4. LANGUAGE ARTS

Our estuary has inspired creative expression throughout time. Even before written language existed, San Diego's lush coastal wetlands were probably depicted in native art. Once actual writers found the estuary, their words immortalized the land for all time. It is remarkable to appreciate how writers depict the same setting differently, depending on their work, their time in history, and their intent. The following passages reflect this diversity and how unique interpretations about the same land have been used. Reading them, you will note just how much…and how little…the estuary has changed over these hundreds of years.

Living and attending school near the estuary, you doubtless have your own views on this land and its impact on your life. As you read these passages, by people from very various walks of life, think about which writing tells you the most about your environment, and about yourself. Can you conceive of ways you could write about the estuary that would convey your time and your sentiments - positive or negative - to others?

Official Government Journal Entry

The real writing began in 1769 as Spanish missionaries made their way up the Pacific coast into what was later called Alta California. Missionary Padre Juan Crespí was assigned to keep records for religious reasons, and his numerous entries distinguish themselves with detail and feeling. Crespí had no way of knowing how fascinating and useful his reflections would be, not just to his peers back in Loreto on the Gulf of Mexico and in Spain, but also to future generations.

He wrote the following entries on the final days of his journey north to San Diego. His beleaguered party moved to the east to stay clear of the seaside cliffs and had their first view of the Silver Strand and the South Bay area from there. That night they camped on the southern Tijuana River delta, apparently much populated by Native Indians. This text is a translation from the original eighteenth-century Spanish.

May 13, 1769

We set out in the morning, course due northward, with seven heathens belonging to this spot accompanying us. We had shortly to descend a steep slope to a stream that was deep down, but once having gotten down, we com menced climbing up over a large pass, for the reason that the way which we had been following along the short was cut off by the land's turning very cliffy upon the sea. On going about a league, we won past a point of land that had hindered us from seeing in what direction the sea ran onward; and there, for a vast distance along, was revealed to us the plain that we were to follow along the shore, with everything well grown with green grass. We descried, from a small height upon the plain here, the sea reaching far inland, and there

was caught sight of the ships' main masts, hardly discernible because of the distance they were at. I cannot tell the happiness and joy we felt upon see ing the hour arrive of our reaching our so long wished-for San Diego Harbor, with His Majesty's two packetboards, San Carlos and El Principe (alias the San Antonio) lying there. On going for about three hours [two leagues] we arrived close to a very populous hea-then rancheria, along one side of which there was a handsome stream running

with a good-sized flow of water that with great force issues up out of the ground upon the spot, good fresh water. The stream flows at the foot of a range that we have borne upon our right hand during the whole day's march and that draws back for a bit over a league here, the country making a great plain of good soil, everything carpeted with green grasses.

Immediately upon our arrival, many, many heathens - men, women, and children in large numbers - came over both from this rancheria as well as from other rancherias that seemingly are nearby, almost all of them of both sexes being heavily painted in red, white and black, the men having on large feather headdresses and having their usual good-sized quivers upon their shoul ders and bow and arrows in their hands. All are very sharp Indians, great bargainers, very covetous of anything they see that pleases them, and by, what was observed of them, great thieves. Their manner is to be clam-orous; they speak whatever they are saying at a shout as though very angry. The heathens here would bring mus - sels but would not part with a single one unless given the item they wished or had taken a liking to.

This spot lies about half a league from an inlet that is close to the harbor. There is no fire wood or trees at the spot, but there are some in the mou-tains not far off. This afternoon, the weather turned to heavy rain and we were all soaked through. (Crosby, 102)

Children's Literature

Melicent Humason Lee and her artist hus-band Leslie W. Lee moved to California in 1919. They first lived near San Diego's salt marshes, where Sea World is today. Immediately enchanted and intrigued by the land, they began making friends with local Kumeyaay. Melicent Lee learned about and recorded the native culture. She wrote for *Art and Archaeology* magazine and became the director of San Diego's Indian Arts League, always continuing her research.

