

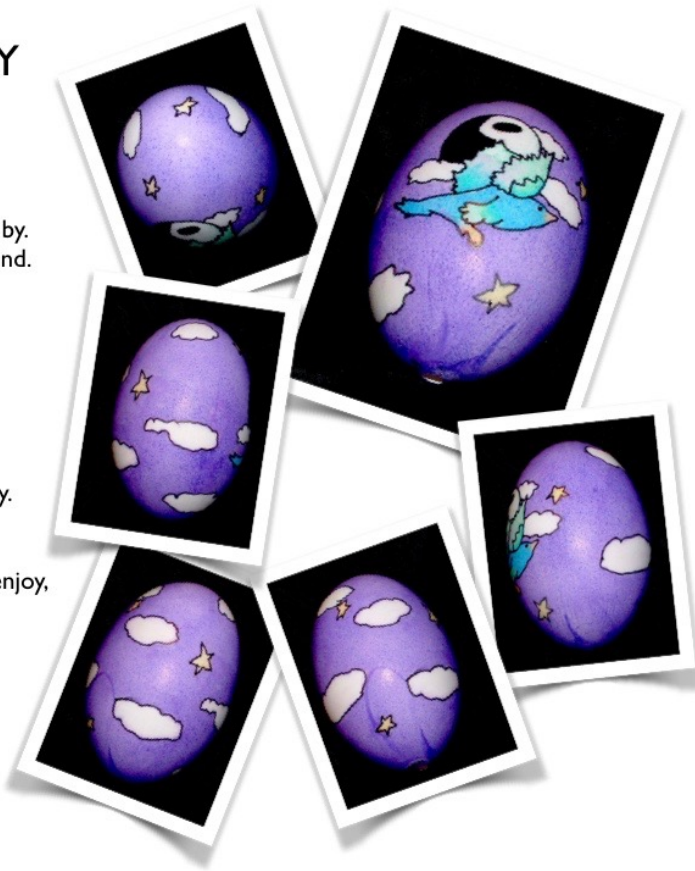
Why Eggs?

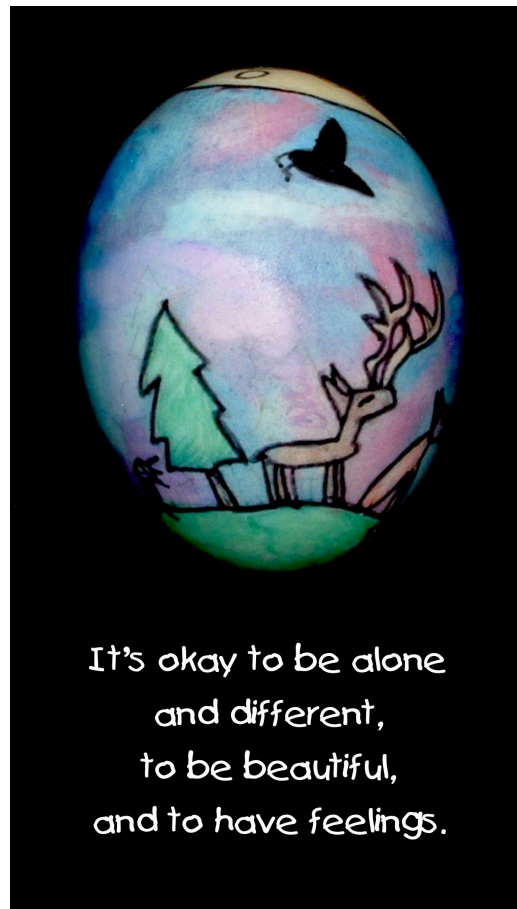
"Eggs are perfect to paint on when you are learning about things that can break. When you know that something is really fragile, you take care of it. When you see that the whole earth and everything in it can be fragile—well, you can imagine how that makes you feel. Maybe if we all cared for each other and the earth with our whole hearts, the world would be happy, and we could relax and enjoy it together."

—a third-grader after completing the Egg Painting Compassion Project

PEACEFUL NIGHT SKY

I am the yin and yang moon.
I gaze upon the purple sky.
I see the white clouds floating peacefully by.
I hear and feel the faint whisper of the wind.
I light the night sky like a flashlight.
I smell the bird flying by.
I taste the fresh air of the sky.
I see the friendly stars.
They help people find their way.
The bird has his wings spread far.
He glides on an updraft of wind.
He flies peacefully home after a long day.
I enjoy my life.
I get a great view. I have many friends.
Even though there are some parts I don't enjoy,
I make the most of it.
My message to the world is:
Enjoy your life the way it is.
No matter how bad it is,
there are always good days to enjoy
and remember.
I am the yin and yang moon.





The Egg Painting Compassion Project was designed with third and fourth graders in mind, although it has been adapted for children and adults of all ages. It consists of ten gentle lessons that help students focus, find their center, paint their own stories on eggshell canvases, and write poems with messages that can only be found in the body of their completed work, messages that might help the rest of us navigate our world.

