

THE BEST STORIES I LIVE BY THE SEA INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PHOTO AND FILM CONTEST 2022

<https://www.todaywehave.com/contest.html>





THE BEST STORIES AND PHOTOS

Alex Clyde SJ. Badayos, 17 **Captains of Tomorrow** **Philippines**

In our hectic, fast-paced lives, it is all too easy to lose sight of how our seemingly insignificant activities can have detrimental effects on our oceans - including using single-use plastic, microbead-containing goods, and chemical runoffs. We constantly forget that our oceans provide us with life, livelihood, food, and of course, a place to create the most profound and unforgettable memories.

As Filipinos living in an archipelago, we identify the sea with our most treasured memories - times full of laughter and people's spirits flying high above the horizon as happiness radiated in each of them - the sun illuminating their smiles. But will the future be like such as well? Or will it be clogged with floating garbage, withering ecosystems, and dangerous chemicals that seep into our systems?

As Peter Drucker said, "the best way to predict the future is to create it." Presently, the boat ferrying us to the future is brimming with indifference and negligence. Our indisputable disregard will wreak havoc on the world's seas. We are so preoccupied with deadlines and material possessions that we lose sight of the bigger picture, the long-term damage we are inflicting.

We are the captains of the ship, serving as the bridge for future generations to enjoy and appreciate diverse, healthy oceans for years to come. So, as we navigate the vast, furious, deep-blue waters - consisting of both highs and lows - let us remember to steer this vessel in the right direction and preserve this irreplaceable wonder mother nature has graciously gifted us.



Tiago Chen, 13 **We live by The Sea** **Portugal**



We live in the same world, we breathe the same air. Although we have different brains and think differently, we are still humans. Yes, WE are humans, and I say we because we can do nothing alone, we always need each other. This planet would be better if we thought about being a group with pasts, presents and futures.

The ocean is key for our generation and for the future generations. It may sound crazy that the ocean produces more oxygen than forests, that the ocean contains more than 700 thousand species, that more than 70% of OUR planet is water, but we still don't care about it? There's more than 5 trillion of plastic waste in our oceans and that number is only increasing in massive amounts.

It may seem hard to diminish this crazy number, and may even be impossible. But it's never too late to give up. Although we really can't decrease the amount of plastics left in our oceans because of us, we are still able to prevent the annual wastes. And this is if we all do this, it's more than only recycling, we need to make other people recycle. Because we are the people who started and we also will be the people who ended this terrifying irresponsibility.

Sofia Duarte, 14

Wondering the waves

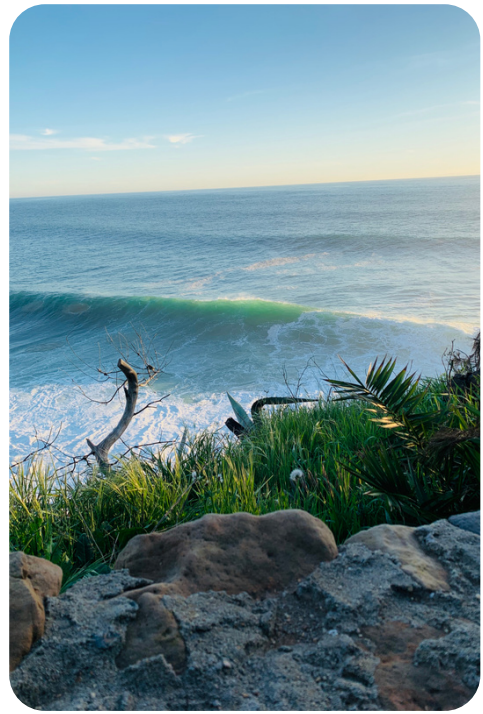
Portugal

Whenever we think of the ocean this is the image we have, a symbol of beauty, serenity and strength. Regardless of where we live we think that due to its size the sea will never extinguish, however this is not true.

Just like us, human beings, the sea hides behind all its beauty and harmony, immense suffering.

Plastic islands have formed, species have become extinct, and the entire balance of the ecosystem has been compromised.

