



THE QUEEN'S
COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2019

Senior Winner: Catherine Wang, 15, Canada

Beached

I saw a whale on the beach.
it was a lonely sight
the beast's pained bellows rang true for miles
and pulled me towards its limp body
tentatively, I observed the damage:
it was littered
with oil stains,
and plastic wrap
but my interest had that feigned
once I beheld its eyes
before kind and
full of life,
now shallow and desperate
my heart sank to the pits of the sea
among the other life
I whispered a
gentle apology

and with all the strength I could muster

pushed

to return the whale

back home

to safety

but it would not budge

I saw a whale on the beach.

a man stood by

as the whale cried out to me,

and I felt its melancholy song

resonate

through the muddy earth

the man attempted to move the thing

and return it back into the ocean, but

his futile efforts

did nothing

“step aside”

I declared

and fashioned a harness of rope

around the gigantic beast

after a bout of silence

the man spoke up

“how can you be so sure

that will work?”

pride is a

fool’s folly

but no folly of mine
“trust me”
even the automobile
with the strength
of a thousand oxen
could not move the whale
the bitter weather
did not amount
to the bitterness in my mouth
as the other
scowled
“he will die out here—
all you have done
is hasten his end.”
and I knew
the whale would soon disappear
if nothing were done

I saw a whale on the beach.
there were two people around the massive creature
bickering.
tightly gripping my daughter’s hand,
I approached

as the whale
beckoned with a
roar
audibly weak
the others continued on
arguing
seemingly unaware of my presence
the salty air nipped at my face
walls of blue and grey
crashed, monotonous
upon the shore
the metronome of time
giving it my all
I attempted to
push the whale back to the sea
now lavished with Death's sickly aroma
"don't bother"
one man huffed irritated
"there's no use"
the whale was draining away
by the second
monarch of the deep sea
upstaged from its

kingdom
at the fault
of a greedy society
such a siege
executed only by the likes
of man
“why do you bicker about
like schoolchildren?”
my daughter had piped up
with her insistent,
timid voice
seldom heard
“you cannot heal alone;
this is the work of many.”

the child went towards the tail

“come, help each other”

I went and took a

firm hold of the whale’s head

I gently cradled the whale’s fin

with a newfound energy

I made haste and secured

a grasp on the

whale's underbelly

and together

we lifted the ocean king

and carefully

returned him

to

the

sea.