

The Weekly Avocet - #596

May 5th, 2024

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

Pink creek Trillium Birth roots, shade toads, wake robins! 3 petals mean spring

Kristin Ruth Lawrence - Sebastopol, CA - webwalker17@aol.com



Submitted by Edwina Kadera

The Spring After

In the after for my father it is everlastingly spring
He sees daylight greater, less darkness
Catches aspen gasping
He can get ready for Yosemite whenever he pleases
His lungs fill with jonquil incense
He feasts on asparagus crisp & strawberry shortcake
Caresses the coats of creatures budding
So much he has protected
Is forever a ranger
A ranger to angels?
In the after for my father are fresh thresholds
People respect their planet & each other
In the after it is spring everlasting
Dad is always happy

Kristin Ruth Lawrence - Sebastopol, CA - webwalker17@aol.com

Vernal Mockingbird
Shrieks "Cheeseburger!" in its song
I, in awe, giggle

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Tassajara Springs Spring

Sticky monkey flowers are glowing mango
Rainbow roses lounge by the pool
Bells Buddhist knell before daybreak
Fleeting feet are enlightened along trails
We breathe, devour the finest vegetarian fare
Tipple teas distinct
Meet with stream & treasure waterfall
Evade shaking snakes, oaks' poison
Bathe our bodies in balmy waters
Play Password & Scrabble & laugh
Memories of springs healing not lost at Tassajara

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Mother Gem

This Mother Gem
Turquoise twirling & emerald
Tumbling in black silk, crystals
Let us hold her in hands humble
We owe her everything
Let us polish out the flaws we inflict
Restore her lucent air, water, terrain
Let us keep watch over her greenery
Creatures delicate
Value her ruby fruits
Let us snuffle her wonders luscious & amber
Listen to her brilliant, glistening winds
Let us cherish her miracles of amethyst & topaz
Let us grasp our maternal masterpiece
This gem is precious & all that we have

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Hetch Hetchy Hotshot
Hovers grass, magpie, 2 trees
Cries for lost valley

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The Morning's Light

The chill of night, the morning's light,
The sun in shades of gold,
A burst of Springtime's fragrant breath
As Nature's scene unfolds.
Forsythia like yellow stars.
The royal purple hue
Of beautiful grape hyacinth,
A sky of silver blue...
A whole new world awakening
To see and feel and touch.
The beauty and the special joy
This season brings to us!

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

The Storm

A rumble of thunder
Is heard far away,
The white clouds are grey now
And darken the day.
The birds are excited,
The animals are, too.
A big storm is coming!
So, what should we do?
Sit in the treetops
And join in the fun
Or hide in a hollow
Until the storm is done?
Shelter in shadows
Or splash in the rain?
Play games or wait
Till the sun shines again?
While this is debated ,
the rain starts to fall.
Delaying decisions
For one and for all!

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A New World

A brand-new world's awakening
Of Peace and Hope and Cheer.
It isn't someplace far away,
Because that world is here...
A world where people really care
How other people feel
Where goodwill flows
For others know
This spirit is quite real,
Where mountains spread from sea to sea
And the air is crisp and clean,
Where rivers sparkle, clear and pure
And grass is springtime green
Where people live who realize
The wondrous world we live in,
And do their part to help protect
This GIFT that we've been given!

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Sunflower

Sunflower
So big and yellow
In the sunshine
Warm and mellow
Why did Nature
Leave a trace
Of brown
Upon your golden face?

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I Am

I am a squirrel sprinting for wild blueberries.
I am a butterfly dancing in the sun.
I am a chipmunk foraging for insects and worms.
I am an eagle over the sun-polished rocks.
I am a seagull circling the beach.
I am a starfish in the tide pool.
I am the hermit crab inside a scavenged shell.
I am the lobster hiding beneath the rocks.
I am the tussock sedge in the bog.
I am the lady fern along the brookside.
I am the great horned owl guarding the birch forest.
I am the cliff overlooking the climbers.
I am the budding cardinal flower.
I am the yellow pond lily.
I am the breeze caressing the flower bed.
I am the campfire burning on the terrace.
I am the dusky sky lingering in the twilight.
I am a sailboat fading into the sunset.
I am a traveler coming home again
to hear the bullfrogs rehearsing in the rain.