The saddest thing is that all this is due to our selfish and greedy actions, simple attitudes that we all consider harmless, are in fact triggers of enormous consequences. How would we feel if we had someone hurting us constantly, without even realizing it? This is exactly what we do to the sea. So the next time we do something that could damage or pollute the oceans in any way, we should think that no matter where we are we have an impact on this ecosystem and the animals that live in it.



Eva Fernandez, 12

No title

Portugal

Hello, my name is Eva, and I live in a boat.

Every week, once a day, I like to go on a walk around the harbour and catch fish. But, the problem is, there is more plastic than fish. So I always end up cleaning the ocean.

I'm not saying that it's annoying, I'm saying that it's a huge problem that's changing our lives in the worst possible way.

When I say I live in a boat, people think that it's super great and they think I see fish and crabs in the blue water everyday, with no pollution. I do see fish and crabs, but they are all drowning in plastic... And that's the sad reality, the extremely sad reality.

I am here to make a change, and to save the world from pollution.

My photo shows the fishing net I use to catch fish with an important amount of plastic in it.



Alicja Łuczak, 15

And yet the sea...

Poland

The presentation of the artistic vision seems to present three equal realities, and so the bright sun, in the foreground of the shot, is visible. It shines brightly into the sky, which becomes vividly coloured with its rays. From a bright yellow, its glow turns the sky a strong orange.

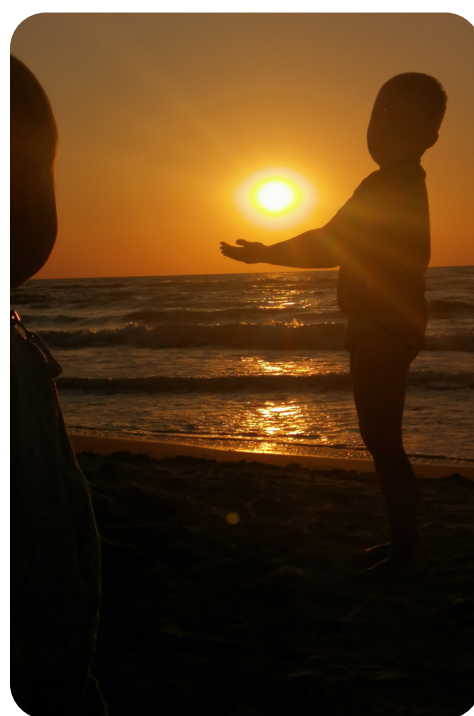
It is precisely this colour that seems to plunge into the abyss of the sea, which remains as if suffused by the sun's rays.

The illuminated perspective of the sea waves seems to warm the image of the sea abyss. The sea thus becomes more friendly to man.

Its power is no longer overwhelming, but invites us to have contact with it. The phenomenon of this shot, however, turns out to be the

children's silhouettes on the seashore. Outlined but not fully visible, they are the foreground reality of the artistic vision. Standing on the shore and stretching out his arms, the child figure seems to be supporting the sun. It is the human being who seems to help nature in this shot, and nature bestows her radiance upon him.

We can say that by looking up to the sky and perceiving the waves of the sea, at this very moment man is merging with nature. But this is not the end of this reality. The marginalised foreground figure of the second child, located in the corner of the photograph, no longer does anything but gaze at the boundlessness of the sea, the beauty of the sun and the "boy who sustains it". This silent vision of reality and the almost invisible shore shows that it is man who is the inseparable element that connects the elements of nature.



Karen Dl. Santana, 17

Wheel of Fate

Philippines



Life comes in all forms; through serenity and solitude, through bustling crowds and roaring laughter. And what gives life if not the sea. The gentle waves crashing into rocks ashore as the dusk befalls perfectly illuminates the smiles and sparkling eyes of every person behold its beauty.

The boats they carry, not just passengers, but the hopes and dreams of everyone step afoot into the vessel traversing and carrying life. The city skyline meeting the horizon and signifying the new break of life in this urban world we live in. The world where quiet is forgotten and life is everything but calm.

