

# *The Weekly Avocet - #492*

## **May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Hello to our Poets and Nature-lovers of The Avocet community:**

**first morning sunbeams  
filter through long, narrow shafts  
cloud-crowded spring day**

Laurel Jean Becker - Lakewood, CO - laurelbecker@msn.com



Submitted by Edwina Kadera

### **A Moment for Reverence**

How amazing a fully articulated  
Peace rose after a soft spring rain.  
Its petals a frill of ballet pink champagne,  
clotted cream and quiet morning yellow,  
each petal covered with dozens of crystals  
each like a diamond facet as cleaved  
by the Dutch cutter's hammer stroke.

Each carat seems surely the result  
of hours of thoughtful planning and study.  
Yet their sparks lasts but brief moments  
before they fall to earth and are gone,  
leaving only a memory of brilliant facets  
flashing in the early morning sun.

Words paint so poor a picture,  
but this flower covered with diamond chips  
presented a moment of reverence that day,  
and for some few that followed,  
maybe that is enough for today and tomorrow.

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

### **A Supine Oak**

I saw an ancient supine black oak,  
laid low by wind and rain over generations.  
Its four-foot trunk of hundreds of rings  
reclining mere inches from the earth.  
No longer able to raise most branches  
to the sun's rays or feel the raindrops  
cascade down its lichen covered trunk,  
nor see its branches arching to the sky.  
Still, it was there, ready to leaf and branch  
yet another spring, like an aged person  
who is stooped and bent but not undone  
by the sturm and drang of long life.  
As spring approaches,  
both unfold ready  
to leaf yet one more season, ready  
to arch a few new branches to the sky.

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

## Coming of the Day

The quiet just before dawn  
hunkers down in the black oak,  
the leaves quiet their whispering.  
The wind for the moment  
moves not a branch, not even a twig  
in oak or pine or bramble or bayberry,  
yet it tarries before the quiet gold  
lights the edges of the ebon sky,  
the morning star reluctantly departs,  
the mourning dove trills an early song,  
the mountain quail rooster-like crows  
at the peak of the Dutch gambrel roof,  
announcing the coming break of day.  
It's time to leave the spirits of the night,  
it's time to leave the dreams of might have beens,  
it's time to throw back the coverlet and rise,  
it time to rinse last night's revels from the eyes,  
it's time, almost past time for a first caffeine rush,  
it's time to warm a cinnamon morning bun,  
it's time to sip a latte from a steaming mug,  
it's time to scan the "Times" and the "Guardian,"  
it's time to take up the cudgel of the day to be.

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

**“Flowers are the music of the ground. From earth’s lips spoken without sound.” - Edwin Curran** (Theresa A. Cancro, phoenixlady@comcast.net)

## I'm Awake!

Like peeling, excess matted  
fur from the grizzly's back

after sleeping hard for months  
Spring gently arrives, a little

at a time until fresh, alive,  
ready to start over with new

promises, energizes us both as  
yawning, we get going again.

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

### **Take A Butterfly to lunch**

The monarch, new this Spring,  
eyes the closed milkweed pod,

rubbing its spindly legs to-  
gether like arranging a napkin

around its neck waiting for  
the bud to open, sweet nectar

inside promising meals like  
suckling calves, nuzzling its

mother, he knows what is in there.

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

### **Spring with Bird Song**

It begins with the sky of cloudcover,  
sunshine, or rain.

Each will dictate the birds' mood  
with their every-present dartings,  
and fly-bys,  
all in the moment with song.

Birds sing in sunshine.  
They sing in rain.  
Their songs sing of the green grass  
with tiny strawberries,  
each the size of a cricket's heart  
that beats to the tune of bird songs  
that linger in Spring light.

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

baby birds huddle  
nests built with winter's remnants  
bits of yesterday

Laurel Jean Becker - Lakewood, CO - laurelbecker@msn.com

**“The beautiful spring came, and when nature resumes her loveliness, the human soul is apt to revive also.”- Harriet Ann Jacobs (Theresa A. Cancro, phoenixlady@comcast.net)**

### **When the killdeer speak**

On a parched coastal prairie,  
bristly, coppery harvester ants  
erupt from hibernation;  
wasp-waisted petticoats,  
clunky (don't mess with me) mandibles:  
while the silver-sharp whirrs  
of a killdeer pair  
stitch through the hitches of silence.

