

The Weekly Avocet - #682

December 28th, 2025

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

winter solstice
slithers in on icy feet
days will get longer

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



Submitted by Edwina Kadera

my worst day of the year

the day i most despise
is that too-crisp day in autumn
when later there's a danger of frost...
window and door screens must get switched
radiators have to be bled
everything has to get done
in such haste
especially bringing in plants
that have been flourishing outside
twenty-two free-standing and hanging plants--
wandering jews and a glossy-veined croton
spider plants and rex begonias
fragile jades and a forty-year-old cactus
will winter in my wife's studio
though several do migrate upstairs

it's certainly not life-threatening awfulness
but when the luxuriousness
of longer warmer technicolor days
give way inexorably
to shorter colder grayscale afternoons
when t-shirts and shorts and sandals
get supplanted
by thermals and sweat pants and shoes with socks
and our bicycles stand unridden
for months in the garage
i *don't* have to like it...
one bit
but i *will*... i *must* embrace the change
there is no time for melancholy
no time for lamentation
cold weather *does* have its allure...
walking for miles clothed in multiple layers
shoveling snow while listening to jazz
snowshoeing at the park and on the beach
and i know
with almost absolute certainty
that spring
-- the exquisite time of renewal --
is only months away
and with it will come
my *best* day of the year

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

Prayer

Even as we watch a home
tumble into the ocean
we know Nature's power
and we sigh for the vanity
of man's fixated desire to
'own' waterfront prevails
among the greedy
Even in Delaware's Sussex County
we fought a decade ago to have a 100-foot barrier
on bays, but NO, a state
legislator sued the Department of Natural Resources
and won.
He called it 'freedom'
And so, we pray
new homeowners will be good stewards
on fragile land
Meanwhile all the sand pumping along the coast
has not stopped high tides from their occasional surges
closing a major artery
And so, we wait for the tide to recede
to cross the bridge to come home
and pray

Kit Zak - Lewes, DE - kit.and.bill.zak@gmail.com

Wolf Whacking

Geared up for Wyoming's chill--
sky's a flat gray but
Chuck's primed

Imagine the kick--
the thrill
the chase, engine gunning
as he runs down
his prey, a lone gray wolf
yellow eyes show terror as the wolf tries to
escape the roaring snowmobile

Later, the mighty victor
pounds his chest as he
drags the bloodied, broken corpse
to the bar's doorstep where

fellow drinkers gather to admire the kill
its mouth agape, yellow eyes glazed, bloodied, mangled fur of the lifeless
Canis lupis

Kit Zak - Lewes, DE - kit.and.bill.zak@gmail.com

Winter's Here

The Pacific Northwest feels like
a piece of heaven on earth!
Looking around, Mother Nature
grace us with the promise
of a new tomorrow,
a luscious white blanket
covers the landscape.
Frozen cornfields are dormant
hugging a few bright orange pumpkins
left behind,
the naked trees shiver
at the kiss of old winter,
a doe and her fawn peacefully
feed in the meadow!
The whispers of the season
warm my heart.
Driving on highway twenty six
a gray sky opens in front of me
hiding the sun behind thick
December clouds!
Will it rain or will it snow? Who knows
the weather in the Pacific Northwest
is ever changing,
it will surprise you!

Virginia Tello - Forest Grove, OR - tello.virginia0102@gmail.com

Old winter came again
bitter cold and icy pond
luminous blue sky.

Virginia Tello - Forest Grove, OR - tello.virginia0102@gmail.com

Night Gala

A dazzling moon hangs from the sky
rays of light pierce the glass,
the city is transformed into a
breath taking luminous wonder!
Love and togetherness,
homes filled with the warmth
of family and friends,
the cold breath of winter
taps at the window pane.
When the world is locked
in ice and snow,
I snuggle down in my bed and
cover myself from head to toe,
slipping away into a peaceful slumber
until the sun breaks
the hours of darkness,
I'll be dreaming again and again!

Virginia Tello - Forest Grove, OR - tello.virginia0102@gmail.com

Festive Spirit

It's the most wonderful time of the year,
a time for spreading goodwill and
holiday cheer, a time for peace!
The house is looking merry and bright
with all the decorations,
a sense of celebration has taken hold of me.
A woody, pine-like freshness fills the air,
chimneys are busy at their task
wildlife can be spotted everywhere,
quieter outdoors display
beautiful snow-capped mountains,
dramatic stormy coastlines and
winter's white cloak covers the scenery.
We are brimming with excited
anticipation for the adventures ahead!
We will carry the memory of those we've
lost, and their absence will be a void!

