

The Avocet

A Journal of Nature Poetry

Spring - 2024



Enjoy your stroll through our pages to find yourself in
nature...

The Avocet

A Journal of Nature Poetry

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The Avocet is a quarterly publication devoted to poets and readers who find meaning in their lives from the world of Nature; poets who write of the beauty, the peace, and the fury of Nature in all its glory...

Please address all correspondence to:

The Avocet
P.O. Box 19186
Fountain Hills, AZ 85269

For submissions guidelines and all other inquiries, please email us at: cportolano@hotmail.com

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The Verge of Spring at Equinox

On the verge of spring at equinox, I watch winter's misty veils
lift from the fir trees on the Cascade Mountain foothills.
Dawn's pastel hues embellish fair weather skies.

The air is replete with the trilling and chirping of robins
and red feathered finches as they perfect their melodies,
beguiling would be mates.

Encouraged by the warming day, I explore the garden.
When I trod the soft, fresh-grown grass, a sweet scent rises
from the warming loam.

I listen to the gentle krek-krek of tree frogs,
as they emerge from their slumber in the muddied debris
of last autumn's leaves.

Along the walkway, white snowdrops and purple crocus
have bloomed in anticipation of nature's time of renaissance
in the ebb of long dark wintry hours.

As spring begins her dominion, my flower beds are gifted
with throngs of golden daffodils, unfurling petals and
raising their frilled trumpets towards the sun.

This floral abundance signals an annual rite.
Families pack picnic baskets filled with sandwiches,
soda pop and joy to celebrate the advent of the season.

We journey north to the Skagit Valley's farmer's fields
where long rows of daffodils are chaperoned
by hard-worked tractors and aged red barns.

Wendy N. Bell - Edgewood, WA - wendynbell@hotmail.com

Screes of dirty snow
quickly melt in early spring
hyacinths seek sun

Vaughn Neeld - Cañon City, CO - vaughnneeld@hotmail.com

An Early Walk on Spring Solstice Day

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(After *A Fall Afternoon Hike in the Woods* by Floyd D. Anderson)

The calendar says March 20, Spring Equinox,
yet the rain and snow have ignored the Sun's
new presentation. Winter remains.

I am bereft from losing my daily walks.

Today a small patch of blue peaks through
the darkening, heavy, gray cumulus clouds.
Just enough blue to entice me outside
to a path along a nearby small creek in the woods.

I need to see if the snow mounds are receding
and if the oaks are starting to leaf out.
Has the meadow's melting snow been replaced
with wild Snowdrops that will soon bloom?

Stellar Jays are noisily squawking, sounding off an alarm:
Beware a human in our midst. She's near the tall maple tree!
The chief sentinel flies from tree to tree, his calls keeping
his clan aware of my presence as I continue down the path.

The path becomes muddy, my rain boots stick in the goo,
slowing my pace and eliciting a curse or two.
Rain quickly soaks my hat and drips down my face.
With a sigh, I turn around, head back home

As the path leaves the woods, the rain falls harder.
There is no sign of that blue sky that lured me outside.
Mother Nature seems to be sending a message:
I decide when the seasons come and go.

When I reach home, I make a fire in the fireplace.
I peel off my soaked, muddy clothes, and take a warm shower.
Sipping hot cocoa, I watch the rain through the windows.
Maybe it will be sunny tomorrow.

Sandy King - Lafayette, CA - sandyaking@yahoo.com

Spring's early green shoots
herald the lowly crocus
first to break cold ground

Vaughn Neeld - Cañon City, CO - vaughnneeld@hotmail.com

Circling around and around,
creating electricity as they dance
with one another, the sun and the earth,
drawing nearing to one another
their love lingers longer and longer
with each passing day they touch
in their lust for one another.
Ah, the love she holds for the sun.
Ah, the love he rains down from above.
Both being warmed by their need
to be one with the other
for the sun shines down his love
for the earth radiates up her love
with the bliss of their kiss brings new life
onto her being for their love
is a dance of abundance for all of us,
their offspring, on this gift they gave us,
in this season of rebirth on Mother Earth.

Warmed by their Spring dance all of us
feel their joy of coming together as we,
too, breakout into a dance enjoying
the warmth of being outside again
in the fresh air, feeling our blood flowing
with the warmth of their endless love,
feeling the sun's gentle touch caress her,
feeling the earth's surface radiating up
the warmth of her love of him on the top
of our heads to our feet planted on her,
we dance around and around
in this season of love, of rebirth,
when new life burst from the earth,
pulsating from the kiss of the sun upon
the fair maiden's, Mother Earth's, lips,
in this marriage of sun and earth
we sing out our joy of their love
as new life sprouts up and out
in this season of rebirth
in this season of their love for all of us.

Well, it's coming again, my friend.
A hint, and then a wide burst of bud, bud.
It's that fling of Spring thing,
coming fast, hitting hard, and smelling good.
A mass of a flash of green, seen
...plus, the famed and fabled flower scene,
kicking poets and lovers in that sacred heart part.
Rejoice!
Fresh start. New hope.
Warmth; a luminous inspiration to every artist's eye!
Rebirth, and the dearth of death.
A time of aspired plenty.
The Earth reverberates in new song
and every natural creature knows the tune.
Come join the chorale, pal,
for I sing with the best:
Verdant trees a'twitter with a clamor of birds,
elk and bear and ferret know all the words,
the salmon in the lifeblood of the land;
the froggies courting loudly in their swamps;
cicadas wondering if their year to shine,
and emerge in obnoxious splendor of their kind...
Squirrels, roses, white-tails, dogs,
pigeons, yaks, apple and plum,
cats and cattle, roses and hogs;
the renaissance of the world, chum!
Awaited hope... and promise to come,
and what else could any blessing bring?
All senses pitched to high delight:
Brace yourself for the thrill of Spring!

Steven P. Pody - Fredericksburg, VA - s_pody@msn.com

What Is Spring

Singing birds emerging.
Pretty flowers are blooming.
Rabbits are hopping.
In spring things start living.
Nests of eggs are cracking.
Gardens are now growing.

Paula Goldsmith - Mesa, AZ - wiinger@aol.com

Fern fronds unfurl like
tiny fists, light greens

and blues, many fingered,
soft, damp, sitting in melting

spring snow, reaching out,
welcoming insects and small

tree frogs to sit awhile to
marvel at spring's ability

to provide and grow to all
who are new and those starting

over as spring prompts us
all to begin again.

Dianna Walston - Kokomo, IN - cportolano@hotmail.com

Awakening to Spring

a gentle vibration
at the edge of the pond
a mallard duck
unwinds her head
from under her wing
and slowly paddles
ballet on webbed feet
rippling the surface softly
maintaining glassy mirror
of sky and bare branches
blending with her
feathered design.

Anne Stackpole-Cuellar - Forest Grove, OR -
romitaj244@hotmail.com

**Please be the reason someone smiles today.
If you like a poem, please let the poet know it...
Thank you.**

From snowdrops to raindrops
To Springtime's sweet glow--
Bringing the blossoms and birds
 We all know,
 The sparkle of sunlight
That drifts through the trees
 Filled with the gladness
 Of bright memories.
The song of a wood thrush
 The chirp of a wren
 Breezes that tease us
 Again and again.
The new green leaves rustle,
 The willow trees sigh,
For Spring is a blessing
 We just can't deny,
 Our hearts are uplifted,
 Our troubles are few
As Spring keeps its promise
 To me and to you.

Lorna Volk - Cincinnati, OH - cportolano@hotmail.com

It's Spring!

It's Spring, it's Spring,
 The bluebirds sing!
The robins and the wrens
Are playing in the branches
 Of the maple tree again.
The tanagers are joyful,
And a goldfinch flashes by,
Its feathers bright and golden
In the blue and cloudless sky.
It's Spring, and all the daffodils
 Are dancing in the breeze,
It's a time for new beginnings
 And for lasting memories!

Lorna Volk - Cincinnati, OH - cportolano@hotmail.com

Daffodils now awaken,
slender green fingertips
reaching toward the sun,
emerging undeterred
by frigid nights or dint
of unexpected snow,
resolutely heralding
the return of spring,
season of renewal,
new growth, and hope,
despite human strife
and turmoil elsewhere
that, like winter winds,
chill a body to the bone.
I quietly wait and watch
for trumpet blooms of yellow
to show forth and once again
attune my heart to joy.

Gay Marie Logsdon - Oak Ridge, TN -
gmarielogsdon@gmail.com

New Friends

A mother doe wandered a short distance after securing
Her newborn fawn in the tall deer grass.
A small fluffy grey bunny hopped across a soccer field.
The fawn watched from her hiding place.
Standing to get a better view, she stepped into the open.
The bunny stood still as the fawn approached.
Staring into each other's eyes, uncertainty,
Fear mingled with curiosity at this new creature.
The bunny tentatively hopped towards the fawn.
Sensing no fear, the fawn moved closer.
The bunny hopped away a short distance
And the fawn followed.
Soon the two babies were playing
A makeshift game of run and chase on the field.
Caught on a security camera.

