

# **The Avocet**

**A Journal of Nature Poetry**

**Fall - 2025**



**Enjoy your stroll through our pages to find yourself in  
nature...**

# **The Avocet**

## **A Journal of Nature Poetry**

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Established in 1997.

The Avocet is a quarterly publication 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...

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## Equinox Portrait

Green leaves hang weary,  
dusky, ready for change.  
Autum calls out to them,  
“Come, paint the hills,  
It’s time for a change.”

Days and nights are equal.  
Air grows crisper, cooler,  
appetites turn to soups;  
stews simmer on the stove;  
geese honk their way south.

Age-old need directs us  
to harvest the bounty.  
Swing the scythe, let  
ripeness be gathered in  
ere winter comes hungry.

Prepare now with mindful haste,  
gleaning every bit of grain.  
Store what is reaped with thanks.  
Balance grace with generosity;  
The equinox sings in the sweet shining.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - [tashahal@gmail.com](mailto:tashahal@gmail.com)

Morning glories sing  
“my flame of love is for you”  
orchestrating vibrant notes  
welcoming dawn’s risen sun  
bringing autumn’s equinox

Alicia Ann Torres - Windsor, CA - [freedom0768@att.net](mailto:freedom0768@att.net)

The River of time flows  
steadily onward and we embark  
on a journey through the year, exploring  
the vibrant tapestry of the seasons

Autumn, a time for slowing down  
a season that evokes reflection, coziness,  
nostalgia and spiritual growth

A cool breeze brushes my face and  
the vivid hues of the season captivate my soul,  
amber, burned sienna, fiery reds, golden yellows  
and rich browns  
create a scenic view,

the farms in town are bursting with large  
bright orange, white and yellow pumpkins  
and the corn harvest is complete.

Warblers soar through the skies,  
Fall migration's underway!  
Leaves dance to Autumn's gentle breath  
forming a rustling carpet on the forest floor,  
Oh, Nature's grand design!

Virginia Tello - Forest Grove, OR - [tello.virginia0102@gmail.com](mailto:tello.virginia0102@gmail.com)

Northern sea of change  
draping coast with fogged shorelines  
blanketing waters  
creating false illusions  
of opaque lofty mountains

Alicia Ann Torres - Windsor, CA - [freedom0768@att.net](mailto:freedom0768@att.net)

**Be the reason someone smiles today...  
Please be kind and write to each other...**

My sister's cat Sienna brings us  
Fall leaves in the night  
With a meow mellow & mini  
Tiny teeth prints  
Some are the color of her  
The color of earth brown & generous  
The red color of love for the season  
& each other  
Some leaves Sienna brings us  
Are as orange as pumpkins plump  
As yellow as the autumn sun  
Some are as green as our hope  
For harvesting  
Some like pie spiced  
Some are rough as impending winter  
Smooth as September late  
Or the fur of a torbie cat  
We don't know why Sienna brings us  
Fall leaves in the night  
Maybe she is as excited as we  
For this equinox

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

### **In the backyard**

The grass is sunbathing;  
As a bunny hops across the lawn;  
A dragonfly, in the air, gloriously circling.  
A sudden elegy of a cricket, singing  
For the requiem for the dead robin  
In the flower bed on the fall evening.

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

In late September, dawn cloaks distant stands of fir trees  
in autumn's ethereal silvern mists.

Summer's floral scent of lilies has vanished.

Early fall brings the fragrance of ripening apples,  
a sign of harvest time.

I realize there is beauty and joy with each season;  
though for me, seasonal changes may bring a longing  
for what has passed.

While I sit sipping morning coffee on my porch, I watch  
the vapors lift from the hills and vales below  
the snow-capped Cascade Mountains.

The landscape becomes bathed in autumn's soft golden glow.  
This luminosity gives me a sense of tranquility, though  
the days shorten and the nights' chill foretells winter.

Despite the early fall season's beauty, I feel a sense of loss.  
The exit of summer friends brought keen-edged loneliness.  
My house eaves hold vacated nests of mud and feathers.

I remember the barn swallows, rearing their demanding,  
raspy-voiced chicks, a group of gaping yellow beaks.  
In weeks, the nestlings became small versions of their parents.

The fledged young, garbed in their formal dark blue tuxedos,  
sat proudly, observing their elders from telephone wires.  
The youngsters were eager students, soon performing  
their own aerobatic swoops and dives.

Families of swallows flew in squadrons against hordes  
of gnats and other winged invaders of my garden beds.  
But as fall approached, the birds bid me adieu.

I will let the cup-shaped nests under the eaves remain  
not as souvenirs of remembrance, but as tokens of my faith  
the swallows will visit again when summer is in the offing.

Wendy Bell - Edgewood, WA - [wendynbell1990@gmail.com](mailto:wendynbell1990@gmail.com)

Earth's orbit changes orientation to the sun  
morning sneaks slower into day as  
sunlight softens in reluctant release  
Monarchs prepare for long flight to Mexico  
harried squirrels scavenge non-stop  
turtles burrow into soft, muddy beds  
sheep graze in clumps like cloud-  
banks beneath trees  
Canada geese form arrows overhead  
bears gobble remaining wild berries  
songbirds become silent, some  
disappearing until spring  
fish sink ever deeper in chilly waters  
growing fields lay dry and fallow  
trees disrobe as leaves flutter away  
air turns cool, crisp, invigorating  
winds groan in branches of gnarled-trunked trees  
clouds ripen with steely precipitation  
autumnal rains swell waterways,  
carrying on a flowing conversation  
spiders appear like seasonal tenants into warm corners  
white columns of smoke slowly rise from chimney caps  
fishermen page through dog-earned copies  
of Old Farmer's Almanac  
as the moon's smile slowly extinguishes  
ushering out another day

Susan M. Surette - Cotuit, MA - [suesurette@gmail.com](mailto:suesurette@gmail.com)

The moon  
skitters across  
a darkening night sky.  
Dry leaves decorate the chilled earth--  
Autumn

Madalin Bickel - Tallahassee, FL - [madalin60@verizon.net](mailto:madalin60@verizon.net)

Avocet with spindle legs race the breaking waves,  
dart at the froth, dodge and retreat,  
their tiny tastes scooped through needle beaks,  
their rounded tummies full  
of a spirited joy.

More endangered every year  
sea on one side, humans on the other,  
they stick together -- fearless and determined.

When sports teams choose mascots, they think power, speed,  
leopard, bear, cheetah,  
but for my crucible, I'll stick with the sturdy avocet,  
its comical little body, quick-witted retreats,  
spirited, tireless work.

The fact that its still here.

Cynthia Chadwick Linkas - Hamilton, MA - linkas9@gmail.com

### **Falling**

Leaves fall,  
teaching me surrender.  
How do they decide  
who goes first,  
who follows,  
and who lingers  
long after  
the first snowfall?

What secret rhythm  
guides their passage?

Kris Rued-Clark - Arpin, WI - krudedclark@yahoo.com



sun bouncing off leaves swirling  
filtering through branches  
enlightening environs to the hilt

fullness furnishes spaces, creating  
new patterns of color and shape  
popping up everywhere

feeling contentedly fulfilled  
changes portend something happening  
universe working out its essence

accepting its changes at its own pace  
the breeze surely steadying  
the swift swirling leaves

no aromatic sniffs, or crimping brrs  
no practice tennis machine shooting balls  
so fast with no time to enjoy and savor it

except when Indian summer forces a few  
brow-swiping whews of summer on you

Diane Tehrani - Portland, OR - dianetehrani@gmail.com

**Bring Me**

Montana river,  
rushing, tumbling,  
your smooth rock bottom  
deceptively close.  
Share with me  
your clarity, your depth,  
your strength of purpose.

Kris Rued-Clark - Arpin, WI - krueclark@yahoo.com

Late afternoon sunlight  
shines obliquely across shadowed  
grass as leaves slowly fade  
from summer green to autumn yellow.

In patient anticipation  
of the coming season's harvest,  
a well-worn wheelbarrow lists  
over a yet un-littered path.

Within the quiet of this waning hour,  
silent windows outlined in blue  
blankly stare as if they, too,  
await what is to come.

Vaughn Neeld - Cañon City, CO - [vaughnneeld@hotmail.com](mailto:vaughnneeld@hotmail.com)

**The Joy of Flight**

Ascending the air currents,  
the vultures glide on finger-tip wings,  
riding higher and higher,  
awash in the joy of flight.  
How delightful it must be  
to spread wings and glide,  
rising, ever rising, until  
everything below shrinks  
into a patchwork of browns,  
greens, yellows, and then  
to swoop down, dropping,  
ever dropping, while the earth  
rushes upward and the wind  
catches you, cradles you  
softly in the Mother's arms.