Livingston Rossmoor - Modesto, CA - livingstonrossmoor@gmail.com

a chipmunk scurries
sampling winged maple seeds
that whirled down in gusts

Gay Marie Logsdon - Oak Ridge, TN - gmarielogsdon@gmail.com

Trusted Trees

When I think of those pink
Flowering trees in spring
The cherry blossoms come to mind
As a hopeful sign
Putting winter behind the arch
Of seasons, a reason
To look forward

Then the pear trees
With their white cream-colored petals
That line fairways and downtown streets
I think of them as trusted trees
Like friends who will be there
Through moods and milestones
As we turn another chapter
In the story of our lives

Lester Hirsh

The Rabbit

For the longest time
he stood at the outer edge
of the lawn, staring like a seer
into some distant land

It made me wonder
what this petite creature
was thinking of
or what forest he had
been surveying in his thoughts

After a while, he bowed
his furry head, and began
to chip away at a blade
of grass that pleased him
before moving on

If only we could know
what he pondered
in those private reflective moments
seemingly so ordinary
to my discerning eyes

Lester Hirsh - Watsontown, PA - lesterhirsh@hotmail.com

small tri-color faces
of johnny jump-ups peer out
among the iris

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Dennis Doordan - Santa Barbara, CA - Dennis.Doordan.1@nd.edu

bleeding hearts display
banners of blooms pink and white
delicately dangling

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Morning Shadow

Suddenly, it is next to me
in the early morning light
casting its long-legged silhouette ahead.
Out of its fiery cradle,
across the frigid void,
formless until it found me.
Now it matches me stride for stride.
Its light step mocking my heavy tread,
it stirs no ripples in the pond,
passes effortlessly through the scrub brush.
My shadow is me,
and yet it is not.

It does not mirror my Caucasian skin,
my brown eyes, my white beard.
It is me, minus the parts that make me
different from the others in this field.
This luminous dark echo marks my presence
here and now, yet leaves no mark on here
nor mourns the passage of now.
Standing on the other side of sunlight,
it is not me,
and yet it is.

Ninety-three million miles from where we both began,
fleeting forms fashioned from light and air and earth,
alone together in this meadow
listening to birds sing.

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young ferns that faded
into the dry earth last fall
now unfurl their fronds

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Life's Cradle

I think it wonderful that life should be
so ancient -- old almost as earth, with world
on shattered world descending deep beneath
our feet, like pages in a titan's book.
What treasures of enchantment they enfold--
these chronicles bequeathed in bone and rock.

I marvel at the forms of life that scale
from virus to the great sequoia tree
and cling where hostile elements prevail
from desert sand to bleak Antarctic ice
or thrive where friendly elements agree
from coral reef to tropic paradise.

I love this world that spins serene and blue
about the friendly star that gave her birth.
Life's mother and protector shields her brood
and nurtures them within her firm embrace.
I wish we knew much more of her, our earth,
but fear we know today, too well, her ways.

Whose want cuts down the soaring redwood tree
or dooms to death the great but harmless whale?
Whose hunger strips the bounty of the seas?
Whose need pollutes our water, land and air?
Shall we take time to care or shall we fail?
Is what we've done to earth beyond repair?

Ray Staubach

Impressions of Early Spring

The dark, purple essence of violets
in the uncut grass,
the joyous scream of the windborne hawk
in the cloud-streaked sky,
the sensuous kiss of the welcome sun
upon my face.

Ray Staubach

Spring Venture

Spring was once a time
for me to take camera in hand
and venture forth, into my woods,
to record each wildflower's birth.
The years taught me just where
and when they would appear.
On beech tree hill's steep face,
in a diminutive patch of soil,
sprang the only white hepatica on seven acres.
By a spring-fed creek, in an even tinier
area of damp soil, squirrel com nestled
in a cluster of fragile fern.
On another hill, white trout lilies thrived,
while below, their yellow cousins massed.
Jack-in-the-pulpit never failed
in its chosen spot, and nearby,
large groups of mayapple crowded together
like so many toad umbrellas.
Most rotting logs sported mushroom towns
risen after a warm night's rain.
Each flower and plant had a time and a place,
established long before my tenure.
I most admired the shy
and humble Pepper and Salt,
that raced the crocus
and melting snow
to be first to bloom.
Like Aldo Leopold's Draba it asked little
and chose time,
rather than space,
to be free of competition.
Each wildflower taught me
that we thrive best
where conditions favor our needs
so, we can rise to our full potential.

Ray Staubach

Dark murmurations
spiraling calligraphy
brushed across the sky.

Ray Staubach

Bright Sacrament

Old Earth has rolled
uncounted dawns across her face,
resurrecting the golden host of promise
from the hopelessness of night,
raising it aloft
like a bright sacrament
above the rim
of a vast, darkened chalice.

Holy, holy,
cloud-wreathed and watery blue,
roll on, roll on, eternally.