Carol Farnsworth - Ada, MI - carolfarn@aol.com

I exit winter's womb.
My first cry, "I am Spring!"
I melt the snow, make grasses grow.
I smile, and birdies sing.

My babble buoys rivers.
Fields flower where I play.
My joy runs with the animals;
Enfolds the warmth of day.

Dispelling melancholy,
A harbinger of mirth,
Each year, I recreate the dance:
Renewal and rebirth.

Spring Without Flowers

What if blossoms disappeared?
Without buds to pollinate,
Without nectar for honey,
Bees would grow mighty bored.

Without waving fragrant flags,
Breeze would become bland.
Without flowers,
Spring would wilt.

Upper Buttermilk Falls, Ithaca, New York

Water droplets trickle
Down two-tiered rock formation
Into pool, bathed in solar stream.
To left and right,
Newly leafed trees venerate
The aquatic wonder.

As the Earth rotates on its axis, closer to the sun,
sunlight warms the soil and ground moisturize
Root hairs begin to swell amidst warming rainfall
driving sap upward through cambium tubes
Behind crusty bark, all the way to the treetop.
Warmer weather causes buds to swell and burst open on branches,
unfurling leaves whose green chlorophyll renews life
Fresh energy flows through Nature's lab, converting water
and CO2 into nourishing carbohydrates
The spreading branches shelter birds, squirrels, and insects,
and other critters in this canopied umbrella of life.

Spring has arrived in colorful glory!
Unseen, a lot is happening under the hood.
Carbon inhaled through the tree's leafy pores
is incorporated into its arboreal flesh
While oxygen refreshed air is exhaled for us below.
A miracle!
Repeated over and over thru summer.
It's not just home for birds and squirrels.
When harvested, mature trees' lumber is fashioned
into shelter and furniture for human families.
Its use is limited only by the imagination of the makers
who work and shape it.
A self-renewing gift from the heavens.
So, move over pups, make room, trees are also counted
among man's best friends.

Nick Della Volpe - Knoxville, TN - ndellavolpe@bellsouth.net

Spring's Magical Return

Again
with snow on me
I awake from my sleep
the warmth from the big yellow sun
brings pretty flowers peeking their heads out
birds start to sing joy to the world
squirrels scamper quickly
springtime is here
again

Paula Goldsmith - Mesa, AZ - wiinger@aol.com

fickle anticipation surfaces
arising easier from deep sleep
sunlight extends
rebirth awaits beneath hard, cold surface
days slowly unfold, shifting in light,
color, sound, mood
craving renewal and new experiences

Laughter carries on the wind
spiraling up through budding trees
a time to frolic!
eyelids soak in sunny warmth
breezes caress air with poetry of new season
playfully tousling uncovered heads
palms yearn for heft of a garden trowel
pulling through freshly-turned soil
stirring dormant roots, silent spirits to life

Selfishly doling out temperate days,
preferring landscapes awash in mud or rain
Mother Nature winks playfully

Susan M. Surette - Cotuit, MA - suesurette@gmail.com

After Winter

As huge piles of snow
leave the ground, birds
are starting to keep
their throats in shape
for summer.

My home, like a cave,
is swirling with breezes
of a new season.

My hands are ready
to work in the garden,
and the air will be tinged with little bee “hums”
serenading my flowers
to unfurl.

Brad Vickers - Lambertville, NJ - cportolano@hotmail.com

I have come from far, far away,
My home away from home,
My wings are strong sails surfing the skies
I have spent winter in the high mountains of México,
Spring is calling, the weather here is warmer.
I am reborn, I am made new, and my cycle begins again...
The birds sing, the bees fly and buzz playfully
Blossoms and leaves appear everywhere,
See the explosion of colors!
Joyful humans dance happy on the emerald grass,
I am elegantly dressed
My wings are the color of fire,
I am the monarch butterfly...
No, no don't be scared,
My bright colors protect me from predators but,
I am harmless to you, human beings,
I must continue my journey to find the most beautiful
Of all flowers,
The milk weed flower, so I can lay my eggs and
Perpetuate my species.
I am the majestic MONARCH BUTTERFLY!

Virginia Tello - Forest Grove, OR - tello.virginia0102@gmail.com

Inception

Profound as nebulae...
A starship is woven
on an eight-legged loom,
from silken skeins and thistledown;
cocoons one hundred and sixty
seething suns. Alien life
forms blast from blastula;
divide, invert, tessellate, molt,
divide again. Miniscule
apricot pearls on baby-eyelash
legs, ooze through the membrane
of there to here, of then
to now. Profound as nebulae.
Profound as the human scope
to hope, to seek where kindred thrive.

Jackie Fellague - Torrance, CA - cportolano@hotmail.com

nuzzles the paws of dawn
softly stepping over me
as I lie waking. The light
billows on a breeze.

Oh, glory be the little prodigies--
warblers, wrens, and chickadees--
singing procreation's songs.
Out from winter's muffler we come
to spring's audible light, animal love.

Lynn Palumbo - Knoxville, TN - lynnpsychotherapist@gmail.com

Yellow

The first light shoots
across the glassy bay
like a spirit on the water.
Snowy egrets see their
prey though a light
that blinds me.
They cast their yellow nets
and never come up empty.

Back in the mud flats
a solitary blue heron
imperialy waits for
the incoming tide.
Watching him always seems
to me patience's blessing.
He trusts the delivery of his breakfast.

It's the first balmy morn since winter.
I'll eat alfresco by the water,
murmur a few words
over two eggs over easy.
Swimming in yolk, sop
by sop, they'll perish into me.

Lynn Palumbo - Knoxville, TN - lynnpsychotherapist@gmail.com

Beautiful late March day
Marked by never-ending road construction
Each scrape of the backhoe
Carving away natural habitat
Shredding native plant life
Transforming living landscapes
Into lines of harsh asphalt

Traffic stopped dead
By human worker bees
Vests of neon yellow orange
Grab fleeting attention
Of drivers in a hurry
To be anywhere but here
Forced to be idle--stuck in neutral

Look! Just to the north
Past a long row of orange barrels
Wearing fluttering yellow flags
A flash of brilliant white
Catches my eye and breath
A wayward plastic bag
Draped upon a dying bush?

No! Plastic does not preen...
Does not stretch out sculpted wings
Arch gracefully curved neck
Point long yellow bill
Towards shallow pool
Filled up with recent
Life giving Spring rains

Do others see it? Stunning Great Egret
An apparition of nature suspended
Within chaos of construction
Unruffled by clanging machines it hunts
Cars begin to edge forward
My heart sings out in gratitude
For nature's unexpected gift

Jean Sullivan - Beaverton, OR - jean.sully8269@yahoo.com

How beautiful to watch a leaf
rise from the ground at the will of the wind
and swirl around and around until
the wind's whimsy leaves it
to float to the ground again.

My being is like this leaf,
rising from the depths of my spirit
to whirl around in service to those in need;
then rest again, until another need arises.
How wonderful
that the playful things in nature
often hold great spiritual truths!

Anita Leamy - Sykesville, MD - alleamy@gmail.com

Renewal

Tucked deep within the woods
at the foot of the mountain
a stream bed gathers extra heartbeats,
glistening jewels hidden
in the mud beneath rushing water
that sings hallelujahs
to April's advancing warmth.

The weight shifts, mountain to stream.
Pulses come alive
clinging to cattail promises.

Daylight takes its sweet time.
Leaf-mottled sunshine warms
steppingstones,
a path left by the ancients,
inviting you across
to explore the other side
and if you so choose
return home.

Emily-Sue Sloane - Huntington Station, NY -
esloane2@gmail.com

In early spring
it only took a step out the door
on to the stone kitchen porch
to find myself face to face
with a young buck, velvet-antlered,
unafraid,
his feet buried in tulips
that I had so carefully planted
the previous fall.

There was no surprise in either of us,
I did not gasp
and he did not startle
each of us country dwellers
knowing that we belong,
as secure in our footage,
as the willows
at the bottom of the hill.

A faulted choice,
since willows are shallow-rooted,
and having reached a great height
topple easily in a high wind.
The sturdy young buck,
finally turned his head away from me
and walked slowly down
to the stream,

where he drank undisturbed,
then walked the length of it,
his privilege,
to cross manmade boundaries,
and, in the fading light,
summon thickets and brambles
to disguise
his gradual disappearance.

Daphne Sola - Trumansburg, NY - solagallery@gmail.com

**Please be the reason someone smiles today.
If you like a poem, please let the poet know it...
Thank you.**

Brilliant blue streaks past
bluebirds flit from feeders to firs

Red flashes to tree tops
cardinal sings territorial claim

Titmouse broadcasts need
Today's prominent personal ad

Junco moonwalk dances
scratches for negligible food

Black blankets bare branches
crows congregate, caw a chorus

There seems more purpose
a restive quality, an impatience

Glorious sun getting higher
fuels winter dormant necessity

Yet spring must often wait
capricious winter has last say

Snow swirls, icy winds slash
robins puff and hunker and wait

Chickadees dash, dart nonstop
horizontal through falling white

Perhaps tomorrow will bring
calendar delayed season of spring

Aimé E. Duclos - South Berwick, ME - ajduclos@gwi.net

Close Escape

Red fox flees air shots.
Vulpine paws shake in mud 'til
rounds pierce chill. Duck down.