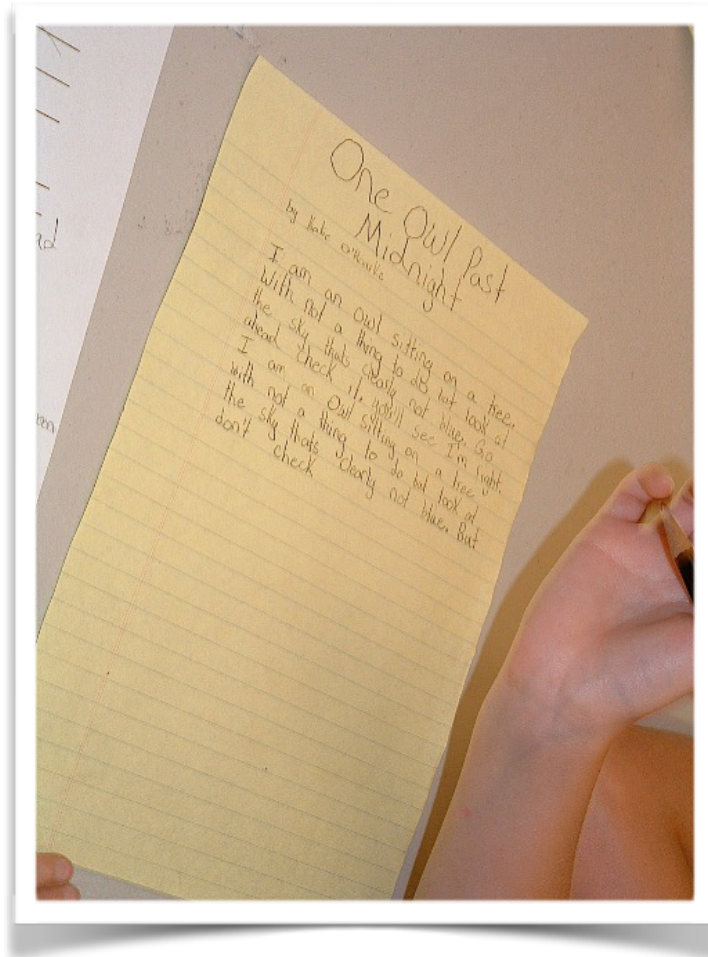
Building Concepts and Creating Art



A holistic exploration into the world of fragility, strength, and caring, The Egg Painting Compassion Project utilizes many Common Core Standards and addresses standards outlined in the Visual & Performing Arts Framework for California Public Education. During this ten-day program, students use empty eggshells as canvases for personal stories, write about their creations, and participate in professional-style poetry readings in front of engaged audiences. The work is intricate. It requires attention, commitment, resilience, and a great deal of care.

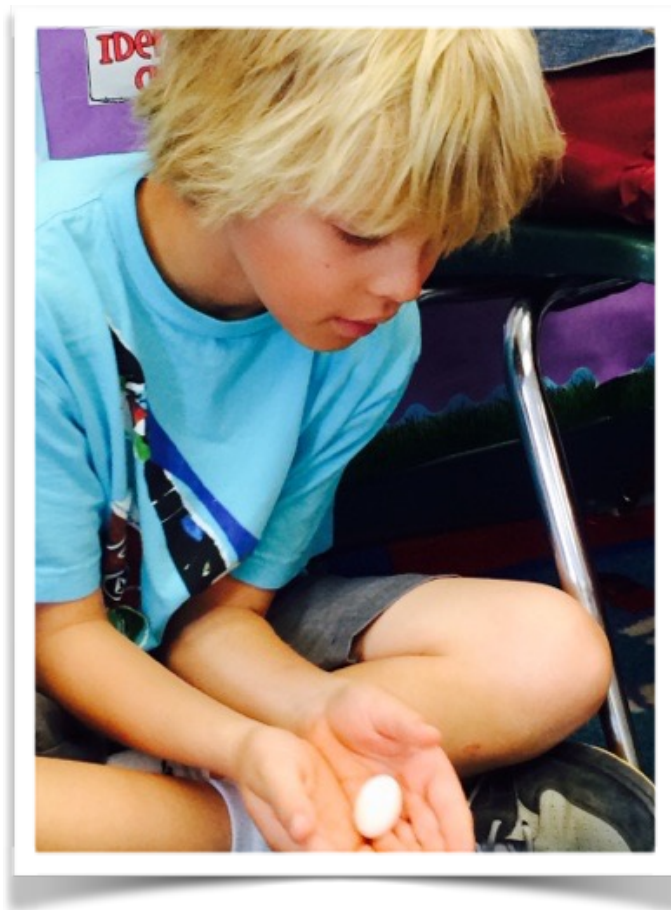


The process of painting on a three-dimensional, curved canvas is challenging. There are no true parallel lines on an eggshell. The background becomes the foreground when a student turns the egg. Proportions and perspectives distort. Unpredictable textures interfere with the way marker ink adheres to the surface, changing the value of colors. A scratch on the shell can cause an unintended division of space. These predicaments lead to countless problem-solving opportunities. Students learn breathing and sitting techniques to help them focus without becoming frustrated.



Writing poetry can also be hard. Inviting students to “become” something they’ve created on their eggs and write poems in that point of view helps them empathize with their chosen character, recognize their character’s needs, and translate those needs into a message that might be helpful to the world. In this process students learn that art and language are integrally connected. They are tools that can enhance the way we communicate with others.

Nurturing and kindness are keys to the success of this project. If students feel intimidated, they may pull back and no longer be open to learning or sharing. When they feel safe, are heard, and sense that they matter, they are more able to relate to themselves and each other with compassion, discernment, and care. This enables them to be okay with complex feelings, to respond with confidence, and to extend that same care to classmates. To foster this kind of ethical sensitivity in the classroom requires skill building. The Egg Painting Compassion Project provides opportunities to develop these skills.



SAVANNAH

I am the fennec fox.
 I'm sitting quietly in the grass
 watching a zebra eat the grass.
 It is ever so boring.
 It is like watching a sloth
 move from one place to another.
 By the zebra is a dead tree.
 It's like a graveyard, so creepy.
 I can see many things in my one spot.
 Close to me is a termite mound.
 It is ever so high.
 I think it touches the sky.
 I love my home.
 I hope it never goes away.
 My message to the world is:
 Be grateful for what you have
 or one day it will all be gone.
 I am the fennec fox.