Roll hope
into the darkness of my heart.
Burn away the gray
vapors of despair
that linger from my night.
Sanctify me with this dawn.

Ray Staubach

“Wildlife needs wilderness--not just to survive, but also to live freely. Sadly, many species struggle to survive due to increased human activity and expansion into habitats they call home.” - Zoe Helene (Theresa Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Touch Life with Gentleness

Touch life with gentleness
like the early spring sun
on woodland moss.
Heed our kindly star,
nurturing the fragile,
living earth
with tenderness
born of restraint.

Ray Staubach

A Spring Day Remembered

I remember a spring day, long ago,
when I picked up my camera and drove
to an old country cemetery
to photograph wildflowers emerging
among the leaning and weathered gravestones.
Nature did not cooperate -- a slight
low-to-the-ground breeze kept my subjects
in motion, so I sat on a stone wall
among a sea of spring beauties while my
dark windbreaker soaked up the feeble
sunshine. A pair of titmice piped their calls
from the just-budding trees and I grew drowsy.
A wave of contentment flowed over me.
I forgot my original mission
and let nature heal my conflicted soul.
Among those ancient, forgotten stones
I realized the brevity of life and
the futility of worldly ambition.
I left without the images I sought
but carried instead a vision of renewal.

Now, whenever the problems of the world
overwhelm me, I revisit that day,
and like a man kneeling before an icy
hillside spring, cup my hands and drink deeply
of the memory of that spring day.

Ray Staubach

“The wealth of the nation is its air, water, soil, forests, minerals, rivers, lakes, oceans, scenic beauty, wildlife habitats and biodiversity... that's all there is. That's the whole economy. That's where all the economic activity and jobs come from. These biological systems are the sustaining wealth of the world.” - Gaylord Nelson, Earth Day founder

bluebird pairs arrive
to inspect the nesting box
and renew their claim

Gay Marie Logsdon - Oak Ridge, TN - gmarielogsdon@gmail.com

Loving-pair

She is of least concern in Red Data.
Not for me. Her effervescent energy
catches my spirit, enlivens and
brings joyous smile, whenever
I see her in my garden, flitting
from one tiny branch to another,
making it sway to her 'which, which'
chirps, attracting a similar looking
mate, who follows her every
move and her chirping vigorously.

I then see them catch-gulp-catch
some flies, worms, insects,
rubbing off their beaks
on twigs, swinging again
to dart off to another branch
repeating this umpteen times,
though it never tires me
to see thumb-sized, tiny,
loving pair of ash-bellied prinia,
chirping their time away in my backyard.

Thriveni C. Mysore - India - thrivenicmysuru@gmail.com

Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" was published in *The New Republic* magazine in 1923. He called it, "My best bid for remembrance." It is one of the best known and loved poems in all of American literature.

Right before he wrote it, Frost stayed up all night working on a different poem called "New Hampshire." He'd never worked all night on a poem before, and he was feeling pretty good about that, and so he went outside to watch the sun rise. It was the middle of June and there was no snow in sight.

He suddenly got an idea there, and rushed back in and wrote "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," almost without lifting his pen from the page. He said of the experience, "It was as if I'd had a hallucination."

Frost said poetry could make you "remember what you didn't know you knew."

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" ends:

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.

(Writer's Almanac)

Young Dove Behind the Armoire

You simply took a wrong turn,
blindsided in near dark, flying
into what appeared a safe cave,
perhaps a place to rest within
nurturing arms like those of the shrubs
that hug the portal that drew you in--
a mistake, though. This soft landing,
managed low on tufted rug,

nowhere near your own carpet,
the damp, new-green forage ground
for dinner. This foreign field fills
with barking, the rush of maw
and tongue, a pounce.
With feathered flash, gray-white-
gray, you power into vertical,
wing high, clear lethal fan blades.

In your fear, you swerve, then dive
or tumble into a dark pit. Cornered,
your heart hammers behind the armoire,
an airless lair, rest stop or dusty trap?
Drifts of animal hair here, voices,
movement near, but no poking, prodding
tools intrude. You, solo, left
to calm yourself in odd dovecote.

Hours pass, the fortress starts to slide,
scrapes the floor; a slant of light;
you startle to escape. A swoop
of swaddled hand, a rush to open air,
You somersault to rooted ground,
shaken under leafy canopy,
One thunderclap of Spring--
you find your wings.

