

The Weekly Avocet - #518

November 6th, 2022

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

Fire red leaf leaps
water glides it to earth shore
autumn air conducts.

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



Submitted by Edwina Kadera

Dying Mississippi

River names flow through history
deep timbered, rolling and measured,
spelled and sprawling and owned
a finger traces the blue lines on a globe
the river will be marked, quartered, and drawn

Human civilization rose from soft riverbanks
of waterfowl, willow, and hidden waterhole
civilization is a questionable noun
its history told
of a river wronged, used, owned,
measured every inch and dollar
never imagining the magic number
where heat meets water

A river dies
for you, for me, for great and small creature, for tree
human does not mean humane
to foul the silvery chain of a river clean and fresh
air, water, earth all enmeshed
only fire will be left
of the dead lands of humans' worst desires

It is wise that the stars are out of reach
of the harm of human hands.

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

**“A poet is, before anything else, a person who is passionately in love with language.” -
W. H. Auden**

Bunny rests in sun
all summer long he worked hard
destroying my plants.

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

**The purpose of poetry is to provoke an emotional
response from your reader...**



Photo taken by Christy McMakin at Mendota Mountain.

Fear not the darkness

Fear not the winter months.
Fear not the darkness.
For without the darkness,
There would be no appreciation of the light.
This is a time of rest, relaxation, and renewal.
It is autumn.
The leaves are falling from the trees,
The earth is going to sleep,
The mother knows it is time to rest,
The mother knows without rest,
You cannot renew.
Fear not the darkness.

Patty L. Fletcher - Kingsport Tennessee - patty.volunteer1@gmail.com

The geese are leaving
skies empty of sound and grace
I am left behind.

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

Fall Festival

The garden needs tending
Lavish summer blooms stand at withered attention
Shears in hand clipping them back with promise of next year's profusion

Musky air rises on nippy breeze
Raking piles of leaves, the dog romps through
Autumn light doled out in ever smaller parcels making shadows full of color

I lean on my rake and marvel at the view
Leaves turn lemon, orange, cranberry, aubergine
Pomegranates still hang like ornaments on branches bereft of small leaves

The children and grandchildren gather
Sticks carefully whittled into forks topped with marshmallows
Crisped just right, then plopped onto graham crackers, chocolate dark or milk

Fire lights smiling faces
Waiting for just the right moment
To inhale the fruits of our labor, another year coming to an end

Linda Golden - Woodland Hills, CA - Lindagolden.berg@gmail.com

“Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.” - Anton Chekhov

Dog and a wild duck
both swim to retrieve the ball
even a duck dreams.

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

Please be kind, write to each other...

raft of ducks
float on barely rippled water--
clear blue sky

Jack Maze - Vancouver, B. C., Canada - erry@shaw.ca

Leaf Journey

Sun shortens visitation hours.
Leaf knows,
senses appointment with change.
Leaf experienced three seasons
attached to tall oak tree.
Now change is inevitable.
Following silent ancestral urgings,
Leafs grip upon tall oak tree
loosens.
Crisp, gentle breeze
blows playfully through oak tree,
ticklish branches sway.
Leaf lets go of the known
lifelong connection to tree.
Carried, cushioned by the wind,
gliding, tumbling, twirling
far from home.
Softly resting upon
nature's textured carpet--
leaves, grass, twigs, cones.

Leaf touches ground
for the first time,
joining the mosaic
of autumnal colors.

Torie Cooper - Tempe, AZ - Torie.cooper4@gmail.com

“Writing poems is not a career but a lifetime of looking into, and listening to, how words see.” - Unknown

fallen leaves
gradually wash away--
brown stained sidewalk

Jack Maze - Vancouver, B. C., Canada - erry@shaw.ca

“Youth is like spring, an over praised season more remarkable for biting winds than genial breezes. Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits.” - Samuel Butler

Indian Summer

Top down, Stormy beside me,
blonde hair tossed by the wind,
streets of amber, scarlet, gold,
leaves flying, whirling as we
cruise along, listening to the radio
and its top ten songs. Each day
dazzling, the majesty of autumn
gathering on the sidewalks, rooftops,
in the gutters, down the gangways,
filling the alleyways, every nook and
cranny, with bushels of color, turning
our humble town into a treasure chest
of splendor, which even Ali Baba
and his forty thieves would lustily desire.
At night, the harvest moon, shining
round and bright like a theater's
spotlight over a nocturnal ballet of
waving tree limbs and dancing branches
reaching for the heavens.