Much has been written about rigor in the classroom. It is often associated with making tasks more difficult or instituting rigid rules. We see it as creating a supportive atmosphere where students look forward to class because what they are learning is relevant to their lives. This kind of rigor inspires students to create high quality work because they want to. The Egg Painting Compassion Project integrates behavioral science, storytelling, and the visual and performing arts with the cultivation of mindfulness and compassion to celebrate each student as a whole and vibrant person.

Ten Sequential Lessons in Two-Hour Sessions

Session One: Sharing Insights and Eggshells



We examine eggshells laid by a large variety of animals, from the ostrich to the African snail. We talk about the habitats, behavior, and survival skills of these animals. We discuss environmental hazards and extinction. We relate all this to our own vulnerabilities and talk about the courage it takes to turn kindness into acts of compassion for ourselves, each other, and the world.

Session Two: Storytelling



During the second session of this workshop, we talk about ways communication has changed throughout the ages. We discuss how storytelling began (before the first humans developed language) with images scraped and painted on rock walls. We discuss the ways stories now inform us, shape us, inspire us, even heal us. We engage in an oral storytelling session based on ancient traditions inspired by indigenous cultures. Finally we bring the discussion back to The Egg Painting Compassion Project and explore the idea of painting a personal story around the surface of an eggshell and writing a poem about it. How might this process inspire new ways to communicate?

Session Three: Practice Eggs



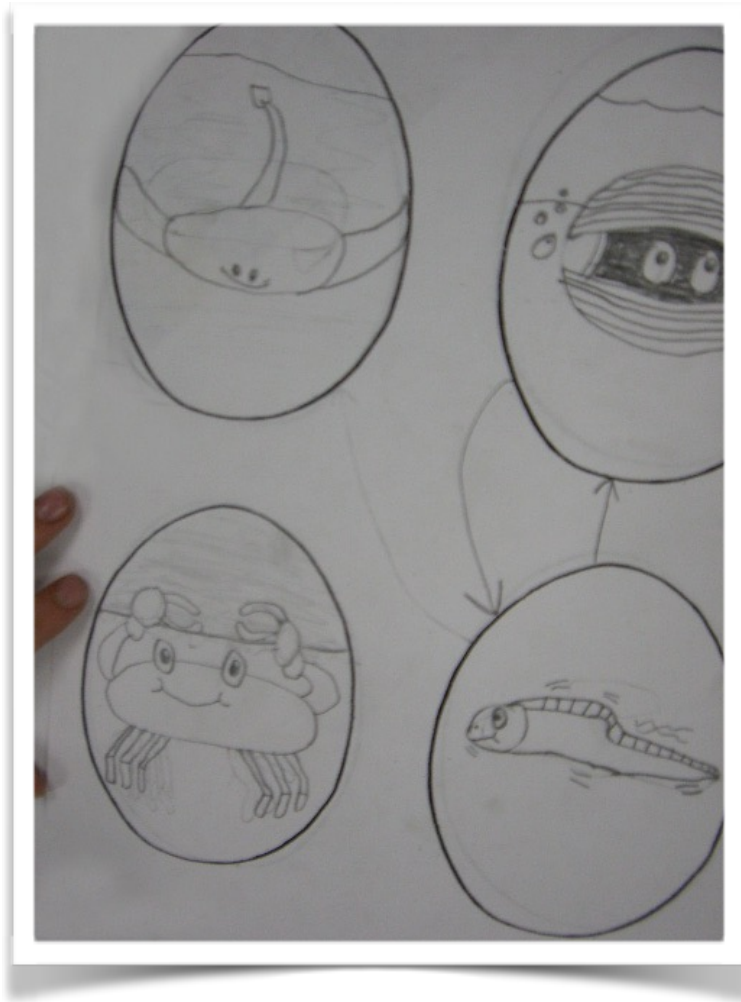
We make towel nests to keep the eggshells from rolling off the desks. If a practice egg breaks, this is an opportunity to think about what happened and how to prevent another egg from breaking. It also is an opportunity to pull out the membrane and observe how exposure to oxygen changes it from a semi-transparent film to an opaque, balloon-like consistency. Using the ink from everyday markers (markers are accessible to nearly everyone and are easy to work with), we experiment with colors and apply special blending techniques to make the marker inks look like watercolor paints. We learn about values, complimentary colors, positive and negative shapes, and contrasting colors for emphasis. We discover how to use tissues to create interesting effects. We paint abstract tie-dye eggs, special-effects eggs, rock-art eggs, and figurative storytelling eggs.

Session Four: Directed Drawing



In this session we complete several drawings together. We discover how a simple line can change an entire picture. We draw some more. We draw action. We draw stillness. We draw faces and bodies. We draw emotions. We discuss horizon lines. We draw floating characters and grounded characters. We draw until we feel like we might actually know what we're doing.

