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Grade 11

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Symphony For A Stray Seed

One mile in, two to go. I reach my crescendo on the Borrego Trail, where I meet you, Santa Fe River. Treasure in hand, I marvel at the freshly picked apple from the solitary tree that stands like an unexpected soloist amongst the pine and aspen chorus. You gave life to this stray seed that now joins your eternal composition, nourishing both body and spirit. The sweet crystalized essence of your waters within this fruit - each bite a note in our shared symphony. Your hymn flows through my senses, conducting life's orchestra, as you move through the apple, body, plant, and creature alike. I've traced your melody through our community, knowing you're not massive in size, yet I wonder at the source of your profound force. You nourish both stray and established seeds, inviting them to partake in nature's grand orchestra that perpetuates the ballad of the life-giving desert river. You, the conductor, remain constant, while your orchestra members change through generations, each carrying forward your essential tune. As one of your stray seeds, blessed by your gifts, I pledge to play my part faithfully in life's endless symphony, honored to contribute to your living heritage in New Mexico.

Born in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, your voice has resonated for centuries. From cradling ancient Tewa village to providing one third of the water to America's oldest state capital, your music has flowed through our community and nature, like an uninterrupted aria. Your refined concerto follows the rhythm of seasons, giving voice to nature's moods, while marking time's passage. In spring, your vivace tempo fills the air with vital energy, awakening dormant seeds and stirring the forest from its solemn winter silence. Summer brings your allegro cadence, imprinting joy in the collective spirit of all who depend on your flow. Your rippling surface becomes nature's mirror, reflecting my face among the portraits of the forest and the sky, while your melody penetrates the deepest chords of my heart. Autumn ushers in an andante rhythm, a contemplative presence that invites reflection. As I watch your waves succeed one another, I meditate on our ephemeral nature, finding comfort in the knowledge that future generations will continue our existence. Each small wave plays its part in polishing the rocks that provide the foundation of your flowy tunes. In winter, I hear your breathy lullaby beneath snow's blanket, your waters drumming under sleeves of ice with the gentle rhythm of deer hooves. Your lento pace in the melancholic winter echoes ancestral stories of our land, protected by mountains that stand like silent guardians of your song. You provide the music that inspires the lyrics of our collective song.

Like the stray apple seed that found its purpose, I am cradled and nurtured by your waters. As the apple represents the fruit of devotion, my lyrics back to you, Santa Fe River, complete a song of profound gratitude. We are like family, you and I are quite similar. How can I wholeheartedly thank you for unconditionally providing the element that comprises most of my being? I make this solemn promise: to preserve your precious body and ensure your song echoes through generations. My gratitude manifests through awareness and action, expanding upon Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic, which reminds us that our relationship with nature must transcend mere economic self-interest. Understanding how vital each seemingly insignificant seed or wave is to the whole, I commit to amplifying my small wave of awareness, inviting others to your banks to hear your story directly from your flowing voice. Though I may seem as small as a single note in your symphony, I carry the potential to make an impact on our environmental harmony. Following your example, I learn how to navigate life's obstacles as you do - flowing past fallen trees, finding the right path through mountains, never ceasing your vital song. Nourished by you, lost seeds discover their chance to blossom and enhance nature's symphony, ensuring your music resonates for generations to come in this Land of Enchantment. Together, we create an endless composition of survival, renewal, and hope.