

## Novel Resource #5

Book: Tour America: A Journey Through Poems and Art

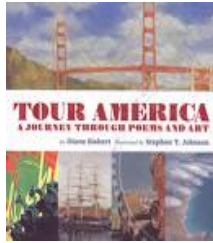
Author: Diane Siebert

Illustrator: Stephen T. Johnson

Publisher: Chronicle Books LLC

Copyright Year: 2006

*Young Hoosier Book Award Nominee*



*Genre:* Poetry

*Themes:* Twenty six poems about twenty six different sites around America.

*Point of View:* Third person (told by narrator)

*Main Characters:* N/A

*Setting:* Each poem has a different location:

- \* Margate, New Jersey
- \* Massachusetts
- \* New York
- \* St. Louis, Missouri
- \* Bemidji, Minnesota
- \* South Dakota
- \* Utah
- \* Washington
- \* California
- \* Nevada
- \* Texas
- \* Florida (2 sites)
- \* Washington, D.C.
- \* New York City
- \* New Hampshire
- \* Louisville, Kentucky
- \* Chicago, Illinois
- \* Wyoming
- \* South Dakota
- \* Alaska
- \* Gold Hill, Oregon
- \* Nevada
- \* New Mexico
- \* Oklahoma
- \* North Carolina

*Conflict:* N/A

*Resolution:* N/A

*Interest Level:* Grades 5 and up

*Reading Level:* Ages 9-12 (Grades 3-6)

Kristin Watson

Westlake Elementary

[Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us](mailto:Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us)

*(Book talk)*

Have you ever traveled or been on vacation before? Do you have wonderful memories of the place or places you've been? In Tour America: A Journey through Poems and Art you will get an idea of the memories made in twenty six different sites. You could even get a taste for sites you may want to visit yourself. What is the mystery of the Vortex in Oregon? I wonder what it would be like to see Niagara Falls in New York. I've always wondered what the Kentucky Derby would be like. All of these wonders, questions, and thought are answered right here in these twenty six poems and the facts given about each place. Read on to see what glorious sites you may want to make your own memories from.

*(Annotation)*

Diane Siebert writes twenty six wonderful poems about sites visited around America. She uses rich word choice to describe the site in order for the reader to capture every aspect. Along with the poem, she has included a brief set of facts about each place. She leaves the reader wanting to visit the site on his/her next vacation. To enhance the poetry, Stephen T. Johnson illustrates the scenes in an amazing way. Each painting shows the beauty of each place. The paintings partner with the poems to capture the reader and give him/her the full effect of truly being in that place.

*About the Author: Diane Siebert*



Publisher's Page: <http://www.chroniclebooks.com>

Interesting Facts/Background:

- ❖ Took a ten year trip around America with her husband to write these poems
- ❖ This is just a few of her favorite sites
- ❖ Lives in central Oregon (Crooked River Ranch), on the east slope of the Cascades
- ❖ Her house is powered by wind and solar energy
- ❖ Her work has been selected for the ALA Booklist Editor's Choice, School Library Journal Best Books of the Year, and IRA Teacher's Choice lists.

Other Books Published:

Truck Song (also written on her 10 year trip)

Sierra (also written on her 10 year trip)

Mojave

## Discussion Questions

### Pre-reading:

- ❖ What are some of the places that you have traveled to?
- ❖ Where are some of the places you would like to travel?
- ❖ Can you name any famous or popular sites around America?

### During reading:

(pages 1-2) What do you think the author's purpose was for putting *American Towns* at the beginning of this book?

(page 2) What city is introduced at the end of the poem?

(page 4) What does this giant landmark look like?

(page 4) What is the giant elephant made of?

(page 5) Where do gargoyles sit?

(page 5) What is the original purpose of a gargoyle?

(page 7) What is the USS Constitution?

(page 7) Who helped to make the ship?

(pages 9-10) Is the weather like most mountain ranges?

(page 10) How have many hikers died on Mount Washington?

(page 11) When light hits the Niagara Falls, what happens?