Session Five: Planning a Masterpiece Egg on Paper



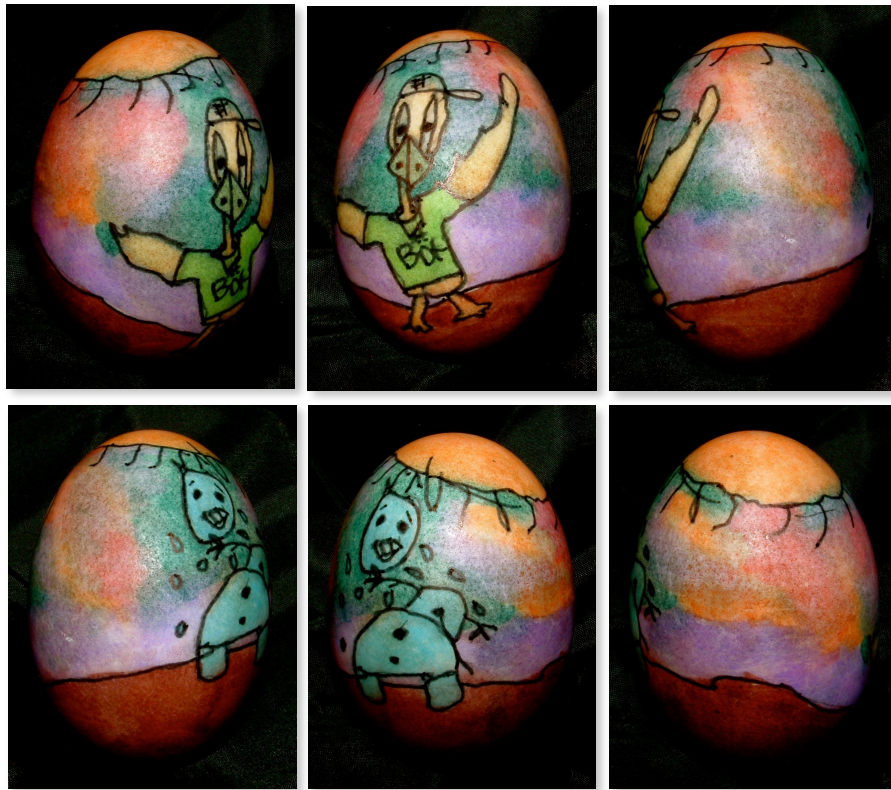
We discuss the difference between planning on a two-dimensional, flat sheet of paper and actually drawing on the three-dimensional, curved surface of an eggshell. We discuss similarities between eggs and globes, flat pieces of paper and maps. We create several maps of possible stories to paint on our masterpiece eggs.

Session Six: Starting a Masterpiece Egg

We go over a list of tips to keep the eggs safe. We talk about “making ends meet” and how to create 3-D effects. This is a day of intense problem-solving and focus as students complete their egg plans (maps) and draw on the unpredictable surfaces of eggshells.

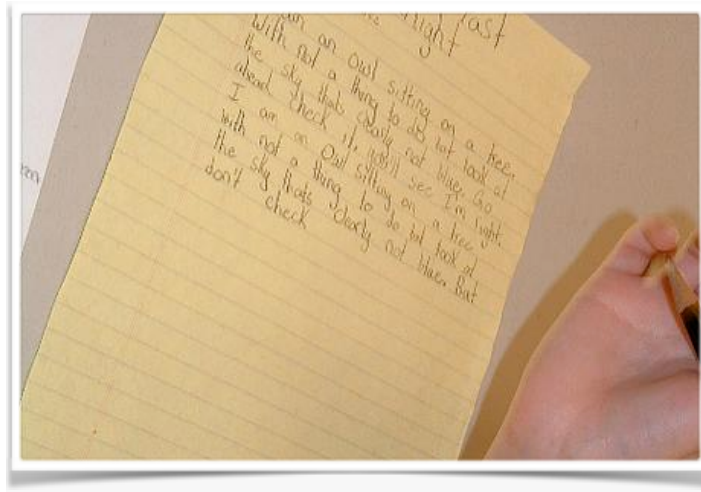


Session Seven: Completing a Masterpiece Egg

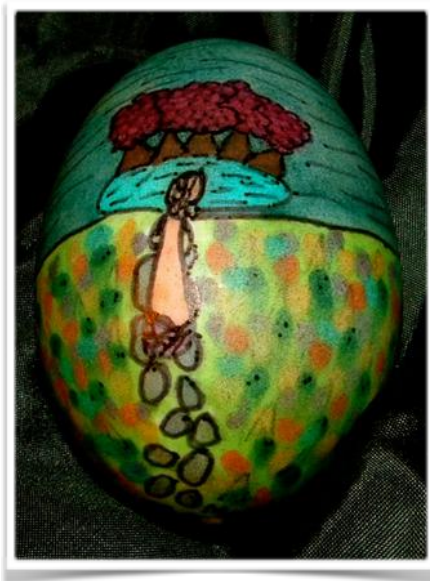


Session Seven can be exciting. This is the day where all previous work comes together. We review the techniques of making markers look like watercolor paint. We talk about mixing and blending colors. We discuss the concept of painting outside our comfort zones — it's okay to create a polka-dotted polar bear among lollipop trees. The sky doesn't have to be blue. It can embrace auroras and sunsets—it can even be tie-dye. The jet stream in an ocean can include an entire spectrum of color. We learn to create mood with lots of color or a few muted tones. A gray sky over a cityscape says as much as an orange sky over an erupting volcano. Every color, like every image, tells a story.