When the Lees' financial situation deterio-rated during the Depression and World War II, Melicent Lee deliberately chose to write children's books and for juvenile mag-azines, feeling that she could make more money as well as instill appreciation for the land in young people. She based her

twelfth book, *Pi-yuck of the West Coast, Salt Water Boy*, on what was by then an intimate acquaintance with coastal Kumeyaay. Published in 1941 and illustrated by her husband, it is both educational and absorbing. *Salt Water Boy's* pages bring long-departed times back to life through her character Pi-yuck's seaside adventures. In the following passage, Pi-yuck travels with his grandfather and others down to the sand dunes.

"I am coming," called Pi-yuck, wide awake now. He had not been to the south beach for a long time. He ran out of the cave. He looked at the hills curled like a half moon around the cove beyond. They were not the color of glis-

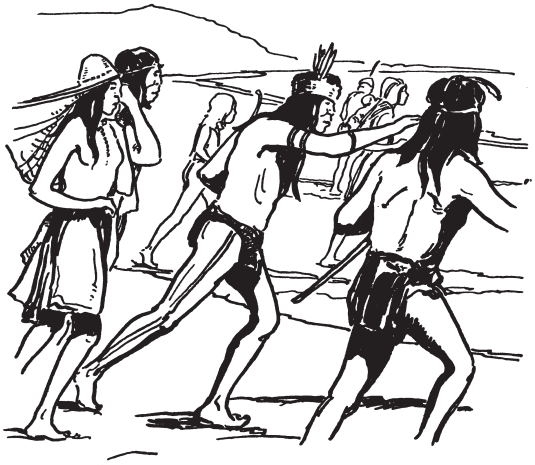
***Pi-yuck of the West Coast, Salt Water Boy*, Copyright © 1941**

tening abalone shells yet. They were the color of fawns that drank water in Sycamore Canyon. The sands looked cooler than when he had gone to sleep. Gulls and pelicans soared over his head.

He ran up the sandy slope through the slippery hi-yow to the hill where his grandfather stood. He could see the rest of the tribe gathering. He could see his best friend An-poke (Shell) with the others.

"Get your net," spoke the old man.
Pi-yuck ran to his hut, put on his basket cap, slipped a large seed basket into his net, then put on the net. He joined his grandfather again.
The old chief led the way to the south beach, and the tribe of Mut Lah-hoy-yah Lay-hoy-yah followed in single file. Across the hills, over the sand dunes where violet and yellow flowers bloomed, over crisp ice plant bubbling with frosty beads, down into the canyons, over rocks and out upon a sandy plain they traveled. Then O-o began to run.

He ran lightly, his little fur head band



***Pi-yuck of the West Coast,Salt Water Boy*, Copyright © 1941**

with its blowing feathers perched on his head, his long black hair flowing in the breeze, his new nose ring of abalone swinging from his nose, his face and legs striped with white paint from ground-up shells and grease.

Pi-yuck ran lightly, his little dove feather still in his hair…

The Indians ran and ran until the fawn-colored hills were out of sight. They ran until they came to yellow sand dunes where yellow daisies and violet morning glories mixed with pale yellow primros es and verbena. They ran over the dunes until they reached a beautiful beach of gray sand as fine as powder.

"There are no lay-hoy-yah lah-hoy-yah (caves) over here," said Pi-yuck.

"And the sand it not like the color of the sun," said Ah-poke. "It is gray as a hum-me-chus (clamshell).

"And one of those islands away out in the sea looks like a great sea otter,"

said Pi-yuck.

He pointed to one of the three islands that looked like sea monsters floating lazily in the sea. Purple hills nestled nearbv, glistening in the crimson setting sun.

"Why stare you?" laughed O-o. He had stepped softly over to the two boys. "Those are only islands. They are no enemies who will attack you. The sea birds nest over there. The pelicans with the fish nets hanging down from their beaks nested there a few moons ago, but sea gulls are nesting there now. And their eggs are good to eat!"

"I wish I had a roasted egg now," said Ah-poke, wondering why there were no volcano shells on this beach. He saw only bubble shells, and they broke too easily when they were pierced for a chain of shells to wear. Ah-poke was always looking for strong shells for chains.

