

The Weekly Avocet

#238

July 2nd, 2017

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

We hold hands
under the pink rose trellis...
two white butterflies kissing...

Holly Rose Diane Shaw
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Take to the forest – Hug a Bear!

Please feel free to forward The Weekly Avocet to all those you know
who love Nature poetry. **Thank you!**

Enjoy the poetry from and of Nature...

Happy Birthday, America!

Hooray for the Fourth of July!!!
America is having a birthday!
Throughout the country we are celebrating,
searching through our closets
hoping to find something patriotic to wear.
Red, white and blue everywhere you look.
There are parades and picnics, barbeques and baseball,
hotdogs and hamburgers, potato salad and watermelon,
and ice cream. Lots and lots of ice cream.
Political discussions are off limits.
Kids reluctantly put away electronic things and find out what fun is.
Bands play, baton twirlers strut their stuff.
Veterans old and young march proudly
down streets well lined with cheering spectators.
Bewildered toddlers wave flags, grinning through painted faces.
Pretty girls wave from crepe paper flowered floats,
tossing candy and flirty smiles.
Come evening the skies are aglow with fireworks
and well into the night we hear the sounds of pop pop pop.
Our nation's capital hosts a huge celebration.
People stand proudly, hands over hearts,
singing to the Star-Spangled Banner.
An orchestra plays the stirring music of
John Phillip Sousa.
Watching on TV screens, our eyes are moist with gratitude
that we are blessed to live in this great country.
Just for today, we are not a nation of red versus blue.
Today we are all red, white and blue.
We are all Americans.
Happy Birthday, America!!!

Wilma Lentz - Peoria, AZ - jlentz2@cox.net

**‘In the end, we will conserve
only what we love.
We will love
only what we understand.
We will understand
only what we are taught.’**

- Baba Dioum (Carol Amato)

**"Never start a literary magazine for money. We make zero pennies. It's a labor of love." -
Leesa Cross-Smith and Loran Smith**

The Big Oak

Lived 400 years.
One night, a brutal wind
stormed through, ripped
it loose from the ground
so it lay, roots exposed.

People heard
and came to see
the huge, felled oak
to touch its whitened feet,
gather in a sort of vigil
over the fallen giant
as it lay upon the barren
apron of its shadow.

A bride, who'd been
married beneath the tree
came for some of its leaves,
to keep, she said.
She cried.

A boy who came
said, *Any tree what
lives to be a hundred
should be kept safe and live,
even if a road's
supposed to go there.*

Even a child knows
a tree has majesty,
seen the many changes,
knows how the earth
gives and receives.

Cynthia d'Este
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We feel blessed to publish the best Nature poets in America!

Spring into Summer

Spring has sprung into Summer
For school children, this is no bummer
School is out for another fun Summer
Children ask to attend parties of slumber

Spring has sprung into Summer
Summer becomes much warmer
Future Farmers of America graduate to become farmers
Husbands and wives who farm plow fields of Mother Nature's charm

Spring has sprung into Summer
Corn and soybeans sprout from mother earth
Acres of commodities from her wonderful given births
To combine and reap from her fields of sowed turf

Spring has sprung into Summer
Horses race at county and state fairs
Spectators watch and may gamble their wares
Hear now the thunder of trotters and pacers racing to win big fares

Spring has sprung into Summer
For Midwesterners, much humidity and summer haze
Over the corn cribs and through the barn maze
To find a new born calf in much amaze

Spring has sprung into Summer
Birds build nests with shared caress
Together they create new feathers
To plume new life and from their nests, -- Spring into Summer!

Belva Mitchell
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George Orwell wrote in his essay "Why I Write" (1946). "My starting point is always a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice. When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art.' I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing. But I could not do the work of writing a book, or even a long magazine article, if it were not also an aesthetic experience. *Animal Farm* was the first book in which I tried, with full consciousness of what I was doing, to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole. (Writer's Almanac)

Here are two more Saving Mother Earth Challenge poems...

A Sample Summer

Ever widening
brown dry fields
dust rising to Sky
Glistening water, a
Tiresome mirage

parched Under
baking Sun
cows move like
camels, never looking
upwards to Pray

Forest, pale yellow
Smell of burnt wood
Red-flames
Dying down
along charred
Peacock feathers

rocking to silence
after pinching
innocent child - Nature,
men pour sand
Dousing smoke
not the fire.