Session Eight: Writing Poetry

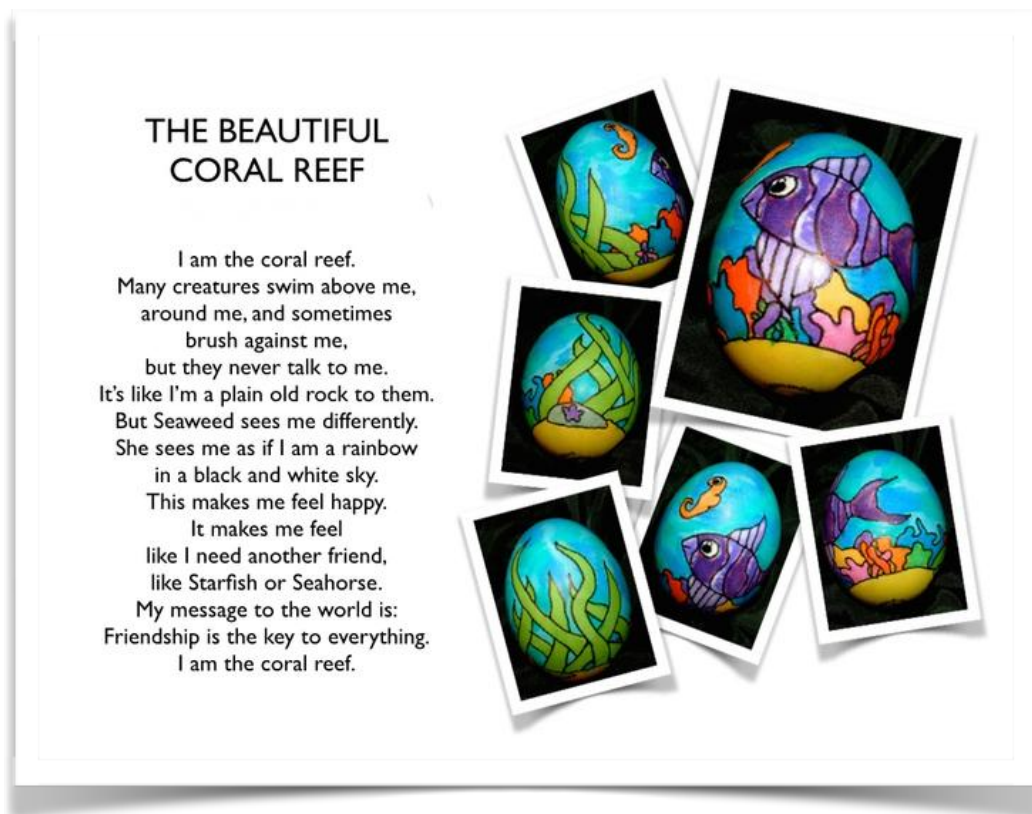


This is the dreaded poetry day. Students often hate the thought of having to write a single word, let alone a poem. This is where the power of storytelling can shine. Stories connect us, inspire us, fire our imaginations, and stir our passions. We are made of stories.



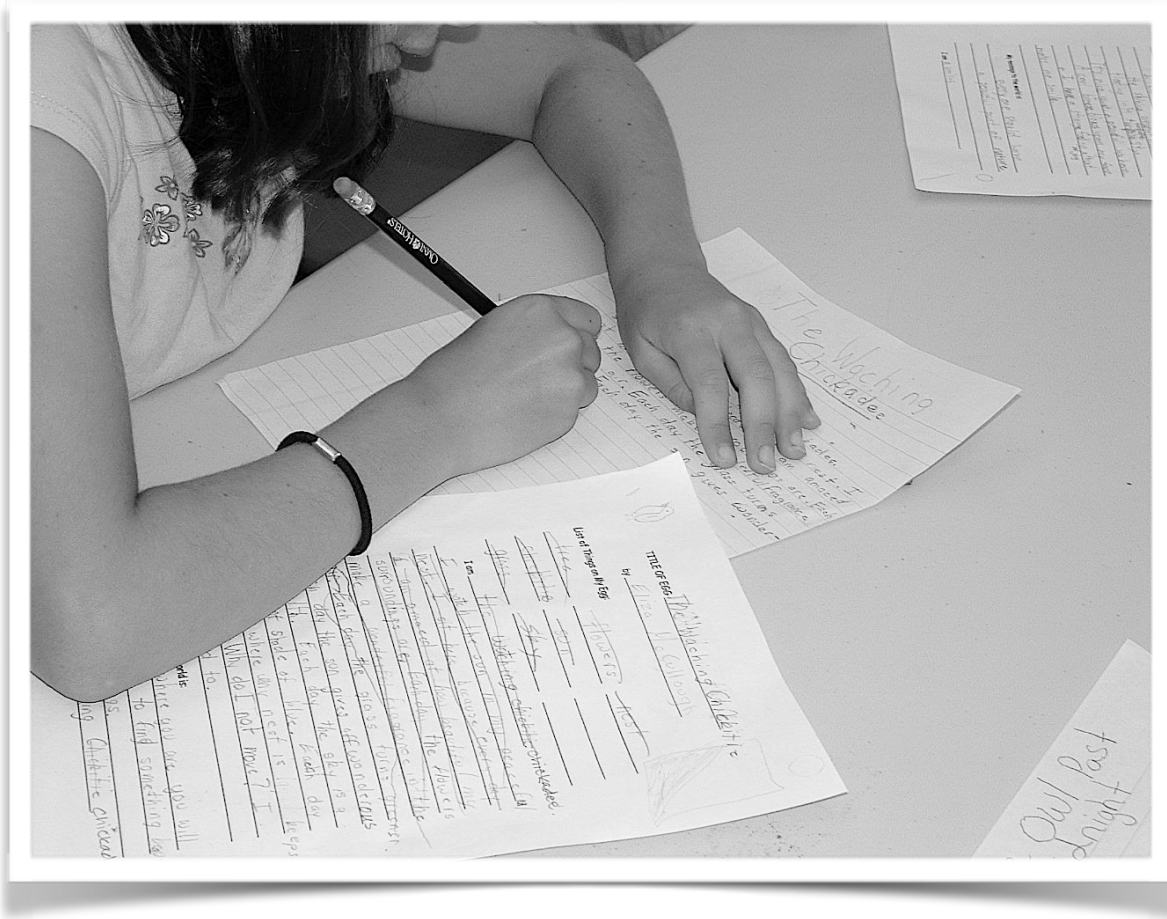
Before we begin, we talk about the differences between poetry and prose and the countless types of poems there are in the world. We discuss metaphors, similes, onomatopoeia, and alliteration. We talk about writer's block and using the five senses to find our way out of writer's block. We discuss tense and point of view. We talk about the importance of feelings and wishes and dreams and how they might lead to meaningful messages.

