



## Oyster Reef

The splotch of darkness looms up ahead,  
The first indication of an oyster bed,  
A place of life for many marine organisms,  
A place of gathering, of tidal rhythms.

The oyster feeds by filtering the water,  
And makes its home by becoming a squatter,  
For the spat – the eggs – float around the bay,  
Seeking attachments – a place to stay.

Just anyplace will work fine at the start,  
But environmental conditions are the counterpart,  
For there's a special range of estuarine salinity  
For which the oyster has an affinity.

In the years when a region's experiencing a drought,  
The best place may be near the river's mouth,  
But when the rains come, and the floods engulf,  
That sweet saline zone is nearer the Gulf.

The oyster's strategy is brilliant, you see,  
It sends billions of spat into the estuary,  
And each year it thrives in the zone that is right,  
Each year the reef gaining a bit more height.

And oh, how I love to sit beside the reef,  
And unload whatever is giving me grief,  
Watching the tide come in over the shells,  
Watching the reef breaking up the swells.

Within Texas bays, the oyster is king,  
A top destination when you're out fishing,  
And when you are sitting back and wishing,  
You just might catch an oyster spitting.

The reef is an assemblage, my kind of place,  
Where I attend Earth Church and contemplate  
The wonderful gifts that nature brings  
And I sit and listen as the reef sings.

So welcome to Earth Church,  
Pull yourself up a pew,  
And pray that the oyster  
Will cleanse you too.