Vaughn Neeld - Cañon City, CO - [vaughnneeld@hotmail.com](mailto:vaughnneeld@hotmail.com)

Walking this loop counterclockwise,  
after the switchgrass and ferns  
have browned and wilted in the frost,  
the birdhouse becomes visible  
at the base of a large leafless maple.  
Once-smooth pine panels  
held together with bent nails  
and echoes of a smashed thumb  
are now gray and spongy and soon  
to inspire no thoughts at all.

Odd that the little rotting box  
is way out here, so deep in the woods,  
unless this really was a scout camp  
like they say.

I imagine its builder, surely an old man  
by now, would recognize  
his boyhood creation  
as we kick aside the fallen leaves.  
He'd tell me his was chosen  
for that very tree  
and all the other boys told  
to take theirs home.  
He'd point out where the dining hall stood  
and the ravine where the older boys  
taught them how to smoke and swear.  
I hope he tells me that he, also,  
was a kid who didn't cry  
away from home  
in the quiet of night,  
who wanted to stay forever  
in the steady,  
the untroubled,  
the sure.

Scott McConnaha - Plymouth, WI - [scott.mcconnaha@gmail.com](mailto:scott.mcconnaha@gmail.com)

The hostas are the first, leaves formerly green,  
bluish, white and green in partnership,  
some golden in their season-long evolving,  
now brown, collapsing in on themselves,  
a ground-covering detritus of summer.

Beyond them a row of bushes shedding leaves  
as are the trees behind, branches leaning forward  
gradually denuded, leaves in their fall colors filling  
the color vacuum left by my collapsed hostas.

It is the backyard, the view from my deck,  
the cooling autumn breeze caressing my face,  
my bare arms still resisting a protective covering.  
For a moment I regret the passing seasons,  
the loss of birdsong, the vibrancy of colors gone.  
But all seasons have their merit, I remember,  
as do the years advancing steadily, beauty in old age  
as surely as in an infant's smile, if one only looks.

Edward J. Rielly - Westbrook, ME - [erielly2@earthlink.net](mailto:erielly2@earthlink.net)

### **Crescent Moon**

Hooked in the sky.  
Reclining, an inviting perch.  
Watching for shooting stars.

Carol Farnsworth - Ada, MI - [carolfarn@aol.com](mailto:carolfarn@aol.com)

### **Half Moon**

midnight glow,  
highlights shadows in trees.  
Mother and child emerge seeking a night's rest.  
leaving hoofprints in the sand.

Carol Farnsworth - Ada, MI - [carolfarn@aol.com](mailto:carolfarn@aol.com)

I was a novice shelling walnuts  
that just fell onto the soft green earth.  
Picking them up with my inner child in tow.  
Finding these incredible treasures,  
and dropping them into my bucket.

*Ker Plunk*

*Ker Plunk*

Carrying this basket of gems back  
to our concrete porch,  
alongside of my three-sisters garden.  
My eyes grew wide with delight,  
holding these lime-green gem,  
in one hand and pocketknife in the other.  
Dreaming of the walnut recipes that would,  
waft in wondrous fall smells from the kitchen.  
Carefully peeling away the husks,  
minus those bulky garden gloves.  
A stubborn woman I can be,  
as my hands were now black as coal.  
Neither soap nor bleach could remove this mess.  
Taking cues from my creative nature,  
I outlined with my forefinger,  
a new way to write.  
Lesson learned gloves are required to harvest walnuts.  
Unless you want to write poetry in black walnut ink.

Mary Anne Abdo - Scranton, PA - Eirinn919@aol.com

### **Harvest Moon**

tinged with red  
rising at dusk  
grey shadow covers half  
show ends with borealis curtain  
through telescope seen.

Carol Farnsworth - Ada, MI - carolfarn@aol.com

'Tis that time of year again, the Season Between This and That.

Between sunlit blue skies, warmed earth, and skies filled with floating sprinkles of fluffy frost gliding effortlessly through the air landing softly on icy ground.

It's autumn, when leaves turn from a cacophony of green hues into shades of rusts, golds, and browns, splattering the ground with a variety of crunchy shapes.

The breeze is crisper now, whispering of chillier gusts to come, heralding the end of gentle whiffs of air from days gone by.

It is that time between Earth's rainbows, flowers in every size, shape, and color, contrasted to Earth's barren forests of leafless branches, and stark, colorless ground.

Yes, change is in the air.

It is the time between fecundity and infertility. Mother Earth's pulse seems to be slowing down. Stock is taken of what has been, the now is celebrated, and preparation for the unknown has begun as nature surrenders peacefully into the stillness and rest of the season to come.

Randi Woodward Larsen - San Juan Capistrano, CA -  
Randi@randistories.com

### **Moonbeam**

Crosses my pillow.  
Reaches down from heaven.  
Watches me dream.  
Then slips away.

Carol Farnsworth - Ada, MI - carolfarn@aol.com

They say this is the season that leads to death,  
But I have never felt more alive.  
Morning starts with foggy breath--  
At last, I feel ready to thrive

Green, orange, yellow, and red,  
All painted around the lane.  
The tapestry of leaves now spread,  
Soon to be swept away with the rain.

Walking through the park, nostalgia sets in--  
I stop and take in the view.  
For all the autumns that have been,  
The best have been with you.

Maddi Larsen - Oceanside, CA - maddiblarsen@gmail.com

## The Fool

Let me dance with St. Francis  
Naked-faced in the streets of the city

Find the beacon of the pole star  
And fly in formation with migrating wings

Laugh with the dolphin  
And swim with joy in the sea

Hear the unseen cicada  
And welcome the coming of night

Sway with the bent pine in the howling wind  
And dig my hands in the earth next to sprawling rose roots

Extend my hand to take the paw of the wolf  
And sing with her in the moonlight

Let me dance with St. Francis  
And celebrate what remains whole in a damaged world

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

Getting off the Kancamagus Highway  
At the Rocky Gorge turnout, we knew  
What to expect: fast, flowing waters  
Flanked by glacier-cut rocks, and a  
Magnificent view of the falls, usually  
Our last stop; this time we decided to  
Also hike the short trail to Falls Pond

We walked briskly, in the cool late-day air  
Reaching our destination in minutes, and  
Finding the crystal-clear watering hole  
Lined by a mixture of green pines and  
Deciduous trees, with their crimson and  
Golden crowns, reflecting in the  
Deep, still pond waters in front of us

For a few moments, we stood spellbound,  
Then started down the short loop  
Which encircled the peaceful pond  
As we trekked along the earthen path,  
We could hear the cries of a red-tailed  
Hawk circling in the distance and across  
The pond, a great blue heron stood fishing

Such an idyllic, magical spot! We hated to  
Leave, but night was fast approaching and  
Since we thought we'd come back someday  
We took one last, deep breath of that crisp,  
Fall air and headed home. But now that you're  
Gone, we can't return. Still, I will always have  
That beautiful scene locked in my heart forever

Dawn McCormack - Plainfield, CT - [djohnson8251@yahoo.com](mailto:djohnson8251@yahoo.com)

deciduous forest  
its canopy mimics  
a fiery sunset

William Scott Galasso - Laguna Woods, CA -  
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Little Grey digs frantically  
Into the creamed-coffee and  
Crimson carpet blanketing the  
Ground beneath Mother Oak

He is sure he buried those acorns  
Out here, but last night's wind had  
Fiercely flung down so many leaves,  
That it was hard to remember where

Usually, the scent of a great feast,  
Coupled with a few landmarks, was  
Enough, but it had also rained and now  
He couldn't recall those special spots

Finally, success! He'd uncovered a few.  
With a sigh of relief, he began to dig  
Again, but then hesitated, as the lady who  
Brought him peanuts had just arrived

So, taking a much-deserved break, with his  
Mouth already watering, he headed for the  
Feeding station. It looked as if he'd soon be  
Dining on some much-welcome fast-food today

Happy Eating!

Dawn McCormack - Plainfield, CT - [djohnson8251@yahoo.com](mailto:djohnson8251@yahoo.com)

**the old oak**

and young maple  
wear their dress

as if prepared for a festival  
held tight by roots  
we can't see

*(First published in The Cherita)*

Norma Bradley - Asheville, NC - [normabradley1@gmail.com](mailto:normabradley1@gmail.com)

there she is  
the maple tree  
in all her glory  
red orange yellow leaves  
explosions of color  
taking my breath away

as I revel  
in this short lived  
visual pleasure  
I watch as she  
releases her gifts of

leaves  
dancing in abandonment  
to the symphony of winds  
plucking her bare branches  
twirling  
whirling  
dropping  
leaving the memory of their beauty  
wherever they fall

Iris Levin - Rockville Centre, NY - [idlevin@aol.com](mailto:idlevin@aol.com)

### **Hunter's Moon**

Amber eyes assess the old and weak  
signals carried upon the wind  
until lupin jaws  
quiets heaving lungs  
the hunt is merciful  
only the fit survive  
primitive eyes burn  
with savage wisdom  
of wilderness and  
echoing voices from the timber line  
not far from human cries  
heard in the distance.