After a bit of coaching and following prompts, students write free-verse, narrative poems in the present tense using the point of view of something they've painted on their eggs. From that point of view and using that "voice," they show what is happening in the scene. They mention every detail painted on the egg. Each poem ends with a message to the world. The students won't know what the message is until they've written the poem. This is where the fun begins. It's a treasure hunt.



Empathy and compassion enter the picture. Students must listen to what their narrator is really trying to say. They have to intuit, interpret, and figure out what's going on in the heart and mind of their character. Then they have to translate the character's need or desire into a message or piece of advice that might be helpful for others and the world.

Session Nine: Editing Poetry



Editing and revision are often regarded as the most impactful part of the writing process. Here we discuss the importance of correcting spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. We also talk about similes, metaphors, and other ways to deepen the meaning of the poems.

Many students take their time editing and completing the final drafts of their poems, and it shows in their work.

Session Ten: Poetry Reading and Presentation



After creating a powerpoint presentation of all the finished poems and photos of the egg paintings, we discuss the art of professional poetry reading and what it takes to be an effective speaker as well as a good audience member. We talk about the nature of energy and how it relates to influence and power.

Each member of an audience holds a lot of power over a speaker. Through attentive body language and listening skills, an audience can give the speaker energy. That same audience can rob the speaker of energy by being distracted and not paying attention. A good audience can help a speaker excel. Even the most effective speaker can falter before a preoccupied group.

After a bit of practice, students read their poems aloud to the class. When we can, we arrange a more formal poetry reading for administrators, parents, family members, friends, and invited guests.



After the presentation, we discuss how to display and care for the masterpiece eggs. Each comes with a special egg stand. Smaller copies of the poems act as title cards. We go over a list of suggestions for keeping these fragile treasures safe in various locations and situations at home.

Again, we talk about courage — how it takes courage to follow through with a labor-intensive process without giving up — how it takes courage to do a good job — how it takes courage to be silent long enough to access our genius. By this time every student has demonstrated this courage.

A question and answer period sometimes follows, time permitting. Here we have an opportunity to discuss art careers, a professional artist's process, and how this process not only relates to other forms of art (music, dance, theatre, etc.), but to other professions and lifestyles as well. We discuss the roles of galleries and museums, publications and performances, how art and artists have affected our lives, and how The Egg Painting Compassion Project has changed the way we look at art, ourselves, each other, and the world around us.

LOST IN SPACE

I am the astronaut floating in space.
I am floating around in this big, purple mass.
Earth is far, far behind.
The sun and the moon are floating as well.
They feel different emotions.
There is very little color here,
except for the small, small planets.
I see my space station off in the distance,
as if with no purpose.
I am as scared as a gazelle
getting chased by a lion.
It smells foggy.
I wish I was not here.
My message to the world is:
Be brave, have courage,
and keep on going.
I am the astronaut floating in space.



We return to a discussion about the art of caring and compassion and how these qualities might help us reach our full potential in life, regardless of the path we choose.

THE MAGICAL BEAR

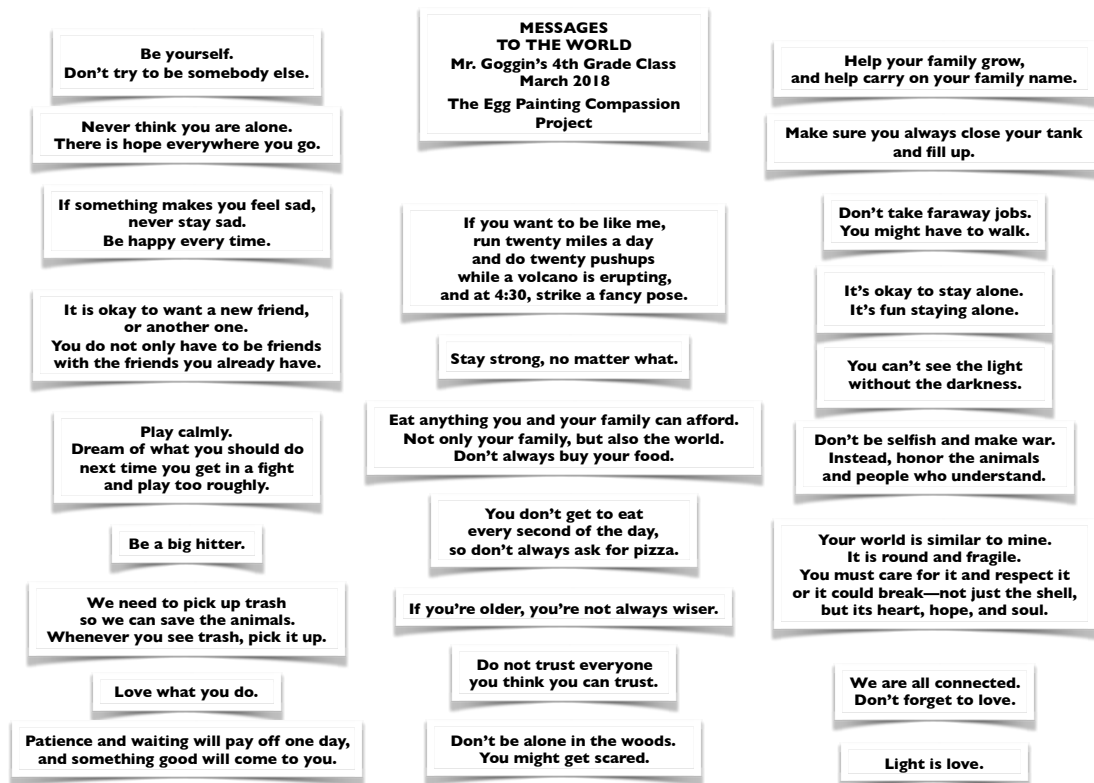
I am a magical bear, as magical as a rainbow.
I'm in Africa, and I'm walking to my magical place.
There is no one with me
because they think I'm mean.
I think it is because I do magic, and I'm a bear.
But I don't care.
I'm still walking to my magical place.
I can see a human.
I'm really scared of humans,
and they are really scared of me.
On my way to my house, my magical place,
I always see humans rock climbing.
I always hear them saying,
"Be quiet!"
The bear is going to attack us!"
My message to the world is:
Be kind to everyone,
no matter where they are from.
I am a magical bear, as magical as a rainbow.