It is a mystical moon, beneath which,
star-crossed lovers, lost in the spell
of its glow, chase life's dream
down the lanes of love through
the heart's mysteries.

Rex Sexton

We feel blessed to publish the best Nature poets in America

bright yellow
summer trapped in leaves--
gold coated ground

Jack Maze - Vancouver, B. C., Canada - erry@shaw.ca

“Never let me lose what I have gained and adorn the branches of your river with leaves of my estranged Autumn.” - Federico Garcia Lorca

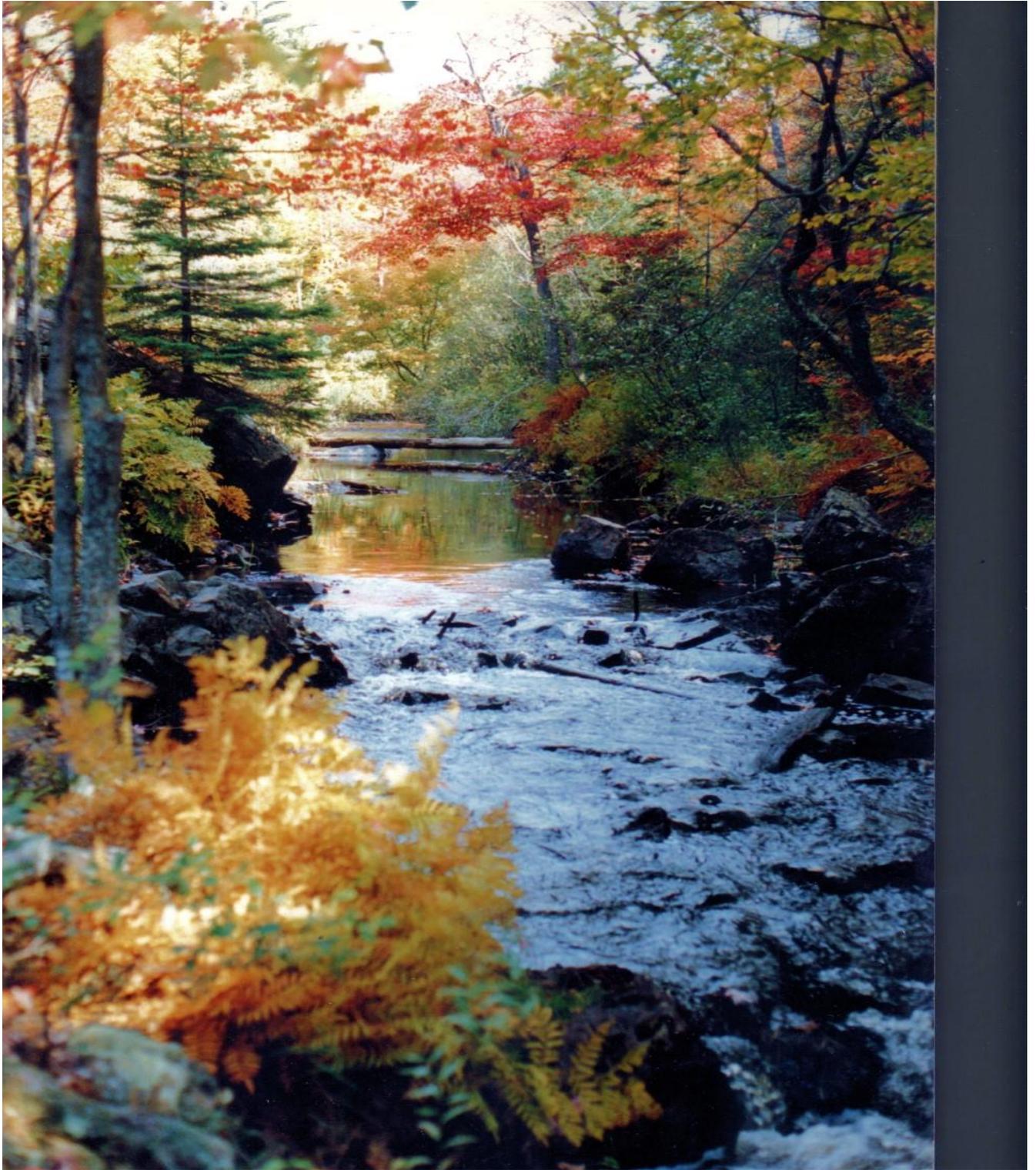


Photo of Kinsmen Park in Sault Saint Marie, Ontario by Peter Sherrill - pmsherrill57@gmail.com

“Steam rising underneath a canopy of whispering, changing aspens; starlight in the clear, dark night, and wondrous beauty in every direction. If only all could feel this way, to be so captured and enthralled with Autumn.” - Donna Lynn Hope (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

a green forest floor
transformed to yellow and brown--
summer said goodbye

Jack Maze - Vancouver, B. C., Canada - erry@shaw.ca

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

Brown Study

There is the brown, so dark,
it becomes difficult to distinguish
iris from pupil,
or read any emotion.
Rabbits have eyes like that.
Feisty women in Joyce novels
have eyes like that.
Also flying squirrels,
softly furred in their colonies.
Twenty of them, huddled
together beside the chimney.

There is the brown of mud
settled after a disturbance.
The first flocculent layer
creating topography, crevices
where the fines rest.
Precipitates fall out, dusting
the murky terrain, tannins
taint the empty water.
Hidden in the duckweed,
not even waving a webbed foot,
not breathing,
frogs have eyes like that--
and family.

Sonja Johanson - Medfield, MA - sonjajohanson@gmail.com

Mary Oliver, one of the best-selling nature poets in America, was born in Maple Heights, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland (1935). When she was a teenager, she dropped out of college and made a pilgrimage to Edna St. Vincent Millay's estate in upstate New York, and although Millay had been dead for some time, her sister Norma still lived