

The Weekly Avocet - #528

January 15th, 2023

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

**the sun is bright
snow cover is shrinking--
sound of dripping water**

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



Submitted by Edwina Kadera

full circle

there was a time
when the snow fell
in January
that my best friend
was a snow shovel,
though i hated to go
out there to
shovel ten inches,
i was young at forty
and my muscles were
tight like an oiled spring
through the window i
would see my wife
watching me shovel
and i felt so much like a cave man
that's how proud i was of shoveling
when i had enough i would
go back in the house
and have a nice glass of wine
and hug my wife, and kiss her too
these days when the snow comes
i am no longer that young man
but an old man of ninety-six
and my wife has left me
and the house is not the same anymore
i sit in a wheelchair
and reflect on all
the snows i have always
seen in so many years
and all the sleigh rides we had
and think of christmas carols
and bing crosby on television
and listen to christmas carols
and shake my head and
drop a tear or two
as the snowflakes
fall outside on the lawn
and i wish i had my
shovel again.

Ed Galing (1917-2013) - *(In fond memory of my mentor, favorite poet, and good friend, ed galing)*

“Nature inspires me to believe!”

ice pond

the ice pond
in january
is just right
for the skaters
both young and old
as they glide along
so free of stress
filled with the joy of winter
the crisp air
she watches her daughter
valerie as she
does a camel on the ice
her daughter is thirteen
her body twirling
like a whirling dervish
so precise and beautiful
a few more years her mother
thinks and she will be ready
to compete
she thinks proudly
the sky cloudy
looks like a
picasso painting
there is such a sense
of freedom
and happiness
skating on the ice pond
smoothly noiselessly
with only the woods and the
bare snow-capped trees
to complete this picture
of her daughter
an angel on ice...

ed galing

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

Douglas fir bough
with snow and a junco--
junco will return

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

Grace

Dear Universal Spirit
this be thy prayer
that always we BE
in thine everlasting care.

Please grace us with guidance daily
and in our hearts speak truth,
Faith & Hope within us as Soul
offers praise to eternal youth.

O Creator of Spirit
feelings, wisdom, dreams
thank you for divine bountiful gifts
please bless our foods & water streams.

As we align ourselves relaxing to rest
Source, Spirit with sun & moon above
please Grace health to family, friends, and WE
Joy and Peace to all who Love... Blessings!

Ron Reddock - Sierra Vista, AZ - creationships@ymail.com

Apples on the Snow

Fall didn't have its full term
when winter came and blew it away.
The leaf rake is hiding under a foot of heavy snow.
Sunflowers waiting to be dried are ruined.
Larch needles came down as a golden blanket,
and the apple tree still wears
an almost- full crown of leaves
although dried and brown
while there are red apples on the snow.

Kathleen Schrum - Spokane, WA - Joeygirl@comcast.net

Truce?

Side by side on the display shelf they sat,
the primroses and fireplace logs.
What odd shelf mates they seem.
One patiently waiting for Spring
while Winter is still in charge.

Kathleen Schrum - Spokane, WA - Joeygirl@comcast.net

“Many years of neglected infrastructure. This is a problem globally and impedes our ability to cope with climate change. For example, during the previous years of drought, California neglected to improve their ability to capture rainwater, so now that there are massive storms, most of the water is running into the sea, helped along by areas where wildfires have removed the vegetation that could have slowed the runoff and allowed more of it to seep into the soil.” - Daniel R. Brooks - dnlbrooks@gmail.com - (FRSC, FLS Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto, Senior Research Fellow, H. W. Manter Laboratory of Parasitology, University of Nebraska State Museum



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Why is cold weather dangerous?

Skin and the tissue under it can freeze, otherwise known as frostbite. When the body gets cold, it sends blood to organs to keep them warm, leaving earlobes, noses, cheeks, fingers, and other extremities vulnerable. If someone is cold for a long time and their body temperature falls below 96 degrees Fahrenheit, hypothermia can set in and lead to heart failure or death. Infants and the elderly are at the most risk.