Yet it juxtaposes the calm blue with the strip of light and life, the place where everything ahead came from and will never be forgotten. The wheel of fate, stealing all eyes, circling the perimeter where life meets the sea. It brings joy to every free spirit and altitude to new perspectives. However, one can never deny how serene has come to chaos. How amid all beauty lies the dark truth of uncertainty with just how long we have with the deep blue sea. The same sea where life started, now being flooded of everything voided of life.

Seemingly a vicious cycle, a spinning orbit of hope and fear of nothingness.

Yet life prevails; a new gust of wind blows another wave of tomorrow promising that the chains of uproar are set free. That we, in this world, can look back and say 'I live by the sea'.



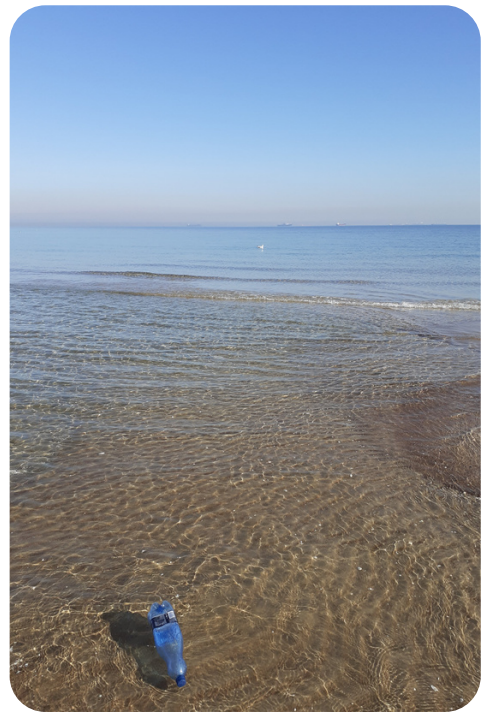
THE BEST STORIES

Laura Banaszek, 12

Lazy Marek

Poland

This is Baltic Sea. Can you see this plastic bottle?
Thousands of trash like this pollutes every seas in the world.
Not just seas are contaminated but also oceans, lakes and rivers.
This bottle spoils the view of the sea. Why that happened?
Well, I think that someone was too lazy to throw it in the trash
and threw it to the see. Let's call him Marek.
So Marek drank the water and threw it to the water.
It could have happened in any part of the world, and the bottle
swam all the way here. That wasn't the right thing to do.
Do you know how long it will decompose? Almost 450 years! That's very long. Is it worth it? Of course it's not.
Maybe he just didn't know what are the consequences of this? They are serious. Fishes eat plastic, then we eat
that fishes. Most of people doesn't know that. Per month you eat plastic the size of a credit card! That's
definitely too much. So let's take care of our future and let's not pollute the waters of our planet.



Jhade Alejandro, 13

Love By The Sea

Philippines



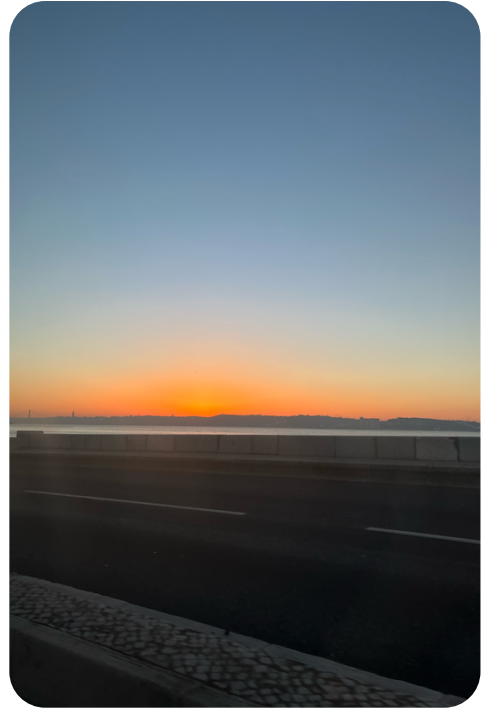
Mother and sea, are pretty comparable, right?
If no one knows how deep the sea is, then no one knows how deep the love of a mother for her son is.
The sea gave life to humanity, like a mother with her child. The bond between a mother and a child goes
beyond just love. It is love in its purest form: sacrifice. The giver of life continues to give and give for the
offspring's life to flourish, yet we often forget how the giver runs out in the end. It is a matter of
reciprocation; giving back everything that was given to you as the ultimate gratitude for the life she has
nurtured.
"How inappropriate to call this planet Earth when it is Ocean." "The ocean stirs the heart, inspires the
imagination, and brings eternal joy to the soul." According to a quote I heard somewhere, "The cure for
anything is saltwater: sweat, tears, or the sea." The child, the mother, and the sea, as shown here, are the
three main aspects that bring the image's meaning to life. It conveys a sense of connection, as well as a
sense of serenity and sanctuary. Us humans have been gifted life, and so we shall use the gift to give
back, thrive, and nurture. We pay with love, hope, and sacrifice for the lives of the future.