But Pi-yuck kept on staring. He was always curious about these islands. They were not like the small rock islands in front of the small beach by Mut Lah-hoy-yah Lah-hoy-yah. These islands were as purple as the back of a mussel shell. Oh, he wanted to paddle out to one of those islands! He would hurry and make his boat!

"I know what you are thinking," said O-o, who had been watching his face. "It will not be safe for you to paddle a tule boat out to those islands. The only safe way is to go in one of the pine canoes with some of the men. The sea is not always so calm as it is now. Content yourself to paddle around home until you have a pine canoe. And now let us dig clams. We didn't run all this way to look at islands."

He walked to the edge of the powdery gray beach, and all the tribe followed. But Pi-yuck followed him only with his feet. His thoughts were on the islands far away. (Lee, 35-39)

A deft author, Melicent Lee tells you about the culture at the same time that she moves the story ahead. Note how Lee describes the land's details figuratively -- "the hills curled like a half moon around the cove," land the "color of fawns that drank water" and so forth, including her impression that the Coronado Islands look like sea otters. These metaphors underscore the natural symbolism that was so much a part of native culture. Few look at the land this way any more, not just because no one takes the time, but because the landscape has been so altered.

Scientific Accounts

Renegade marine biologist and professional naturalist Edward Flanders Ricketts (1897-1948) never graduated from university; he was a largely self-taught biologist and ecologist. Conservation-minded, long before most realized it was necessary, Ricketts founded the Pacific Biological Laboratories in Monterey, California.

Ricketts was a close friend of notable author John Steinbeck and the two men greatly influenced each other. Ricketts was the inspiration for "Doc," a character in Steinbeck's novels *Sweet Thursday* and *Cannery Row*. (You may have seen Nick Nolte playing the part of Doc in the movie, *Cannery Row*.) Steinbeck traveled with Ricketts to the Gulf of Mexico, where the two collaborated on Steinbeck's *Log of the*

Sea of Cortez.

Ricketts himself wrote beautifully and was highly motivated to share his love of seashore species. His book *Between Pacific Tides* is a primary source of information on marine biology on the Pacific Coast, much of it garnered in San Diego County. You'll find that his writing is easy to understand, and you may observe ways his broad interests - music, philosophy and literature - play on his pursuit of science. As Steinbeck wrote in the foreword to *Between Pacific Tides*, "This is a book for laymen, for beginners, and as such, its main purpose is to stimulate curiosity, not to answer finally questions which are only temporarily answerable."

Ricketts was vitally interested in creatures many regard as incidental - the slippery, alien-looking invertebrates of estuaries. His interest was not just as a scientist. As he wrote on an grant application to the Guggenheim, "Light may well be shed on the social problems of *Homo sapiens* by a consideration of the social adaptations achieved on humbler group levels."

Read here about one of these creatures, endemic to the Tijuana estuary,

> The true segmented worms have a large and obvious representative in the tubed Chaetopterus variopedatus which is known from Vancouver to San Diego, and is widely distributed elsewhere. In its U-shaped burrow, it constructs a fair ly thick and woody brown tube, which may be several feet long; the curiously shaped worm itself measures from 6 to 15 inches. Many generations of tube-dwelling have softened the worm's body to the point where it is helpless outside its tube, and it almost invariably registers its protest at being removed by breaking in two just behind the head. The animal secretes a great amount of slime, which covers its body and lines the tube; this slime seems to have some connection with the worm's brilliant phosphorescence, for when the worm is touched, some of the slime will come off on one's fingers and continue to glow there. (Ricketts, 339)

Is not Ricketts's fascination for the slimy evident here? He recognized beauty and necessity in the complex estuarine environments. He was obviously frustrated that too few shared his views, even in the thirties when *Between Pacific Tides* was written, as the following passage indicates:

> Recent studies of estuaries indicate

> that a well-developed, mature estuary may be a closely interrelated system, where changes in the primary microscopic plants of the plankton with differ ent seasons support different species of small herbivorous copepods (perhaps two species of the same genus), successive schools of young fish at the different periods and so on. In short, every ecological possibility is being utilized. The inhabitants of estuaries are characteristically euryhaline, that is, they can adapt themselves to changes in the salinity of the water; but most of them can survive, if not thrive, in oceanic water as well. This may account for the wide distribution of some estuarine species, and for the tendency of some of them to appear in scattered parts of the world, including the Pacific coast. Interestingly enough, some organisms from the sea are more capable of adjusting to reduced salinities than freshwater ones are of accepting increased salinities; very few representatives from fresh water occur in

salinities higher than 2 or 3 parts per thousand.

