

TURTLE POETRY

Editorial Introduction. — This section is devoted to poetry involving turtles, representing either reprinted previously published or new unpublished material. We encourage our readers to submit poetry or songs for consideration, either their own material or work by other authors. Poems may be submitted to Wallace J. Nichols, Coastal Conservation Foundation, P.O. Box 3621, Tucson, AZ 85722 or Anders G.J. Rhodin, Chelonian Research Foundation, 168 Goodrich Street, Lunenburg, MA 01462.

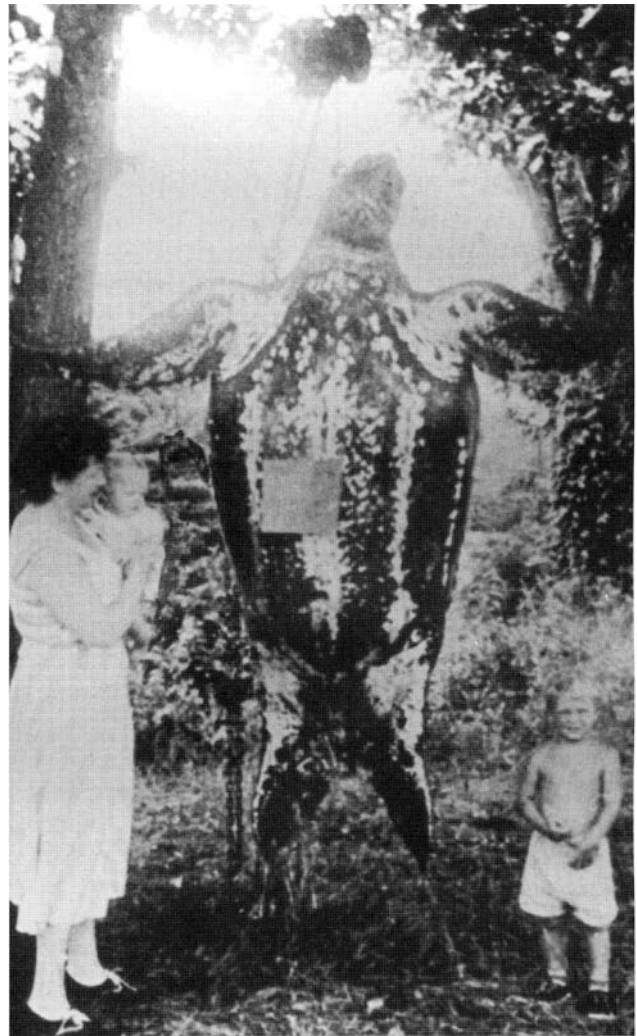
Our desire is to share with our readers the beauty and wonder of turtles as expressed through the art of the poem or song. In the sense that the relationship between man and turtles is multifaceted, so too is turtle poetry. The poems we publish here will reflect that complexity, from poems of pure admiration for the creatures themselves to others reflecting the utilization of turtles and their products. Some poems will reflect man's use of the turtle for sustenance, others will stress man's need to preserve and protect turtles. Some will deal with our emotional interactions with turtles, others will treat turtles light-heartedly or with seeming disrespect, but all will hopefully help us to better understand both the human and the chelonian condition, and remind us that the turtle holds a sacred place in all our hearts.

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Awakening

KEVIN GRIMES¹

Your fins they stretched so far
As blood ran down your side
From where they pierced you with their spear
It made me want to cry
Three days you hang there for all to see
A sacrifice from a raging sea
In my heart I sympathized
A living legend being crucified
In your shadow I stood beneath
In a picture taken of you and me
Without me knowing a seed was sown
As you hung so helpless and all alone
Many years later and many years lost
At war in my soul at a heavy cost
I needed hope and a will to live
Bankrupt inside nothing left to give
Broken in spirit with no hope in store
Alone and afraid knocking at death's door
I was going under in a different war
In the sea of addiction on a distant shore
Suddenly your memory returned
Alive in my heart it began to churn
With depth and weight it pulled at my core
As fate would have it I had to be sure
A spark turned into a burning desire
An inclination set my heart on fire
From a day long ago in a forgotten scene
Of that photograph of you and me
In my mind the dream had begun
The significance of what had to be done
I felt as though I'd known you for a million years
When I learned you were endangered
My eyes filled with tears
I saw that in preserving you
That in the process I might save myself too
I'd be your mentor I'd make your plea heard
If it took me to the ends of the world
So on goes the journey far into the night
The dream carries on that we both might have life
And I never could discount that fateful day
The winds of circumstance had blown our way



Editorial Comment. — This poem about a dead leatherback turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea*, was written for and about Chris Luginbuhl, founder of the David E. Luginbuhl Research Institute, a major supporter of leatherback research in general and this issue of *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* in particular. The photograph shows 4-year old Chris and the leatherback caught by a fishing boat off Long Island, New York, USA, in July 1951. Chris found inspiration and new dedication in his life as a result of re-awakening the memory of this event. He now works ardently to help save leatherbacks from extinction through his Institute's promotional campaign: Save The Leatherbacks, P.O. Box 263, Ellington, CT 06029 USA.

¹ Composed February 1991
Submitted by Chris Luginbuhl