A Sample Summer
just a mute Nature
blowing trumpet
to deaf
manly ears.

(Well, Summer is not all sunny-warm like in your place. We fear Summer on this part of the globe! The seasonal changes that happened on the mark a few decades back is not so now. The four seasons have shrunk to frightful two; hot summer and less hot summer. The seriousness of the moment has not yet got into the thick skins of the countrymen. This is an alarming situation, and the ignorance with negligence on the part of human society is a buffering agent for the downfall of Nature.)

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The Waterfalls of Antarctica

We weren't ready for what
we would witness;
the gushing,
fast flowing of the icy,
green-blue water over the edge
of the ice shelf, in this world
that was once without noise,
now the crashing water
crushes the ice below
trumpeting the coming dangers
of now exposed rocks,
once hidden deep in the ice,
now those rocks absorb
solar energy
keeping the melting process
speeding along,
out of control,
rushing, gushing
away at the thickness
of the ice as fractures grow
water seeps deep
down creating giant
slush puddles, pools of water
where once there was only ice;
creating these dramatic waterfalls –
waterfalls like those found deep
in the warmest of jungles,
but here in the South Pole
worry grows at all these rivers
that now flow out of control,
adding to the rising sea level
that is slowly, but truly
taking back the land
world-wide-over.
Some watch in awe at the beauty,
but I fear the warning, warming
ways of Mother Earth, knowing
now this is truly a man-made mess.

Charles Portolano
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A new Challenge - Time to share a Humorous Nature poem...

We are looking for humorous Nature poems; poems that leave us laughing...

Please read guidelines before submitting.

Please send your submission to angeldec24@hotmail.com

Please do not just send a poem, please write a few lines of hello.

Please address your submission email to Charles.

Please do not have all caps in the title of your poem.

Please no more than 45 lines per poem.

Please use single spaced lines.

Please remember, we welcome previously published poems.

Please put your name, City/State, and email address under your poem. If you do not, only your name will appear. No Zip codes.

Please send your poem in the body of an email. Please do not send in an attachment.

Please put your last name/humor in subject line of email.

We look forward to reading your submissions and seeing if they make us laugh...

Summer's Recital

wind has kept me home today
as lightning strikes my right of way
from scented woods which I walk through
to reach rich fields of harvested hay

all throughout this gloomy day
sky casts out grave clouds of grey
changes mood, my point of view
by hiding sun its light display

when thunder's voice let's out its bray
and rain soon dances its ballet
I hear I watch as drops accrue
nature's music of the day

knowing seeds of yesterday
due to weather's interplay
will offer me a sneak preview
a Spring to Summer *pas de deux*
color fragrance texture hue
when sun performs its *grande jete*

Joan E. Day
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"I think one of my early motivations for writing was that other people's versions of experience didn't gel with my own. It was a gesture toward sanity to try to get the world right for myself. I've since learned that if you get it right for yourself, it often has resonance for others." - Stephen Dunn

Harriers

As the dark slowly yields
to the patient light of morning, I'll bounce
down the rough, rutted, pot-holed track,
park where it divides,
and walk out into the fields.
I'll try not to disturb, not to announce
my presence, for that trek
across the flat land provides

no concealment for the intruder and I'll need to squat
with scant grace to squint into binoculars
whenever birds sing loudly to the light
or silently, as if sleepily, drift into view.
There'll be the usual nervy squad
of bustards, either standing stock-still or spectacular
in the air and a buzzard may circle into sight
with the family in tow: *mew! mew!*

The tight ears of golden wheat will sway
in a dawn-of-day, soon-be-gone zephyr
as I make my way to the one lone tree
and there take stock of who I am and where,
close now to what might be myself, far away
from the dull daily round to which I am bound, better
off, much more alive, or so it seems to me,
than those who find little enchantment where I desire to be: out there.

Between myself and that world, there are no barriers.
I'll munch a sandwich; maybe see some harriers.

Glenn Hubbard
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When asked who owned the patent on the polio vaccine, Jonas Salk said, "Well, the people. There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?"

Ravens in captivity can learn to talk better than parrots.

