

DQ 2, September 15, 2015

From Dennis, concerning the specimens in the vial at the front of the classroom:

"I have this neat freshwater fish tank at home. It has some cool fish and, up until this past week, a pretty big crayfish that I caught this past summer. Last week I noticed one of the big fish in my tank attacking my crayfish. It was weird because, rather than being hard (like it normally was), my crayfish had gone all soft. My big fish had no trouble gobbling down most of the parts of my poor crayfish. Once the meal was over I found these two little hard white things at the bottom of the tank. I think they came from the crayfish. My sister says they are gastroliths.

- (1) What the heck is a crayfish gastrolith?
- (2) Did they really come from my crayfish?
- (3) I dissected one of the crayfish that I caught last summer (it had pinched me and it really hurt because its claws were hard and sharp...), and although it was very interesting, I didn't see anything like these things in that crayfish. Why not?
- (4) What do you think happened to my crayfish that it suddenly became so easy for my fish to attack?
- (5) I was thinking that maybe I could have prevented this disaster if I had changed the water in the tank more frequently. Do you think that is true?"

Due to Dr. Caira on or before Monday, September 28, at 5:00 pm.