Proud mother duck
crosses a sun-speckled
lake with baby ducklings
in tow. She is strict; they stay
in a straight row. A grey
heron stands on one
leg, pondering the duck's
progress. Behind grown
turtles, baby turtles get
swimming lessons.

A breeze sways a pair
of weeping willows
whose long leaves
cast dancing shadows
in the lake.

Honking geese have
taken up residence
on nearby grass.
Sounds like an
altercation.

Spring brings new
animal babies,
and covers trees
with her shawl.
All is as it should be.

Sara McNulty - Staten Island, NY - sablond49purple@gmail.com

Rebirth

nature is my guru
sun always rises
sun always sets
bringing new day
life returns
spring after spring

Carol Bezin - Arkdale, WI - angelbezin@gmail.com

I remember
 when he was old and gray
 sitting by the fire telling
 of early spring back home
 of being among the daffodils
 spread on the hills
 of yellow faces
 popping up through the snow
 turning to the sun
 of being amazed
 they knew to return
 year after year
 sparkling with the promise
 of another spring

nothing has changed
 daffodils continue to bloom
 as if he never left

Iris Levin - Rockville Centre, NY - idlevin@aol.com

Welcome Home

It was cold and blustery
 when we left, streets empty,
 gray, dirty snow piled in
 supermarket parking lots,
 long dead brown leaves
 clogging curbs, drains dammed
 with dirty water, soaked trash.
 Two weeks was all that
 passed, all that went by,
 until that late afternoon
 when we came back, returned
 to a new city, one flooded with
 green -- grass, leaves, an explosion
 of growth, once bare trees filled out,
 limbs overhanging quiet, clean streets in
 vibrant tunnels of green,
 exhilarating cathedrals of green,
 awaiting our return, greeting us,
 welcoming us home.

J. B. Hogan - Fayetteville, AR - jbhogan22@hotmail.com

Bubbling up, cool, refreshing, clean,
spring water trickles away from source
gently down slight hill almost
hidden under leaf and twig
pouring gently, quietly into
streamlet, half a yard wide
softly running over sandy soil
with luck and rain reaching
branch creek, widening, speeding,
over round rocks smoothed
through era, epoch, around
bends with deep holes
for swimming, fishing,
careening under red-rusted bridge
past little country store seeking
more water, river now, wide gap
bank to bank, slow moving, mostly
drifting, floating, eddies and currents
pushing on toward mighty river,
wide enough for ferry, for large boat
reaching village, town, bustling port city,
nearing end at last, washing silt, mud,
debris through the channel to
all engorging sea, endless, saline,
stretching to distant, far horizon,
greedy swallower of all.

J. B. Hogan - Fayetteville, AR - jbhogan22@hotmail.com

A Different Dress

The leaves have long been held in ice
Are melting, limp, and raw
No longer covered up in white beneath
the empty trees

They have been broken, deliquesce
Their robes in grass and straw
Are ready for a different dress
of daffodils and bees

Samuel Wells - Cedar City, UT - samuelwells@suu.edu

Smoky blue morning rises like a whale,
clammers over Max Patch, Mount LeConte,
Clingman's Dome, Chilhowie Ridge,
roars slate gray into the Tennessee Valley,
slaps us all awake.

Moonlight sneaks out of sight
over the Cumberland Plateau,
relieved to avoid the clamor.

Early spring rainstorm, raging cloudburst,
percussion thunder serenade, lightning fireworks--
son et lumière show for early risers.
A morning for strong hearts and strong coffee.

Gray-blue clouds hang over Appalachian
peaks like ovate pewter bowls,
monsoon pours over craggy landscape.
Smoky gray sky wanders off--
in search of Xanadu.

Dogwood Petals

Confetti splashes on asphalt--
Knoxville dogwood trails plush
with pink and ivory petals.

It seems blasphemy
to drive over this sacred bed
of floral splendor, tires crushing
fragile fallen blooms,
as we ooh and aah our way
through April's urban affluence.

I yearn for unfettered forest luxury--
dense heaps of dead leaves,
rhododendron thickets,
impassable squirrel trails,
tiny buds exploding
from the untamed primeval
Mother Tree.

The moon reappears
from behind a cloud.

Moon-glow dapples the water,
pebbles and sand
along the shore are rinsed
by the returning tide.

New moon, not cold nor proud,
but kinder than home,
heart larger than land.

The sound of waves
heard through the window
open to receive it

following months
of winter sleep.

It murmurs low and deep
like a lover's whisper.

Eugene O'Connor - Columbus, OH - emoconnorhd@gmail.com

Here and Gone

She appears, stately and silent,
Plumage blending with the wooded backdrop.
Her brood follows close behind,
Heads bowed to gather edible morsels from the forest floor.

It's late afternoon.
She strides closer to the road, her flock still following.
Pausing at road's edge she hesitates.

My silent plea, "Don't!"

At last, she turns back, struts into the woods, obedient.
Offspring still in tow, melting into the forest.
Gone!

Ginny Wenz - Hamden, MA - ginnywenz@gmail.com

Winter's
solemn beauty
has its charm. Bare branches
etch hieroglyphs on pale skies,
beguile.

Falling
snow imbues the
atmosphere with pale light.
But I am servant of the sun
god, Lugh.

His rise
is slow, gathers
strength each day. I prepare
a royal carpet--green, not red--
for him.

I coax
shoot and tendril,
leaf and bud, to welcome
blossoms for wreaths and garlands for
bouquets.

When Spring's
gossamer gown
swirls in Zephyr's breezes,
I'll claim the lovely May Queen for
my bride.

Katherine A. Hogan - Forest Hills, NY - ednastv@aol.com

Bloom over Thorn

Saguaro defies--
Night bloom white petals close,
ignore thorny ways.

JC Gatti - Tempe, AZ - jcgatti12@gmail.com

On dreamy light
She stood before me
In a gown
Of royal blue.

In her hand
A lily white,
A lion by her side.

I walked toward her.
Marigolds bloomed
Where I stepped.

I stopped.

Thunder sounded.
Sunshine vanished,
And the storm grew.

Dark clouds
Raced across the sky
Like panthers.

The lady smiled
There in the rain.
She raised her hand
In command.

Two fingers
Led the moon
To cross the sun,
And the world
Shadowed
In eclipse.

Judith Lyn Sutton - Campbell, CA - jlsutton46@comcast.net

Spring, that little imp,
gayly gambols through the trees
playing hide and seek.

Vaughn Neeld - Cañon City, CO - vaughnneeld@hotmail.com

The pyrrhuloxia in the pyracantha,
red and gray in the thorny green and red,
the bird the color of ash and fire
like Phoenix at that moment
of immolation/resurrection,
like spring rising out of the
ashes of winter.

You could say that,
but those similes are too grand
for this discrete bird,
the Sonoran cardinal
who nests in mesquite,
feeds on berries and sunflower seeds,
keeps a low profile.

The desert doesn't allow many luxuries,
but considering that and all the other limitations
imposed upon us, it's a minor spectacle
to see his red crest standing straight up,
red breast and tail, red face
around his bright orange parrot beak.
He's dressed for drab surroundings,
allowing only a discrete flair
for his mate.

Richard Green - Pleasanton, TX - rc.green@hotmail.com

Almost Everyone

Most bird eggs hatch in spring, slowly,
gently, allowing new life
to emerge, mothers hovering close-by
food dangling from beaks and talons,
watching for chicks to indulge in
life, giving nutrition, except for
those shells that remain closed,
pecked, clawed, rolled, studied,
cold now, no life inside, not chosen
to start this spring, special still,
somehow, mother pushing it aside into
leaves and pine needle, watching
newborns, almost bald, eat hungrily.

Dianna Walston - Kokomo, IN - cportolano@hotmail.com

A first glimpse of you
evokes a smile, a full gaze
at your faces makes me laugh.
You sport the countenance
of lively, happy children
with your bold, colorful patterns.
Some of you could be clowns
parading your bright apparel
in a circus of color.

Your courage against the cold
is contagious, holding
a cheerful attitude
no matter the temperature.
Inspiring to us all,
especially us wimps
shivering in the frigid weather,
always beckoning the sunshine.
Your presences gifts us
a portion of that courage and warmth.

Wesley Sims - Oak Ridge, TN - wes4words@att.net

Ode to Redbuds

Bold valentines of Spring,
you spruce up woods edge
with magenta buds popping
from bare bark of limbs and trunks.
Your graceful branches arch out
to sculpt rounded crowns.
Your flowers blossom like bright
sky-bursts of dark pink fireworks.
You brighten stark roadsides
like rows of streetlights,
glow like lines of young ballerinas
flaunting their showy tutus.
Your clusters of rosy flowers
flood dull landscapes
and fill our lives with weeks
of early Spring delight.