Constança Batista, 14

Sun Rise

Portugal

When I was younger, I never cared a lot about the ocean, probably because of my distance from it. I cared about my garden because I looked at it every day, we seem to never care about we don't see. I lived in the middle of the city, so I would never see the ocean. However when I started doing surf it all changed, I went to the beach almost every day and started to want to take care of it just like I took care of my garden . I believe we should all take care of the ocean just like we care for our own homes, because reality is that ocean is part of our home, planet earth!

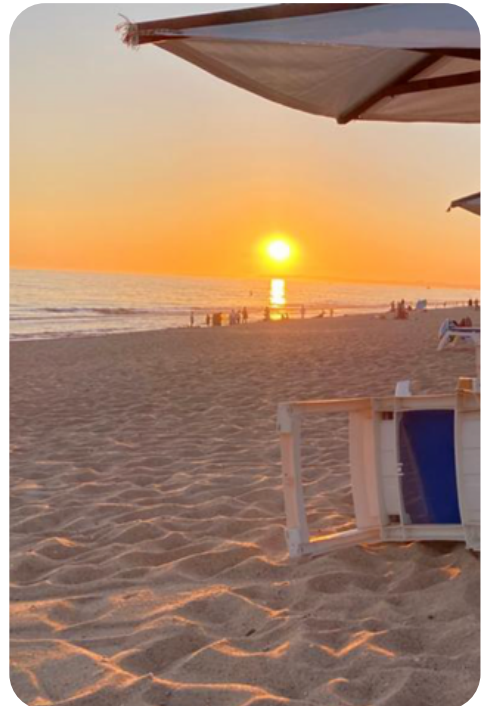


Cláudia Carrilho, 14

Help others

Portugal

I went with my family to the beach, and it was a normal sunny day, the waves were quite big, and the water was freezing. There was a lot of rubbish, plastic, cigarettes, and it quite bothered me. So I started picking up the plastic and putting it in the recycle bin, that's when a group of people were there to pick up the rubbish too. So me and my sister joined them, and there were a lot of kids in the group, so we made wonderful friends, and I am still in contact with some of them. It was a lot of fun, and we picked up almost everything. The beach looked so nice and tidy.



Assunção Costa, 14 **Connection with the sea** **Portugal**



If, from where we live, we can see the sea or if we can only observe the mountains and don't have the possibility of watching the waves, enjoying its calmness or spending time doing all sorts of water sports, we are always connected to it.

Everything we do has an impact and we are the ones who can choose whether we can maintain the sea's greatness so we are able to enjoy it.

I love to swim, paddle and spend my time in this lovely place.