(page 14) What is the Kentucky Derby?

(page 15) What was the role of St. Louis during the great migration?

(pages 15-16) What is the Gateway Arch made of?

(page 17) What is the EI?

(pages 17-18) Where are some of the places the EI can take you?

(page 19) Who are these statues of?

(page 19) What is the lesson taught in this poem?

Kristin Watson

Westlake Elementary

[Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us](mailto:Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us)

(page 20) What is Old Faithful?

(page 20) Where is it located in Wyoming?

(pages 21-22) What is the land like at the Badlands?

(page 22) Who gave it that name?

(page 24) How did the mountainside get this way?

(page 24) Who do the faces belong to?

(page 25) How is this lake comparable to the ocean?

(pages 27-28) Where can you see this amazing sight?

(page 28) How is this sight scientifically possible?

(page 29) What is Mount Saint Helens?

(page 30) What is the mystery that happens on the hillside in Oregon?

(page 31) What color is the Golden Gate Bridge?

(page 31) What goes under the bridge?

(page 33) What are Bristlecone Pines?

(page 33) How old was the oldest tree on earth?

(page 35) What do people lose in Las Vegas?

(page 35) How are people tricked in Las Vegas?

(page 37) What is thought to have appeared in Roswell?

(page 37) Why isn't there any evidence?

(page 39) What is planted in the ground at Cadillac Ranch?

(page 39) Whose idea was this?

(page 42) Who used to live in the Tallgrass Prairie?

(page 42) What animals live there?

(page 43) What is the problem with the Everglades?

Kristin Watson

Westlake Elementary

[Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us](mailto:Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us)

(Page 43) What kinds of animals live in the Everglades?

(page 45) Who are the people mentioned in this poem?

(page 45) What is the place on Cape Canaveral?

(page 48) What is the job of the lighthouse?

(page 49) What does the Washington Monument stand for?

(page 49) Where is it located?

Post-reading:

- ❖ Now that you've read the poems, which places would you like to visit?
- ❖ Have you already been to any of these places?
- ❖ What was your favorite poem? Why?

### Vocabulary List

(page 1) perched: a resting place

(page 1) hydro: water

(page 1) peculiar: unique; special

(page 1) roulette: a gambling game

(page 4) prospective: looking to the future

(page 4) pachyderm: a large hoofed animal like an elephant

(page 4) demolition: destruction of something

(page 5) gargoyles: a waterspout shaped like an animal

(page 5) demonic: like a demon; evil

(page 7) sheathing: a waterproof inner covering

(page 7) frigate: a fast, medium size warship

(page 7) undaunted: not hesitating because of fear

(page 7) plight: an awkward or dangerous situation

(page 9) deceptive: intended to deceive

(page 9) entice: to attract by offering a reward

(page 10) hypothermia: a below normal body temperature

(page 11) frothy: foamy

(page 14) derby: a race for horses

(page 14) homage: something done to show respect or honor

(page 14) vying: that completes

Kristin Watson

Westlake Elementary

[Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us](mailto:Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us)

(page 15) crest: the highest point  
(page 15) silhouette: an outline of a person or thing  
(page 17) turnstile: a post allowing one person to enter at a time  
(page 20) cache: anything stored or hidden  
(page 20) geysers: a small spring with boiling water and steam  
(page 21) silt: sediment being moved by water  
(page 22) basin: a container for holding water  
(page 24) granite: a very hard igneous rock (gray to pink in color)  
(page 24) immense: very large  
(page 25) briny: very salty  
(page 25) arid: dry  
(page 25) larvae: the immature stage of an animal's life  
(page 25) brine: water full of salt  
(page 27) celestial: in the sky  
(page 28) phenomenon: an event comparing to the eclipse  
(page 29) obliterated: to wear out  
(page 29) plume: a large feather  
(page 30) vortex: an activity that involves a whirl  
(page 30) awry: not straight  
(page 30) stupefies: to amaze  
(page 30) hoax: a trick  
(page 31) resonate: to be resonant  
(page 33) mystique: a mysterious feeling  
(page 33) gnarled: knotted and twisted  
(page 35) oasis: fertile place in the desert  
(page 37) debris: broken pieces of stone, wood, or glass  
(page 37) emphatically: trying to understand another's emotions  
(page 42) remnant: what is left over  
(page 43) cypress: evergreen trees  
(page 43) egrets: a heron  
(page 43) terrains: ground  
(page 45) persevere: to continue in effort  
(page 45) ignition: catching on fire  
(page 48) sentinel: to guard or watch over  
(page 48) beacon: a signal for warning  
(page 49) obelisk: a tall four-sided stone pillar