Ann Chiappetta - Monroeville, PA - [anniecms64@gmail.com](mailto:anniecms64@gmail.com)

Autumn morning signals  
somewhere in slate-grey darkness  
outside my window  
I listen to Red-tailed-Hawk whistling  
An endless chant before dawn  
“Singsong,” he calls from  
top of old Douglass Fir:  
“Come on.”  
“I’m here.”  
“I am patient.”  
“I am watching.”  
“I am waiting.”  
“Come on.”

Lynda McKinney Lambert - Ellwood City, PA -  
riverwoman@zoominternet.net

## Skinny Broomstick

“That is a skinny broomstick,”  
my husband remarked when  
you arrived in the morning mail  
fifty years ago.  
I planted you gently  
near a flower garden  
where our children played  
in all seasons.  
Now, you tower over our house  
your bark looks like a thick elephant hiding  
waving your sturdy limbs.  
Glorious, Chinese Ginkgo Tree  
you shed your yellow fan-shaped leaves  
In an ancient ritual  
I stand beneath you  
with my arms outstretched to the sky  
as your Golden Shower begins.

Lynda McKinney Lambert - Ellwood City, PA -  
riverwoman@zoominternet.net

Around the lake, at eighty-four, I take my stroll  
 which has been my practice for over twenty years.  
 A great deal of history has changed in that stretch.  
 I see it happen as I walk through time,  
 expressly on an Autumn day like today.  
 I make my way on hot hilly tarmac  
 and long for the narrow path that used to be--  
 Where the quartzite boulders and ever-present trees  
 welcomed me and my canine companion.  
 A shadow of trees reminds me of how it used to be.  
 Stopping to rest on a guardrail fence  
 sheltering a brook which babbles below,  
 I listen as it sings of bygone days,  
 then urge an aging body to renew my search.  
 I continue into the shadeless development  
 Where I can catch a glimpse of the dying lake  
 and ducks finding shelter amongst houses.  
 Sometimes they walk amiably beside me,  
 and my soul feels hopeful and refreshed.  
 I lean on a neighbor's sturdy wooden fence,  
 hear the earth movers there for the past three years  
 busily destroying forest to build high risers.  
 I shed a few tears for what we are forsaking.

Leonard Tuchyner - Barboursville, VA - tuchyner5@aol.com

### **Wing Sounds**

The geese fly  
 overhead  
 and when their honking  
 is silent  
 I can hear  
 their wings  
 whirr  
 the air as  
 they head south.

Beth Cash - Howes Cave, NY - bethjeancash@gmail.com

I fished with my Dad,  
streams for trout,  
sea shore for mackerel.  
He would take me out on our  
motorboat to hunt tuna.  
And swordfish. I didn't like the  
killing part, and left the  
gutting for him. Forget sharks,  
too dangerous. He'd say, "You're  
a natural at this." We camped and roasted  
the catch in a fire, with marshmallows.  
Once we snagged an octopus,  
Its lone eye stared at us.  
He called me Bara, for barracuda.  
I called Dad the Big Fish.

David Blackey - La Crosse, IA - funkyjubu@yahoo.com

**Hairy Woodpecker**

The Hairy Woodpecker  
does not move.  
He looks as if his beak  
is caught in the wire  
that holds the suet.  
My daughter-in-law  
opens the door  
to rescue him.  
He flits away  
and as he does,  
I spy a hawk  
circling in the sky.

Beth Cash - Howes Cave, NY - bethjeancash@gmail.com

*Larix occidentalis*,  
standing tall and slim,  
stretching needle-leaf limbs  
among Ponderosa pine,  
Douglas fir, and quaking aspen,  
I spur another gold rush  
each autumn as chill descends  
in the mineral-rich Methow Valley  
of north central Washington.  
Prospectors long ago  
laid down their metal pans  
and left the mining camps,  
yet adventurers still arrive,  
beckoned by the glow  
of the mountain slopes  
as my needles turn yellow,  
then fall to the forest floor,  
and illuminate the wilderness trails.

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

### From My Window

two old maples blazed shades of orange, crimson. All winter their colors welcomed the day on my computer screen. I looked forward to tiny buds of spring, shade cooling the summer heat. A knock at my door "Tomorrow, the tree surgeon will take down the two dying maples." My heart racing, I ran outside, hugged their old, gray, rugged trunks. The next morning--through my window the Blue Ridge Mountains one peek at a time as the fog lifted, blue sky, gently rolling puffy clouds.

five generations    no limit to gifts

Norma Bradley - Asheville, NC - normabradley1@gmail.com

*Two full-on heatwaves this summer,  
and I went to the beach only once.  
Summer is cool but autumn is Hot!...*

like my desire to see fall's colorful leaves,  
those that no artist's brush can capture  
and the bluest blue skies,  
air invigorating that invites a big inhale  
in sweater weather,  
prelude to winter's warm white blanket.  
*Autumn, bring it on!*  
And better much sooner than later,  
my prayer was answered on Connecticut's Rte.8.  
*Hello!*  
Bushes low-to-ground displayed  
their deepest red, brightest orange leaves  
and those of yellow-gold--  
signs of early autumn,  
a welcome taste of vivid colors  
soon to paint the trees above.

Fred Simpson - Torrington, CT - simpsonfnyc@gmail.com

### Time and Tides

Summer ebbs away  
on neap tides, leaves behind  
shell and sea glass souvenirs.

On vesper season breezes  
boughs of stained-glass leaves  
rise, crest, spread  
like ocean waves.

Sun gazes down upon  
flowers that mirror his image  
blooming brightly  
under a sea  
of blue autumnal skies.

Katherine A. Hogan - Forest Hills, NY - ednastv@aol.com

As Wildfires in the Northern Forest Rage  
Heatwaves press the Green Scent Essence  
From meadow grass to memory  
Upon the page.

Steaming raindrops  
Mark time on the sundial.  
Wet stones edge flower beds,  
Burned wild.

Hot stones settle, slide  
Imperceptibly down  
When the Wet Earth Tide  
Shifts underground.

Mother Earth grieves  
As shellfish millions  
Bake, alive, in their shells,  
Cling to hope for Life in the shallows  
When coastal fog has fled.

And the Red Sun rises  
Burns as a Siege Fire  
Through Eternal Midnight  
Of a dread -- smoke sky.

While here the rains fall and fall  
Unwelcome, through our hearts' confusion,  
For it seems unworthy lament now,

Our strange regrets,  
This secret melancholy of rain,  
When fire fighters in the Northern forests  
Labor in weary lines to cut fire breaks,

And welcome helicopter air drops of water,  
Knowing each scarcity must suffice.  
Lakes and reservoirs run dry.  
The sky is on fire.

Margaret Fox - Middletown, NY - foxblue1973@gmail.com



Man's quest for greatness  
has turned his treacherous heart from Reason.  
No noble search for knowledge!  
He wants to pose for Fame beside the Elder Trees,  
Betray their refuge to the trample of masses;  
proclaim open season on all we cherish,  
all we must protect, all we will lose.

Do not call him thoughtless or careless.  
Innocence and Ignorance never balance.  
Protector? Not when the names bestowed on trees  
become their certain death,  
for the trampling herd must see for themselves,  
and all paths converge,  
trees taken down, not always with axe or saw  
but with subtle theft of topsoil  
carried away on hiker's boots.  
And the roots will grow to the sky in Despair,  
impossible to remain as ancient anchor.

Then, many who come have pictures taken  
alongside the ancient one; steal a souvenir;  
"Just a little piece of bark"  
each may say to their conscience,  
if they had any,  
stealing lifeblood, stealing shelter,  
stealing from the Elder the last Days.

Margaret Fox - Middletown, NY - foxblue1973@gmail.com

### **Bird Cloud**

Starlings create shapeshifting  
waves in the sky.  
I stare,  
unable to blink,  
as their cloud somersaults  
above me.  
I feel my shoulders  
bend when they tilt their wings.

Beth Cash - Howes Cave, NY - bethjeancash@gmail.com

tug on the string  
of nature  
walk barefoot  
let your feet  
kiss the earth  
drink in the morning sun  
bathe in pale moonlight  
behold the raiment  
of forests, mountains  
the flow of rivers  
plains continuous stretch  
take notice of creatures  
great and small  
each heart beats  
in a body of  
feathers or fur  
they are your  
brothers, sisters  
cease struggle  
against yourself  
and others  
rather, lean  
into  
the world  
dare  
to be  
amazed

Lynne D. Soulagnet - Medford, NY -  
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lawn grass  
no need to be perfect green  
love Mother's way

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

The evening cadence  
of the desert wind  
blows over gravel ghost,  
smoke tree, snake stone,  
elf candles, and devil's toenails.

