

# One Nod

I can feel my legs trembling,  
The wind is strong and unrelenting  
I can't even open my eyes.  
I grip my paddle tight,  
And push off the rocky shore.  
The current is so powerful,  
It will never let up.  
It can fight for the rest of the day.  
I am fighting frantically  
Just to gain an inch of progress.  
What I can't see  
Is my mother sitting  
On the shore far away.  
Waiting for me to gather my strength  
And fight back.  
It would be so easy for me  
To just jump off  
Onto the safe land.  
I shake my head with a stern  
Hard determination.  
I dig my paddle into the water  
And pull using my entire body.  
Then I do it again.  
And again.  
Again  
Again  
Slowly,

I can see the shore  
Drift away behind me  
I am determined to put up a fight.  
With the wind stretching my mind and my will  
I realize that I have done this before.  
I do this every day.  
I open my eyes.  
I nod my head.  
I whisper to myself,  
“I’m ready for this.”

- by Kelly Stellmacher  
Junior  
Telluride Mountain School  
Emily Schoff’s English Class  
Winner 2020 Rella Award  
High School category