## Read-Aloud Passages

### Passage 1: (Page 30) *Vortex*

I chose this poem to share because it is so mysterious. Children get into the mystery of situations, and I think they would find the Vortex an interesting place.

### Passage 2: (Page 35) *Las Vegas*

I chose this poem because Las Vegas is my favorite place to go visit. When I am reading something to my students, they really enjoy when I am able to make my own connection with it. They love to hear their teacher's personal experiences.

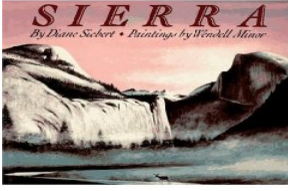
### Passage 3: (Page 49) *The Washington Monument*

I chose this poem because I don't think a lot of children get to hear about this monument. Because it is a symbol of our country's freedom, I think they should at least know it exists and why.

## Anticipation Statements

<b><u>Before</u></b> <b>True/False</b> What do you think?	<b><u>Anticipation Statement</u></b>	<b><u>After</u></b> Were you correct? Why or why not?
	There are only twenty six tourist attractions in America.	
	Every tourist attraction in America is part of a state or national park.	
	All tourist attractions are made by nature only.	
	Every state can only have one famous tourist attraction.	
	Every tourist attraction in America is full of excitement.	

If you enjoyed reading Tour America: A Journey Through Poems and Art,  
you'll love reading...



Sierra By: Diane Siebert

Like Tour America, this book is poetry about America's beautiful landscapes, especially the Sierra.



Mojave By: Diane Siebert

Like Tour America, this book is poetry about America's beautiful deserts, mostly the Mojave.



My America: A Poetry Atlas of the United States

By: Lee Bennett Hopkins

This is another book of poems about different places around America. Each poem is about a different place, where it's located, and what it looks like.



Hand-in-Hand: An American History Through Poetry

By: Lee Bennett Hopkins

This book is a full of poems about the history of diversity we have had here in America.

Kristin Watson

Westlake Elementary

[Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us](mailto:Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us)

## Indiana State Standards: Language Arts

Grade 3: 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.6, 3.1.7, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.8, 3.3.1, 3.3.4, 3.3.5

Grade 4: 4.1.1, 4.1.3, 4.1.7, 4.2.2, 4.2.3

Grade 5: 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.6, 5.2.1, 5.2.4, 5.2.5, 5.3.1

Grade 6: 6.1.1, 6.1.4, 6.2.7, 6.2.8, 6.3.1, 6.3.4

### Across the Curriculum Connections

#### Activity #1: Art

- ❖ Students will create a picture (after hearing the poems from Tour America—without seeing the paintings) that portrays the feelings, connections, and visuals the students had while listening to the poem.

Materials needed:

- Drawing paper
- Pencils, crayons, and/or markers

Art Standards:

Grade 3: 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.7.2, 3.12.1

Grade 4: 4.3.2, 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.7.2, 4.7.3, 4.12.2

Grade 5: 5.1.3, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.7.1, 5.7.2

Grade 6: 6.3.2, 6.6.2, 6.7.1, 6.7.2

#### Activity #2: Geography

- ❖ Students will use a map of the United States to identify where on the map each of these poems took place. The students can write the name of the site on that map.