The sidewinder crawls its curved alphabet  
among them. It leaves  
its wisps of shed skin  
on the sand like hieroglyphs.

You wander late  
among these beings  
who live and love  
in twilight  
under the sickle of  
a rising desert moon.

The moon finger paints itself  
luminous among stars that shine  
in frozen constellations  
in the shapeshifting twilight.

We leave behind ghost dust  
in the desert night air  
as wind erases our footprints  
and we pass through  
under a ring of stars.

Greg Gregory - Antelope, CA - [greggkg@gmail.com](mailto:greggkg@gmail.com)

windblown autumn leaves  
tossed in the mind  
settle into stillness

Carol Bezin - Arkdale, WI - [angelbezin@gmail.com](mailto:angelbezin@gmail.com)

A great horned owl's  
moved in across the way.  
Hoo hoo-hoo's so profoundly loud  
I am wakened from my vigil  
over leaves floating on the pond  
where goldfish dart and hide  
amid the light and shadow.

An umbral call to vespers,  
I listen for the owl's mezzo presence  
and wait for it, don't believe  
I hear it right. It seems to me  
rather some lamenting howl  
loosed from a cavernous heart:  
who'll go through my portal  
to the next world?  
Hoo hoo-hoo?

It is not yet October  
yet a subtle darkness has set in.  
The thinned-out chorus of crickets  
chants lowly in elegiac tones.  
A lone cicada sings a one-note  
solo hung from the high octave  
but my heart resounds  
to the descending clef  
of the nocturnal.

The owl calls.

Cynthia d'Este - Oak Creek, WI - destino@aol.com

chili pepper red, orange, golds  
descending from the mountain ridge  
a gathering in the valley

Norma Bradley - Asheville, NC - normabradley1@gmail.com

Near dawn,  
hundreds  
of hànzi appear  
to scroll down  
aspens standing  
thin, incised  
with ebony ink.  
Overnight, sifts  
of early snow  
have veiled  
white onto white.

My frosty fingertips  
trace raised welts,  
press into indents.  
Can I decode  
the years here  
scribed over seasons  
on this papery bark?  
A cottontail darts out.  
Suddenly nature tales,  
cached in my core,  
flicker in first light.

These sagas,  
fragrant with fall,  
reveal rondos:  
leaves smolder, spiral,  
flame to darken columns  
that reduce to ash.  
Time encourages...  
Seedlings emerge,  
fill lacunae.  
New saplings stretch;  
each, a new beginning.

*(hànzi: scribed characters or logographs used to write Chinese languages and others from regions historically influenced by Chinese culture)*

there may come a moment  
 face to face with destiny:  
 the flash of insight  
 that if everything stayed exactly as it is,  
 you would be complete--  
 the futile wish to keep from changing,  
 Call it gratitude  
 or call it melancholy--  
 the lightning knowing  
 things are as good  
 as they are going to get.  
 Does the flicker circling  
 the locust's last golden leaves  
 this October morning feel the same  
 within his wings and bones?  
 Will the solitary dove stay again this winter?  
 Will the old, demented fox  
 running sideways to catch a squirrel  
 finally come no more  
 to the russet prairie grasses?  
 Somewhere in the sinews  
 of our used monolith of muscles,  
 you know you are lucky  
 to come this far  
 and live so well  
 amongst the trees and grasses,  
 leaf fall and chilly breeze.

*(First published in CHIRON. Also published in WILD FRUTION:  
 SONNETS, SPELLS, AND OTHER INCANTATIONS, Puddin'head  
 Press. Also published in AMERICAN AESTHETICA.)*

Christine Swanberg - Rockford, IL - [chris.swanberg@comcast.net](mailto:chris.swanberg@comcast.net)

Foliage  
 Aglow in  
 Luminous  
 Landscapes

In Florida, fall whispers soft and low,  
Not in rustling leaves or crimson glow.  
Palms sway gently in a balmy breeze,  
While sunlight dances over the Gulf,  
The pumpkin spice still finds its way,  
To coffee cups and porches day by day.  
Flip flops linger and sandals stay,  
As September's heat refuses to stray.  
No flannel jackets, no frosted grass,  
Just warm afternoons as the seasons pass.  
A golden hush fills the coastal air,  
There are indications that autumn has arrived.  
The sky grows deeper, a sapphire hue,  
And migratory birds search for something new.  
Under Florida's sun, fall feels unique--  
A gentle promise, soft and meek.

Betty O'Hearn - St. Petersburg, FL - [Mimiohearn@gmail.com](mailto:Mimiohearn@gmail.com)

### **Sunflowers**

Crowded together  
Saluting the sun  
Burnt orange  
Flaming yellow  
Coffee brown  
Painted on an  
Ocean blue canvas  
Heavy heads  
Sometimes bow  
Petals randomly missing  
Fading and withering  
They still beg  
Let us continue our show

Charlotte Ferrante - Greenacres, WA -  
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Maybe Autumn is the cruelest  
not April at all.  
Days drop like boulders, slowly,  
ever so slowly, drawing the light,  
teasing winter's gloom.

Here in the tropics, autumn  
giggles & smirks, willing,  
waiting for cold.  
Avocados & chickpeas--  
ready,set,go.  
Molding aviaries stink & sway  
in trees, still leafed, but nervous.

Watch the Skies!  
Watch the Skies!  
Above the infant papayas, we search  
for vacation-bound flocks.  
Their inchoate formations on the sky highway.  
Our own birds sit warm & laugh.  
Watch the Skies!  
Beware that Sun!  
The authority of beauty makes its own rules.  
My warrior heart is breaking.

Tone Blevins - Bal Harbour, FL - Matocca22@yahoo.com

### **This Cool Fall Morning**

See how the sun  
breaks through the trees  
on this cool autumn morning.  
Observe the luminous projection of light  
upon the fence,  
as it moves slowly as the day  
across clusters of jasmine vines.  
Piercing slightly, the dining room window,  
it explodes throughout the house,  
like genesis on the first day,  
and life burst forth.

Gene Hodge - Soddy Daisy, TN - cportolano@hotmail.com



A seasoned group of birders, a hearty band  
Trek east along the cliffs at the Atlantic Ocean  
Makeshift staffs, hiking poles and enthusiasm bolsters their way,  
as they move towards the lighthouse at the point  
Along the way, they hope to see:  
Great Gannets, a large white monogamous seabird  
known for their awe-inspiring fish catching plunges  
Large flocks of migrating Shearwaters, their stiff wings  
glide, shearing just above the surface of the waves  
And if by chance a sharp-eyed traveler sweeps binoculars  
across the waves and spies a spout  
A shout will go out, "Whale, Whale, Whale"  
A loud cheer, heads will swirl, and the moment will be forever cast  
And perhaps, someone in the enthusiastic crowd might chance  
to say "Thank you, George Washington for having built  
the Montauk Lighthouse"

R. Duke Liddell - Malverne, NY - [dukel@optonline.net](mailto:dukel@optonline.net)

**golden beauty**

she stares out  
the window  
at the sunflower patch  
admiring the  
golden beauty  
she'll get the  
strength at  
some point  
to bring in  
some of those  
cheerful flowers  
placing them  
on the crocheted doily  
in the center of the table  
enjoying nature's beauty

Wendy Wasner - West Seneca, NY - [wendyew3@yahoo.com](mailto:wendyew3@yahoo.com)

I come down,  
Down from hills the pine-scented way  
This cool autumn evening.

A doe and her white-tailed fawn  
Hiding in shadows catch my eye as Lake  
Invites them in water whispers;  
But they ponder, shy in russet leaves.

We gaze at each other as stars appear  
On sky's purple banner framed  
By now golden Ginko trees with silver  
Wavelets calling *Welcome!* as soon, Moon  
Lights the velvet eyes of my shy friends.

Mystic trust gained, they cross my path  
Near where I, statue in starlight, stand.  
Down the hill they go, and Mother nudges  
Child to drink among the ripples.

Quiet, I pass close by:  
We three comrades, safe on our quest  
For Nature's peace.

Judith Lyn Sutton - Campbell, CA - jlsutton46@comcast.net

### Places in Mind

Somewhere lies a place where  
Morning Glories bloom all year.  
Somewhere lies a place where  
Forget-me-nots speak of you.  
Somewhere lies a place where  
Grass ever feels soft underfoot.  
I find such places within, so I can  
Return there, not feel the cold.  
When autumn winds chase leaves  
Along paths of the deserted park.

Bill Peck - Santa Clara, CA - bwillysjr@aol.com

Our backyard beckons me  
Surrounded by redwoods  
And a lone magnolia  
Still boasting candle blooms  
Providing fragrant air.

