



## **Alessandra Seawright**

### **FIRST PLACE Grades 6-7**

Grade 6 – La Mariposa Montessori School, Santa Fe NM

Teacher: Katrina Holder

Author Robin Wall Kimmerer inspired me to think about how the Earth has so many gifts that we take for granted. This planet gives us water, food, and so many things that help support life. I am so grateful for this planet. I also entirely understand that humans are taking too many of Earth's resources and that this is destroying the balance of nature. Kimmerer reminds us that, "Though the Earth provides us with all that we need, we have created a consumption-driven economy that asks, "What more can we take from the Earth?" As a global community, we need to acknowledge our gratitude for Earth's gifts and ask, "What does the Earth ask of us in return?"

Down in the Southwest, I go to a wonderful school where my friends and I learn how to be stewards of the Earth. My classmates and I regularly spend time cleaning up old trash from a nearby forty-five acres of land that used to be an illegal dump. During the beautiful month of October, when we are able to see Mother Nature thrive and turn our trees shades of purple, orange and red, our school community plants seeds and flower bulbs in preparation for the Spring. To nurture our environment, we use fertilizer that our goats, donkeys, pigs, and horses kindly create for us. The wildflowers blanketing our school campus are oh, so beautiful! We collect seeds from all the colorful sunflowers that grow on our playground and feel grateful for how breathtakingly beautiful Mother Nature is! We truly need to protect her.

Worldwide, people are making choices that increase pollution and do damage to the various ecosystems that exist on land and in water. Too much plastic trash is going into our oceans and this harms the lives of fish and sea creatures. We still have too much reliance on fossil fuels. Mining for precious metals that are used in our cell phones and other electronic devices is polluting the land. We clear cut entire forests so that cows can have more grazing land all because we want to consume more and more meat. Why are we burning and using these things when they are hurting the Earth, our home? We have other choices that we can make.

Conservationist Aldo Leopold said, "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." We need to be partners with the Earth and take advantage of alternative renewable energy resources like sun, wind, water, and geothermal power. Earth is a beautiful planet, but if we love it so much and it is the only planet that can support life, why are we making the choice to destroy our home? It is like making the choice to do terrible things to your most prized possession. Let's make changes together to heal and take care of the Earth.