Materials needed:

- United States map
- Pencil

Geography Standards:

Grade 3: 3.3.1, 3.3.5, 3.3.8

Grade 4: 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 4.3.11

Grade 5: 5.3.2, 5.3.3

Grade 6: 6.3.3, 6.3.5

Kristin Watson

Westlake Elementary

[Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us](mailto:Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us)

## Resources to Supplement Activities

Kentucky Derby 134. 1 May 2008. Churchill Downs Incorporated.  
<http://kentuckyderby.com/2008>

\*A website about the Kentucky Derby. It even has a video to watch a clip of a derby.

Washington Monument. 16 June 2008. National Park Service.  
<http://www.nps.gov/wamo/>

\*A government website about the Washington Monument. It gives details, history, and photos about the monument.

## Book Activities

Activity #1: Partner Assignment (leads into activity 2)

Step 1: Read at least five (5 or more) poems from the book Tour America: A Journey Through Poems and Art. Both partners should read these poems together.

Step 2: On a piece of paper, list the poems that you chose to read and compare.

Step 3: Make a list of three or more similarities between the poems you read. (Write each down on a piece of paper.)

Step 4: Make a list of two or more differences between the poems you read. (Write these down on the back of the same piece of paper.)

Step 5: Each person should pick one of the poems that you read. Have the other partner reread your poem to you while you close your eyes. While your partner is reading, you should be picturing what is happening. When the poem is over, draw what you saw happening on a separate sheet of paper. (Each partner will be drawing a different picture.)

Step 6: Between the two students, you now have three pieces of paper. Turn them in together with your names at the top.

Standards: English/Language Arts

Grade 3: 3.2.2, 3.2.7, 3.3.1, 3.3.5

Grade 4: 4.2.2, 4.2.7, 4.3.1, 4.3.3

Grade 5: 5.2.4, 5.2.6, 5.3.1, 5.3.3, 5.3.5

Kristin Watson

Westlake Elementary

[Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us](mailto:Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us)

## Activity #2 (Part 2): Individual Assignment

Step 1: Think of your favorite place. Choose a place that gives you the most vivid memories. (It doesn't have to be someplace out-of-state.)

Step 2: Brainstorm some of the memories and details that make this your favorite place.

Step 3: Reread the five poems you chose from Tour America: A Journey Through Poems and Art.

Step 4: Write your own poem about your favorite place.

### Rules to Remember:

- Include details that will help the reader visualize your place. Think about what helped you visualize what you illustrated in assignment one.
- Use your compare/contrast list to help guide your creativity and form.
- Your details need to make sense. Look at your brainstorming page to help guide you.
- Grammar and punctuation must be used correctly.

Step 5: Make revisions/corrections to your poem after rereading and having a peer editor reread it.

Step 6: Make sure that your final draft is done in a presentable style. It may be typed or handwritten, but it must be presentable!

### Standards: English/Language Arts

Grade 3: 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.5, 3.4.6, 3.4.7, 3.4.8, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.6, 3.6.7, 3.6.8

Grade 4: 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.4, 4.4.9, 4.4.10, 4.4.11, 4.4.12, 4.5.5, 4.6.1, 4.6.3, 4.6.4, 4.6.5, 4.6.8

Grade 5: 5.4.1, 5.4.11, 5.4.8, 5.4.9, 5.4.10, 5.5.5, 5.6.8, 5.6.4, 5.6.6, 5.6.7

Kristin Watson

Westlake Elementary

[Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us](mailto:Kristin.watson@wayne.k12.in.us)

## My Informal Bibliography

Book reference: <http://amazon.com>

Indiana Department of Education (Standards) Website:  
<http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/standards/welcome.html>

Dictionary:

"Michael Agnes." Webster's New World College Dictionary. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1999

Author's Biography:

[http://www.harpercollins.com/authors/12728/Diane\\_Siebert/index.aspx](http://www.harpercollins.com/authors/12728/Diane_Siebert/index.aspx)

Author's Biography:

Siebert, Diane. Tour America: A Journey Through Poems and Art. Chronicle Books, 2006.