Fountains soothe thoughts  
Bouncing inside my mind  
Bringing me back to this oasis  
Of ferns, asters, and goldenrod  
As sun peeks through treetops.

Japanese lanterns grace walls,  
Statuesque angels overlooking  
The herringbone brick patio  
Laid by these old hands,  
Now seven decades worn.

Redwoods sway in fall breeze;  
So too does my mind, toxic  
With chemotherapy cure-alls  
Fighting an elusive demon  
Too small to see or feel.

Cubby, our dog, brings peace,  
His silver-gray head in my lap.  
Surely, he knows what courses  
Through my veins robbing me  
Of now vanishing white hair.

His eyes smile and tell me,  
*Don't worry as all will be well!*  
The fountains soon soothe away  
My mortal fear as once more,  
I rejoice in Nature's gifts.

John B. Swartz - Campbell, CA - johnswartz07@comcast.net

*(for my Dad)*

This type of fair and rare fine day in October is a gift signaling a colossal day of greets, treats, and feasts with family members. Clear blue skies with high heat meant my Dad and I would slip off away to my favorite Aunt Mae's house. Dressed in our bathing suits we were off to Sands Lane in Bayville, Long Island for the day.

All six homes on Sands Lane were owned by my father's family members. Up since 5 am, they were preparing for a huge beach day feast. An enclosed street lined with white sand and a cove is where they all came to escape the Brooklyn summer heat. My Dad, the youngest of eight, was always welcome as well as me and my poodle, Nini.

As soon as the car stopped, we jumped out and ran straight for the beach and into the water. They were all swimming and working filling buckets full of clams and mussels for our feast. The kids got the nets to catch the smaller fish. Further out were two boats catching lobsters and oysters. Golden-colored, salty fish fries always started the party.

We cycled between the beach and the tables filled with delicious fun in this gorgeous October sunshine, so rare in my mind, of a different time. Those few precious Indian Summer days spent under golden rays passed too quickly and are long gone. Yet, the memories of my Dad and these glorious October days I hold like gold in my heart forever.

Vivi Portolano - Fountain Hills, AZ - [cportolano@hotmail.com](mailto:cportolano@hotmail.com)

**Be the reason someone smiles today...  
Please be kind and write to each other...**

I close my eyes and listen  
 to the compelling sound of water  
 pushing against the rocky shoreline  
 A creamy wake of waves follows a lone boat as it  
 speeds across the lake.  
 A man carrying a walking stick and the leash of a shaggy dog  
 leave prints in the sand.  
 Gray skies fill with a flock of geese flying in formation,  
 They submerge beneath the bubbling fish cafeteria to dine.  
 As the sunlight fades, they bob gently content and full.  
 When ready to come back to shore  
 they push hard against the outgoing tide,  
 leaving me to the sway and waggle of the waves.

Dolores Cinquemani - Central Islip, NY -  
 dcinquemani@optonline.net

### High Head: October 2

The swallows are massing  
 soon to fly south.  
 They circle and swoop as they  
 scoop their sustenance from  
 a clear cerulean sky;  
 small joyous engines, hundreds strong,  
 that soon will be but a memory.

### High Head: October 15

Silence has settled across the dunes  
 empty now of all but clouds,  
 an occasional hawk,  
 the ever-present scent of the sea.  
 It is as if a bell once rung  
 has ceased its hollow sounding  
 leaving only an echo in the vacant sky,  
 a memory of bird flight,  
 a forlorn sense of loss.

*(previously published in Snowy Egret)*

Dave Reddall - Wellfleet, MA - dreddall@verizon.net

In the fall of the year  
We go camping.  
We light our fire and  
From white oak shavings  
Come wisps of white smoke,  
A puff of orange,  
Glowing,  
Growing,  
Curling  
Around the kindling.  
Sitting now  
With our boots  
To the woodsmoke,  
We agree  
Those little gas-fed backpacker stoves  
May be ecologically correct,  
But they cannot begin to match  
The crackling ambience  
Of a good old-fashioned  
Campfire.  
What is it  
That binds us so tightly  
To woodsmoke?

The spark of some  
Primordial memory,  
The gene that reminds us  
How dreadful it was  
When the dark was never light enough  
At the back  
Of the cave?

Emory D. Jones - Iuka, MS - pianot@bellsouth.net

apple orchard  
letting the deer cull  
low hanging fruit

William Scott Galasso - Laguna Woods, CA -  
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Birdsongs between raindrops, sun-glints like similes,  
the brusque bellows of grazing cows along grassy knolls,  
the beckoning of gravel, damp gates.

One thought leads to another, how dead people can  
still live in dreams, beckoning us to walk across  
worn paths, sip tea or whiskey, as the dream-sun  
rises over ridges or just disappears. Autumn dreams  
begin to shorten, complicate, arrange, before  
being forgotten. A hand reaches out, trusting,  
unsure, but I don't know it. Old friends steady sails  
as we cross a smoothly rolling sea. Autumn morning,  
roosters firmly believe their loud crowing. I waken  
alone, dreams dissolve into another dawn, beginning,  
new and cooler raindrops, and, yes, the birdsongs.

Brian Cronwall - Wailua, HI - [cronwall@hawaii.edu](mailto:cronwall@hawaii.edu)

### **Hawaii Lesson - Fishponds**

It doesn't matter that Everest is smaller than Mauna Kea  
or that manta rays come to bright lights or that the guy  
rambling on in the row ahead is much too young to have  
done all that he claims, for you have accepted the hush  
of the engines and the crying baby and the giggling  
teenage chatter three rows behind are just another cost  
of slipping time zones chasing the sun to a destination  
that will bring several days' confusion before you settle,  
if this is a proper way to describe leaving urban life  
where passenger ferries and cargo ships cover the bay  
not catamarans seeking trade winds or dolphins racing  
answerable only to nature unless mankind interferes  
with rhythms the dolphins do not need to understand,  
like the peril of the cardinal that announces the arrival  
of dawn by striking his reflection in a kitchen window  
that was not there before the fashionable condominium  
was built beside ancient fishponds that are maintained  
for decoration, not sustenance, where the resident eels  
are unaware that they should be grateful that local chefs  
prefer under-seasoned poke to unagi as the Daily Special.

Ralph Long - Oakland, CA - [rjljr1957@gmail.com](mailto:rjljr1957@gmail.com)

Orange and black  
wings applaud  
morning's beauty,  
as magnanimous  
milkweed attracts  
migrating Monarchs.

They float within  
blue sky, pause  
to sip nectar  
then quickly  
flick, rise, flit  
with plans to  
return for more  
on the morrow.

Jill G. Hall - San Diego, CA - [jill@jillghall.com](mailto:jill@jillghall.com)

**Descanso Autumn Sunrise**

Soft blanket clouds  
cover Cuyamaca Peak.

Steller's jay squawks,  
brown towhee peeks  
in my window, acorn  
woodpecker soars into oak.

Swallowtails and Monarchs  
flutter from butterfly bush.  
Rabbits bounce with abandon.  
Squirrels scurry without worry.

Deer mosey down meadow.  
Six-point buck leads the way.  
It's hunting season and he  
knows they're safe at the J & J.

Jill G. Hall - San Diego, CA - [jill@jillghall.com](mailto:jill@jillghall.com)



Under an autumn sky shouting blue, the ginkgo leaves shone  
bright gold these trees are fossils from when dinosaurs roamed  
or were they dragons who left the trees a treasure trove  
whispering, "We must go lovely trees. Live long."  
so, the trees traveled far and wide and even survived  
the bombs of Hiroshima  
I don't know exactly about the dragons  
then again  
no one does  
there is no doubt though of the little fans that travelled far and  
away and the golden dreams shared this autumn day.

Susan Oleferuk - Buchanan, NY - soleferuk@yahoo.com

### To Those Walking Through

If you are in the woods and you are not looking at the woods  
you are not in the woods  
for even the smallest flower  
has much to say  
all the derided weeds  
maybe tasty berries and seeds  
while the trumpet vine is loud and proud to be a bird's bright cover

If you look  
you can read history written in language old  
as well as all the signs of the coming to be  
the toll of man's selfish hold  
still if you look at a tree and find its words  
you will leave the woods  
soul to soul.

Susan Oleferuk - Buchanan, NY - soleferuk@yahoo.com

Next year  
Anniversary will come and go  
Palm trees more palm trees  
Same joy of seeing sunshine in palm forest  
Wren still singing  
Avocet perches at the same spot  
Doves busy making nests in spring  
Finches migrate south in the fall  
Owl still staring all night  
Same shadow same darkness same warning  
Don't eat the fruit from that tree

Same omen same silence  
Someone remembers to plant a palm tree  
Someone remembers to read a poem  
We all remember Topsy remembers

Livingston Rossmoor - Walnut Creek, CA -  
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### **October brings**

witches and princesses strolling down the street  
knocking on doors, hoping for treats.  
Winds of October blow through costumes,  
and howl through trees under sliver of moon.  
Monsters vie for spots on lawn of dried leaves,  
scaring children with their life-like hatchets in sleeves.  
You know they're not real, parents assuage  
fearful faces of those of impressionable age.  
With houses alight, dogs bark behind doors  
hoping to escape, chase squirrels with speedy paws.  
Finally, at home, children count out their bounty.  
With squeals of delight, each one finds a wrapped brownie.