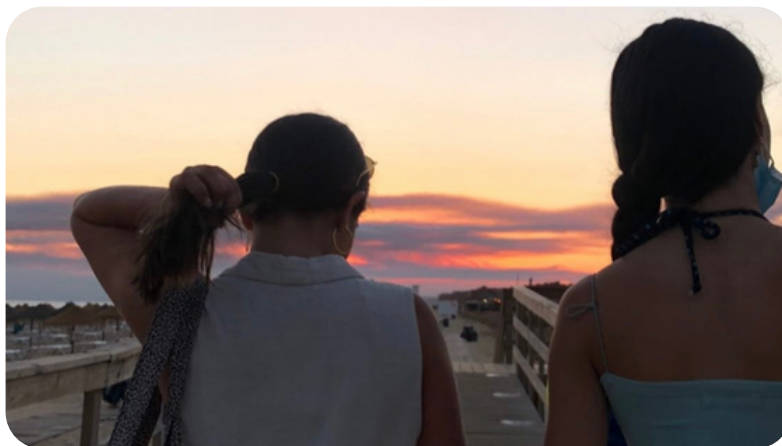
This is why I choose to have a positive impact, what about you?

Marisa Elias, 13 **My beautiful sea** **Portugal**



My beautiful sea please stay here with me
Just for me to appreciate your beauty
The place where everything is an unknown
And we just have one
My beautiful ocean please stay here
I need to know all the species until they disappear
I need to surf on water and not trash
Our ocean is falling apart in the velocity of a flash
My beautiful planet please hold on
I won't let you fall
With my generation
We will save our ocean

Marta Fraga, 14 **The beach, my refugee** **Portugal**



Dear ocean, thank you for making us feel tiny, humble and inspired all at once.

The sea. Whether you live near it or not, you will always have a big impact on what's happening inside that gigantic world. A world where numerous species of animals live and that covers 71% of our planet. It's extremely interesting how a phenomenon like this can be so important, not only to us, humans, but also to the animals that call the ocean their "home". For example, as well as providing us oxygen, it supplies us with food.

In fact, I'm extremely lucky to live relatively close to a beach. If there's heaven to me, I'm sure it has a beach attached to it. It gives me an enormous sense of peace! I LOVE imagining what's beyond what we see when we're laying down at the beach.

However, our selfish selves don't think about how much we're affecting it. What's the difficulty of grabbing the plastic you throw to the floor and put it in a bin? Is it that difficult? It's not. And I guarantee you that if everyone of us did that, the levels of pollution would decrease substantially and there would be less animals dying because of us everyday. No animals, no oxygen and no food. No oxygen or food, we all die. Come on guys! The world is in our hands!y

Judith Jordan, 15 **My Safe Place** **Spain**

...There is no better city than mine, Badalona.

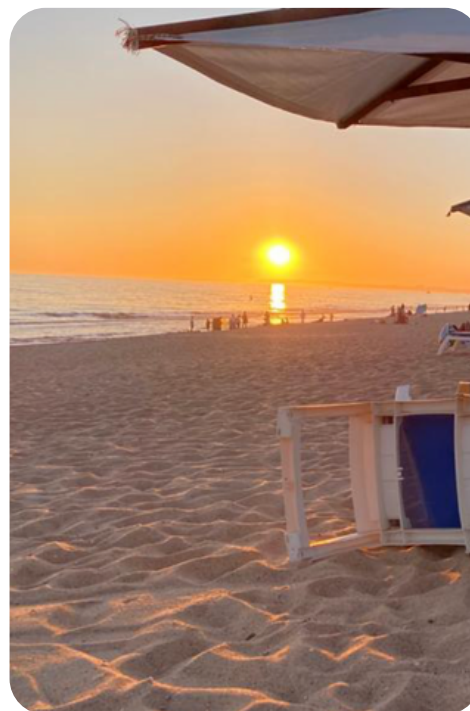
I love going to the sea whenever I'm feeling under the weather.

I remember those days when we could leave our homes at a certain time during our first long quarantine and I would always go to the sea. It was my safe place.

There I could feel free and at peace for at least some minutes a day.

I've always felt that mankind has constantly been destroying nature and, ironically, whenever we are feeling sad it is to nature where we go.

In this image I wanted to show you the beach in Badalona at golden hour. It is a magical place!!