In a Civil War encampment,  
thousands of spiders reconnaissance  
mud-spattered grass stalks,  
bivouacs of hydrodictyon;  
mildewed bedsheets, hospital screams;  
and the killdeer tear like Keystone Kops,  
keening and tutting.

By a ship-wrecked black willow,  
guffaws of madly-hilarious mallards  
romp on the tail of the sea-misted breeze  
to the klaxon blares of the Canada geese;  
fuchsia tongues flare at courtship rivals,  
and it's all very urgent and fiercely important;  
while a killdeer struts distractedly

like a tearful flapper girl.

By a bank of sulfur tules,  
knuckled twigs, snitches of witchery  
twist and twirl, cocoon and consume you  
and reframe your focus  
to the gothic rump of a killdeer mother  
shading three marbled orbs  
right by your boots.  
She fires a dart of gratitude  
as you settle into an ageless silence.

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

# Spring Medley

~ Paintings by Dr. David D. Hunt - [dhunt34973@msn.com](mailto:dhunt34973@msn.com)



In his second year of *Avocet* membership, David D. Hunt, retired orthopedic surgeon with a long and fulfilling career, finds inspiration in strong poetic imagery contained on every page. Dr. Hunt has received various awards for artistry, and his paintings have appeared in California's Santa Clara Triton Museum and other such locations. Renowned for his vivid images of Santa Clara Valley locations, Dr. Hunt's private studio in the Saratoga Foothills has welcomed many visitors over the years including numerous poets, inspired by his work. Judith Sutton, a seasoned *Avocet* member and longtime family friend of Dr. Hunt's, submitted this collage of Spring paintings from her collection of his wonderful work.

## **Weeping Willows**

There is a grove of eleven,  
yesterday there were twelve.

A fresh stump marks the loss.  
leaves litter the ground as  
branches reach out feeling emptiness.

I mourn the graceful willow  
at the hands of man.

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

## **Line the Nest**

Anna's hummingbird hovers,  
plucks tufts of fur  
shed during my shepherd's spring brushing.

Beak full, she zips to Hawthorne cover,  
tucks soft nest lining into her tiny bowl  
of pine needles and moss. I'm told

hummingbirds weave spider webs  
in their nests, fine threads of give  
as eggs hatch and offspring grow.

Timing is crucial, weather changes  
precarious, our reliance on earth's bounty  
critical, regardless of species.

I watch for this season's brood,  
think of hummingbirds as I brush my dog.  
Tufts land where they may.

Ann Farley - Beaverton, OR - annedf@comcast.net

dancing wildflowers  
sway along with the sweet wind--  
butterflies float free

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

### **Phantom Fox**

Yips heard from the woods  
Deep in dead of night  
Muddy tracks in morning  
Straight-line, clearly oval  
Musky scent closes windows  
Spring air too pungent now  
All signs that's he's still here  
Though hidden from our sight

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

### **Desert Beauty**

I confess I can't get enough of...

the sights of profuse  
yellow brilliant blossoms  
draped and masking palo verde  
limbs

orange flags on the  
decades-old ocotillo  
spiny stems

the beauty of multi-hued  
green trees against the backdrop  
of solid sky

the keen squeak of a leader  
Gambel's quail who alerts the  
covey of my presence and watch  
them twitch their forward-facing  
rufous crests as they follow in a  
one-by-one parade

Oh, Spring, your beauty calms and  
offers such joy!

Eva Marie Willis - Phoenix, AZ - jwillis42@cox.net

unique grey squirrel  
proudly sports a white-tipped tail  
no one seems to mind

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

### **Bunting**

Deep, cerulean blue  
Nestled in a background  
Of multiflora roses  
The familiar, high-pitched song  
Signaling his return  
Dressed in indigo finery

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

### **Feeling the Foam's Edge**

small female feet  
impressions  
in glistening wet sand  
along foam's edge  
of relentless tide  
turned by moody  
spring moon

just risen sun  
for musing meander  
on this misty morn

squawky gray gulls  
gratefully, gleefully  
herald the day and  
its comforting warmth

Eva Marie Willis - Phoenix, AZ - jwillis42@cox.net

**“In a world where you can be anything, be kind.” - Dr. Seuss**

a school of dolphins  
leaping high into the air--  
blue striated sky

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

### **Our Springtime on Washington Peninsula**

I am captivated by light plays on the  
water like a child dancing in a stiff  
breeze, the areas of sunlight and grey  
changing places.