Wesley Sims - Oak Ridge, TN - wes4words@att.net

I am the child of spring.
Roaming this earth for six decades.
Wandering and wondering.
With the eyes of nature,
and the curiosity of a cat.
Leaping over streams,
and tossing pebbles,
watching ripples glide towards the shore.
Astonished as fish swim in their schools.
Shimmering to and fro,
as the sun sets over the horizon.
I hike and walk--
To satiate what my inquisitive soul craves.
Quill feathered clouds instruct me to follow,
verdant mountain paths.
To a world of inexplicable silence,
the language of spring's beauty,
is full of peace and joy.
As iridescent wings of the wind,
carry me through,
her musical notes of this earth.
The scent of lilacs and apples blossoms,
fill my imagination,
with words to describe my very being.

Mary Anne Abdo - Scranton, PA - Eirinn919@aol.com

The Nature of Spring

Spring tells the grass to welcome flowers, frogs, and children.
Pleasing the lilacs and roses that give their perfume as gifts.
Rambunctious squirrels play like happy children.
Incredible bird choirs sing at sunrise and sunset.
Numerous constellations light the night sky.
Grand Nature's beauty helps Creation enjoy spring's rebirth!

Terri Winaught - Pittsburgh, PA - terriwinaught2@gmail.com

Rainy morning
miracle, overnight
tiny volunteer
popped up, crannied
between red bricks.
Pretty pixie-sized
pansy in her ruffled
yellow, purple dress.
How it's possible
is anybody's guess.
Viola reminds
me beauty can
flourish even
in hard times.
She prompts me
to skip today's
paper and paint
her ladyship instead.

Dawn Breaks

Outside my bedroom
window last night's
raindrops glisten
like silver sequins
in California
pepper tree canopy.
Lingering schefflera
leaves wave hello
to emerging sun.
Sparkles evaporate
as daylight warms
the morning; birds
herald it in. A spirited
squirrel wakes, races
along back fence.
Fine fortune is on its way.

The tiny tomato plants
purchased from a greenhouse
need more water, yet again,
with the sun cranking out
way too much heat.

Now the petunias in hanging baskets
shout for water--then, seeing they have
our attention, point to pesky weeds at their feet.

Mosquitoes don't wait for dusk
for their out-for-blood attacks--
this weather must intensify their
desire to drink people.

At the bird feeders,
wasps annoy and torment
thirsty orioles and hummingbirds--
thus, we hang liquid wasp traps
without too much guilt.

Through it all, unperturbed,
the petite bright moss rose live in bliss
in the garden, welcoming the heat--
Bring it on! they sing.

Linda Aschbrenner - Marshfield, WI -
wordzooLAschbrenner@gmail.com

Butterfly

Chrysalis
Brown small casing
Spring's gift to flowers
Waiting for the proper moment
To waken
Bringing colors to flutter around
April's pale blossoms
Join bees and hummingbirds
Scattering pollen
Swallowtails

Madalin Bickel - Tallahassee, FL - madalin60@verizon.net

Frantic winds today.
Wind chimes play jazz.
Pipes crash,
pick up one chord,
play another
only to be
interrupted
by a jarring run.
It's chaos out there.

Yesterday, waltz time.
A breeze carried the pipes
in quiet rhythm.
As the clapper struck each pipe,
the sound resonated,
hung in the air,
created a smooth melody.

Some days the pipes rest.
They hang, barely moving,
except for an intermittent
almost unnoticed *ting*,
a quiet tone that lingers.

Nature In Tune

Do you see the sunshine
creep through the blinds?
Do you hear the birds sing
in syncopated time?

The trills run octaves upward,
the chirps are monotone,
the caws are more like drumbeats,
or a steady metrodome.

Flowers nod to breezes,
branches dance to winds,
raindrops fall in rhythms
creating nature's hymns.

Clearing the raspberry patch
 in the spring, we find a large snake--
 exhausted from struggle,
 hopelessly tangled in the net
 we'd placed to keep birds out.
 At first, we fear it is dead,
 then spot a tiny movement.

I run to the house, find strong scissors.
 You carefully cut the nylon strands
 while I overcome my aversion to snakes,
 hold the coils away from your work.
 Mottled skin feels surprisingly dry,
 coils bulge in spots, tightly constrict
 in others. Finally freed, stillness.
 Moments--an eternity?
 Suddenly, the head rises,
 primal eyes meet ours,
 tongue flicks. In a second,
 the pine snake--four feet long,
 slithers away across the grass
 and we vow--no more nets!

Kris Rued-Clark - Arpin, WI - kruedclark@yahoo.com

Dandelion

Beneath the grey trunk of the old oak,
 an unexpected flower appears.
 It has dug into the hardened ground,
 triumphed in the very spot
 where nothing else can grow.
 It has a yellow crown, a sweet smell.

Some call it a weed, try to eradicate it;
 still, it manages to bloom.
 Soon it will transform into a cotton ball
 with a multitude of feathery seeds;
 no longer will it hold itself for its own keeping,
 dispersing parachutes to be carried by the wind.

Lynne D. Soulagnet - Medford, NY -
LynneSoulagnet@yahoo.com

In memory of Charles Podbelsek

From the moment you heard
my enthusiastic tale of watching
a flock of white pelicans
spiral higher and higher
until they were out of sight
in the Nebraska sky,
you were determined to discover
your own pelican ballet
here in Wisconsin.
You found the perfect
pelican watch platform,
the marsh observation deck
on Smokey Hill Road.
On our first visit,
no pelicans in sight,
we listened to a medley
of frog songs.
Hearing their music,
you reached over,
folded me into your arms,
and we waltzed.

Vlasta Karol Blaha - Colby, WI - vkb66@frontier.com

Bee

A bee contacted me this morning
hovering above the blackberries
he touched a flower here and there
yet paid me no mind
I filled my woven basket
with the tiny grape-like clusters
while he gathered nectar
for his honeycombed hive
worked casually beside me
as I moved along the bushes
humming, went about
his business as I did mine

Lynne D. Soulagnet - Medford, NY -
LynneSoulagnet@yahoo.com

This morning, I am a puddle
in the grass after a heavy rain.

Sunlight mirrors from my surface
illuminating a nearby pickup.
I feel the grass below me drinking
me in. Part of me becomes grass
growing green and healthy.

A young robin comes sipping,
then wades deeper, fluffs
her wings, flings droplets about
making a small rainbow.

Now Lea from next door, stomp
stomp in her small yellow boots.
Whee, I fly in all directions.

Some of me evaporates, wafting
with the breeze, part of the air itself,
spreading out over Iowa, a change
of form but the same immortal
water, next perhaps rain in Kansas.

Tree Frog

Time seems to push
me along, a powerful wind,
and I on a slick sidewalk
slipping and windmilling
my arms for balance,
perpetually falling forward
in the maelstrom.
A single iridescent green
tree frog croaking on a tree,
tiny but with a great voice,
grabs my full attention, stops
me in the present moment,
a hole in time I can duck into
and stop this precipitous slide.

A gray squirrel settles on a railing
of my backyard deck, oblivious apparently
to being watched this spring morning.
The squirrel is intent on cleaning, his paws,
even his mouth, serving as comb and brush.
His left hind leg rises to his stomach,
the leg blindingly fast back and forth,
its guard hair and shorter underfur the repository
perhaps of lice or mites embedded in its winter nest,
or perhaps just dust and bits of leaf.
Then its front right paw rubs its face,
and its tail curls up and over, then down
onto the railing, mouth jabbing at the tail,
seemingly biting away whatever resides there,
like a person devouring buttered sweet corn
off its cob, back and forth. The squirrel pauses
occasionally, looks my way but shows no fear,
appears not to notice me behind a window
in my kitchen. The squirrel's efforts continue until
satisfied on this bright day, it finally ends
its grooming, the cleaning done, and sprints
away to where fellow squirrels perhaps await
its coming, or, possibly, one special squirrel.

Edward J. Rielly - Westbrook, ME - erielly2@earthlink.net

osprey pair

osprey pair
one among the twigs of the nest
one on the crossbar high above
unsheltered from driving rain
waiting
stoic, impatient or oblivious of time
for nature's next step
in their bespoken calling
to bring forth the next generation

mjNordgren - Forest Grove, OR - maryjanenordgren@gmail.com

With my mind full of questions, I sat on a dock
 overlooking an ocean. I was deep in thought.
 I wondered, "Where might the universe end?
 and if it does, tell me, what then?"
 "Why am I me and why not an ant,
 or a bird, or an animal? Why not a plant?"
 My brow was furrowed, my face had a frown.
 Just at that moment I chose to look down
 as a porpoise swam by in the bright blue sea.
 Why was it a porpoise and why was I me?
 From far away sounded the chimes of a clock.
 I reluctantly rose and walked off the dock.
 The tides had washed in some shells from the sea.
 Why were these shells and why was I me?
 Bordering the beach was a stand of pine trees
 Their needles were moving in the ocean's brisk breeze.
 Pinecones lay waiting to be washed out to sea.
 Why were they trees and why was I me?
 Lightning flashed, thunder rolled, I ran to get home.
 Huge drops pelted down; I was soaked to my bones.
 I entered my cozy house, fixed a cup of hot tea.
 My questions had vanished, I was glad to be ME!