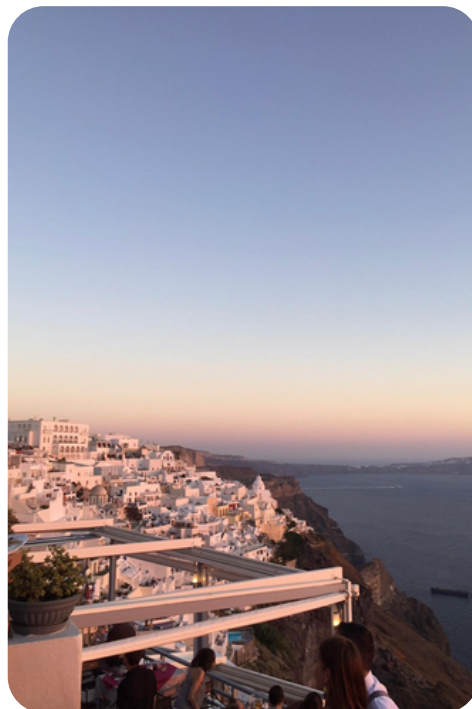
Luisa Mathias, 14

The beach

Portugal

Every time I think of the beach and the sea, it reminds me of a happy place, of relaxation and tranquility. It reminds me of not being worried about anything. It reminds me of being sunburnt and having the sun on my face. It reminds me of the feeling of relief after jumping in the cold water, after being in the sun for too long.

I would say that the beach is one of my happy places. I feel really privileged and lucky to be able to live by the sea, therefore I feel sad when people take it for granted and throw things in the ocean with no regards to the animals that live there.



Maria Oliveira, 13

Through my window

Porugal



Since I was a little kid I used to look through my parents window. I would spend hours and hours looking through the window watching the sea and the horizon, and all of this with my mom.

My mom works all over the world and she doesn't spend much time at home, so every time I used to miss her I would look through the window that me and my mom love and as soon as I looked at the sea I would feel like she was with me again.

And I can tell I still to this day and feeling never changes and on multiple occasions it saved me.

Jéssica Zhu, 14

No matter how far from the sea we live, we still have a great impact on it Portugal

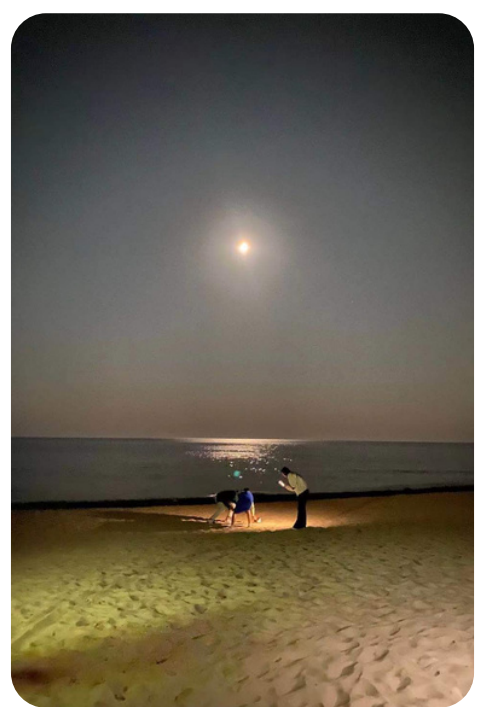
Since I was little, every year, my family and I go to a fabulous beach located in the south of Portugal. I have always been somehow connected to this incredible sea.

More and more often I realize how lucky I am and how grateful I should feel to live near this spectacular aquatic ecosystem.

Even though the people who live far away from the coast cannot see its beautiful waves, hear its relaxing sound, and smell the salty fresh air, they still have a huge impact on the sea.

If we do not take care of our planet no one else will do it for us, and so every single human being on Earth has the responsibility to look after nature. Our planet's health is in our hands and we should have in consideration a very important dictation which is "always leave it the way you found it".

Do not pollute the sea. Instead of harming the environment, always try to leave it as it was or even in a better way. And whenever you see the sea being "harmed" do not hesitate to help before it is too late.