As I return my gaze to the boat,  
with you rowing, I am not sure  
which is more beautiful to me.

On shore, wild wheat-colored grasses,  
standing mostly straight,  
remind me of dried stick figures  
marching off to some new adventure.

Here and there remain low battered  
wooden fences that have strained  
against the wind far too long. Atilt,  
they are drunken sailors looking  
longingly toward the sky.

Across the water, layers of  
blue-green-grey trees, the color  
of your eyes, and hills are shrouded  
in mist.

Now is our time.  
Here is our place.

Eva Marie Willis - Phoenix, AZ - jwillis42@cox.net

more ashes than flame--  
my soul-fire sputters on  
in circle of life

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

blazing sun burns strong  
above field of wild roses--  
bees buzzing about

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

**If you like a poem/haiku, please let the poet know it...**

**Twilight Magic**

Driving in the pale-yellow  
twilight, I spy the silhouettes  
of two soaring birds. Where  
did they come from and where  
are they going? Or were they just  
dancing together on the wafting  
winds, enjoying the last light  
of day?

Turning into night before my  
eyes, the tall stately palm trees  
blend into the dearth of darkness.  
I return home, open a bottle of  
spring wine and freshen my bouquet  
of tulips, daffodils and heady  
hyacinths. Content to sit now and  
read poetry.

Eva Marie Willis - Phoenix, AZ - jwillis42@cox.net

**“We are the first generation to feel the sting of climate change, and we are the last generation that can do something about it.” - Jay Inslee**

the sun is setting--  
in the half-light of the night  
jasmine fills the air

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

## **The Passing**

He hangs his lofty head  
as if in prayer...

a crying whinny soon  
fills the stifling air,  
his bulging, black eyes  
look into the empty pen,  
with grieving eyes, he waits  
for a return response.  
He whinnies all afternoon, waiting...

With darkness, he hangs his head  
as if in prayer  
and with the deepening of darkness  
of a long night, with this empty pen  
next to his, and with the full moon  
rising in the night sky,  
he lowers his lofty head...

For they had jostled as colts,  
hours running and racing  
in all four of the directions,  
free in that large, open field.

With the full moon high in the sky,  
he dares stare into the empty stall  
of his best friend, who he ran with.  
He whinnies, waiting for a response  
that had always been returned.

He now knew, hangs his head  
as if in prayer...

(click on to watch short video - <https://pethelpful.com/pet-news/horse-grieves-for-best-friend>)

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

## **Definition of Refrain**

Refrain is a verse, a line, a set, or a group of lines that appears at the end of stanza, or appears where a poem divides into different sections. It originated in France, where it is popular as, *refraindre*, which means “to repeat.” Refrain is a poetic

device that repeats, at regular intervals, in different stanzas. However, sometimes, this repetition may involve only minor changes in its wording. It also contributes to the rhyme of a poem and emphasizes an idea through repetition.

### **Difference Between Refrain, Repetition and Villanelle**

Refrain is a type of repetition, but it is somewhat different from repetition. Refrain is repetition of usually a line, a phrase, two or three lines, or even words in a poem. Repetition, on the other hand, involves repetition of words, phrases, syllables, or even sounds in a full piece. Another difference is that a refrain in a poem may appear at the end of a stanza; however, this recurrence of words and phrases in repetition may occur in any line of stanza. Villanelle, on the contrary, is a poetic form consisting of nineteen lines that uses refrain in its first and third lines.

### **Function of Refrain**

Refrain is purely a poetic device, and the most important function that a refrain may serve in poetry is to lay emphasis and create rhythm. When a line or phrase recurs in a poem, or a piece of literature, it becomes noticeable to the readers. By using refrain, poets can make their ideas memorable, and draw the attention of the readers toward a certain idea. This is done by using a single line recurrently throughout a poetic work, allowing readers to take a pause each time they come upon such repetition.