> There are only a few estuaries on the Pacific coast…A few, especially in southern California, may be closed off from the sea and form hypersaline lagoons. However, it is now rare to find a bay left in southern California. The bays are being chopped up into sterile marinas, and the marshlands have become parking lots. From the natural ist's point of view, the transformation of Mission Bay, once an "unimproved" environment of sloughs and marsh lands, into a complex of artificial islands, swank restaurants and speed boat courses is hardly an improvement, Roger Revelle to the contrary notwithstanding. Bays and estuaries, alas, are particularly vulnerable to progress, since so many of them lie near cities and are treated either as sewers or as ticky-tacky boxes. It is not much consolation to reflect than in due time the sea may rise again and do away with all this, and that life of some sort should prevail as long as the sun lasts; for we are concerned for our own times, which are brief enough on earth. (Ricketts, 233)

In San Diego County, Ed Rickett's spiritual heir must surely be Dr. Joy Zedler, a professor of ecology who taught at San Diego State University. Zedler's teaching inspired a generation of estuarine ecologists and her research fueled the Tijuana estuary's ultimate conservation. Dr. Zedler contributed vast quantities of writing on the subject of the Tijuana estuary, among it *The Ecology of Tijuana Estuary* written for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration in 1992 in conjunction with Christopher S. Nordby and Barbara E. Kus.

In the preface, Zedler and her colleagues write,

> What makes Tijuana Estuary eligible for national recognition? It functions as a coastal water body that is influenced by both marine and river waters. It supports a range of natural plant and animal communities that are especially adapted to withstand the variable salinities that occur when sea and fresh waters mix. It has persisted through human history as an ecosystem that retains many of its natural qualities despite disturbance from urban and agricultural land uses. Unique to Tijuana Estuary is its international setting, with three-fourths of its watershed in Mexico; its diversity of ecological communities, which provide habitat for a variety of rare and endangered species; and its history of ecological study, with extensive data from years with and without catastrophic disturbances.
>
> What sets California's estuaries apart from others in the nation is the degree of variability in the physical environment. During most of the year, they are marine-dominated systems, i.e., extensions of the ocean. During the winter rainy season, they may become completely fresh. In addition, there is substantial annual variation from years with no streamflow to years with major floods. The extremely variable nature of southern California's coastal habitats is not evident from short-term observation. Indeed, many visitors enjoy weeks of warm, cloud-free days and deny that we even have "weather." But from over a decade of study, there have been repeated opportunities to witness extreme events within Tijuana Estuary, ranging from catastrophic flooding to tidal closure and drought. These events

> have in turn allowed us to identify how physical factors influence biotic communities, and to quantify the dynamics of estuarine organisms as they respond to environmental extremes.
> (Zedler, i)

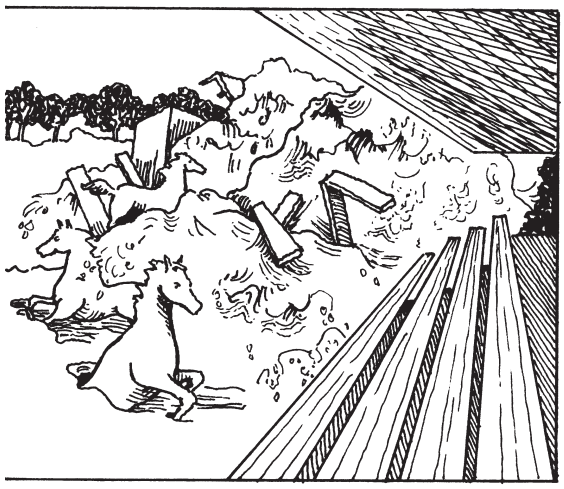
Literary History

Laura Hillenbrand loves history, horses, and writing. She began writing about Thoroughbred racing for national publications in the late eighties, *The New Yorker, The New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today*, among them. She is a two-time winner of the Eclipse Award, the highest journalistic honor in Thoroughbred racing. In her acclaimed book, *Seabiscuit*, which was made into a movie, Hillenbrand includes a lively passage about the Tijuana River Valley. The single incident gives readers a good indication about the unstoppable water that intermittently surges through the valley, about the nature of fecal waste…and the mad hazard of reckless human schemes.

