

The Weekly Avocet - #536

March 12th, 2023

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

**the town under the snow
so quiet, it is picturesque
lone rabbit hops round**

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



Submitted by Edwina Kadera

A Quest for Sunshine

Winter
in the woods.

Each morning,
a quest
for precious slivers
of sunlight

that have
miraculously
survived a journey
of millions of miles
from their birthplace

and navigated their way
through a dense thicket
of evergreens

to reach the plants
and animals
eagerly awaiting
their arrival
at the forest floor--
including me.

A patch of sun
large enough
to light my face
is a blessing,

one big enough
to warm my whole body
a revelation.
Every cell
sings Hallelujah!

Kai Siedenbug - Santa Cruz, CA - kai@ournatureconnection.com

green juniper's branch
sticks out through the snow on it
what is going on

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

The Avocet and The Weekly Avocet are publications 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...

Elemental

It's just
the juncos
and me
out here
today.

Every other animal
seems to be
sensibly sequestered
somewhere warmer,
drier, and safer.

But we
intrepid creatures
are out here
with the howling wind,
driving rain,
and pelting hail.

And we
don't mind
a bit--

truth be told,
we love it!

It quickens
the pulse,

awakens
the senses,

makes us
feel more
fully alive.

It reminds us
that we are part
of something

vast, wild,
and beautiful--

it's elemental.

And later,
when I return
to my cozy cabin,
turn up the heat,

peel off
my rain-soaked clothes
and replace them
with dry ones,

I notice
what a
precious gift it is
simply to be
warm and dry.

Because of
the cold,
I understand warmth
in a new way.

Kai Siedenburg - Santa Cruz, CA - kai@ournatureconnection.com

We want to thank our subscribing members who keep us afloat. With their support we continue publishing our two Nature poetry venues. But it is getting harder and harder to keep our presses going with the rising cost of paper and mailing. So, a big “thank you” to all of you who do support us! And to those who week in and week out enjoy our hard work, but do not feel the need to support our mission of spreading the word about the beauty of Nature poetry, please think about supporting our work we do for just \$28. The best deal in all the small presses. You get 4 printed issues (64 pages of pure Nature poetry) and 52 weeks of The Weekly Avocet, every weekend. Our hard work needs your support if we are to continue sharing all the wonderful poetry, we do week in and week out, because without your support little poetry journals like ours disappear, leaving poets one less place to share their work. Thank you!

**Please make your check out to The Avocet and send to:
The Avocet, P.O. Box 19186, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269**

“Nature inspires me to believe!”

I Speak Chickadee

I speak
a few words
of chickadee--

although
clumsily,
haltingly,
with a thick
human accent.

To a native speaker,
my words may be
completely
unrecognizable.

Doubtless
there are those
who cringe

when they
hear me mangle
the elegant sounds
of their native tongue.

Yet most
seem to
appreciate
my earnest efforts
to learn a few words
of their
beautiful language,

no matter
how awkward
or imperfect.

Kai Siedenbug - Santa Cruz, CA - kai@ournatureconnection.com

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

The Water Has Her Way With Me

My wool socks,
while still warm,
are decidedly not dry.

My leather boots
and nylon rain shell,
having valiantly resisted

the gentle
yet persistent advances
of the rain
for nearly two hours,
are beginning
to yield.