#### **Example #1: *Stopping by Woods On a Snowy Evening* (By Robert Frost)**

“The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.”

Frost has used refrain in only the last stanza that he repeats twice as “And miles to go before I sleep.” It gives rhythm to the poem and lay emphasis on this idea of doing many things before dying.

#### **Example #2: *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night* (By Dylan Thomas)**

“Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light...”

“And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

This is very a famous poem using two refrains; one comes in the first line, as “Do not go gentle into that good night”; while second comes in the third line of each stanza. These refrains make the poem catchy and easy to remember.

<https://literarydevices.net/refrain/#:~:text=%20Short%20Examples%20of%20Refrain%20in%20Poetry%20,sounds%0AEffervescent%20vowels%20go%20up%0AWriting%20starting%2C%20end.%20More%20>

**Time to share up to four of your  
Spring-themed poems,**

**Photos (4), haiku (up to 10), Saving Mother Earth Challenge poems  
Please read the guidelines before submitting**

**Now you can send up to FOUR (4) Spring poems**

Please send your submission to [angeldec24@hotmail.com](mailto:angeldec24@hotmail.com)

**Please put Spring/your last name in the subject line. We are not accepting early Spring poems any longer.**

Please be kind and address your submission to me, Charles. Thank you.

(Just so you know: I do not read work from a poet who doesn't take the time to address their submission to the editor, who they want to read their work.)

Please do not just send a poem, please write a few lines of hello.

Please do not have all caps in the title of your poem.

There is no line limit per poem.

Please no religious references.

Please use single spaced lines.

Please remember, we welcome previously published poems.

Please put your name, City/State, and email address under your poem. No Zip codes.

Please send your poem in both the body of an email and an attachment, **no pdf file.**

We look forward to reading your **Spring submissions...**  
**We feel blessed to publish the best Nature poets in America**

**The Burning Question for our generation is:**

**What are we going to do to stop or even just slow down Climate Change?**

**Do you feel like there is nothing you can do about climate change?** Well, there is, even if we all do small things it will make a great difference. Alice C. Hill (**the David M. Rubenstein senior fellow for energy and the environment at the Council on Foreign Relations.**) states the first thing we all need to do is not shy away from the subject. Talk about, write about, climate change to everyone you know and meet. Write your congressperson and Senators. Let them know what you think and fear!

**I want to do another Saving Mother Earth Weekly Avocet issue, so I am looking for poems that address the most important issues of today, so please write about what you think and fear of the coming end of our world as we know it. But if we join together, work together, we can make a difference to Save Mother Earth, the only home we have.**

**Show you care. There are so many topics to write about when it comes to Climate Change. Please find one you are passionate about and write about it!**

**A Poetry Challenge for all Nature-loving poets in 2022.** I love writing Saving Mother Earth Challenge poems. I am always on the lookout for an article about our wondrous Mother Earth. Please find a climate change issue about our precious planet and take the Saving Mother Earth Challenge, and, then send it to us to share with the community...

**We all call Earth our home - Have your voice be heard through your words!!!**  
**Please put Saving Mother Earth Challenge/your last name in the subject line of your email and send to [angeldec24@hotmail.com](mailto:angeldec24@hotmail.com)**

**(Warning, warning, if you don't write them, then I will!!!)**

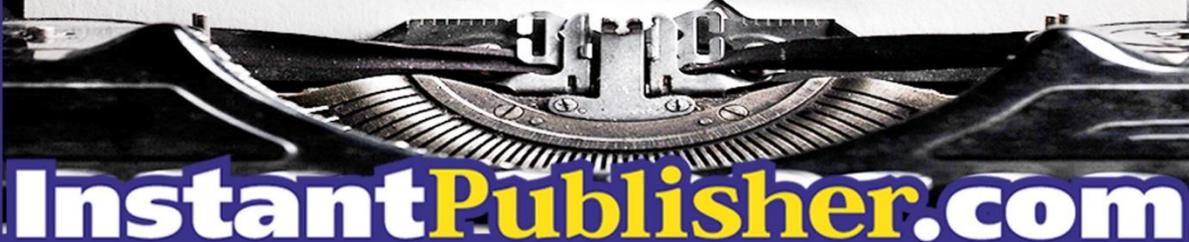
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**Norma Bradley, an Avocet poet - [normabradley1@gmail.com](mailto:normabradley1@gmail.com) - writes, “When I was ready to publish my first self-published chapbook, I called Instant Publisher. Chris was very helpful and answered all of my questions. I am delighted with how the book turned out and have had many positive comments. I did have help along the way to be able to get it sent off to finally be published. What I like about self-publishing is that I made all the choices for the cover design, font, paper etc. The copies arrived within 10 days. Being able to speak directly with Chris made all the difference. I highly recommend Instant Publisher.”**