Gambling and horseracing were prohibited in the early twentieth century United States, but it wasn't illegal just across the border in Mexico. The Sunset Racetrack first opened on January 1, 1916, just a few hundred feet from the San Ysidro border, right in the river bottom, but it washed out within ten days when the Tijuana River overflowed. A second racetrack was built in an area now occupied by today's Padre Kino monument, where it remained until 1929, when Agua Caliente Racetrack opened.

The following incident, in Hillenbrand's words, occurred during flooding in 1927.

> The halcyon days at the Tijuana track came to a spectacular end. On the backstretch early each morning men guided teams of horses on circuits of the barns, shoveling the mucked-out manure into wagons and driving the teams up the hill behind the back stretch, where they would dump it. The pile had been accumulating since 1917, and because the city received little rain to wash it down, it was enormous. "Oh my gosh," remembered trainer Jimmy Jones. "It was as big as the grand stand." Inside its percolating depths, the manure fermented, generating scalding heat.
>
> To the locals, the mountain of manure was a steaming eyesore. To the jock eys, it was prime sauna country. Every day riders dug holes in the surface and burrowed in, Pollard and Woolf probably included. A few took the precaution of zipping into rubber suits before wiggling in, but most just wore street clothes. It was almost too hot to take, but Mother Nature's hotbox proved unbeatable for sweating off weight.
>
> The mountain was not long for this world. Sometime in the late 1920s, after extraordinarily heavy rains, swollen streams running off the nearby mountains backed up into a ravine, then exploded over the banks. Howling through Tijuana, the wall of water crashed into the racetrack, hurling houses, barns and bridges along with it.



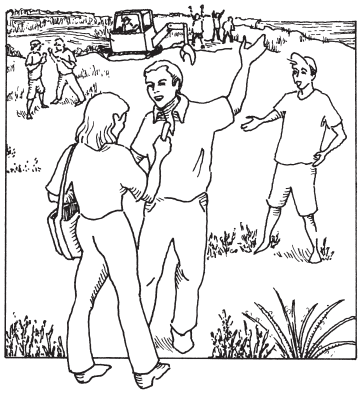
> Grooms ran down the backstretch before the onrushing water, throwing open stall doors and chasing out the horses, who scattered in all directions. Behind them, the irresistible force of the flood met the immovable object of the

> manure pile. The water won. The mound, a marvel of solidity for a decade, was uprooted whole and began to shudder along in one murder ous mass. It rolled over the San Diego and Arizona railroad tracks that fed the racetrack, tearing them out. Moving as if animated with destructive desire, it gurgled down the backstretch, banked around the far turn, bore out in the homestretch, and mowed down the entire grandstand. It made a beeline for the Monte Carlo Casino, crashing straight through its walls and cracking it wide open. Then, like a mighty..... Godzilla, it slid out to sea and vanished. (Hillenbrand, 88)

Have a look at the lyric expression in the last paragraph alone. You'll find alliteration, as in "the water won." It's not difficult to imagine the manure, as it shuddered along in "one murderous mass." Hillenbrand puts evocative verbs to use too. Instead of simply saying "moved," she wrote that the mound "gurgled," "rolled," and "mowed." These are the kinds of details that make any descriptive writing memorable.

Journalism

The year 1980 was filled with contention over the fate of the estuary. The City of Imperial Beach, Mayor Brian Bilbray, and some city residents were insistent that the estuary be turned into a marina. They sparred continually with environmentalists and other advocates of estuary preservation. Finally, city fathers drove heavy equipment into the estuary in an attempt to dam the river in early summer. Protesters (high school students among them) stood in their way until U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff arrived to stop them. Reporter Lori Shein, who covered municipal matters for the then-*Imperial Beach Star News* wrote about this after it occurred.



