keep them swimming along our coasts requires devotion.

**Southern live oaks**, providing a home for hundreds of types of insect,  
The birds and other animals who live in and around them do not object.

**Woodpeckers**, drilling like master carpenters across their range,  
Without their handiwork, entire environmental communities could change.

**Florida's keystone species**, holding our state's ecosystems together like glue,  
Their success and their future are dependent on what we do.