The water
is having her way
with me,

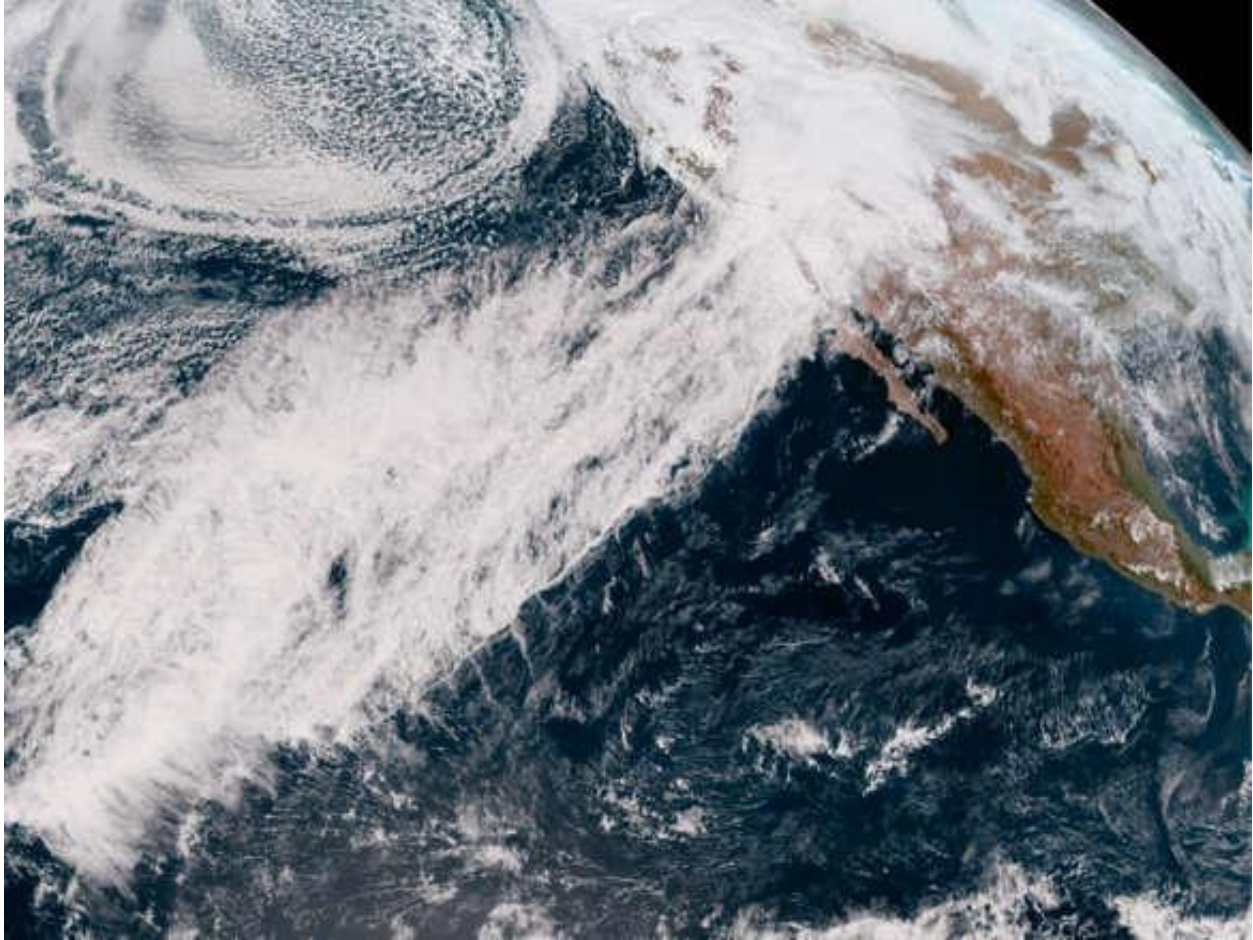
finding her way
to and through me.

Kai Siedenburg - Santa Cruz, CA - kai@ournatureconnection.com

Hints of Spring

On this March day,
the first above forty degrees,
I'm wearing tall boots
So, I can splash through puddles.
I discover the snow has vanished
from the south side of my house.
Viewing the leaf litter
scattered in the flower bed,
I spot one-inch tall green spears
clasping tiny white buds
still tightly furled,
all pointing toward the sunshine.
Waiting for another burst of sun,
perhaps tomorrow,
I will see snowdrops in bloom.

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



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What are atmospheric rivers?

Winds in the lower atmosphere can transport evaporated ocean water around the world, dumping snow and rain along the way. One of these fast-moving streams can carry about 25 times the volume of water that's in the Mississippi, reported National Geographic.

A Winter of Global Warming

Warm winter weather
forsythia blooms then wilts
and dies next cold snap

In New York City
we've had no snow this winter
as we wait for spring

Gordon Gilbert - New York City, NY - gordonagilbertjr@usa.net

sun comes bursting
breaking through snow-laden clouds
squirrel pops head out

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



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How does hail form?

Air currents in thunderstorms can pull rain up into a part of the atmosphere that's really cold. The raindrops freeze and turn into balls of ice. When they get heavier than the updraft, gravity pulls them to the ground. Hail causes up to \$22 billion in damage a year, reported CBS News. As Earth's atmosphere continues to warm, hailstorms could get worse.

slowly melting snow
grows smaller each new sun
soon flowers will sprout

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

Showcase your work in The Weekly Avocet.

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

Spring photos (4),

Spring 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) Spring/your last name in the subject line.

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

(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 - town/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 Spring submissions...

Ask the Gardener: A Sonnet Triptych

If you want to know how the earth changes,
each year bearing one more scarring,
scalding the soil's surface, then rearranges
the system beneath the soil, marring--
Ask the gardener on her knees. She will tell
you how she's watched and witnessed
day by day, year by year, the darkened spell
of careless winds and tainted rains, the flood
and parching bi-polar seasons, distressed.
She will tell you how sorrow's in her blood
watching all the life she considers blessed--
today a lone monarch lands on milkweed,
where once a dozen hatched and danced, then sailed,
where once the creatures that she loved prevailed.