While reading the following passage, note how Shein shares information. Journalism is different than other kinds of writing. It must get compelling facts across fast and simply. Paragraphs are short, rarely more than one sentence. Reporting strives to relay incidents without bias, letting readers draw their own conclusions. It avoids using vivid adjectives and adverbs that might prejudice readers in one direction or another.

Fights Break Out Over River Damming
By Lori Shein

> "Come seven days, if I don't see them doing anything, I'm going to go right back out and do it again," a frustrated Imperial Beach Mayor Brian Bilbray said this week after an aborted attempt at diking the mouth of the Tia Juana River.
>
> Bilbray and three council members - Tom Stark, J.B. Bennett and Lorraine Faverty - donned old clothes and steered three skip loaders Thursday as curious and somewhat amused community members looked on.
>
> But their goal - to build three sand dikes or "berms" at the river mouth in an effort to half the flow of sewage from the Tijuana and Imperial Beach shore line - never came about.
>
> City officials agreed to a seven-day truce on any further diking actions after a hastily called meeting with federal wildlife officials.

The federal officials "pledged to make a thorough investigation of every facet of the problem and come back within one week with a concrete plan to resolve the problem," City Manager Larry Gridley said.

The meetings, which city officials say they have been seeking for months, came only after a heated confrontation between community members. Before council members could finish the first dike, three local residents who were not amused jumped atop the uncompleted dike in an effort to stop the city officials' actions.

Imperial beach residents Serge Dedina, Ben Holt and Jack Burns charged that council members were backing up the polluted water to kill the estuary wildlife so they could eventually build a marina.

Calling the council's actions "comic book politics," Dedina claimed the council members were acting illegally and irresponsibly in trying to resolve the sewage problem with simple solutions."

City officials claimed that an emergency permit to build the dikes was on its way from the Army Corps of Engineers based on an earlier phone conversation.

It later was learned that the permit had been denied and a letter confirming the denial was on its way instead.

Bilbray responded angrily that the pro testers could sit there all night, but that he would be back to complete the job.

As Bilbray drove off for another scoop ful of dirt and rocks, angry words were exchanged between the onlookers and the protesters, whose members had increased.

Bilbray returned with a determined look in his eyes and almost attempted to plow the protesters off their dirt mound into the water as some community members shouted their approval.

Instead, he dumped the dirt a couple of yards from the protesters' feet, then backed his machine away from the scene. At that point, tempers flared and a fistfight ensued, but was quickly stopped.

The confrontation did not end there, however. Bilbray soon returned with a scoopful of polluted water and dumped it on the group.

"You wanted polluted water? You got polluted water," Bilbray yelled. The group remained where it was - soaked and shivering in the morning haze. With no solution in sight, Imperial Beach resident Clinton Earles hopped aboard a skip loader and steered it toward the group.

Earles then dumped a pile of dirt and rocks just inches from the protesters, after holding the scoop close to their heads.

The protesters angrily left their mound, and police asked that everything stop until they could determine what to do.

It was at that point that Bilbray was told that a federal inspector had arrived on the scene. He told Wally Callan of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service that his "priority is to the life and children in the community."

"Where has Fish and Game been when the pollution has been going on for the last six months?" Bilbray yelled.

Local residents who had gathered around the mayor and Callan applauded and shouted their approval again. The discussion continued, while in the background, kazoo tunes were played by the members of the Whale and Sunset Watchers Kazoo Band.

