

The Weekly Avocet - #535

March 5th, 2023

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

**wolf-howling winds blow
rattle doors and windows
trash cans party, lidless**

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



Submitted by Edwina Kadera

Early Spring

Spring rushed in one cloudy day
and introduced herself
as the bridge to the
antitheses to winter's sway.
She seemed warm and
friendly--had a convivial smile.
Trailing behind her were
early bloomed flowers, and
a parade of believers-for at least a mile.
Punxsutawney Phil brought up the rear,
hoisting a dark cloud without much cheer.
That dark cloud he did take
and position it just so, so that
everyone--even--he saw his
shadow, don't you know?
Back into his hibernation hole
he went, until three more fortnight
were spent. Spring retreated like
the good harbinger she was, to gather
steam for her return victory when
she could get it right.

Julie K. Caulfield - Beaverton, OR - jcaulfield436@gmail.com

We want to do a whole Weekly Avocet issue on the theme of Trees.

“All trees hold secrets. From tiny saplings just piercing the earth to the old sentinels that stretch toward the sky until they founder, what the trees have witnessed, we can only dream. They harbor the winds and the changes of time, recording reunions, catastrophes, even unremarkable sunrises in concentric rings that lie concealed in darkness, deep within.

Trees are consummate listeners. A fibrous canopy above the earth, they gather into their taut, hollow bodies all the stories of the world. Like the angels, trees will not interrupt, disagree, or offer advice. Perhaps this is why the ancients thought them wise.

**Trees are the first libraries, the oldest houses of wisdom and knowledge.” -
K. Hollan Van Zandt - *Written in the Ashes***

Please send us your tree poems to angeldec24@hotmail.com. Please put Trees/your last name in the subject line. I would like to have them as asap, please. Thank you.

“Nature inspires me to believe!”

colt and elk play ball
in the six inches of snow--
warms my heart and soul

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

Double click to check out this .40 sec video of an eight-month-old colt and an elk playing ball together, just wonderful!!!

<https://tw.tv.yahoo.com/usa-today-news/eight-month-old-colt-elk-222735723.html>

Winter Promises

Some Thoughts on a Cold Winter Day

The thought of Springtime breezes
Ending icy rain,
The joy of seeing new life
Stirring once again,
Visions of the tender green
Replacing dreary snow
Upon the old familiar trails
Wherever we may go,
Of tiny buds about to bloom
That beckon us to see
A picture of the way we hope
Our world will always be!
How wonderful the promise
Of renewal and rebirth,
But we should make a promise, too-
"Take care of Mother Earth"!

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

"The flowers of late winter and early spring occupy places in our hearts well out of proportion to their size." - Gertrude S. Wister (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

bare tree sentinels
welcome us into the woods--
snow suddenly stops

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

“Trees offer us the solution to nearly every problem facing humanity today, from defending against drug resistance to halting global temperature rise, and they are eager to share those answers. They do so even when we can’t or won’t hear them. We once knew how to listen. It is a skill we must remember.” - Diana Beresford-Kroeger (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Snow

Snow is white
snow is pure
a pity pure lasts but a day
snow is beauty
snow is scorn
too high-toned for summer play.

Snow is cold
cold is cruel
cold comes stealthy in the night
crawls through brick
through gorse and bracken
turning brown and black to white.

The land contracts
in wintry silence
grasses wither
letting go
only trees are giving voice
groans and cracks at ten below.

First warm air
will lay a hand
gesture soft on old white snow
to loose beneath its winter skin
frozen water
held for spring.

Snow now weeping
its own death
gives life
to Nature’s quickening breath.

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

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

the hoary, old snow
once so proud and shiny white
knew it's day had come

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

Winter Days

For me, winter has never been a favorite season,
snow chilling
snow freezing, and to be fair,
snow softening a barebones landscape.

But even as I start to complain
what comes to mind
is the figure of a six-year-old
standing, staggering, floundering,
in a twenty-inch March snowfall,
joy written all over her face,
joy and her squeals
reaching through the cold panes
of the window
where I was watching.

Coming indoors later,
as the sun was sinking,
I see Michèle sitting under a lamp
doing her homework,
with her back to me,
and I had the wits to tell myself,
I will remember this,
the winter evening
the lamp-lit room,
our child bent over an antique desk,
absorbing knowledge through
books and pictures,
trying to understand and carve
her place in the world,

Against uncertain future, I am storing
such moments,
too savory to be forgotten.

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

eight degrees, streets bare
an email early morning sun
highlights black ice

Sara McNulty - Staten Island, NY - sablonde49purple@gmail.com

In The Dark Of Early Morning...

a long white cloud lies on the chill waters of
the lake
a deep lake
a miles-long lake
that centers my life.

If I travel east, north or south
the lake and its wooded hills
fill the horizon.
The water is not blue in winter
not azure
often a slate-to-silver gray
Longevity is the language that it speaks
the lapping and
the running white-caps
its singing voice.