If you want to know how the earth is tipping,
with each up-close-and-personal invasion,
ask the gardener with her bucket, dipping,
filled with black beetles not in the equation
that balances the garden: creatures devouring
the native plants provided for safe keeping
of the bees, butterflies, and birds; scouring
each buckthorn, rose, and milkweed, feeding
frenzies, insatiable, in black swarms.
Ask the gardener when the bees disappear
before her eyes, or when dry earth warms
and turns from black to gray, a cracked mirror.
Where once the gardener laughed with easy sighs,
now the gardener stoops too full of goodbyes.

Goodbye monarch, swallowtail, and bees.
Hello white grubs beneath the soil, tiny whales
like the curled bodies of Orca in seas
seen one summer before the gusty gales
of their great diminishing. Too much loss
for a decade or a century to bear.
The gardener sees, feels, and knows the cost.
And yet her green thumb sends its healing, shared
amongst spider lilies and bergamot,
where hummingbirds return from year to year
to this their sanctuary. Were it not
for gardeners on their knees in greening prayer,
only scientists would speak of earth's demise,
but to the gardener, it comes as no surprise.

*(This poem was first published in CHIRON REVIEW and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.
Also published in NORTHWEST QUARTERY)*

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

Waiting for the Storm

All evening the ribbons of warning
speed across the television
sending people grocery shopping
checking snow blowers and generators
stocking up on salt pellets.
We feel the heavy moisture and wind
on our faces and necks
and ask ourselves again
why we live here in a Siberian climate.
But checking on the storm's progress
we see baby kangaroos
in faux pouches and baskets
tiny knitted slippers on koala bears
the scorched nose of a wombat
and ask ourselves again
why the powerful and deluded deny
the ever-slipping slope of climate crisis
when firestorms kill our precious creatures.
We are told it is arson
by those who love money more than
the paradise we could call earth.
Arsonists thrive when Australian heat
and winds brew the perfect storm.
We remember Paradise itself
burned to the ground in California
like Sodom and Gomorrah
or Dixie's driven down. We wait
for the storm, hunker in homes,
bunkers in bleak times
and ask ourselves again
what more can we do?

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

under the deep snow
nothing seems moving, even trees
why the wind howls so

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

a snowy Maine coast
light illuminates darkness
welcoming beacon

Abbie Johnson Taylor - Sheridan, WY - abbietaaylor945@gmail.com

Argyle Park

Waterfalls and flowing feeds the bay.
Turn of the century monuments,
the background for a wedding day.
Joggers,
lovers,
lunch box picnickers,
children romping,
the old woman
with the handle bar ice cream wagon
teaching young boys to bait hook.
My children spent summer Sunday's
making sandbox friends,
shoveling a windstorm
at the bills of squawking ducks,
then befriending them
with stale Italian bread.
Faces in focus.
Cameras clicking.
Not a moment missed...
a snapshot
for every local's photo album.
Even in winter, I return,
my daughters since grown,
swings hang stiff against the wind
like frozen vanilla ice
and ghosts glimmer,
windswept from the chilled lake cover.

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

amid winter calm
one bird sings a joyful song
is spring coming soon

Abbie Johnson Taylor - Sheridan, WY - abbietaaylor945@gmail.com

late winter sunrise--
crystalline frost melts away
crocuses wait in the wings

Susan K. Hagen - Birmingham, AL - skhagen47@icloud.com

Solitude

I watch as nature orchestrates her
seasonal drama, unfolding
in its own course.
The snow is draped over trees;
both earth and road are covered.
A greyish mist is settling over the land.
The lines of houses and cars are
no longer easily defined. Streetlights
soften into a circular, hazy glow.

I am captivated by the beauty offered,
the wondrous sight of virgin snow.
And like a curious child, I sit and peer
through the window watching the dance
of snow. The wind lifts and swirls flakes;
they drift and tumble, pile into mounds.

Pine trees take on a white, pyramidal shape;
bushes become spherical, vanilla cones.
Hardened by the cold, crusty snow shimmers
like a sea of glass in the bright moonlight.
Icicles dangle from snow laden branches
like inverted quartz obelisks.

One moment in time
of peace,
solitude
in a world where there is so little.

Lynne D. Soulagnet - Medford, N.Y - LynneSoulagnet@Yahoo.Com

forsythia-yellow dotting
green-brown winter background
dust stirs indoors

Susan K. Hagen - Birmingham, AL - skhagen47@icloud.com

Blazing scarlet sun
sinks behind brush fire of clouds
consumes winter day

(Previously published in Haiku Journal)

Suzanne Cottrell - Oxford, NC - cottrell_suzanne@yahoo.com

Our Town Walker

Waiting for the light
in my warm car
on a cold winter day,
I look out the window
and see a familiar sight,
the man with the long gray beard
who walks the streets of our town,
day after day
season after season.

