



Writing Sample - Dana Kester-McCabe

The Earth Will Outlive Us All

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When reading about the environment you can get pretty depressed. Everything tells us that we are a blight on a blessed fruit, and that the cost of our comfort is the destruction of our descendants' future. Here on Delmarva that tug of war between human progress and nature's destruction is much the same as it is everywhere. Nature maybe losing right now, but eventually it always asserts itself.

If you look at satellite pictures of Delmarva you can see signs of human engineering everywhere. The Pocomoke River runs up our center like the peninsula's central nervous system. Large sections of it have been straightened, deepened, and connected to a system of manmade ditches. The purpose of this was to aid in navigation, and to help drain fields and timber forests for greater productivity. Despite the good they did farmers for awhile, farming continues to decline as a way of life.

Likewise a number of our marshes, particularly on the Delaware Bay were ditched in the 1930's and 40's for the purpose of aiding runoff and lowering mosquito populations. I doubt whether they really do much help now after filling back in for more than sixty years.

When I am out taking pictures of our beautiful landscape, one of my goals is to capture images of those spots that show no evidence of human tampering. It is not easy to do. We are covering up more and more of the landscape. And yet there is evidence all around of nature's indifference to our striving.

To be in relationship with the earth is like canoeing up river. It can be dangerous and exhilarating, and once you arrive, you have the feeling of having conquered something. Yet in reality, you have merely survived while the river could care less whether you were there at all.

Don't get me wrong. I firmly believe that we need to actively improve the way we treat the earth. However, nature "will out" as the poets say. The earth and the water continuously reclaim what we have attempted to mold to our own purpose.

So why should we clean up the environment? One test for me is whether something is ultimately unhealthy for human beings. If the land and water around us is sick then we will get sick too. If other species are dying out chances are we are next. The earth will not care if we kill our self with toxic waste. It will simply continue its cycles of growth, decay, and rebirth.

Another test of equal importance, in my opinion, is how we treat each other as we try to "survive and thrive". If we care more about our own sense of progress than each other, then we will live in the equally toxic waste of human conflict. And well, the earth won't give a damn if we do. Because time is on earth's side not ours.

April 22nd, is Earth Day. On that day, be kind to mother earth and to all the other earthlings who inhabit her. The earth may have all of eternity but we only have now.