Judith Youngers - Comfort, TX - judiswording@gmail.com

“Wildlife is something which man cannot construct. Once it is gone, it is gone forever. Man can rebuild a pyramid, but he can't rebuild ecology, or a giraffe.” - Joy Adamson (Theresa Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Arrowhead

Potawatomi, Ojibwa, Kickapoo, Fox
The Michigan tribes, Grandpa said,
As he wiped the mud from the arrowhead,
Handed it back to me.
He tapped my shoulder with his big fist.
Good eye, Rusty.

That night, in my cot on the porch
Overlooking the lake,
Arrowhead silhouetted between finger and thumb
Against the star-filled sky,
I said the names out loud.
Potawatomi, Ojibwa, Kickapoo, Fox.

Most nights I'd fall asleep
Listening to the night sounds in the woods,
Thinking of the fish we had caught,
The ones we would catch tomorrow, or
My Grandpa, the bear,
How when we swam together
The hair on his chest and shoulders
Waved in the water like river grass.

But that pine-scented night
Those names rolled off my tongue
Like an ancient chant.
Potawatomi, Ojibwa, Kickapoo, Fox.
Bullfrogs thrummed, a fish splashed,
An owl hooted nearby.

I stared through the trees
At faint lights from a cabin across the lake.
Campfires crackled,
And Grandpa was there with other old men,
Sitting around the fire,
Smoking long pipes and telling long stories.
I fell asleep, listening.

Russell Reece - Bethel, DE - russ_reece@yahoo.com

“The love for all living creatures is the most noble attribute of man.” - Charles Darwin
(Theresa Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Elevated Mood

The mumble of bees that inhabit the poppies tumble,
their wings full of inebriated grace.
The golden-red pollen has their bellies so bloated
that flying, that sweet secret they are so adept in,
is now an open-joy fumble of laughter
a busy buzz at the lunacy of lifted wings that
when flittered and fluttered leave the Earth far below
with its desperate voice calling up,
Don't go. Don't leave.

But this fat day isn't made for flying anyway.
It's too lazy, languid as a log.
The sky's a heavy honey
drooping down sticky and sweet
warm as a new lover's kiss.

This is a day for laughter,
for rolling in the unmown grass,
the flower gardens alight with delight
a vibrance rejoicing of captive wild beauty.
Sure, the lilies are a little narcissistic
as they swell wide with pride,
but so be it.
Besides,
we all are a little.

So, bumble on bees.
Boast and sway and swing, sweet flowers.
You are all happy little children,
and with your mouths open-open,
celebrate the colors of your beauty.
Heaven and I are listening.

Robert Kokan - Palmyra, WI - octoberintherailroadeearth@gmail.com

mirrored sun-lit trees,
sound of stone and sand and bird--
Nature's Narcissus.

Susan K. Hagen - Birmingham, AL - shagen@bsc.edu

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

Time and Space

This time, this place, these realities,
Sometimes I get up in the morning
Open the shades and step outside,
Greet the day, feel the sun, the breeze

And I forget the state of the world,
The air still feels fresh and crisp,
The trees ablaze in their spring finery
I linger a while, not wanting to face

The outer world's reality, our cozy
Space with its full frig, family down
The stairs, everyday chores masking
The emptiness of purpose, movement

I fill the time with words, read, spoken,
Written by me, sometimes it feels like
Enough, other times I yearn to go out
To see nature to fill myself so I can do

More, help more, make more of a
Difference, yes, I write political cards,
Support causes, make calls, listen more,
Get on my knees, say prayers,

Leave the television off as long as
Possible, hold on to the memory of
Trees, meadows, flowers, lakes,
The ability of nature to heal

Count the days until our healing
Can start on a whole different level
So much pain, suffering out there,
So many wounds to be healed

Linda Golden - Woodland Hills, CA - lindagolden.berg5@gmail.com

Seeds and Seasons

Spring

Glancing out the window
Watching my grandson
Though not yet twelve
His height matching his mom's
His shoe a size greater than his dad's

Watching as he tends seeds
Seeds a heritage of our
Nations founding father
Acquired while journeying
A gift from grandma and grandpa

Watching, he studies his chosen task
Handling his tools like an old pro
Purposely preparing the ground
Gently carefully placing seeds
Finishing touch, water, and proud smile

Summer

Weeks later back at my window
He smiles, standing tall and straight
Beside him standing equally elegant
Three blooming sunflower plants.

Warmth, wonderment, joy, and love
For just as his seeds brought forth these flowers
In testimony to the seasons of life,
For me: son, father, grandfather
Spring, summer, fall, and winter,
Beholding the wonders of nature.

Mike Goldenberg - Woodland Hills, CA - mmikegoldenberg@gmail.com

Please be kind and write to each other...

(If you want to hear from poets about your work, then write them about their work)

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 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...

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 to 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

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**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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