

Creatures of the night forage amidst the thick jungle,  
**Flashlights** illuminate the canopy,  
the trail is swept with dangling **roots and vines**.

The sounds of footsteps through the leaves,  
masked by the chorus of insects, the squawks  
of awakened birds, the scuffle of monkeys above.

The moon is full and the rain falls lightly.  
The air is moist, and smells of rich soil and fruit.

**Scientists** embark,  
A midnight excursion through the cloud forest.  
Searching for a rare species  
that dwells during the tropical night,  
a rare Baird's tapir that was  
radio-collared last spring.

Over by the river,

A pair of golden eyes,  
A glimpse of a prehensile nose,  
A shrill whistle....

The solitary tapir catches the flashlight's beam,  
and disappears behind a palm  
draped with lush epiphytes.

Habitat preference, social behavior, mate choice  
A study is necessary for conservation.

Sounds of **tropical birds**

The creek-creek of a Keel-billed Toucan, *Ramphastos sulfuratus*  
Poetry in its name, a masterpiece painted on its large bill  
chattering over its favorite fruit tree, hopping  
branch to branch  
plucking a ripe fruit  
off a vine  
and the seeds  
Litter the ground below.

Emerald Toucanets embellish the trees.

**A scientist** is crouched nearby  
30 feet in a tree, with a tape recorder,  
this species voice needs to be heard  
throughout the world.

Tenkile, as it is called locally

**Wild tree kangaroo** in Papua New Guinea  
is Endangered. It looks up, the diurnal marsupial  
from eating moss and vines, and in its eyes I see  
its innocence.

A creature that has evolved, adapted, flourished  
in the Torricelli Mountain Range, its forest home,  
only 100 left.

Its future is in our hands. **A scientist**  
conducts demographic and behavioral biology studies.

Act. **The power of a single individual.**

I am touched like a child by all life.  
I am at peace when I look at a living creature, I am  
filled with passion.

But from this child's love  
I have developed adult goals,

**and science has become my life,**

I am **the scientist** is this poem,  
In my dreams,  
In my studies,  
In my experiences so far.

**R**eliving the dream of yet another strong young woman,  
overwhelmed with the intricate web of life.  
Awed by **biological diversity**.

My life spans out in front of me.  
I look out over the Pacific Ocean,  
Wrapped around the Hawaiian Islands.  
I watch a **Green Sea Turtle** rest  
beneath the plate-like coral,  
And I know my place on this Earth.  
My devotion is conservation.

**I**ntelligence, and aspiration

**Green Mountain,**

a cloud forest reveals my future.  
Understanding, striving to learn,  
to experience, to be a part of a wildlife expedition.  
To work for a conservation fund, to rehabilitate orphaned creatures,  
to teach, to guide responsible ecotours  
through the rainforest.

To collect data, To analyze, To photograph, To survey,  
To present my research to the local community,  
touching their hearts, their minds  
like I was touched  
**as a child,**  
with the

**C**omplexity of nature, the study of biology.

If I .....  
Could release an orphaned orangutan back  
into a newly designated forest reserve. If I.....  
Could save one acre of rainforest from  
**DESTRUCTION**

If I....  
Could change one single person's view.  
This is my goal. I am ready.

**A**n adventure. One life. One Earth. Endless possibilities.

In the distance, a howler monkey calls.  
It's twilight  
**the scientist** returns to camp.