Found Poems

Found poems take existing words, phrases, or sentences and rearrange them as poems. Like collages, found poems are often made from newspaper articles, street signs, graffiti, speeches, letters, or even other poems. A true found poem contains text that remains as it was found. Decisions of form, such as where to break a line, are left to the poet.

At the end of The Egg Painting Project, we create and share a found poem using all the messages from poems the students have written in their class during this program. Each line is a message from a different child's poem. The length of the found poem is determined by the size of the class. These found poems often reflect the personality of the class as a whole.





As human beings, we are a lot like eggs. We are fragile yet strong. We are bursting with life. We have a multitude of stories to share.

Eggs

Cathee showed us an egg from a quail
and one from a pinosur with quite a long tail
then she gave us a look
of some pictures she took!

cathee had lots to tell
we where under her spell
then showed us how to make a nest
it was so quiet it felt like a test

she tught us to draw
there was lots that I saw
cathee was great
she helped us creat a project we will always appreciate

Responses from Students

Three to two weeks ago Cathee
past eggs around there were eggs
as big as dinosaur eggs to Africa Snail
eggs. The egg I liked most was the
dinosaur egg. The next day Cathee
told us storys. We would pick up a bag
and Cathee would take something
out and she would tell us a story
about it. The next day Cathee
showed us how to draw animals and castles.
My favorite animal I drewed was
the frog. The next day we planed
our eggs and I made Superman
on one side and a monkey on the
other. Then we did a poetry about
are egg. Then finally we presented our
egg.

I had fun.
Thank you Cathee.

I enjoyed the three dazzling weeks of cool eggs and drawings. If I were to rate the egg work shop I'd rate it 100 percent. There was story telling, drawing lessons and and egg painting and poetry. A lot of interesting things that the future generations will remember for the rest of their lives. Cathee St. Clair's egg work shop is so fascinating majestic and wonderful that I am anyone will love.

I really enjoy doing eggs in 4th grade. On the 1st day we shared eggs, the smallest egg is a african snail. On the 2nd day Kathy told us stories my favorite one is anansi. I also did learned how to plan an egg and how to hold it. On the 5th day we did our own poems about our eggs. On the 6th day we shared our poems and overall it's an amazing experience.

These eggs are amazing
 this was really fun first we did
 story telling such as The Hat
 Man and Enari. Next we learned
 to draw cool designs like
 a dragon and a castle. Then we planned
 and made our eggs it was
 so exciting!! we also wrote
 poetry mine is about a cat. Then after
 that we presented them in Mrs. Strayer
 class

Thank you for coming
 and showing us the
 eggs and telling us
 the story. I also
 liked painting the eggs
 and then showing them
 off for the little kids.
 I like the most is look-
 ing at the eggs that
 the birds laid.

I love my egg and I couldn't
do it without you and I
loved the egg Shering. The eggs
felt smooth and amazing it was
so fascinating. I also liked
to learn to draw, I learned how
to draw so many new things it
was extraordinary. And one
of my very favorites was
the presentation because I wanted
to tell all my friends for so
long. Once again thank you
so much my egg would of
looked horrible if it wasn't
for you. Thank you.

I am going to talk about my egg. I think my egg very cool and awesome. When Cathee shared the eggs with us my favorite part was seeing the smallest egg and it was a snail egg. It was very cool and it was amazing. Also my favorite story was the one about Anatsi the Jamaican spider. When we learned to draw the dragon and the castle that was so awesome. When we did our poetry it took me a long time for me to come up with but when it was done it was very meaningful. And finally the presentation, I had a lot of butterflies in my stomach and I was nervous but when I finished I felt really good. I want to thank Cathee St. Clair for all the help.

I loved doing the eggs it was very touching. First, I got to hold eggs. Next, I story telling I listened to a lot of stories. Then, we learned how to draw a camel and a dragon. then we started our eggs. Finally, I wrote a story and I had a presentation. My favorite part was doing the eggs.

My favorite part of egg painting was the presentation. I liked the presentation because some of the eggs were very extraordinary. The messages were interesting and some were touching. All the kids that participated put 100 percent in their egg. I really enjoyed egg painting with Miss Cathey.

In our class we did this extraordinary egg painting with Mrs. Cathee. Egg painting is VERY exciting, especially with Cathee.

Cathee does not just do egg painting she also tells amazing stories. I've never heard someone tell a story as good as Cathee. I really enjoyed Cathee's drawings, They were amazing! My favorite drawing was a dragon, That is how I got an idea of painting a dragon on my egg.

On the first day that Cathee came in she brought all different kinds of eggs, some of them we got to hold, The most interesting egg I think was the oastregge egg!

After you are done painting the eggs you get to write a poem about your eggs. I think egg painting with Cathee is one of the most funest thing I have ever done in school!