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

A medley of hues of autumn's magnum opus,  
summer's swan song, crunch underneath new shoes.  
She leaves behind the sidewalk's chalked, but faded,  
squares from hopscotch, a game of chance and skill,  
and aims straight for her undiscovered self, sitting  
behind a wooden desk, second row, fifth seat, as in  
that first-grade class picture, fresh, smiling, hands  
beneath the desk, pretty dress, anticipation in her eyes.  
New black and white composition book in hand,  
a tabula rasa, she awaits her own lines to be filled in.  
Or did fate already write her story as she  
guilelessly glides toward a destiny in waiting?  
When our own autumn arrives, we contemplate  
our life's game of hopscotch. Where the pebble landed,  
how well we hopped through the course. Crisp autumn  
winds swirl the lingering leaves over the pastel court.  
There's no turning back.

Rochelle S. Cohen - Marlton, NJ - rochellecohen19@yahoo.com

### **Indian Summer**

Top down, Stormy beside me,  
blonde hair tossed by the wind.  
Streets of amber, scarlet, gold,  
leaves flying, whirling as we  
cruised along, listening to the radio  
and its top ten songs.  
We were free and easy that  
sparkling day.  
Too soon winter comes.

Rex Sexton

A day like today  
November 1<sup>st</sup>  
north from the bay  
in the woodland at Laurel  
that's where the trees  
are tall and bare-legged  
with tops of burnt orange  
and antique gold  
rich dark and deep  
unspeakably autumn  
It is just after noon  
with barely a breeze  
the sky is sharp-blue  
the air crisp and clean  
light is somnolent  
whatever it touches  
is burnished and buffed  
brightness like a cat  
climbs to high branches  
preens there and purrs  
Splashed by waves  
sunshine and shade  
wind thinned woods  
are dappled and bright  
alive with light  
tree trunks washed  
with blacks and grays  
tree crowns aflame  
The palette of fall  
takes precedence here  
The year has stopped  
to catch its breath  
you can hear one leaf  
as it falls to earth  
shadows are long  
and well defined  
seed has flourished  
and ripened to fruit  
April's brash promise  
is kept by November.

When Dad worked away from home, Mother  
thought it good training for me to learn to milk.  
Maybe because she dreaded that chore  
when it was 35 degrees on January mornings.  
I didn't love the job either, though  
our brown and white half Jersey  
did not often move and upset the galvanized  
bucket. But she might walk away  
if she ran out of feed before I finished.  
A serving of sweet feed dumped  
in her trough and a packet of lespedeza hay  
thrown down from the loft before I started  
worked wonders to keep her happy.  
I gave thanks we only had a one-cow dairy.

Churning proved a more pleasant chore.  
Pumping the sudsy white liquid  
up and down with the hickory-handled  
home-made, cross shaped dasher  
until a cluster of cream globs floated  
to the top in the blue and white porcelain churn.  
How delightful to dip out the yellow chunks  
and pat them into a rectangular  
wooden mold, squeezing out  
the milk to compact it, and stamping  
a flower pattern in the top of it.  
The best benefit of this bovine production,  
the part I enjoyed--chowing down  
on the palate-pleasing golden nuggets,  
those hot buttered biscuits, topped  
with a dollop of blackberry or grape  
jelly my mother or sister made  
in the middle of summer. I reckoned  
this is fair enough labor trade.

Wesley Sims - Oak Ridge, TN - wes4words@att.net

early November  
a dismal gray day--  
scarlet maple leaves

Jack Maze

Sunlight streaming  
Silver gleaming  
Through the autumn trees  
Crickets calling  
Bright leaves falling  
In the morning breeze.  
The wheat grows high  
Beneath the sky  
And golden daffodils  
With just a sigh now say goodbye  
As sun fades on the hills.

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

**puckered earth**

furrows of scattered clods  
now rich, burnt-umber brown  
with root-fed sugars and worm-  
worn passages' loose welcome  
to growth of plant and planter  
harvester of far more  
than food-stuff for the body  
gifted nutriment also for the soul  
puckered earth with stalks  
and leafed branches lift to kiss  
the sky as we, even stooped low  
to filter earth between our fingers,  
hear echoes of the snuffing  
of help-yourself rabbits among  
carrot tops and the spearing  
cry of an up-drafted redtail hawk

mj Nordgren - Hillsboro, OR - maryjanenordgren@gmail.com

As fall descends upon the mountains,  
The once lush green canopy of summer ignites  
Into a fiery brilliance of color.  
Scarlet oaks stand regally dressed in deep crimson  
While sugared maples glow a harvest orange dappled  
With sunshine yellow.

The cloudless sky reflects the vibrant colors,  
Casting a celestial blue hue over the vast expanse  
Of the horizon.  
The migrating birds dance an aerial ballet as their songs  
Float in the wind and echo down the majestic peaks.

Cascading waterfalls become a liquid tapestry  
Of autumn colors Glistening like tiny jewels  
Spilling over the rocks.  
Twirling leaves, like delicate brushes dipped in rich colors,  
Become a watercolor canvas of nature's artistry.

A solitary doe stands near the water's edge,  
Its coat now a faded brown blending with the earthy tones  
Of its surroundings.  
A moment captured in time, showcasing the splendor and  
Tranquility of nature in its autumn glory.

Tina Robinson - Oak Ridge, TN - [justinarob12@gmail.com](mailto:justinarob12@gmail.com)

mid-November  
with every raindrop  
a leaf freefalling  
at our leisure  
walking in woods  
my terrier and I  
so many scents to smell  
squirrels to chase up trees

William Scott Galasso - Laguna Woods, CA -  
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When the woodlands are destroyed,  
the path of the turtle and rabbit  
are poured over by macadam  
for acrobatic teens on wheel boards,  
all the unshed tears of the young  
now fill the eyes of the aging.  
When the beaches are swallowed  
by brown tides, horseflies abandon  
clumps of seaweed for gulls to peck  
through scales of washed-up fish  
and cascading waves pound the shore  
with white-knuckle gut punches.  
I close my eyes  
as the season begins to chill;  
the earth and the sea coming for me.

Robert Savino - West Islip, NY - [dynsus@aol.com](mailto:dynsus@aol.com)

### **Observation Deck**

It happened so fast. I heard nothing  
until the nightly news reported flooded fields  
that were once hometowns of hope,  
rising tides creeping over childhood dreams.  
Silence wraps around me as I shiver,  
linger in the face of loss.  
A single branch protrudes in the distance  
like a student struggling to ask, why.  
Little is known amidst clouds of confusion.  
I want to hear the warbler sing.  
I want to believe it's not acts of negligence  
or ignorance against Mother Earth.  
I want to believe.

Robert Savino - West Islip, NY - [dynsus@aol.com](mailto:dynsus@aol.com)



Dogwood leaves curling  
brown at the edges  
white light casts a spell  
of longing  
a wish for steady rain  
to restore dimension  
to the wilt

Hose in hand I offer relief  
however temporary  
to the ones resisting  
time's tug at roots  
minerals leeching  
from bones  
going brittle  
in summer's scorch

When daybreak delivers  
a crisper tone  
and the sun casts  
an orange hue  
across treetops  
the air changes  
desultory to cool  
demanding focus

So begins my longing  
for the longest days  
greenest hues  
lushest gardens  
heaviest hottest air  
softest music -- sounds  
only butterflies  
can hear

Emily-Sue Sloane - Huntington Station, NY -  
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**Be the reason someone smiles today...  
Please be kind and write to each other...**

Autumn abundance,  
spills over the hills,  
painting the maples brilliant  
red,  
yellow,  
orange,  
leaves flying in the wind  
like colored snow, blowing, leaning into letting go

*Rage*

rusty oaks, last to lose their leaves, hanging on  
daring the snow to come  
sumac staining the understory  
blood red patches

*Rage*

birches white chalk lines,  
scrawled against the brilliant backdrop  
all of them, letting go

*against*

surrendering to the season soon to be skeletons  
black branches reaching across the sky

*the*

conifers like sentinels lined straight and tall,  
spruce, pine, cedar, tamarack, hemlock  
dark green companions, backdrop to the others, still letting go

*dying*

fields of cornstalks, crinkly paper bag brown, some gathered for  
display skeletons loom large, witches and spirits, await Samhain,  
wiccan sabbat the end of the harvest beginning of winter