Amalia-Elena Dan, 16 To love the seas within Romania

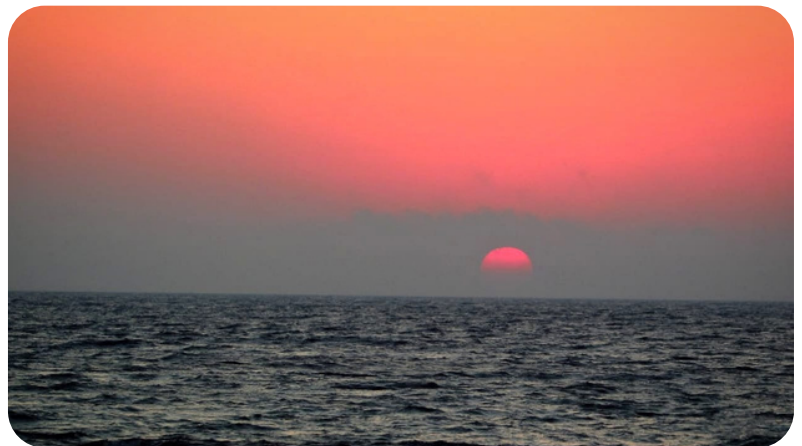
I must begin with the fact that I live by the sea, in Constanta, Romania. And I'm going to tell a story about my dearest beach, Tuzla. Growing up, a tradition also grew onto me. Every summer, me, along with my parents and other families close to our hearts gathered and went camping on wild beaches. We've seen the sun rise among the wild willows of Tuzla in the last six years and made countless memories.

Somehow, we've all felt like we belong there. The warm breeze, the waves crashing on the shore, the azure water...

And the most unbelievable aspect of all... the dolphins. It was always so intriguing, the way they were dancing with the waves... They were free. And it was as if we weren't there. It was their sea, their home, their freedom. But one day, in the cold mornings of August, my friend and I saw a little dolphin far away. We ran up to it and found him lifeless, tangled up in fishing sails... For two twelve year olds it was not only a wrecking experience, but also an awakening.

People have been fishing since the beginning of time, it's true. But from simple creatures, we've become indifferent beasts.

We shall learn to feel again, to care and to act on it. To educate the world, for it to become responsible of its actions. And to let the children love the creatures without words.



Paul Owen Albaladejo, 20 **The Old Man and the Sea** **Philippines**



This photograph inspires everyone to believe that even when we are alone in life, we may look to the sea as a friend and companion. Like the Old Man, who has lived by the sea for many years, he considers it as his refuge and a friend who provides him with food and even a home. As we all desire to have a sense of belonging, he emphasizes that he belongs to the water - as we all live by the sea. This photograph portrays the true sentiment of love and compassion towards the seas since we all know that they offer us with nourishment, income, and a home. Therefore, as individuals who rely on the sea, we must ensure that it is preserved and sustained in an excellent condition.

The sea means a lot to the old man, who has viewed the water as his life companion for many years; it is his inspiration to keep living. Therefore, do not deny the sea to many individuals who regard it as their encouragement and a friend.

Anna Zabrocka & Julia Zabrocka, 21 **What is your choice?** **Poland**



Ever-increasing consumerism is the main problem the world faces today. Tons of garbage and pollution ends up in the oceans and destroys our environment. Ice caps are melting, more and more animals are losing their homes and are in danger and we dare to call this destruction "progress". We can stop it! Each of us is the main character of this movie and the future of the Earth is in our hands. No more excuses. Remember, a mistake doesn't become a failure unless you refuse to correct it. It is up to us to take care of this planet. We must globally warm our hearts and change the climate of our souls and realize that we are not apart from nature, we are A PART of nature and to betray nature is to betray ourselves. To save nature is to save ourselves. Be aware of the fact, that whatever you're fighting for: racism, poverty, feminism, gay rights or any type of equality, it won't matter in the least. Because if we don't all work together to save the environment, we will be equally EXTINCT. So... what is your choice?