there. The two women hit it off, and Oliver ended up living on the estate for several years. It's there that she met Molly Malone Cook, who had come to pay a visit to Millay. Oliver and Cook fell in love and moved to Provincetown, Massachusetts, together. Cook became Oliver's literary agent, and also sometimes impersonated Oliver for phone interviews because she hated talking to the press. They were together for more than 40 years, and after Cook died in 2005, Oliver published *Thirst* (2006), a collection of poems about her grief. ("I love this collection of poetry. It is about nature as much as about grief; the healing power of nature on the human soul." - CP)

She won the Pulitzer Prize in 1984, for her collection *American Primitive* (1983), and she's one of the best-selling American poets, but she was a very private person who rarely gave interviews. She died on January 17, 2019 (she was 83) (The Writer's Almanac)

Hedgerows

Come fall evenings when it's dark at six
we walk more quickly past the hedgerows
separating fields, their harvests bundled up
and taken away, leaving a few straggling stems
and nettles. Beyond we see, sporadic,
the empty spaces in the moonlight,
in the glow of distant lamps.

The shrinking days draw into themselves,
becoming melancholy: the dark inverse of sun,
the reversing of the clocks. The changed light
shifts the truth of what we see.

Hedgerows, baring, offer no resistance
to the open field, where tragedies have played:
the running blood, the crimes of our fathers, or maybe
just masked revelers in the guise of children
gathering in the long shadows
before their appearance at front doors
demanding alms or entry.

Eugene O'Connor - Columbus, OH - eugene@osupress.org

"The most beautiful gift for the Earth is your thoughts." - Sylvie Decaillet (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

rose fruits in the fall
an intense red--
look to the future

Jack Maze - Vancouver, B. C., Canada - erry@shaw.ca

Autumn Sapphics

The forest paths lie barest at onset of
Spring: depths cracking surfaces ooze camouflage
Wisps of lime across pubescent trees strung with
Withering, frail vines.