Wilma Lentz - Oro Valley, AZ - wilmallentz@gmail.com

Clearly Spring

Bare branches with open arms
 birth baby leaves.
 Dainty dandelions
 dance in warm breezes---
 lift yellow faces and smile.
 Red winged black birds
 wear stripes insignias
 like those of a colonel.
 Robins bob heads,
 keep one eye open,
 nod again... I nod back.
 Chirp-filled trees and hedges
 makes me trill along,
 and invent my own bird chatter.
 They like it--and answer back.

Rosemary Marshall Staples - Eliot, ME - roeystaples@netzero.net

Beneath fresh, glisten-green leaves
 an Orange tree arm hosts a
 suspended swaying cluster of
soft brown-shiny black, feathery, fluttering,
crowding, unruly, chirping, clutching, contending,
 Intervals...
 dancing mid-air
to and fro,
 out, up, around and back,
on top, sideways, below,
 hanging downside up ... upside down,
seeking a brief grasp and peck at
 tempting treats ...
(held within a dangling, thin wire basket)
 as the morsels diminish rapidly,
affording clever feathered visitors
 on the ground -- tasty opportunities...
until a return of
 stillness... silence.

Marlene C. Little - Sun City, AZ - cportolano@hotmail.com

A Neighborhood Bicycle Ride

Sounds of life seem endless
on a neighborhood bicycle ride.

A muffled lawn mower sputters its path
through lush, fragrant, grasses.

Clunking crockery sinks in high dishwater,
under open, cafe-curtained windows.

The finality of silverware clatters on empty plates
from deep within a corner cottage.

Handlebars turn homeward while...

Over-watered yards send trails of gurgling water
echoing into a nearby storm drain.

Marlene C. Little - Sun City, AZ - cportolano@hotmail.com

Each day now a different garden patch
is up for cleaning of grasses and dead plants
previously left to overwinter for snowbirds
that glean for protein in the stark cold

now needing to compost or burn to make way
for new growth, foxtail, and Johnson grass
escaped brome and even switchgrass
tugged free from soil, seed stalks stripped
by tiny beaks as per design so that
we defend the frowsiness of plots
to explain how those tiny birds will now nest
and multiply alongside plump chickadees
and woodpeckers in tree hole nests

come May, we set tomato plants
danger of a late frost rare after Mother's Day
seeds pushed into soil for cucumbers
in the wooden whiskey barrel wire wrapped
to keep out the inquisitive deer
that visit young shoots even alongside the house

fingers comb warming soil to search out
perennials pushing up from winter sleep
butterfly milkweeds, larkspurs, beebalm
and coneflowers all roughly where
memory recalls their hibernation
even as prickly pear's black pads swell
into fat green ovals, and penstemon
spikes through gravel being returned
sustaining soil, every act intentional
to help Nature thrive and survive.

Pat Anthony - Fontana, KS - metpvan@gmail.com

In the sun's bright rays
I sit in a beam of gold
wrapped in spring's warm quilt.

Vaughn Neeld - Cañon City, CO - vaughnneeld@hotmail.com

You can't quite contend it is out of place--
except that it is a domesticated type
in full pink glory beside a fieldstone wall
deep in a gully of a deep wood
no one has visited for how long now
no one knows.

Any poor potato patch is less than obvious.
The boards or logs of any house or cabin
eviscerated long ago and added to
the tree's chances of survival in this dark
seclusion but by chance I've found.

You can't quite say it is the saving grace
of human activity everywhere on the land--
but the squirrels and the sunlight
probably would not argue if you did.
The overwhelming green of a natural state
throws shadows.

It ought to allow for this kindly shock
of flamingo even at the hands of intruders.
It will not bear fruit but it will bloom
for a meeting place and cast its treaty petals
like a blanket on the ground.

Daril Bentley - Elmira, NY - dbentley@ohiologistics.com

Spring Sunrise

Dawn breaks
dramatic skies,
drapes orange pink drop curtains,
scattering violet clouds east
dancing
like pink graceful ballerinas
blithely spinning across
an endless stage
of play

Alicia Ann Torres - Windsor, CA - freedom0768@att.net

A century ago, a work crew stuck a power pole
On top of a random boulder,
Properly called an erratic.

It's still there,
Thirty feet off the road,
Down thirty to the rock
Down another twenty to the ground.

Somebody cleared a path for the wires
Through the trees

And left it.

The clearing is gone.
Swallowed by a mazing line of aspens
That somehow doesn't quite reach the wires

But fills every inch of ground not already
Claimed by pines and stumps

A sort of manmade opening
Taken and regained
In a flutter of yellowing leaves.

Harold Sneide - Indian Hills, CO - haroldsneide@comcast.net

The Trees Wait

The trees wait in silence
As the sun digs wells around them.

These wells get deeper and wider
As they reclaim the surrounding slope

Joining to open the hillside
To the sun.

Harold Sneide - Indian Hills, CO - haroldsneide@comcast.net

She speaks their names tenderly
as if they were family members
the sounds trailing softly behind her.
This morning, she awakened early
from a restless sleep
after having dreamt of storms
she looks out upon dark clouds
in a quarreling sky, and goes out
purposely walking like Emily Dickinson
back and forth along designated paths,
seeking their familiar plots
looking carefully at each one
again, she recites their names:
Daffodil, crocus, hyacinth, allium,
mint, chives, Lilly of the Valley, Holly Hock
all her beauties, soon to emerge after sleeping
beneath winter's cold landscape
patches of dark soil come into view
feathered wings swoop low,
over the unplanted places now the color of rich java,
moist, patiently waiting for seeds of last year to become
she clutches her shawl, tho the morning is warm
her smile fades at times, gazing to shaded spots
where some sprouts have failed to emerge
in her heart she knows there are
so many others below
that have already taken root

RM Yager - Deerfield, IL - yagojohn@aol.com

Ode to the Wild Strawberry

Oh, yellow bloom atop stout stem
with five petals to turn into
ripe, sweet berries. Oh, green,
green leaf with ruffled edge,
may spring pander to your heart,
and April nourish your beauty
with its cool nights and warm
days and may you forever bring
forth the fresh, fragrant fruit of joy.

Patricia Hope - Oak Ridge, TN - thetwohopes@aol.com

I am a yellow swallowtail,
Coming from a chrysalis.
My best friends are Monarches.
Nets take us both out of the wild.
Please don't cut the weeds
Or coneflowers,
As they are our habitat.
I admire the Monarches
because they freely
migrate for warmth
in Mexico.
Black swallowtails
are my dear cousins,
though we compete for
the same flowers.
Painted ladies and whites entertain me.
I would really like to meet
a Blue Morpho.

David Blackey - La Crosse, WI - funkyjubu@yahoo.com

Nothing in Nature Dismisses

The lily does not dismiss the sun.
The cardinal does not ignore its mate's call.

The trees have no choice but to obey the wind.
The rain responds to the clouds.

The dog does not roll its eyes when spoken to.
The cat's detachment is not a choice.

Nothing in nature dismisses the other.
Only humans dismiss.

The lilac does not refuse to lend its fragrance to the May breeze.
The maple does not choose to keep its leaves when fall arrives.

The sun is not selfish nor does it eclipse for spite.
The moon does not refuse to reflect the sun.

Christine Swanberg - Rockford, IL - Chris.swanberg@comcast.net

You do not. This is our daily parade.
See it as a turkey trot or spring saunter
Know that you are but a spectator.
No honking, please, or show of dismay
at our daily crossing of side streets
or your perilous highway lacking stoplights.
Relax. Put your life on "Pleasant Pause"
for but a minute or two. You need it!
There's no all-fire hurry here, so settle
into our adopted small-town scene.
While we do our own thing, we're here
to entertain you too! Surely, you've seen
or heard of Las Vegas style fan dancers.
We strut in full-feathered costumes. Our famed "Toms"
fan out in full display for your viewing pleasure
in our free and free-form, new, non-show-biz show.

Realize we provide a mobile act,
no dull "same ole, same ole" where
your eyes glaze over day-in and day-out.
Do we not make you stop, look twice?
Consider us a bouquet of feathery spring delights,
something beyond your small boring life
or cares of winter past. If you listen,
we'll give you a gobble-ly shout out.

Our throaty gargles might make you smile,
that is, if you'll let the corners of your mouth
turn up just a mite.
It's time to come out of your dormant cave
We, your unlikely, fair-weather guests of spring,
already have! Choose to live large, venture forth.
Consider it a feather in your cap or spring bonnet,
our pleasure.