*of*

the dead returning the veil thin  
souls on the wings of monarch butterflies, letting go

*the*

two jet streams carve a sharp X across the sky ahead as  
we are almost home, soon to be

*light*

letting go

Cynthia Holick Foley - Ithaca, NY - cynfoley@gmail.com

Most people I know focus  
on Autumn's visual transformation  
a kaleidoscope of deciduous leaves  
tones of amber, orange, scarlet, and maroon  
cascade to carpet the ground  
as I step lightly, I swing my arms  
I can't contain my smile

my ears open to the arrival  
of migratory birds  
high-pitched "chips" and "tips"  
of dark-eyed juncos  
honks and barks of snow geese  
percussive sounds like the clatter  
of falling pecan and hickory nuts  
plop of ripened apples  
crunch of dry leaves  
beneath my feet  
the swoosh of a cool, crisp breeze

carries tantalizing fragrances of wildflowers  
my nose wrinkles to  
vanilla scent of Joe Pye weed  
licorice aroma of anise hyssop  
sweet musk of decomposing leaves  
the woods a natural perfumery

I pause  
open my arms to the sky  
breathe in, savor  
the intimate moment

Suzanne Cottrell - Oxford, NC - cottrell\_suzanne@yahoo.com

Chill is in the air  
Long legged deer disappear  
Bare trees hide the night

Madalin Bickel - Tallahassee, FL - madalin60@verizon.net

Tilting on its celestial axis, distance grows, its angle shorten days  
The changing airstream gradually welcomes polar chills,  
Searing summer sunlight fades and the garden's lifeforce ebbs, as  
Mother Earth spins onward, a Fall journey that morphs into winter.

Confronted by fading chlorophyll, early sunsets, and brisk air,  
the gardener and his plants shut down daily operations of summer.  
It's time to harvest remaining crops, cut back plants, and store  
stakes and supports for a renewed round in Spring.

Leafy greens grow a bit longer, ribbed and resistant to the  
evening chill they enjoy their final growth spurt.  
Gathering minerals from unadulterated soil, they fashion green  
fiber into food, stored energy with bioactives to keep us strong.

The harvest done, gleanings are left for lingering critters,  
those midnight marauders who formerly feasted on purloined  
provisions in the summer.  
Remaining stalks and stems are collected and composted for  
future use, allowing worms and bacteria to deconstruct them  
into renewed soil.

Shorter days, falling leaves, and gathering breezes announce  
these changes.

Vibrant colors light up the trees and gift us a final farewell salute  
Fall festivals and carnivals help us celebrate the season and the  
garden's respite.  
For now, a time to dance with joy.

Fall is a respite...  
Soon, though, it will be time to gather and split firewood to offset  
the coming chill.  
Old Man Winter is not far behind.

Nick Della Volpe - Knoxville, TN - [ndellavolpe@bellsouth.net](mailto:ndellavolpe@bellsouth.net)

hide and seek  
Blue Ridge Mountains  
covered by fog

Norma Bradley - Asheville, NC - [normabradley1@gmail.com](mailto:normabradley1@gmail.com)

The acorns are gone  
tucked into earth  
by squirrels and wind

High above  
a few leaves still keep  
their last gold and red  
turning now toward brown

Under its branches  
they stand close  
their breath clouding  
in the chill

A hug is given  
and another  
as if the arms could hold  
what must be let go

The oak has seen this before  
its rings holding the years  
roots deep in their seasons  
of arrival and leaving

Wind through branches  
in noble silence  
it keeps watch  
sheltering this moment  
with all the others

Baskin Cooper - Pittsboro, NC - [baskincoop@yahoo.com](mailto:baskincoop@yahoo.com)

**November Days**

fewer cranes in fields  
their kin have all headed south  
snow flurries today

we start to crave comfort foods  
sit, snack, hibernate, stay warm

Kris Rued-Clark - Arpin, WI - [kruedclark@yahoo.com](mailto:kruedclark@yahoo.com)

Fall is for reveries  
of what was, of what might have been,  
of periods past, of histories departed,  
of what might be in remaining term.

As each leaf falls to a cooling earth,  
time to remember people and places,  
time to wonder on lost lovers,  
time that passed so brief moments ago.

As leaves depart Summer homes, falling  
as compost for an Earth waiting,  
as a snug harbor for tree and bush,  
as Persephone sleeps before return.

Our lives as the arrow of time  
gone as swiftly as the winds,  
gone as the last leaves of Fall,  
gone as the naked limbs and vines.

Sam Doctors - Petaluma, CA - [samdoctors701@gmail.com](mailto:samdoctors701@gmail.com)

### **Prelude**

The sunlight is peeping  
On leaves red and green,  
A happy delightful, beautiful scene  
But from the corner of my eye  
I see a snowflake drifting by!  
In mournful tones so soft and low  
Is that an owl predicting snow?  
The woodland thrush has stopped his song.  
The golden daffodils--all gone!  
The weeping willows twist and sway,  
And this is what they seem to say--  
Late Fall is here!  
But keep in mind  
Winter isn't far behind

Lorna Volk - Cincinnati, OH - [cportolano@hotmail.com](mailto:cportolano@hotmail.com)

# Walt Whitman: *Leaves of Grass*

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

I cut across the yard yesterday  
on the way to the gym,  
following three sets of mushy footprints  
deeply embedded in the wet infield clay...

The tracks reminded me of a PBS documentary  
about a recent archeological discovery  
of a trail of prehistoric, fossilized footprints  
made on some ancient beach...

From those preserved blurry tracks...  
scientists extrapolated insights into long-lost lives...  
hypothetical cultural and gender roles and even  
pre-wheel modes of transporting heavy cargo...

Did those ancient commuters know their simple ordinary  
footprints would be forever  
frozen in time and communicate troves of  
understanding and knowledge to future peoples?

I paused,  
turned around  
and reflected for a moment  
on four sets of footprints....

I wondered....  
if these unpretentious tracks were somehow  
sealed and locked in place only to be unearthed  
eons later by future historians....

What information would they glean  
from our trail of footprints  
left in the muddy infield  
of my prison yard?

Matthew Feeney - Moose Lake, MN - cportolano@hotmail.com



Autumn winds bring chill,  
leaves blow like dark curtains  
as spooky mood deepens

Autumn winds bring chill,  
wet fingers freeze, yard work done  
before snow falls

Autumn winds bring chill,  
lacking leaves, catalpa tree  
sports two brown seed pods

Autumn winds bring chill,  
pileated woodpeckers  
gobble suet

Autumn winds bring chill,  
goldfinches feast  
on thistle seed sack

Autumn winds bring chill,  
when my dog shakes her long hair  
leaves scatter onto floor

Vlasta Karol Blaha - Colby, WI - [vkb66@frontier.com](mailto:vkb66@frontier.com)

### **A Magnificent Fall**

Pumpkins, squash, and zucchinis growing in the garden  
Overflowing their vines  
Empty brown cornstalks lingering about  
Black crows cawing from the shoulders of  
A sun-bleached scarecrow  
While freshly bales of hay tumbles from the hay baler  
Rolling through the field  
Red, orange, and brown leaves swirling to the ground  
Showing the empty bird nests  
Once homes to the birds flying above

Terra De Lora - Cornelius, OR - [terradelora@yahoo.com](mailto:terradelora@yahoo.com)

We would be moving at a much slower pace.  
Speed limit was ten miles per hour.

We could buy gas and drugs at the same time.  
Fuel for cars was only sold in drug stores,  
along with marijuana, heroin and morphine.  
The average worker earned \$200 a year.

We would be communicating via letter.  
Only 8% of people had a telephone.  
Your doctor probably had no college education.  
He learned through on-the-job training.

A grim picture, BUT...

There would be more trees than parking lots.  
The passenger pigeon would not be extinct.  
Our food might not be imbedded with plastic.  
Hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires would be a rarity.

If we could continue progress but correct our mistakes,  
maybe our air would be clear, our water clean.  
Perhaps we would look up at the stars more,  
appreciate and protect the blessings of our planet.

If we could turn back time and do better,  
maybe Mother Nature would not be crying.

Sharon Canfield Dorsey - Williamsburg, VA - shargypsy@aol.com

### **Rural Magic**

Fall pathways  
wind through carpets  
of spent golden leaves  
nestled beneath and around  
dark, bare trees

M. C. Little - Peoria, AZ - cportolano@hotmail.com

Old mountain mists whisper of other worlds--  
 of ecstatic dolphins dancing on air,  
 of the wisdom of turtles more ancient than trees,  
 of angel fish yellow as late September,  
 of the damp incense of seaweed,  
 of giant clams with glowing palms clasped in radiant prayer,  
 of whale choirs, barnacles a-quiver,  
 intoning hymns to muted mountains,  
 of constant motion, translation, flight.  
 The aspen leaves listen, click, and clatter in awe.