In April, the dogwood flowers in white crepe
Wedding gown. Her bed of rich green grants envy
Color, stealing honeysuckle's birthright, her
Quivering perfume.

Grown charcoal-gray absorbing heat in Dog-star
Days, the squat May-apple congregating prays,
Parasols planted against the sun, along
Fields of unmade hay.

Then a cleansing wind sweeps through; their green youth gone,
The trees can find their season. Swaying they stand,
Spangled orange, bronze, crimson, ripe past bearing,
Blanket of fire-hues.

Their leaves speckled, like eyes, yellow and brown, kissed
Gleaming golden where the sun does shine, falling
Will find rest in the whispering nights of rain,
Autumn in their veins.

Mike Rydock - Middletown, PA - mrydock@gmail.com

stored sunshine
finally released--
red cap mushroom

Jack Maze - Vancouver, B. C., Canada - erry@shaw.ca

“Poetry should... should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.” - John Keats

After the Suicide

All day today hummingbirds
have been absent
 from my feeders,
no flirtatious flashes of green,
no tiny beaks bobbing, bobbing
 into the sweetness,

no satisfying surge of pure joy
as they approach my window.
 Instinct has told them
it's time to move south
 before winter life here--
the confinement, the cold--

becomes paralyzing,
 before they can no longer
make the decision to go.
Yesterday morning
I saw the last fairy-green female
 having breakfast at the feeder.

If I had known
I would not see her again,
 if I had known
she would be gone from my life,
could I have changed her mind?
 What could I have said to her?
Would it have been kind to her to try?

Pat Goodman - Wilmington, DE - plgoodman@comcast.net

bit of white
on the forest floor--
lichen fell from a branch

Jack Maze - Vancouver, B. C., Canada - erry@shaw.ca

“Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty in words.” - Edgar Allan Poe

Thanksgiving

When the sky softens and September heat
is left behind
those of us who remember
last year’s late summer hurricane
are thankful that it is now fall

We rejoice to see ancient oaks
green again after a barren year
and the oleander
oh, how strong
soaked in her drink of brine
blooms
white sun in a halo of green
until winter

The Roseate Spoonbills
return to our marshes
dip pink wings
into golden sky
before morning feast

I sit on the porch
marvel at the resurgence
of plumeria
let the rhythm of rocking
like the pull of ocean
unwind my muscles

We give birth
or die
the sea has ripped us clean

Vanessa Zimmer-Powell - Houston, TX - vzimmerfalls@yahoo.com

**“A true poet does not bother to be poetical. Nor does a nursery gardener scent his roses.” -
Jean Cocteau**

Poetry is everywhere and in everyone...

nature's child

i am nature's child
in the fall
i walk the forest
near my home
breathe in the
invigorating air
the breeze caresses my
face as I walk along
by myself
the trees are still green
changing colors
it feels like I am
in the land of Oz
i can swear the trees are
dancing a tune
as they change their
clothes
the river close by
seems
to have a new beauty
with its rippling, gentle
movements
so quiet and serene,
the more i walk in
this forest of mine
the greater the love
for the magic of
mother nature
here comes a small duck
with her six ducklings
in a line quacking at me
crossing in front of me
so sure of themselves
i stop and stand
in the middle of this
wondrous glory
raise my arms towards
the sky
feel the surge of life
anew

Ed Galing

Please be kind, write to each other...

Poet Emily Dickinson was born in Amherst (1830). She was a bright student, social, with plenty of friends. She and her friends took walks across the hills around Amherst, picking pink and white trilliums and lady's-slippers, and Emily told her friends stories about the animals that lived in the woods. They went on sleigh rides, attended concerts and lectures, had parties and cooked chowder over open fires and talked about their favorite writers. At the age of 14, she wrote to her friend Abiah Palmer: "I am growing handsome very fast indeed! I expect I shall be the belle of Amherst when I reach my 17th year. I don't doubt that I shall have perfect crowds of admirers at that age. Then how I shall delight to make them await my bidding, and with what delight shall I witness their suspense when I make my final decision."