Deenaz Coachbuilder writes, “I have treasured each poem in Charles Portolano’s new collection of poetry, *Wild with Life*. Love and reverence for nature and those you love imbues each page. Relationships between animals, between man and animals and birds, between humankind and the plants we touch, smell, taste, shelter under, respect. There is a sense of almost holiness, that they were here before us, and will remain long after, that we are but ephemeral visitors in their world. Our power can be used to preserve nature or destroy it.

The poems enlighten, entertain, instruct. They help us understand the world around us in the best of ways, through the stories he tells, for did we not learn of the world through the stories we heard, and then read, when we were children?

There is a feeling that cannot be described, when we carefully and cautiously rescue a spider, a lizard, a bird, that has accidentally entered our home, which we release back into their natural habitat. It is as if something has blessed us.”

## A collection of Mother Earth poetry by Charles Portolano

Editor of The Avocet, a Journal of Nature Poetry – cportolano@hotmail.com

### *Wild with Life*

Just \$12.00, which includes postage, for 90 pages of pure love for our Mother Earth.

*Knowing I am wild with life  
but once  
on this gift we have been given,  
this precious gift that we have  
been given guardianship of...*

Send checks to:  
The Avocet  
P. O. Box 19186  
Fountain Hills, AZ  
85269

“These poems are written by a seasoned poet who has reached the pinnacle of his art with a recognizable and moving voice. Charles edits the highly-successful nature journal, THE AVOCET, a must for nature loving poets and writers.”- Christine Swanberg, Poet Laureate of Rockford, IL.

“In Wild with Life, Charles Portolano has deepened his engagement with the natural world he began so movingly in his earlier works. It is a noble, ambitious, and moving work.”- Joel Savishinsky - Charles A. Dana Professor Emeritus in the Social Sciences, Ithaca College

#### **The American Avocet**

I watch unseen this large,  
long-legged shorebird,  
with its pied plumage  
and a dash of red  
around its head and neck,  
scampering along  
the coastline  
searching to snatch-up  
some aquatic insect  
or a small invertebrate  
hidden beneath  
the brackish waters  
of this saltmarsh.  
I watch unseen  
it swing its odd,  
long, up-curved bill  
through the shallow,  
still waters, catching  
a tiny creature,  
trapping it in its bill,

racing off to its nest to  
feed her four hatchings  
with this feast she found.  
I watch in awe  
as the male  
grows protective,  
fearlessly fending off  
an encroaching  
common black raven,  
attacking this intruder,  
striking at it with its bill.  
I watch in wonder  
as they swim as a family  
just days after  
the young ones are born,  
then back to the nest to  
rest where its kind flocks  
together in a community.

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

**If you would like to become a supporting member of The Avocet community, The Avocet is only \$25.00 for 4 - 64 page - perfectly bounded issues and 52 weeks of The Weekly Avocet, every weekend, plus other poetry surprises, with the best Nature poetry by the best Nature poets in America, a steal of a deal. Please think about supporting our little poetry journal. Sample copy just \$7.50.**

**Please make your check out to The Avocet and send to:**

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

We hope we provoked you; that you leave having experienced a complete emotional response to the poetry. I want to thank our Poets for sharing their work with us this week. **And “Thank you for reading, dear reader!”**

Be well, see you next weekend,

Charles Portolano, Editor/Publisher and Vivian and Valerie Portolano, Co-Editors  
of The Avocet, a Journal of Nature Poetry and The Weekly Avocet, every weekend.

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