Eye Opening or Not

Packing for a camping trip,
I gathered reading material.
The fancy magazine waited
for my fingers to slip through its pages.
Big names popped up,
poems and quotes from my favorites
bemoaning the destruction of our world,
the ‘consequences of industrialized natural resource extraction.’

Even in small doses,
the destruction of our land is hard to swallow,
to accept and learn about.
When I rode horses the stable owner clear cut many of his acres.
It made for great trail riding.

I’ve only seen a Bobcat once
and all I saw was the animal’s bobbed tail
as it slithered fast into brush.
For the Bobcat, there were way fewer places to hide,
to spend time in tree’s crook
planning on how to survive.

Meanwhile, I grab the Country Living magazine.
I need pretty pictures to look at--
Less ‘real life’ to see as I drink wine around a campfire.
I have failed again,
let’s pretend that everything will be all right.

Can we break the cycle of endless greed and genocide?
Look at that picture, my kitchen would look good painted Navaho white.

Ursula McCabe - Portland, OR - ursulawmccabe@gmail.com

**“Mother Nature holds the high cards and when we try to cheat, we lose.” - Kathleen Schrum -
Joeygsgirl@comcast.net**

yellow leaves coat the ground
life’s gone into hiding--
winter’s not empty

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

We feel blessed to publish the best Nature poets in America.

The Warming

Pseudo scientists still
proclaim that warming begs
a question. Yet this blue
planet warms, even in winter.
Earth's Ozone layer thins,
dead zones grow, ice shelves
crash in their calving and seas
rise as whales starve in open
ocean, their catch of salmon
growing scarce, may soon
be gone forever and polar
bears lean towards extinction,
washed up on Arctic beaches
as the snows of Kilimanjaro
melting fast, may vanish to
be seen no more. Today,
despite a calendar reading
December, plum trees bloom
in the heart of Boston, in
Brooklyn it's cherry trees,
plied by honeybees. In
Virginia, they're mowing
lawns on New Year's
Day and sails unfurl on
Michigan lakes that a year
ago were frozen.

Still, we drill deeper for oil,
addicts tapping earth's veins,
pumping air with carbon,
lungs with ink, while naming
our species sapient. What
space age Ark can save us now,
how long can we tread water?

William Scott Galasso - Laguna Woods, CA - scottgalasso@yahoo.com

winter sunset--
bright orange captured by gray clouds
shared with the sea

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

Warning Signs

Black clouds crowd mountains,
fog broods in valleys, tombstone gray.
Wind begins to hiss, then howl
like a shrieking crone. A reek
of sulphur steals my breath,
smoke and fire rise to eclipse
a dull red sinking sun. Seas
rise, wave by restless wave
biting sand beaches, gnawing keys,
eating at the walls of coastal cities.
(I could dismiss this nightmare
but I fear I'm wide awake.)?

(Previously published in the San Diego Poetry Anthology)

William Scott Galasso - Laguna Woods, CA - scottgalasso@yahoo.com

clear blue skies
the sun sparkles off mounded snow--
icy sidewalks

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

Ides of Winter

Swirling wind rushes
blowing hard
under trees over bushes
touches embraces
rising higher
in one sudden shudder
gushes forth with unabashed desire
wild and untamed like a lover's fling
sighing promises of all
each new equinox might sire,
the sharp pleasure of waking
still keening and wanting:
believing the vernal credo
of Spring.

Joan Vullo Obergh - Seaford, NY - Lydia82@verizon.net

on a tree trunk
lichens result in lichens--
snow in a wet tree trunk

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

Singing with Stars in the High Desert

I step outside to see the stars
in this clear and moonless winter night.
The air is crisp and cold and lightly
smells of piñon burning not far away,
its fragrant smoke drifting across
these greasewood hills.

I feel the sting of cold against my face
as my eyes adjust to the dark.
Sirius is bright at Orion's heels--
The Great Bear leads her cub
across the pole--
Andromeda glows faintly
in the corner of my eye.

I strain to hear a yip or two.
I know coyotes are out tonight
but hear only a distant dog.
his solitary intermittent bark
articulates the silence.

From the black sky, dense with stars,
I seem to hear the hum of light,
stars singing like Blake's at creation.
The infinite seems immanent.
I want to be among the stars.