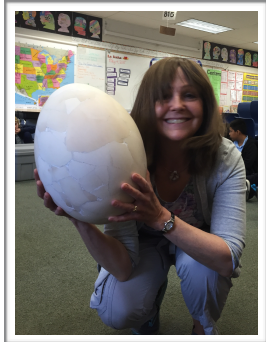
ni Thank You Mrs. Roberts for
letting Cathy come in. Thank you
Cathy for teaching us to draw and
make eggs and thank you Victoria for
helping me draw the monkey.
Cathy and Victoria are good at
drawing. Thank you for letting us
hold the different kind of eggs.
The stories were fantastic. My
favorite stories were the hat man.
He is very nice. Thank you for helping
me draw. I loved when you show us how
to draw. My favorite thing to draw
was all the animals their so simple.
Thank you for showing us how
to draw. You are wonderful at
drawing. I had fun planing out the
egg. You are good at teaching kids
how to draw and how to make
marker look like paint and the
swirls in the marker. You are
also so wonderful at doing
that. Thank you for teaching

us how to do poetry. Now were learning more about poetry in school. You are good and wonder-
 full at teaching us how to do poetry. And now im better at doing poetry. And the last one. The presentation was fun really fun. I like doing presentations. I also like reading. You are so nice and awesome.
 Thank You!

I really liked doing the egg paintings. If I rate it 1 out of 10 I give it a 10. Some of my favorite things we did is story telling, painting our eggs and telling the poem. Now that I know how to do it I mite do it at home. I also now I learned how to draw cooler things. I also had fun listening to other peoples poems and messages. Finally thanks Mrs. Roberts and Mrs. Cathee.

Dear Mrs Robert's, We had a very fun 3 weeks in egg work, Cathel (the egg lady) came and showed us some amazing egg's from Dinosaurs to humming bird egg's. Day 2, Cathel told us some really interesting story's, my favorite story was the Spider from jumaka, No one has ever told me a story like that before, it was really amazing how she knew all six or five story's, that was really really cool. Day 3 On day three we leared how to Draw dragons, castles, cows, bunnies, and Frogs, they looked really hard to draw, but with Cathel it was easy step by step. Day 4, On day four, we leared how to blow out the egg's, it was sooper sooper cool, all of the yellow slime came pouring out,, I saw this thing that was twisty and I made scarabed egg's for my dogs. Day 5 On day five we leared how to write poetry / and every thing. Day 6 On day six was writing poetry and giving presentation's it was really cool Cathel is the best art teacher I ever had!

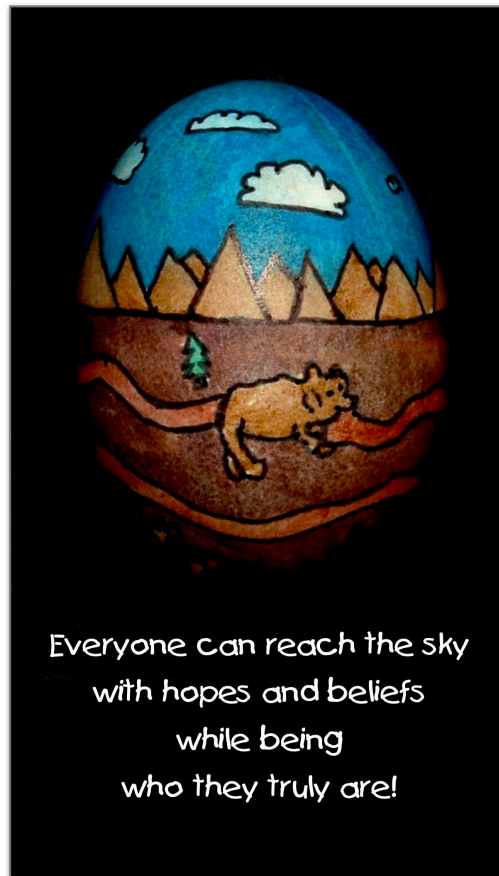
About “The Egg Lady” Behind the Scenes



Cathee vanRossem-St.Clair is a miniaturist who has earned national and international recognition for her paintings on eggshells. She began her art career in 1974 and won the highest award in New York City's first Women In Design International Competition in 1981. Since then she has been featured in *The Artist's Magazine*, a national art publication that referred to her as “one of ten artists we can't forget” and has been nominated for the *American Artist Magazine*

Achievement Award for her lifetime work as an artist. She has been invited to showcase her work in special exhibitions in the Performing Arts Center of Cincinnati, Ohio, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Santa Rosa, California, and the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, Nevada. Her art has been featured in solo exhibits in galleries throughout the country and continues to be commissioned by art collectors in the United States, Europe, and New Zealand. One of her painted eggs, commissioned by The White House, is now in the National Archives.

Cathee was one of ten artists selected to participate in collaboration between the California Arts Council and the California Arts Project to teach inner-city students about the relationship between fragility and caring in her Egg Painting Compassion Project. Since 1988 she has been offering this program to third and fourth graders in the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District and has worked with two generations of children (over 10,000 young minds and hearts). In 1999 The Rotary Club of Tahoe City named her an honorary Paul Harris Fellow for her artistic service to the community. Cathee vanRossem-St.Clair is also a storyteller, an alumna of the prestigious Squaw Valley Community of Writers, and has been invited as a guest to teach storytelling at the University of Nevada Reno and the Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village. She has been a returning artist, storyteller, and poet in Trails and Vistas, a Tahoe/Truckee art hike designed to create experiences of art in nature that inspire environmental awareness. In North Lake Tahoe she is simply known as “The Egg Lady.”



Everyone can reach the sky
with hopes and beliefs
while being
who they truly are!

The Egg Painting Compassion Project

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The Egg Painting Compassion Project
was created in 1987
by Cathee vanRossem-St.Clair.
Thank you for helping
to keep this program alive.

www.compassioneggs.com

**Please donate if you can:
[gofundme.com/egg-painting-
compassion-project](https://gofundme.com/egg-painting-compassion-project)**