Blue Mussels

Blue-black valves, hinged,
obscured by barnacles,
algae, and thick strips of seaweed;
brown beards attached to shell and stone,
like ropes tossed to anchor.

Clustered on a wave-washed rock,
mussels cling, one on top of the other,
a bed of thousands exposed at low tide,
raw meat for starfish, whelks,
shore crabs and gulls.

Starfish crush, break the sinews
that hold the valves together.
Whelks scrape the blue-black shells,
dissolve their delicate flesh,
siphon it into their mouths.

Slow whelks are caught,
entwined in threads;
the mussels hold them, till they starve.

Seagulls snatch the mussels,
fly them hard onto rocks,
shore crabs crack them in their pincers,
men pry them off stone, scrape
their beards and shells with knives.

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Sea otters hold hands when they sleep so they don't drift apart.

If we fail the sky will be empty in the next century...

"In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act." - George Orwell

The Expedition

In the orange gleam
preceding sunrise,
toward bosky hills
shielding the coast,
dew collecting on the skin.

Chasing the lighthouse
by the fortress where the Hero of Two Worlds
called to load more arms and disembark some men,
brave and keen on dying for the making of a country,
yet unwilling to fight for the sake of a king.

A brief pause on Capo d'Uomo,
enough to take a pensive look
at the smoothest sea between Giglio and Montecristo,
before withdrawing through Bengodi
across the former marshland of Maremma.

Anointed with the smell of pines and oleanders,
heavy paces beat the time
to the fast-advancing morning,
while the silver bay reawakens slowly to life.
Once again I've made it back a perfect stranger.

Alessio Zanelli
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**In the 1880s, a baboon worked as a signalman for nine years on a South African railroad.
He was paid in brandy and never made a mistake.**

**We want to thank all our poets and subscribers who keep our vision alive of
bringing Nature poetry to the forefront of poetry in America.
We, Nature poets and Nature-lovers, are keeping a watchful eye on our
disappearing natural world around us, and, hopefully provoking others to
rethink about how truly special and of vital importance Mother Earth is to all
of us and our future generations. We all call Earth our home...**

Editor Bennett Cerf challenged Dr. Seuss to write a book using no more than 50 different words. The result? Green Eggs and Ham.

Cottage Road, Northern Ontario

In a rented car, I drive past the cottage road.
The silver-painted tire marking it might as well be
an angel with a flaming sword barring entry to Eden.
Our cottage is sold, renovated, other,
The gravel road, once narrow and cozy,
has been widened, familiar trees uprooted,
blueberry patches and bracken ferns plowed under,
raw earth just beginning to grow over.

The white-rumped flicker flees before me.
A spruce grouse acts as decoy,
stands in the road, while her chicks hide in the brush.
Miniature frogs still hop across the road
to get to the other side.
Twinflower, rosy spreading dogbane, yellow clintonia lilies,
pink lady's slipper, red hawkweed, fragrant Joe Pye
bloom in their usual places. I knew them when I was at home.
Does anyone now gather chanterelles and leccinum mushrooms
in my secret spots?
Does anyone even notice the mosses?

Leslie Mills
Leslie.r.mills@gmail.com

"You must be a little driven, and what you're doing must be crucial to you in order not to be defeated by the likely neglect that awaits you, the lack of rewards, and the fact that, by and large, your culture doesn't take you seriously." - Stephen Dunn

Ghost lights, red and green,
Move upstream in the darkness.
Faint engine drumbeats.

Robert Hahn - Martinez, CA - Coronado67@comcast.net

When Nature thrives, people prosper...

Dandelions and Evergreen

An evergreen bush
gives my otherwise drab
entryway a bit of class.

My granddaughter, Lynn, often feels
the sharp needles with tender fingers
but never expresses her thoughts.

On one of our walks
she gathered an arm load
of deep-yellow dandelions.

When we returned to the bush
she decorated it.
A Midas touch of golden heads.

Pleased Lynn danced and clapped.
"Doesn't she look happier now?"
I had to agree.

Now whenever Lynn visits,
I string dandelions
among the evergreen.

When she walks by the smiling bush,
as if by magic,
sunlit fountains burst into bloom.

Gerald A. McBreen - Auburn, WA - mcbreenpost@aol.com

Sea cucumbers eat with their feet...