I am among the stars.
The pungent piñon clings to Earth
and yet I soar, singing with stars
of light and life,
eons and distances,
voids and matter
unimaginable.

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

**“Nature heals spirits which have experienced the winters of life with a reawakening.” -
Mary Belardi Erickson,**



Winter's Full Moon

Winter's full moon
calls to us
through the bare branches of trees
and by its nature
illuminating all things in its path
releasing magnetic forces
to play in human
and animal worlds
suddenly a dog's bark
exalts it in the here and now,
everything is clear and still
The moon moving quietly
over and beyond the horizon
still calling out.

James Carney - Middletown, NJ - jrcarney19@gmail.com

Migration

The water in the pond had turned to ice.
Aquatic life had slowed down to a crawl.
Most birds had travelled south as if
a gate had opened to invite them all.
And farther north, the cold had set in fast,
the arctic birds had felt a growing need
to leave their breeding grounds behind,
with little on their minds except to feed.

The northern air grew colder than the snow,
the snow as deep as winds would let it build.
It left the fox to dive until
her nose was frozen and her gut was filled.
And further south, the owls had lined the coast.
For hours they perched as if to meditate.
They probed their new surroundings for
their prey, and then the rest was left to fate.

The ice above the pond was deep enough.
The fish and smaller life below were spared
from temperatures below the point
of freezing, and the eyes above that stared
at anything that moved, diseased or fit
to make it through another taxing year.
Then early in the morning while
the day awoke, there strode a group of deer.

They stepped across the pond one after one.
They must have thought it prudent to advance.
They weighed the threat of being seen,
and judged the safest route was one of chance.
They moved as though their weight was no concern,
moved on and knew the other side was still
a place where finding food was scarce,
but went as if they had more days to fill.

Bob Moore - East Kingston, NH - bmoore628@comcast.net

early morning sun
filtered through leafless trees--
day's preparation

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

From one of us: Melanie Perish sent us this wonderful idea to keep us creating poetry. She writes, “I write a poem every day, but I do acrostics. I choose a word and make each letter of that word what I use to guide the poem.”

Poem

Passing the time indoors
Outside the snow drifts and drifts and
Every day I drift, too, but not like
Many birds who have the gift of wings.

In most of my acrostics, I write a line with each capital, then I go back and make couplets from them. In this poem the word is MISSING. That day I was missing the light -- wanted it to stay. The light I say was so holy, it created a chapel. I understand impermanence. Some days I don't want it to function in my life. MISSING is spelled out with every other line here.

Chapel

Magnificence is
first glimpse,

Isolated light sliced wide
behind the north hills who

Sit each ordinary day. Noticed now,
promise of snow

Sweeps a lemon mist;
cloud-fringe

Impossibly speeds its wings,
its glint, its

New opportunity
to scatter horizons. They live

Gold and vibrant for moments
grand and gone.

Melanie Perish - Reno, NV - mperish@unr.edu

Please be kind, write to each other...

Karma

(Inspired by Taylor Swift)

With the full moon, the stars,
covered over by dark clouds,
on this cold, cruel evening,
with the wind wilding,
stirring, brewing up trouble
for the coming night
will be a nightmare
as the lights go out,
as the heat shuts down,
as the winds begin to pick up
and the snow descends
from the high heavens
like an avalanche,
storming down upon us,
I light countless candles
to ward off, just to keep
my growing fears from
unraveling in the darkness
as the wind whips up
shingles fly off the roof
and nearby trees
crash hard upon the earth
as the snow still floods
down upon us there is no
seeing the outside world
or hearing from any one
for there's no phone service,
then you come over,
finally waking up
from your long afternoon nap
to come cuddle, huddle,
warming my lap
as you stretch out over me,
keeping me warm,
keeping me calm
as I stroke your long back
your purring pure music,
a symphony for my ears,
for Karma always comes back
as I drift off in complete peace.

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

Full circle

So much like his father,
oh, how his father would be so proud
how he learned of his father's ways
those seven years they had together:
the love of the wilderness,
love for all things wild for he was
once in the shadow of his father, but
now in his father's footsteps
for they've walked these woods often
and talked of the thread of life, that
we are all connected on this earth.