On a dull winter day, pulling no light
from the sky
and with the south inlet icing up
the lake's cold sheen looks
like permanence,
but on the day when temperatures rise
the white cloud that rests, opaque and heavy
along its surface
lifts, and frees itself like a living body,
each wisp an arm or a leg
disappearing into the warm daylight
above the lake.

Perhaps it is telling us that
not all beautiful things
are meant to last.

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

Winter wind whistles.
Jack Frost dances merrily.
When will spring be here?

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com



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What is a whiteout?

Sometimes it's impossible to see through a snowstorm. If the ground is already covered in snow, fresh snowfall under gray clouds can make the landscape blur together. Travel can become dangerous or impossible when this happens.

Snowflakes each unique,
Pile into drifts together,
Now just one again.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

Repose of Our Souls

After autumn's imposing pageant
rainbows painted on the hills
pastel confetti floating freely
forming crunchy floral paths

After bumblebees burrow deep
bears seek snug sanctuary
birds chase the setting sun
roses retreat reluctant

After busy fruitful harvests
filling cans and chest freezers
temperature drops as days shorten
nights lengthen, bed turned down

Gaia prepares for our slumber
time for retreat and quiet rest
rejuvenation for all her children
warmed under white comforter

Winter will perform its duty
preserve and reconfigure
usher in spring resurrection
after repose of our souls

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

You Really Don't Know What You Have Until It's Gone

Sparkling crystal snow
Bedecks the branches of trees,
Chilling sparrow feet.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

“There is nothing in the world more beautiful than the forest clothed to its very hollows in snow. It is the still ecstasy of nature, wherein every spray, every blade of grass, every spire of reed, every intricacy of twig, is clad with radiance.” - William Sharp (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Old dinosaur drifts
Left over from the plowing
Lurk by the roadside.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

Hoary Cave

North wind waves the hay
chills mouse and song sparrow
trees bend more than sway
bow to the coming snow

Fields painted parched and tan
lifeless flora's last stand
earth sallow and wan
a dirge playing for the land

The end will soon come
cold Sun far and low
gives way night has won
with Winter fast in tow

Sheet of white drawn over
blanket thick with snow
heavy the tombs cover
ground buried tight below

Sound of Taps through whitened trees
floats above the frozen grave
softly whispers on the breeze
long sleep in this hoary cave

Will Spring yet reappear
Will Revelle yet be heard
Will the Sun burn warm and near
Will resurrection be conferred

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

“Out of the bosom of the air, Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken, Over the woodlands brown and bare, Over the harvest-fields forsaken, Silent, and soft and slow Descends the snow.” - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

woven web
garlands great oak trees like jewels
icicle filigree

Sara McNulty - Staten Island, NY - sablonde49purple@gmail.com

Leaf Dance

The surface glistens
starkness almost twinkles in the late day sun
playing down the eastern slope of Pleasant Mountain

Intruding on this land of life in waiting
a tired leaf dances haltingly with an occasional skip
movements like fits coping with the vastness of alone

Once the source of mighty Aspen nutrition
this tiny desiccated ashen remnant of arboreal green
struggles across the snowy expanse seeking repose

Far from its slumbering kin
it is desperate for the comfort found in kindred likeness
amidst the distant naked trees defining winter's isolation

Spring will bring rebirth
fueled by the food that can only be fed by many leaves
together working as one touching like hands entwined

The leaf knows the empty needs of one
and the fullness power and peace of many
the little leaf will soon exalt in destiny

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

“Silently, like thoughts that come and go, The snowflakes fall, each one a gem. The whitened air conceals all earthly trace, And leaves to memory the space to fill.” William Hamilton Gibson, Pastoral Days (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Cardinals in red
Flash brightly against the snow
Searching for some food.

Tasha Halpert North Grafton, MA tashahal@gmail.com



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Why does snow make it quiet?

When snow accumulates, it holds onto sound waves. “Snow is going to be porous, and typically porous materials such as fibers and foams...absorb sound pretty well,” David Herrin, a professor at the University of Kentucky’s College of Engineering, told AccuWeather.

Children cheer the snow,
Running out to craft snowmen,
Heedless of the cold.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

“To see a hillside white with dogwood bloom is to know a particular ecstasy of beauty, but to walk the gray Winter woods and find the buds which will resurrect that beauty in another May is to partake of continuity.” - Hal Borland (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Winter

is a heartless taskmaster,
seems to delight seeing skinny
fingers of trees petition the sky
for moisture. Likes to serve
it cold or frozen. Doles out
nourishment like a Christmas
Scrooge. Keeps the trees gaunt
and pale as thin gray ghosts.
Considers Spring a servant girl
who can enter his presence
only when granted permission,
often on timid tiptoes, picking
a small flower here and there,
offering up her sparse bouquet
as a ticket for admittance.