City silhouette
At dawn, sad news of the world,
The river's soft laugh.

Robert Hahn
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Please write and support each other...

From Rhea Suth, President of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

The government giveaway of America's Atlantic coast to oil companies has officially begun... The Trump administration has proposed permits for dangerous, large-scale seismic blasting up and down the Atlantic coast, from Delaware to Florida, to detect the presence of oil and gas. And this seismic blasting is dangerous and destructive — scientists have determined it can injure or even kill whales, dolphins and many other species of marine wildlife.

Make no mistake: This is another boon to Big Oil that leaves marine wildlife and coastal communities to pay the price.

NRDC is fighting back, **including preparing to go to court to block these disastrous permits.**

But first, the administration — specifically, the Department of Commerce — is inviting public comments on their proposal. **The first step in our fight is to bombard them with messages urging them to put the health of our oceans, fisheries and coastal communities ahead of oil industry profits.**

Tell Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross that you oppose seismic airgun blasting in the Atlantic Ocean — and you won't let their deadly plans stand.

The permits would allow ships to troll our mid-Atlantic and southeast coasts with arrays of industrial-sized airguns. The explosive noise from these seismic blasts is the equivalent of dynamite going off in your neighborhood every ten seconds, all day and night, for weeks and months on end.

And the impacts to marine life are devastating. Seismic testing is known to impair marine mammals' ability to communicate, find food, navigate and breed over vast expanses of ocean.

Even according to the government's own analysis, **the oil and gas industry would harm marine mammals in the Atlantic more than 13 million times over the next seven years** if seismic exploration moves forward there.

That includes the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale. Experts say that **seismic blasting in the Atlantic may be a tipping point in driving the iconic species to extinction.**

Whales don't have a voice, but we do. Please speak out now to help stop the Trump administration's giveaway to Big Oil and save whales.

Seismic exploration is the first step to opening our cherished Atlantic coast up to more reckless oil and gas drilling. We must step in and stop this dangerous plan in its tracks. **Please send your message to the Secretary of Commerce right away.**

Rhea Suh, President, NRDC

The mission of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is to safeguard the Earth: its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends.

Please write a poem for **Mother Earth, let her know of your love...**

We all call Earth our home

Have your voice be heard through your words!!!

Please do not send those poems that have already been in The Weekly Avocet.

Saving Mother Earth for the Next Generation

Please put Saving Mother Earth Challenge/your last name in the subject line of your email and send to angeldec24@hotmail.com

"There would be no peace for me if I kept silent." – Rachel Carson

Also, time to share a Summer-themed poem

Please read guidelines before submitting.

Please send only one poem, per poet, per season.

Let's do Summer-themed poetry.

Please send your submission to angeldec24@hotmail.com

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

Please do not just send a poem, **please write a few lines of hello.**

Please address your submission email to Charles.

Please do not have all caps in the title of your poem.

Please no more than 45 lines per poem.

Please use single spaced lines.

Please remember, we welcome previously published poems.

Please put your name, City/State, and email address **under your poem.** If you do not, only your name will appear. No Zip codes.

Please put the season/your last name in the subject line of your email.

Please send your poem in the body of an email. Please do not send in an attachment.

We look forward to reading your Summer submissions...

Poetry is everywhere, in everyone...

“We must all be fighting for Mother Earth, no time to waste. We must stand up together for clean, clear air for all. We must stop the polluters, those that take in the name of greed and leave our Earth, our only home, scarred. I am fearful of what we will leave our children and our grandchildren. Will they enjoy their home as much as we have? Will they look up at the smiling sun or will they run indoors when a new day is about to dawn, hiding away from the scorching sun or one that never gets to shine through the dark clouds that cover our Earth? There is no time to waste!” – Charles Portolano

“Each Season has its story, a beginning, middle, and an end to tell.”

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 Sunday morning,

Charles Portolano, Editor/Publisher
Vivian and Valerie Portolano, Co-Editors
of The Avocet, a Journal of Nature Poetry and The Weekly Avocet, every Sunday morning.

Please visit our website www.AvocetReview.com

“The purpose of poetry is to provoke thought!”

“Whatever we don’t waste will be there for our children and our grandchildren to enjoy.”