While wandering in their "woods,"
he saw a tiny creature shivering,
scurrying frantically
through the few inches of snow
wandering lost in the coming night,
he followed as the hedgehog
buried its head in the snow.
He took off his jacket
and wrapped the young one in tight
as the creature relaxed in his arms
as they made their way home.

Oh, so much like his father,
watching her son
empty out his toy box,
lined it with newspaper
and soft towels,
making a perfect little bed,
then getting warm water
and some food for the hungry guy.
Gently putting "Henry" down
next a hot water bottle
to keep him warm overnight.

As tears well up in her blue eyes,
she watches her son's every move,
he even moves like his father.
Oh, how his father would be so proud
to see their son show such kindness
to such a tiny wild thing,
but then his father did teach him
that no being is too small or too large
for your kindness, for kindness
always comes back to kiss you.
Oh, how his father would be so proud.

Charles Portolano

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/lifestyle/family/little-boy-s-determination-to-rescue-frozen-little-hedgehog-should-be-applauded/ar-AA15gJnl?ocid=mailsignout&pc=U591&cvid=fd898c0c1e764852b9378c8c746896a4>

The Winter of your Pain

For three, dark, straight days
the unrelenting snowfall,
the howling, angry wind
whirls around our home,
keeping us all indoors
without any power,
so, no lights or heat
as I walk the dark hallway
I hear weeping, sobbing,
coming from your room;
learning you cry yourself
to sleep each lonely night.
This I had not known that you
live in fear of forever winter,
its chill in every bone,
every cell of your being,
fearing forever pain.
Learning this leaves me
frozen, stricken by your life
in this frozen wasteland that
you live with every moment
storming down upon you
with your stars blocked
out by these falling, frozen,
tears from high above as
the snow begins to fall faster
as your tears flow
I hold you closer
to keep you warm
to keep your bright light
of your sweet soul glowing
in the dead of this endless
winter nightmare, keeping
you looking up, waiting
for the next rising sun,
for the warmth will come
when the snow stops,
when you stop crying
and the sun smiles on us again.

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Finding our Center

Hard to believe
we once thought the earth flat,
that we were the center
of the universe,
that our galaxy
was the only galaxy up there,
now we know our sun
is one of many suns.

Hard to believe
our arrogance allows us
to know we are the only
life that exists anywhere
in the vast universe.

Hard to believe
how large of a view
we have of ourselves
for such a small dot
in the dark, night sky,
our awesome smallness
is only dwarfed by
our inability to learn
from our histories
as we went from mythology
to religion to endless wars
for it seems we can only be kind
to one of our own kind
and as humankind finally learns
now of its tiny place
in the interstellar blackness,
you would have thought
we would have learned as we
traveled through time and space.
But then, even Einstein once
thought our universe was static.
We now know it is dynamic,
ever-expanding as we unlock,
unravel its mysteries and secrets,
we have Newton to thank
for he knew when that apple
fell that it was gravity that holds
the universe together and once we
realize the gravity of how bad
our situation really is,
how the weight of the world
is now upon our shoulders,
pushing us down to our knees,
maybe, just maybe,

we can get together to work
to keep life on this earth
a reality in the vast
unknown of the universe.
Hard to believe
we haven't yet learned this.

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Time to share up to four of your Winter 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

Please send your submission to angeldec24@hotmail.com

Please put (early or late) Winter/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 - 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 Winter submissions...

The Burning Question for us Earthlings is:

What are you/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 have, at least, one Saving Mother Earth poem in each issue of The Weekly Avocet, so I am always looking for poems that address our 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. A world our great grandkids will never know. A Mother Nature who is no longer kind.

But if we join together, maybe, just maybe, working 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!

Write a Tell-off poem letting the world know what you are feeling about what is being done right before our eyes by those who claim to want what best for all of us.

Think it out in your head, then put it down on the page, then fight with it, get your rage out, then send it to us to share, so you can see your voice, your words, being read, being heard...

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 \$28.00 for 4 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 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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