When Dickinson was 20, in 1850, she was still very social; she wrote in a letter: "Amherst is alive with fun this winter -- might you be here to see! Sleigh rides are as plenty as people -- which conveys to my mind the idea of very plentiful plenty. How it may seem to you I don't calculate at all -- but presume you can see the likeness if you get the right light upon it. Parties can't find fun enough -- because all the best ones are engaged to attend balls a week beforehand -- - beaus can be had for the taking -- maids smile like the mornings in June -- Oh a very great town is this!" A year later, she was writing to her friend and future sister-in-law: "Susie -- have all the fun why you possibly can -- and laugh as often and sing, for tears are plentier than smiles in this little world of ours; only don't be so happy as to let Mattie and me grow dimmer and dimmer and finally fade away, and merrier maids than we smile in our vacant places!"

For a while, Dickinson remained actively engaged in Amherst's social life, going to parties and entertaining visitors. But she grew more depressed after the deaths of several close friends and family members, and she slowly withdrew from social gatherings. She wrote lots of letters, but she rarely left her home, and spoke with visitors through a closed door. She spent much of her time gardening, and during her life she was known in Amherst not for her writing, but for her fabulous gardens of flowers and trees. She published just 10 poems during her lifetime, and they were heavily edited. After her death, her sister Lavinia found almost 1,800 poems that she had left behind.

As the years went by, she became noticeably more reclusive -- she corresponded mostly through letters and allowed only a few visitors. But she also threw herself into her poetry -- with her sister, Lavinia, managing the household tasks, and without many social obligations, she had plenty of time to write. In 1855, the Dickinson family moved back to the estate known as the Homestead, where Emily had been born. Her brother, Austin, and his wife, her friend Susan, built a house next door. For the first time, she was no longer sharing a bedroom with Lavinia -- she had her own room, on the second floor, in the southwest corner. By 1865, when she was 35, she was no longer an active participant in Amherst's social life, and she had written more than 1,100 poems. When Dickinson died in 1886, at the age of 55, Lavinia found about 1,800 poems in her sister's desk.

Over the years, scholars have done a lot of speculating about Dickinson, coming up with all sorts of theories. Last year, a biographer named Lyndall Gordon suggested that Dickinson was epileptic, and that her epilepsy explained her seclusion, the rhythm and content of her poetry, and even her famous white dress, which according to Gordon was white for sanitary reasons. Various critics have tried to prove that her seclusion was the result of a broken heart and have offered up any number of men in her life as the possible heartbreaker. A few years ago, a scholar named Carol Damon Andrews published an article claiming that Dickinson was engaged to her brother's friend George Gould, but that her father broke it up because Gould was too poor, and that Dickinson's love poems are written to Gould. There is also the popular theory that she was a closeted lesbian, possibly in love with her sister-in-law, Susan. Other scholars have diagnosed Dickinson with SAD, seasonal affective disorder.

Many people think that there is no one answer for Dickinson's seclusion -- but that above all, she was driven by a fierce desire to write poetry, and she chose to sacrifice everything else for that. Allen Tate said: 'All pity for Miss Dickinson's 'starved life' is misdirected. Her life was one of the richest and deepest ever lived on this continent.'

Dickinson wrote: "There is a solitude of space / A solitude of sea / A solitude of death, but these / Society shall be / Compared with that profounder site / That polar privacy / A soul admitted to itself -- / Finite infinity.' (The Writer's Almanac)

Time to share up to four of your Fall themed poems for The Weekly Avocet,

Photos (4), haiku (up to 10), Saving Mother Earth Challenge poems (as many as you can write)

Please read the guidelines before submitting

Now you can send up to FOUR (4) Fall poems for us to pick from.

Please send your submission to angeldec24@hotmail.com

Please put (early or late) Fall/your last name in the subject line.

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 Fall submissions...

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!

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

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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

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

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P.O. Box 19186
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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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