Judi Youngers - Comfort, TX - writingjudi8@icloud.com

boisterous spring winds
shake pine trees hard
indoor stillness

Carol Bezin - Arkdale, WI - angelbezin@gmail.com

We open the door and step
onto the wooden planks
of the porch at dawn.
Thus, begins our daily prelude.

Miss Mitchel, my aging white dog
tugs gently at the leash
I hold tight with left hand
stretch out my right arm,
grasp the young sugar maple tree
with my right hand for balance
to descend the hillside.
Early spring landscape.
We reached a familiar deer trail.
My walking shoes squish into
soggy rain-soaked layers of new
grass pushing upwards
through dissolving leaves.

Detritus, moss-covered trail, broken branches.

We stop to stare at rushing creek
glowing silver-lilac illumination
I am thinking of poems
about the season's transformation
when green leaves begin to sprout
and change into delicate brilliant hues.

I look through layers of vertical
trees and feel the textures of bark
glance up into the clear blue sky
take a deep breath and smile
as we turn around and walk home.
I say to my dog,
"This is a perfect spring day!"

Lynda McKinney Lambert - Ellwood City, PA -
riverwoman@zoominternet.net

**Please be the reason someone smiles today.
If you like a poem, please let the poet know it...
Thank you.**

What wakes me in the morning
is not the melody of the songbird
It's dogs barking in battle
Lawn service weed whackers
Town workers breaking up the street
What soothes my anguish is the café
Its clear window brightens the eye
from winter-worn stress

Dogwalkers and commuters
Moms walking baby carriages,
I sip espresso, break the yolks of two
eggs, absorb the yolk with toast
I'm just another face in the crowd
Outside the pre-summer sun
reflects off my aviator glasses

It never matters...
what the groundhog predicts

Robert Savino - West Islip, NY - dynsus@aol.com

Call of the Raven

“When the raven calls, listen,” her grandmother once told her.
“It’ll give you a warning.”

Now, seeing this poor bird struggling beneath
an unusual mound of smooth, gleaming stones,
she wonders how it got there,
realizes it's in danger.

She carefully clears the stones away, one by one.
The bird snaps at her,
then seems to realize she's trying to help.
Finally, the raven, disgruntled, disheveled, but unharmed,
rises, escapes, in a flurry of wings.

Abbie Johnson Taylor - Sheridan, WY -
abbietaylor945@gmail.com

It's not what it used to be back east--
my bike's front wheel stuck in the mud,
daffodils Mother scattered in the woods
dipping their heads in the rain.
Later in life, my own crocus
busting through patchy snow,
the scent of hyacinth at the screen door.
I wander outside with a cup of coffee
to welcome May's first warm day.

Our desert unleashes a different
brand of spring. By late February
patio flowers no longer need
protection from a pre-dawn freeze.
In mid-March we trek north to savor
golden poppies along the back road
to Florence. April brings warm, dry
afternoons, reminders of fiery days
that lie in wait. At sunrise
I don a sweater, grab the paper,
head out back to enjoy spring's
last cool morning.

Janet McMillan Rives - Oro Valley, AZ - rives@uni.edu

Tree Swallows

Like demented darts they stitch the air,
chasing occult trigonometries;
crisscross, crankle, hairpin turns,
do-si-do. Like fetishes carved
from soap, they loom on blasted branches;
fistfuls of iridescent scales,
mermaid tails, flung on ashen heads
and shoulders, like Phoenixes half-
resurrected. Cyan, turquoise,
silver-blue, drizzle-dazzle-slather;
smelted Mediterranean.
Whoever knew such loveliness
could be bestowed by blushing Earth
on fickle-fleeting feathers?

Jackie Fellague - Torrance, CA - cportolano@hotmail.com

Living in the middle of a meadow,
to guard from the cows, I have a corral.
In midst of the beautiful Blue Ridge mountains
I live alone with my black dog Aric.
In the dusk, we sit on the rear porch,
watching Sol slip behind the mountain
as sky darkens into starlit night.
We listen to the dulcet sounds of my mouth harp,
and the occasional songs of cattle,
as they settle down in a peaceful nightfall.
I am sublimely and serenely at home.

Majestic, Deceptive Sea

I hear the sound of waves in the distance,
as a whisper in the misty moonlight.
A serpent's tongue speaking tones of mystery
entices and sets a tingle down my spine.
Growing more loudly as I move in,
a hint of waves crashing as I draw nearer,
promising me a playful mystery,
encourages me to venture closer.
The moon reflects its light on the breaking water;
that game with a playfulness that pulls me closer in.
Sand, cool on my feet, speaks of gentle sport.
I am led to the wet licking slope
where waves are breaking with sounds of thunder,
enticing me to imbibe of its power.
Now, with sea-water lapping at my feet,
my heart is filled with a horrible terror.
The overwhelming intensity is too much to bear.
I back away, lest I am engulfed by the sea.
Settling on the upper slope of wet sand,
where my heartbeat is slightly slower,
and I can contemplate the raw power.
But even there, it is too much for me.
I move back to where the sand is dry and cool,
to sit and meditate on the majesty,
and hear the serpent's hiss beneath the power.
It tells me to heed the sibilant warning.
Many an unwary soul has found its doom
in the mighty, wild deceptive deeps.

A small stream behind the lot
whispered as the new sun
poked through newly blossomed
branches of trees.

The friend who asked for my help
sat with his two sons, his daughter
and his wife. He said they were
creating a new life after their
mobile home burned to the ground
and I told him I was looking
for a second job.

A cool breeze whispered
through branches and limbs
and his daughter and sons
picked up branches and twigs
while the friend and I
mowed the yard.

When his wife gave us Kool Aide
I wondered about friendships made
and he said this was his
first job of the year.

The soft breeze was a song
as we took a mid-morning break
and I listened as the earth spoke
to me, and for that moment
I knew this was where I belonged.

Mike Bayles - Davenport, IA - bayles.mike558@gmail.com

Avian Chorale

Warbling
Clear insistent
Calling enticing evoking
Crescendos of desire awaken
Trilling

Gay Marie Logsdon - Oak Ridge, TN -
gmarielogsdon@gmail.com

As raindrops sing their comfort song,
My thoughts go to the woods
An earthy call reminding me of what lies there,
Awaiting my footsteps and play
Mossy lichens lovingly wrapped
Translucent green under rainy love
Woodears and lions' manes
Fleshy chicken of the woods
Hanging on, plumply strutting their red wares
Tree trunks with whorls of age
Revealing portals into the unknown
Or faces of things known
There's piney fragrance mixed
With damp creosote
Flashing memories of summer camps
And autumn bonfires
Catch the sunrays between tall trees
And marvel at the spot of blue above the canopy
Symmetry in chaos, patterns in magical things
Secrets of ancient pasts, stories and lores
Ancestral call from the earth
Awakening the wild beast within
City sounds disappeared by piney cushions
Here is a world lost into its own
Creatures crawling, creatures croaking
For once, I'm at ease in my soul
The soundtrack of life thrumming
An unbroken circle of life
That feels sacredly restored
As raindrops sing their comfort song,
My body hears but my soul is at play
In the woods.

Amee Shah - Philadelphia, PA - Ameeshahphd@gmail.com

taking pause

morning breeze
green boughs sway
my coffee grows cold

Gay Marie Logsdon - Oak Ridge, TN -
gmarielogsdon@gmail.com

One fine May morning
A flash of auburn
Caught my eye from
Atop the hill out back

Three red fox kits
Gamboling about
Seemingly involved in
A game of vulpine tag

Fascinated, I watched as
They chased each other,
Sensing their joy in this
Simple, exuberant play

Until their mom appeared
Yipping shrilly, while
Gesturing for her errant
Kits to follow her

It seems I had been spotted
And, in the interest of
Safety, Mom decided to
Bring her kits back home

Smiling, I went back inside
Knowing what a wonderful
Gift it had been to witness
Those young foxes at play

Dawn McCormack - Plainfield, CT - djohnson8251@yahoo.com

Daylight
Lasting longer.
Evening walks through gardens,
Sighs of contentment,
Flowers bloom, sweet aromas fill
The night

Madalin Bickel - Tallahassee, FL - madalin60@verizon.net

Fuzzy, wide-eyed pair
Of barred owl babies
Newly hatched, raspy
Cries beg for food

Dad and mom both
Playing their parts,
Knowing what to do,
Sharing responsibilities

As they respond to the
Owlets frequent
Harsh cries and screeches
For more and more mice

Finally, the day arrives when
The young learn to fly
Yet, even then, they depend
On mom and dad to feed them

Until that day when they learn
To hunt, and eventually,
After much practice
Master their famous call

Eight sonorous hoots, four
At a time, and then fly
Off to their own territories
To join the woodland chorus

Dawn McCormack - Plainfield, CT - djohnson8251@yahoo.com

He scampered
Across the lawn
Swishing his fluffy tail
Stopped and looked around, grateful for
Peanuts.

