

## **Biloxi**

**By Shelby Camille Balius, 15, of Cumming, Ga.**

**A land of gumbo, po-boys, and etoufeeé,  
A place where “fixin’ to” and “y’all” are things we say.  
Homes of down-to-earth southern belles and their beaus,  
The sunshine looks on as the children squish sand between their toes.**

**All the fishermen on their boats with bait and reel,  
A quiet setting with that small-town feel.  
The seagulls and pelicans stood perched on every pier,  
Biloxi was home to peace and comfort – never to fear.**

**Then by first light, on that August day,  
Awaking from rest, in her bed she still lay.  
Later in the morning, as the coffee started to brew,  
The water rose, as the strong winds blew.**

**As the storm went on, the water thrashed and threw,  
The buildings without water were awfully few.  
The landmarks we knew, as did generations past,  
The surge was too strong, and the structures didn’t last.**

**Hours passed and the morning grew long,  
We thought just another hurricane... Boy were we wrong.  
The water drew back, and the winds died down,  
We took our first looks and realized –  
Hurricane Katrina destroyed our town.**

**Casino Magic was across the street,  
The Ocean Springs Bridge the waves had beat.  
Tullis-Toledano, with its oak trees always so large,  
Well, the sight was taken over by the Grand Casino gaming barge.**

**Damage was done from the flags to the Point,  
And for the deceased souls, God will anoint.  
Destruction was wrought not just on our town,  
But the whole coast of Mississippi was home to spirit gone down.**

**Our city has seen many hurricanes over the years,  
None have brought so much sorrow, so many tears.  
Months have passed since that fateful day,  
One that made history – when the Gulf met the Bay.**

**None of the others have shaken us to the core,  
But we'll pull through, as we've done before.  
Everyone has to work together - man, woman, and child,  
Because our feelings toward Katrina can be reconciled.**

**We can all overcome everything to do with this plight,  
Keeping close to our minds the one goal in sight.  
That goal is very simple, even though it may sound hard to bring about,  
We're gonna rebuild Biloxi better than ever, without a doubt.**

**We will always remember, memories galore,  
She's in our hearts, we shall forever adore.  
And just as the lighthouse shines on the Gulf with luminous light,  
All of our futures are sure to turn out just as bright.**

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**(Shelby is the daughter of Lisa and Brian Balias of Cumming, Ga., and the granddaughter of Biloxians Kenneth Lamey and the late Ramona Lamey, and Helen and Arnold Balias.)**