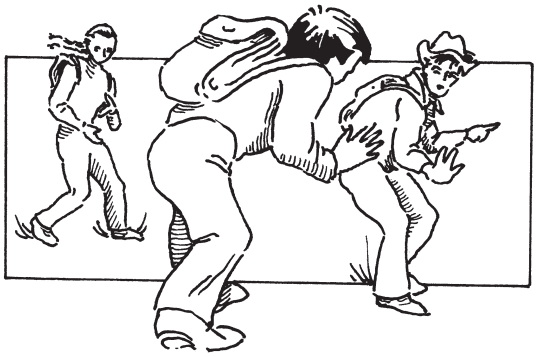
"I am asking you to stop until we can take a look at the whole situation," Callan said. He cited a section of the Fish and Game code, which says that

> any changes made in a river, stream or estuary where endangered species are located can be done only with approval of Fish and Game. Callan told the mayor he had the authority to order him to stop and arrest him if he refused. It did not come to that. (Shein, 1)

Sometimes short deadlines lead to errors. In this incident, as an example, the federal agency that arrived was the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Bilbray may or may not have yelled out about Fish and Game. The California Department of Fish and Game is not a federal agency and it is unlikely that Wally Callan would have referred to Fish and Game code. More likely, he would've referred to Fish and Wildlife Service code. It's important to remember, too, that at the time the public and reporters had briefer acquaintance with the environmental resource agencies and often confused the regulations under their purview. In this case, the federal Endangered Species Act covered the Light Footed Clapper Rail, which lives in the estuary; therefore the incident fell to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Poetry

The estuary is a wildlands through which many illegal immigrants have passed in their desperate flight to "el norte." Though incidents have decreased in recent years, the proximity to the border and vast differences between Mexico and the United States cannot be shed. They are scorched in the memories of anyone who has ever made the passage and in anyone who has ever found a beleaguered, sick, or even dead immigrant in the estuary. The passion of these frightful excursions into an uncertain future is perhaps most deeply remanded to poetry. Following is the final segment of Luis J. Rodriguez's poem, *Running to America.*



> Still they come,
> wandering bravely
> through the thickness
> of this strange land's
> maddening ambivalence.
> Their cries are singed
> with fires of hope
> their babies are born
> with a lion
> in their hearts.
>
> who can confine them?
> who can tell them
> which lines never to cross?
>
> For the green rivers,
> for their looted gold,
> escaping the blood of a land
> that threatens to drown them,
>
> they have come,
> running to America. (Rodriguez, 250)

Award-winning poet Luis J. Rodriguez has come a long way. He was born of Mexika/Raramuri indigenous descent in 1954 on the U.S./Mexico border, but his family soon moved to Los Angeles. A gang member at age 11 and drug user at 12, he was hooked on heroin by age 18 and at least 25 of his friends had been killed in barrio gang life. He faced a six-year prison sentence that members of the community rallied to shorten. When he got out, he committed to getting off drugs and hard work.

Rodriguez joined various community and political circles that helped him find a path out of violence, drugs and destruction. And

he became deeply embroiled in the Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 70s. By the time he was twenty-six, he began writing, first as a journalist, then as a poet. Work in prisons and juvenile detention homes, and as a union activist, led to his becoming editor of the *People's Tribune*, where he conducted an analysis of labor, the homeless, and the arts. Over the years, he has written in pursuit of justice and immigrant rights, as is evident in the poem, *Running to America*.

Today, Rodriguez is one of our country's leading Chicano writers and the recipient of many literary awards for poetry, fiction and children's literature. He is best known for his 1993 memoir of gang life, *Always Running: La Vida Loca*, *Gang Days in L.A.*, which he wrote for his son Ramiro as a cautionary tale. An international bestseller, it won the Carl Sandburg Literary Award and a Chicago Sun-Times Book Award. Luis and his wife Trini founded the League of Revolutionaries for a New America - an organization dedicated to the "comprehensive revolutionary education and activity vital for just and equitable social change in this country." Through his writing, travel and speaking engagements, Rodriguez has carried these messages throughout the world. He was one of 50 leaders worldwide selected as "Unsung Heroes of Compassion," presented by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

Conclusion

As is evident, even from these few literary selections, our estuary has meant vastly different things to many different people over time. It will continue to do so, both as a rich environmental resource and as an expanse of land in our community. Why not strive to understand and articulate its complexity and mutability yourself. You too will find words that describe your life and times.

Tonight we shall eat the assumptions of ourselves,
Or our house and where we are going.
Tonight we shall embark on the Floating Borderlands
Toward our liberation.

- Juan Felipe Herrrera (3)