Madalin Bickel - Tallahassee, FL - madalin60@verizon.net

Spring comes late to the high country.
Snow lingers in deep drifts
in shadows where winter is salvaged
and reigns unmolested,
while the sun bares faded grasses
in the warmth of south-facing slopes,
and new green shoots inch toward the light.
Nature's lines are rambling curves
traced across slopes and fields,
outlined by a thousand streams
of just-melted snow.
And across this zebra-striped landscape
the embroidery of wildlife tracks is stitched
in wandering rows and crisscrossed paths,
tracing patterns of life still living.

Greer L. Fox - Knoxville, TN - greerlfox@gmail.com

A Pine's First Memory

A pine's first memory may be the feel of warm earth
that gives it birth, the trickle of water giving it life.
It might be the pushing through from ground to air, bark
starting, branches spreading, sunshine on its young boughs.
First memory may be the sound of birds calling, building nests
in its limbs, their cries of danger when the hawk is near.

Or maybe it remembers its siblings as far as the eye can see,
too many to count but all welcoming to their woods, where they
depend on each other for understanding,
to grieve when they are grown
and gone, destroyed by a storm and left to rot on
the forest floor, or felled
by man, cut into firewood and burned into oblivion.
But, somewhere
in the forest a new pine seed is pushing through eons old soil,
anxious for its first memory.

Patricia Hope - Oak Ridge, TN - thetwohopes@aol.com

Spring walks in Occidental are exquisite
I park near The Pantless Gardener's house
& try not to gawk
They are just pleased for the season
Like so many out & about today
There are flowers colorful, flavorful everywhere
Mixed with Italian cuisine
There is wisteria hysteria
I make my way to the peaceful creek
Its waters sweeping after a wet winter
People & creatures are elated for the mellow flow
Shade of oak, laurel, maple
Bird & squirrel are diligently erecting nests
I peer into the magic stump
That holds wishes & treasures
Reach the route that reminds me of Yosemite
My redwood grove favorite filters sunlight just so
Moss, fern, trillium, clover all over
I pick up amber banana slugs thus they won't get mashed
Stroll downhill close to the swimming hole old
Tim's lush, beautiful lot is imbued with butterflies bluest
I declare to deer that they have nothing to fear
An inky cat named Blackberry shows me its last fraction
Of the road aged
I have come to an end of my promenade
Someone has dressed the Bigfoot statue in bunny ears
& tutu pink
How fond I am of walking Occidental in spring!

Kristin Ruth Lawrence - Sebastopol, CA - webwalker17@aol.com

Springtime Bumblebee
Humming on ceanothus
Endangered beauty

Kristin Ruth Lawrence - Sebastopol, CA- webwalker17@aol.com

Spring is when the Swallows come,
back to nest on my front porch.
The nest awaits them, firmly built
with twigs and mud tightly packed,
neatly tucked above the light,
empty, waiting for their return.

A pair of Swallows begin
circling round and round,
taking turns on the nest,
warming tiny splotched, speckled eggs,
babies waiting to be born,
droppings decorating my porch again.

One morning broken egg shells appear.
Hungry chicks have hatched,
needing constant feeding,
little black heads with rusty throats
poke above the nest, beaks open wide.

Parents protect them,
circle in their watchful vigil.
Downy babies quickly grow
until they fill the nest,
feathers developing.

Fluffy gray feathers
begin to flutter onto the porch.
The fledglings are trying flight wings,
wobbly, awkward at first,
then back to the snug nest safety.
Soon they will be gone.

Jane Russell - Pittsburg, CA - jrusele@yahoo.com

O, Pussywillow
Will you let me touch your fur?
Silver-gray cat paws

Anita Leamy - Sykesville, MD - alleamy@gmail.com

In a rainbow after rain fall,
painted watercolor arch,
pale hues perfectly blended.

A spun spider web,
masterfully designed architecture,
every strand measured,
intersected with accuracy.

Miniscule crystalline snowflakes,
each unique, intricately designed,
miniature lace doilies.

Butterflies, meticulous works of art,
colorful patterns copied exactly,
total wing symmetry.

Birds in migration,
harmonious murmuration.

Leaves, small efficient factories,
producing bright green chlorophyll.

Rainwater, clear, pure,
no filtration needed.

Bee hives, complex communities,
smoothly run, each bee doing its task,
for the good of the hive.

Blossoms of many hues, fragrances,
provide exquisite beauty,
sweet nectar for Hummingbirds,
butterflies, honeybees.

Bird nests carefully crafted
with twigs, grass, feathers, mud.

Rhythm and balance in ecosystem
provides synergy.

Life cycles, metamorphosis,
seasonal changes
repeat in accurate order.

Just look around,
perfection is everywhere.

Nature is in order,
it is Man who is out of sync.

As sunset's brilliant hues give way,
to darkness overtaking day,
a still hush o'er the woodland falls
awaiting twilight's chorus calls.
Creatures great and small process
in and out lairs they possess
while moon and stars turn on to light
the theater of early night.

Bats emerge, they swoop, aspire
to set the stage for nature's choir.
Woodpeckers' strident final taps
the choir director's baton raps.

Cicadas buzz and peepers peep.
The evening vesper's time they keep.
Resonant calls of great-horned owls
join in with solemn hoots and growls.

Coyote whelps, their eerie yelps,
their wild incessant crying helps
to add raw discord to the tune
that rises midst this night in June.

Alas, the house lights now burn bright.
This twilight chorus ends.
Its voices silenced, taken flight
till tomorrow its run extends.

Dale K. Nichols - Beverly Shores, IN - nichols-dale@comcast.net

Roar 'Lion

Dandelion seeds
stuck. Lost till whisked from girl's hand.
Hover next 'lion.

JC Gatti - Tempe, AZ - jcgatti12@gmail.com

Fierce wind rattles the windows,
they breathe in and out like lungs
accepting air. The rain batters the windows,
splashes onto the deck, knocks on the roof,
Violent thunder causes the house to vibrate.
The cat pauses mid-step, stares at the ceiling.
Rivulets of rain paint pictures on the glass.
I close off the lights, to better appreciate
the spectacle--the lightning carving the dark
sky with jagged slices, millions of raindrops
glimmering in the beams of the streetlamps.

Then all goes dark. Except for the momentary flashes,
the neighborhood obscured. I decide against
finding my phone, no reason to break the spell.
I open the door to inhale the scent of the garden
and the sweet aroma of Spring rain.

I find some candles, some matches.
The small flames illuminate my living room.
I climb into the recliner and pull the blanket
up to my chin. With the rain raging on the roof,
I am transported back in time, imagine myself
sitting at the entrance to a cave, fine red dust
sifting from the rock above, a small fire to
keep away the cold. And Fire Woman throwing
slashes of light across the dark, starless night.
I make an offering, for she can set
the tree tops ablaze. I sift a handful
of dried leaves into the fire, their smoke
scenting the air--

Suddenly, the cat leaps onto my lap,
startling me back into the present.
He circles three times and falls asleep.
But I am wide awake feeling
through all my senses
the primordial wonder of the storm.

Louise Moises - Richmond, CA - bookstallsf@outlook.com

The birds sound muted
A beetle
No bigger than a black nickel
Makes its way on faded ceramic tiles
to cream and red brick pavers

He is headed somewhere fast
Swift for his kind
No wings
Just short legs
Impossibly thin pencil marks
scurrying him along

The longer I am still
my ears collect birdsongs
I tuck each jingle into my heart with a smile
and note of thanks

It seems Morning Dove and Spotted Towhee
can always be counted on
Also, Bewick's Wren

That should be enough, I think
Then joy arises as Lesser Goldfinch, not less to me,
and Northern Mockingbird gift their tunes to the score

Surveying the scene from high in the sky
Red-tailed Hawk
Releases his plaintive cry
As I witness ever earth bound

Tucked in my chair
Under the eaves
Snug as a bug
Softly breathing

Julie Potiker - San Diego, CA - juliepotiker@icloud.com

The setting sun is far over the hill where sits this house
my younger brother built for our father and mother
after their retirement respectively from preaching and teaching,
both gone these many years, my home when not in New York City,
this house in shadow in the dusk that lingers still a while.
I look from the back porch to the pond just below the steep hill
where under the cover of darkness a chorus of frogs has begun
their jug-a-rum, jug-a-rum bass to the staccato of spring peepers
perched in the poplars the other side, where the outlet stream
trickles down through that copse, then into a small forest of pines
my parents planted years ago, all of one age and now all dying.
My mind turns to my own generation,
each year more of us than the last as we now age,
the dying off that has become too frequent now
to be dismissed as something I will think about tomorrow.
We're told the trees, their roots so intertwined,
commune in language alien to our kind.
Bemused, I wonder, do they mourn those who have gone before,
as we must do now more and more, as others of us take our leave,
blown down, much like diseased old pines, like them, gone with
the wind?