Autumn's ash tree leaves  
 of leaflets -- fives and sevens--  
 fall into winter.  
 Golden blizzards swirl about  
 the yard. The rake is downcast.

Changing leaves above--  
 green and gold chrysalides--  
 will soon fall away  
 revealing limbs and branches--  
 veins of blue butterflies.

Cheryl Miller - Canon City, CO - camcraig49@gmail.com

### Fall Fibonacci

Pile  
 of leaves  
 like a coat  
 of many colors  
 begins to shift, shake, form new shape.  
 Leaves lift in breeze, float in air like festive confetti.  
 Revealed is a brown-gray coat followed by emergence of a sleepy,  
 confused hedgehog.

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

maples and tupelos  
sassafras and sycamores  
spruces and elms  
come tumbling down  
in tropical storms and blizzards  
in nor'easters and hurricanes  
... our wooded neighborhood  
gets depleted by nature's vagaries  
mournful though understandable

but also by the cruel and oblivious  
who absolutely *need* that inground pool  
who abhor those messy herons  
nesting above their driveways  
who despise the boisterous crows  
meeting late every afternoon  
who are terrified that the next weather event  
might -- just might -- bring down  
onto their manicured lawns  
a perfectly healthy  
century-old oak

they don't or can't realize  
that their malicious transgression  
affects not only themselves  
but every single one of us

we are all inalterably diminished

Lloyd Abrams - Freeport, NY - lbabrams@gmail.com

Brown dry leaves crackle  
Wind stirs the cooling night air  
Hibernation nears

Madalin Bickel - Tallahassee, FL - madalin60@verizon.net

Butter is the base, the only dish our mother  
ever made that was actually edible.

Open a bag of Mrs. Cubbinson's Corn Stuffing,

and shake into a bowl. Chop celery and fry in butter.  
Just dump the celery on top of the stuffing.  
Onions get the same treatment, go ahead,

use the same frying pan, just add a lot more butter  
and simmer until onions are almost translucent  
and tender.

Add to the bowl. Now for sausage; the spicy kind,  
the make-your-eyes-water-from-the-heat kind,  
if you dare sneak a bite. Crumble in that same pan,

then add it to the bowl, drippings and all. Parsley  
is next. Chop and add to that same pan  
with, you know, more butter.

Simmer until tender, not very long, oh, maybe  
three minutes or so. Add to the bowl. Pour in milk  
or chicken broth or buttered water, and toss

by hand until it starts to ball together.  
Place in a generously buttered loaf pan  
and move to a preheated oven at 325°

for forty-five minutes. I loved our mother  
for this one accomplishment, a masterpiece  
made once a year, trusting there would always be

another Thanksgiving. And there have been,  
fifty more Thanksgivings with our mother's stuffing,  
one of the many gifts she left us to remember her by.

Stellasue Lee - Knoxville, TN - [stellasueL@aol.com](mailto:stellasueL@aol.com)

A stream of snowmelt dances and cascades,  
Abandoning her mountain crib arrayed  
With quilts of columbine. From alpenglow's  
Magenta light, the Thompson River flows.

Mature, rebellious, full of trout and mood,  
Her rushing muscles wear the bedrock smooth.  
Sedate, she suns her rippled face, a queen  
With eddies crowned by autumn's leaves citrine.

From heavy rain and sullen charcoal skies,  
Her turbulent and hostile waters rise.  
She floods the canyon, showing no restraint.  
Then, apathetic and aloof, she wanes.

In time, adorned in prairie grass, she meets  
The South Platte, far from Rocky Mountain peaks.  
Embracing her, he soothes her fickle throes,  
And in his arms the Thompson River flows.

Paul Martz - Erie, CO - skewmatrix@gmail.com

**fall finale**

harvest is finished  
november's muted morning sun  
illuminates the deserted fields  
highlighting dried brown corn stalks  
cuddling brittle once rainbow leaves  
the icy dew  
atop a lone pumpkin  
slowly melts  
softening exposing  
the seeds  
for the future  
as we ready for winter's howl  
we enjoy the last peaceful sigh  
of the earth's bounty

Iris Levin - Rockville Centre, NY - idlevin@aol.com

The intensity of loss  
that of death      and yet  
not death.  
How is    one      BOTH  
dead    and    alive?

Chaos theory?  
Poor excuse for an  
answer! Anger rises...  
no flapping wings  
no luna moths...  
When they're extinct  
will there still be  
unexpected consequences?

Crumpled fall leaves portend the bleak cold of loss.  
When a voice goes silent  
but still rings  
in ears. No peace.  
The ultimate tragedy.  
Grief absorbed,  
persistent sadness  
shoveled deep below  
the surface  
like compost decaying--  
yet decomposition  
like a phoenix rising  
triggered alive exposing  
emotional wreckage  
debris-memories putrid  
velvet knives stabbing rose-thorn niggling  
the sweet entwined with the bitter  
reality.  
HOW  
to extinguish a life  
that remains alive?

Marilynn Deane Mendell - Fredericksburg, VA -  
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A standing stone  
Stopped in an open field.

At first you don't notice  
The fringe of grey hairs  
That overhang the solid rock  
Like feathered grass  
Broken by the wind.

The top is indented  
The eyes held tightly shut  
The tail is tucked under.

A perfect stone.

Coming close  
It holds its place  
Sprinting at the latest moment

For the taller grasses  
In a frantic series of hops.

Harold Sneide - Indian Hills, CO - [haroldsneide@comcast.net](mailto:haroldsneide@comcast.net)

**The River Has Washed Itself**

The river has washed itself clear.  
It has not frozen.

The last of the leaves has fallen.  
The ground is tracked with snow.

The earth will not give up any more of itself  
Until the sun returns.

Harold Sneide - Indian Hills, CO - [haroldsneide@comcast.net](mailto:haroldsneide@comcast.net)

**Be the reason someone smiles today...  
Please be kind and write to each other...**



I've been graced  
with the gift of life,  
grateful to even exist  
so, when many question  
Why? Why? Why?  
Not I, for I am  
a simple man in need  
of purposeful work  
and lots of love,  
seeking peace  
in this vast universe,  
grateful for the gift  
of getting to feel  
the glorious, generous,  
love of Gaia,  
giver of life,  
beneath my feet  
and when I look up  
into the night sky  
I see the moon, the stars,  
lighting up the darkness  
and when the dawn comes  
the sun warms me  
to the joys of a new day,  
but when my eyes come  
back down to earth  
I see the world edging  
closer to darkness  
with the great hate that  
many harbor in their hearts  
so, as a simple man  
I look into your star-lit eyes,  
feel your sun-lit smile,  
hear your moon-child's heart,  
I find peace, lots of love,  
and my purpose  
gracing my existence  
within the breathtaking,  
vast universe of your love  
when in your warm arms  
with Winter on its way...

Seeing what is there  
in trees and mountains,  
in Daffodils and foxes,  
in half-hidden falls,  
in lichen covered trunks,  
requires only new eyes.

Each season opens  
to these hidden treasures,  
if only we resolve to see,  
to open ourselves,  
to be fully present,  
to become mindful.

We can pass over and over  
the same terrain, the same space,  
not seeing the squirrel staring at us  
from an overhanging branch,  
not hearing the sound of quail at peak of roof,  
not seeing the swelling magnolia buds,  
not hearing the quiet as night falls,  
not seeing the tiny tips of tulips  
barely breaking early spring sod,  
not hearing the first cries of a robin's hatchlings,  
not seeing the first yellow-green  
on a willow branch just before leaf,  
not hearing leaves scudding cross the track,  
not seeing the buckeye anticipating  
its early spring opening,  
not hearing the last gurgle of a winter creek  
as the summer solstice begins,  
not seeing the last bright hued leaves  
of lemon-yellow Ginkgo trees,  
not hearing the cricket's spring song,  
not seeing the amaranth-red of elephant heart,  
not hearing the doe's tread across the soft scree,  
not seeing the rust-green of late bosc pears  
each only requires quiet hearing,  
each only requires fresh eyes,  
each only requires our attention,  
each only requires a move to mindfulness.

## **Welcoming Fall**

A new season  
A time for renewal  
Of harvest  
Of reflection  
Of autumn leaves

How beautiful life is  
Each moment  
Each season  
That brings forth

People gather  
Celebrating  
Thankful hearts  
Of each other

Pumpkins of autumn colors  
Scent of cinnamon and spices  
Warmth to the hearts with joy  
While cooler breezes in the air

Every season with its uniqueness  
Its movement  
Its purpose

With the season of Fall  
Bringing joyfulness  
Continuation of growth  
And life all around

Together we celebrate  
The preparation for a new season  
The transition to a new chapter  
A new cycle  
Of the year

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