He walks a racer's pace,
looks straight ahead,
determination on his face.
He stops only to cross streets.
The rest of us sit in our cars
and wonder why he walks
so many miles year after year,
but he will never tell,
this private man in the public eye.

Melanie Harless - Oak Ridge, TN - melanieharless@Ymail.com

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

Freezing rain glazes tree branches
Frozen prisms diffuse sunlight
Limbs crack; icy shards scatter

(Previously published in Three Line Poetry)

Suzanne Cottrell - Oxford, NC - cottrell_suzanne@yahoo.com

Pristine snowfall blankets the land.
Bare branches wear fluffy, white robes.
A red cardinal perches in an evergreen.

Suzanne Cottrell - Oxford, NC - cottrell_suzanne@yahoo.com

Song of the Glacier

In this fiord I want no cathedral;
frissons of frigid aquamarine;
miracles of nature are their own temples.

Carved spaces of air, mute confessionals,
magnify crystals of serenity.
In this fiord I want no cathedral.

Chalky-turquoise slabs of time, tabernacles
of ice, sizzle into the opaline sea.
Miracles of nature are their own temples.

Ice cliffs cleave, crevasses sunder, glacial
meanderings buckle eternity.
In this fiord I want no cathedral

but the hemispheric crucible
of the nacreous, Eden-spangled sky.
Miracles of nature are their own temples,

the human soul unchained. Prodigal,
artless wonder approaches divinity.
In this fiord I want no cathedral,
miracles of nature are their own temples.

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

my breath leads the way
on this freezing, brutal day
snow cracks beneath feet

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

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

tortoise treks thru snow
hare bounds about everywhere
both waiting on Spring

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

Earth Grief, Canada: Athabasca Glacier

Athabasca Glacier, resident of the Columbia Ice Fields
aging body of layered ice restlessly
shrinks walking backwards

arms weakened by heated days, frozen fingers
claw at rocky remains shedding skin trails
of pebbles scattered on scraped earth

inhabited with yellowish withered weeds
face of the glacier weeps icy tears
freezes by night melts by day

steady degeneration marked in decades
more loss in these fifty years than
in the last thousand

tourists stare snap pictures climb
the perpetually declining body
of glacial formation

children kick at ribbed crystals
with dirty boots leave
footprints on grey ice

at the foot of the receding giant
my body casts a blue shadow
across the compact ice
death is imminent

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

icy, slush puddles
make walking dangerous, ouch!
squirrel scurries off

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

many deer hoof prints
in the freshly fallen snow
golden moon blazing

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

Uninvited Visitors

The cat hears it first,
the noise on the porch,
now he hides beneath the bed.
I flip on the light, peer through the peephole,
see no one. Shuffling and scratching persists,
Who's there? No one answers.

I find a pair of scissors on the desk,
fling open the door,
come to face to face
with three masked strangers
defiantly digging for worms
among my porch planters.
You have the entire yard for digging, I tell them,
They are not interested in conversation.

The largest rears up on her hind legs
like a small bear, fur fluffed,
a gesture of threatening alarm.
The Mother, I guess, with her two children
out for a midnight snack.
For several minutes we lock eyes.
Then the three agree among themselves
that I am a harmless intruder,
resume their digging.

I could chase them away
with loud noises and a broom.
Instead, I bid my racoon visitors goodnight,
close the door.
Listen to the scratching
of urban wildlife.

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

Please be kind, write to each other...

mountain peaks with snow
none down here in the desert
coyotes calling

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

Too Much Rain

Day after torrential rains,
I wander in wetted-shoes
down the garden path
looking for disasters.

I find over-turned chairs,
broken crockery, wind sculpture
upside-down in the mud, sun umbrella
heavy with wet. Pungent scent of mold.

Every potted plant flooded
with standing water, I move along
tip planters, let extra water runs in rivulets.
Bird bath filled to capacity.

The beige bowl on the ground
holds drunken succulents.
Lifting it from saturated soil,
it makes a sucking sound.

Beneath the bowl a glossy wiggling body,
an active earthworm, unhappy
to be discovered, he tries to dig
one end of himself back into the soil.

Thick clay-like consistency
blocks his progress. I gently
replace the vessel, hope
worm will recoil.

Balancing on steppingstones,
I step over broken branches,
retrieve a forgotten trowel,
already turning to rust.

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

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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