Wesley D. Sims

Haiku of Spring Flowers

I can't wait until
rose magnolia buds unfurl
into giant white blooms

Their slender stalks rise
when winter still holds its grip
jonquil blooms pop gold

Green spear points pierce ground
while temps dip below freezing
hyacinth blooms soon blare

Lenten roses show
pepper pods of green or rose
lanterns light the ground

Ignore icy weather
spread their multicolored blooms
Pansies flash their smiles

when crocus begin
to escape prison of sod
I can wait til spring

Soft snow fall today
pile so very high to see
shovel hard I must.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

Please be kind, write to each other...

Late Winter Snow

Snowflakes
soft as angel wings
float to the ground,
cling to grass,
kiss the tight bloom
of the redbud trees.
They care not
that the calendar says,
it's March.
They are giddy to dance
among the bare limbs
of winters trees
one last time
before spring blooms
the earth closer
to the summer sun.

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

“In a way Winter is the real Spring - the time when the inner things happen, the resurgence of nature.” - Edna O'Brien (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Defying the frost
Small green weeds sprout in a pot
Spring's advent signal.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

I am in awe of our Earth and the beauty I have been blessed to play in.

feeble sun
stingy warmth
steely gray sky

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

March Snow

You're a show-off winter!
Allowing a few warm days
to creep in, just enough to pop
out daffodil and forsythia,
saucer-size tulip-tree blossoms,

bees buzzing among
the hyacinths, permit temperatures
to rise into the 70s,
then wham! Dump a half of foot
of snow on everything!

How you must be laughing
as the bees shiver looking
for the sweetness that was here
only yesterday, as the birds peck
at frozen food in their feeders and try

to keep their eggs warm. You can be cruel.
It's a wonder spring even arrives at all
the way you cripple her sometimes.
But beware, others can play this game.
Next year, fall may slam the door, shut

you out. Don't think she won't do it,
either! She can be as cold and calculating
as you, or should I say Christmas sandals,
warm January days and grass-mowing
in February! Don't mess with Mother Nature!

She gave you three months. Use them wisely.

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

red fox silently pads by
over frost tipped trail
gibbous moon shining

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

Winter's Theater

There's something about breath-taking frigid air
and blowing stinging snow right into my face

Enveloping me as I try to walk with my dog in tow
slipping and sliding in my tall leather boots

bound tightly in my warm wool coat, that thrills
and comforts and pleases me like

a gift I didn't expect, but welcomed and
treasured, its arrival, realization, it's just for me.

stepping outdoors from the warmth of the fireplace
I enter the stillness taking winter's visit to

heart and soul and I share it, talking to the
rabbit who crosses my path and the many birds, toes

curled around phone wires, I relish it all, as I become
a part of it and welcome its once-a-year arrival, just for me.

A time of rest and sleep for regeneration for man and beast
before Spring tickles life from inside dormant seeds and land

inside a frozen cocoon, reflecting Nature's compassion
for the tired, depleted earth Mother, holding her

close to her ample bosom, nourishing, protecting, encouraging
her cycles, her days and years, cherishing each new hope

I, too, start over again, hopeful, humbled to be a part of
Winter's silent glory, surely, she performs this dance

Just For Me!

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

What Can I Do?

I could just kill myself,
settling my personal debt of carbon
sooner rather than later.

If I make that choice, I would like to do it in some place
where other creatures could profit from my helpful suicide,
splattered into lunch at the bottom of a cliff.

Even more impactful, I could found a doomsday cult
inducing others to give up their own ghost.
If we can't do anything about coming into the world,
at least we can help ourselves out of it.

Yet, the world is naturally so delightful
it is hard to talk ourselves out of it,
so instead we point fingers at others who should be exterminated instead,
We are quite direct with some species:
Folks labelled Exterminator are
devoted to the elimination of species we have designated as disgusting (rats, ants, bedbugs,
cockroaches) or merely inconvenient (mice, squirrels, opossums, raccoons) and we have
anointed death squads to take care of them.
We have also invented industries designed to propagate species solely for our consumption,
billions of chickens and cows and pigs come into life enslaved for our food.
We have plowed diversity out of billions of acres of land, reducing it to a place where only our
favored plants are permitted to grow, to whatever stage we prefer as food.
Each species hunts for food, but we have eliminated any competition, slaughtering whole
ecosystems for our own comfort and convenience.

And that doesn't even start to talk about fossil fuels
So, when you ask, what can I do, I say,
Thanks to you doing, we are almost done.
Try to undo, sit down, lay down, promise to wear out your shoes,
blow up the tv, turn off your devices, stop making sense, understand instead.
The world was perfect before you started trying to make it all about you.

Ellen Mendoza - Portland, OR - ellenmendoza_lido@yahoo.com

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.

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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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