Gordon Gilbert - NYC, NY - gordonagilbertjr@usa.net

to the ballgame

springtime makes
one think of
baseball diamonds
I can hear
the bat hitting
the ball
and see the players
running from
first to second, then third
and finally home base
what joy to
be had by all
as baseball
season is in full
swing

Wendy Schreiner - West Seneca, NY - wendyew3@yahoo.com

Meet me in May by the weeping willow
where the breezes of spring touch you the right day and time
we will all gather under the winsome willow
all who survived, all who lived through the cold

Meet me in May where the stream takes its time
a bridge is there and a log in the sun
come from your barrow, your warren, your lair
we have changed those who will come

Meet me in May near the early rose brambles
the east of the hill catches the young spring dawn
we will run, rejoice, be reborn
and look for those, one soft spring sigh to mourn.

Susan Oleferuk - Buchanan, NY - soleferuk@yahoo.com

There Are Quiet Places

There are quiet places
Where something stopped long ago
Primordial ancient redwood forest
Sunlight filtering through the trees
I visualize dinosaurs ambling
Redwood trees fall
Open up forest floor to new sapling growth
Trees slowly decay
Release nutrients into the soil
Fires hallow out base of trees that still stand mighty
Creeks move in their channel beds after a downpour
Runoff forms new rivulets on slopes
Damp coolness on my skin
Take in incredible green-ness
The beauty, the grandeur
Grounded again, rejuvenated
But time has not stopped
It only seems so
For the few moments
As I stand among giants

Roger Funston - Marysville, CA - rogerfunston@me.com

Poems of the hills and dales
donned rainbow,
echoes in the clouds and hawks
glide in the sea of blue sky.
Even the lazy tumbleweed
among the gorgeous maidens
can't help but dance in the breeze.
Dazzling smiles of
the rainbow in the hills and dales;
celebration of the roots and seeds;
their survival beneath the snow,
more resilient and stronger
than the little stars in the night.
To begin the new life; to try again
the failed dream in the season gone;
to renew the lost love;
Mother nods in the wings of the time.

Byung A. Fallgren - WY - pyogool65@gmail.com

Old Growth

Lulled by flowing water
Wildflowers of many colors
Ferns, bogs, stately trees
Sunlight filtering through the canopy
Old growth trees untouched by recent fires
A miracle this area never logged
Widely spaced trees
Different species, different ages
Winding mountain road passes
Old gold rush camps, logging towns
Now resorts, retreats, vacation cabins
Past clear cuts, burned areas
The trail is not well maintained
Climb over fallen trees
Path littered with pine cones, sticks, small stones
Decaying wooden bridges cross the creek
Step gingerly over missing boards
Finding my muse among the trees
Good visit with an old friend

Roger Funston - Marysville, CA - rogerfunston@me.com

Hundreds of black flashes swoop past my window
and dive-bomb into the bare field beyond my deck.
Their shrill chatter drowns out the mid-day news,
sends me running to document the fluttering wings.
The acre field that is my backyard is a sea of black.
Before I can raise my phone and click the button,
they rise as one to some unseen, unheard signal
and fill the tall pines that line my property.
Pine boughs sway and sigh under their weight.
Then, as quickly as they came, they are gone,
a dark blanket rising into the clear blue sky,
soaring off to places known only to them.
They have senses that we have never had
or have long forgotten. They are not equals;
they are not underlings; they are other nations,
deserving of respect.

Sharon Canfield Dorsey - Williamsburg, VA - shargypsy@aol.com

In Spring There are Babies

I held a downy chick in my five-year-old hand,
Feeling the fragile beauty
Of a newly hatched life.
I gently lifted a black poodle pup
From a pile of champagne-coated puppies.
Being nursed by my mother's fluffy white dog Babette.
I laughed when a tiny goat kid
butted her head against her twin sister's
within hours of their births.
A paint quarter-horse mare
Gently nosed her wobbly-legged foal
Helping her find breakfast.
On a morning in spring,
I sat on the edge of a hospital bed.
My heart filled with wonder and joy.
I heard her soft cries
Drawing closer to where I waited.
I knew my daughter's voice.

DeAnna Quietwater Noriega - Columbia, MO -
dqnoriega@gmail.com

I left before seven on a Saturday morning,
time for my many miles walk just after dawn.
All the sounds came from a squirrel
high up on a large bay tree,
loudly scolding me
for disturbing his morning meal,
and then some rowdy noisy ravens,
calling their disdain from a several nearby pines.
Then a scurrying flock of quail
escaped just out of my line of sight,
taking refuge under a boxwood hedge
while raging quietly at me,
asking, “why, why, why are you there?”
Their calls came clear,
“no need, no need, no need,
too early, too early, too early
for you to be in our world,
this tranquil Saturday morn,
this day of peace created for us.”
Then the first car disturbed
even this cacophonous harmony,
then another and another and another,
till all the quiet Saturday sounds are gone.
All was the grating sounds of rubber tires
driving too fast on Old Redwood Road,
taking no time to hear the squirrels.
overcoming the ravens' raucous calls

not listening to the flock of quail,
taking no thought of all these native voices,
taking no thought of what had been
a time for natural, peaceful reflection,
a time to quietly observe, but not interject,
a time and a place for attentive mindfulness.

Sam Doctors - Petaluma, CA - samdoctors701@gmail.com

Birdsong melodies
chirping, whistling joyful bursts
singing love lyrics

Alicia Ann Torres - Windsor, CA - freedom0768@att.net

At the end of May
when the moon is full
just after the sun has set
horseshoe crabs crawl in from the deep
and nest in the sands
around Broadwaters Cove.

Cows and bulls
with barnacled backs
spawn in groups of two and three,
there is some perverseness in nature too.
The waterline is a collar of foam
with churning creatures partly washed
by lulling wave and flooding tide.

The evening is still
but there is this awesome stir
of a species prolonging its race.
Fossils prove they have existed
for more than a million years--
older even than dinosaurs.
Yet I know that in a few weeks
I will find the tiny transparent shells
of their unsuccessful offspring
wantonly strewn along the beach.

Peter Leverich - Manhasset, NY - peterl@techsoftinc.com

Tall grass wet with dew
Red-breasted Robin strolls through
Natural birdbath

Anita Leamy - Sykesville, MD - alleamy@gmail.com

**Please be the reason someone smiles today.
If you like a poem, please let the poet know it...
Thank you.**

hinged-wing glider
scours in decorous
sharp eyed gyres
divines sans shadow
schools of scaled scup
darting at depths
murky to plumb

a gathering up
wings furled close
streamlined to plunge
briefly freeze framed
sudden cant bayward
compulsion to dive
in mindless descent
lustful of fish

spray white spume
opalescence of spearing
seized in talons
a fathom below
ruckus of wing beat
commotion of brine
wings spanned wide
racking thin air

weighty path airborne
struggling with prey
dragged from the tide
upwards to blue
reflection of sunlight
glitter of scales
skims the steep bluff
fading from view.

Peter Leverich - Manhasset, NY - peterl@techsoftinc.com

O, Forsythia
Blooms before the leafy green
Yellow dots on stems

Anita Leamy - Sykesville, MD - alleamy@gmail.com

The chilling spray washes
over me, leaving me misty eyed
as I watch the gushing water
thunder down the ravine,
down the side of this mountain,
moving with a purpose;
like us, not knowing
where the journey will take it--
collectively each molecule
moves as one
to create positive energy
over the massive boulders,
around them if need be,
nothing can stop its progress,
moving forward with purpose,
even not knowing
what is around the next bend
or down the next freefall;
to come crashing down
into the womb again
of Mother Earth,
she who gives life
to all the molecules there are,
that ever existed.
The sound of the water's
thunder sweet music
to my dancing heartbeat;
the smell of crashing water
fills the air with extra oxygen
forcing my lungs to expand
to gather in all its goodness;
I feel I could levitate
from the world of man;
as the touch of the spray
cleanses my skin and
deep within me,
freeing my thoughts to be
deep in the heart of creation.

Open Windows

Mother Earth wants to entice us to sing,
It's Springtime again!
Her entire new season is an extended
Explosion of energy and growth.
Filled with joyful ways to get us outside
To play like children again!
The longer days of increased daylight
And glorious rays of sunshine capture
Our hearts with the promise
Of new beginnings.

Yet, in essence the beauty of Springtime is
It's a promise fulfilled, it returned.
This fulfillment is essential to our survival
As it renews us with hope.
It is this affirmation of renewal and rebirth
That fills our souls with new light.
Spring adds new life and new joy to all that
Exists continuing to build the
Merriment of springtime.
Our renewed energy in the future
Is one of the best parts of springtime.
We want to sing aloud when we hear the
Chirping of birds with babies in their nests.
We sing as we throw open the windows to
Let the fresh air rush in and with it the exquisite
Scents of honeysuckle and roses on the vine
Beneath the window, with
Every sign of spring it starts to converge
With the beauty of how change can be a
Powerful reminder to be mindful of each day.
Mother Earth puts on the best show in spring.
I make a wish to enjoy each blossom, baby chick,
And new fruit on the vine.
This Springtime is my time to sing my heart out
With the enchanting, greening of the Earth.

Vivian Portolano - Fountain Hills, AZ -
cportolano@hotmail.com