Virginia Tello - Forest Grove, OR - tello.virginia0102@gmail.com

A Flash of Red in the Woods

The Pileated Woodpecker's hammering
can be heard through the woods
loud like a linesman fixing an electric pole.
He remains hidden, but for the sound
he would not be found.
Red feather crest, white markings on his face
black body, a strong tail that helps him
move up the tree.
There is a flash of red
when he flies to his next tree.

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

Please be kind, write to each other...

Silence Is Red in Holly

Silence is round in winter.
Corpulent and red, silence
Is bound to burst any minute
In the quickest bird's beak.

Round in winter, holly berries
Crown the silent snow, prepared
For a neighborly host that winters
With us on the ridge: chickadees,

Cardinals, house wrens, and
Bluebirds. A feather-force
Of black, straggling crows
Hangs back--silent scavengers.

All of them dart to snip our sweet,
Red holly berries, dropping the pits
Behind the brush pile you stacked,
Dropping them in quick time for

Spring.

Mattie Quesenberry Smith - Lexington, VA - mattiequesenberrymsmith@gmail.com

Wishing you were here

Looking up at the many twinkling lights
on the massive tree on this pale, cold,
late December day in Rockefeller Center,
I remember how you loved seeing this sight--
maybe the tree here in cold New York City
reminded you of the ones in the Swiss Alps,
your adored home country,
and how you had promised
to take me next Christmas
but you were dead two days into December
and squeezing my Dad's hand,
I can't help thinking that the tree,
like everything else in the world,
is less bright, shiny, without you here.

(For my beloved Grandma Simone; without you, everything is less magical now. RIP)

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

Garden Shadow

Amidst a winter storm
the weather-beaten gate blows open.
There's a knock at the door.
 No one is there
 No footprints in fresh fallen snow
 No handprints on the railing
 There must be a secret to be told.
Someone from somewhere has arrived
 with a message too dispiriting
 to leave in the mailbox.
Someone so cold to stir seasons
of unpleasant memories as hands
of time fall back just far enough
to be haunted by faceless voices.
 The knocking silences.
 The gate swings closed.
Another night alone lost to wind swirls
 of mystery, more disturbing
in the absence of the gardener's shadow.

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

Forever, Susan Lily

Archetypal clusters of Forever Susan Lily
bulbs arrived in the mail
cushioned with hoary moss
dusty bulbs and dry Iris corms.
Every single one will have a winter's nap.

Forever Susan Asiatic Lilies
glorious manifestations beside
Hyacinth mix of purple and pink.
I imagine them thriving next spring.

Just think, how does Mother Nature keep bulbs safe in frozen soil?
I know she's
laughing at winter snowstorms.

My pipedream endures for
Nature has perfect timing in her ornate drawers of dreams-come-true.
Purple Dusky Challengers with black beards
quivering and tall.
Representative ambassadors
singing life-force.
That is who you are
underground secrets of winter.
Victorious prize-winners
warbles in secretive clusters.
Xerophytic, ferns asleep in rocks and rubble
yearnings by washed-out pathways when it's zero degrees in the sunshine.

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

Healing Snow

Snow is falling tonight
in soft, silent flakes.
Our transgressions to the eye
are being transformed
into clean, white hillocks
and blue hollows.
In Her kindness
Nature is bestowing upon us
Her healing snow.

Ray Staubach

3 A.M.

Today, pelting rain
shrouds of draping darkness. Now
star chunks stud the night.

Sheri Lindner - Bondville, VT - SheriAL@aol.com

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

Ode to a Sunflower

At the edge of the threshed field,
brushed lightly with snow,
the multi-headed sunflower
sways in the breeze
like an anthracite-eyed
hippie-chick at a Dead concert
in Golden State Park.
Its thick stem holds on.
Its sole companion is a crab apple
whose desiccated fragrant fruit
rests on the snow like maraschino cherries
topping a vanilla sundae.
The wind picks up and
wants to topple the sunflower but
the school-bus yellow
petals merely quiver while
the elephant-ear leaves flap.
The heads are a community
waiting for famished crows
to attack its dried seeds.
Some few will drop and
come to life in Spring.
For now, it knows
they are beginning to die,
that to be real
is to die.

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

A Winter in West Virginia

A cold wind blew around the corner of the old house,
The snowflakes fell, and they fell all night.
Icicles glittering in the moonlight hung from the roof.
Twelve steps to the front porch froze over with ice,
One step down a body could fall.
The last of the embers of the fire in the coal stove still burning,
But not for long,
The cold wind moaned and groaned as it blew through
The cracks in the wall,
Bringing the chatter of my teeth and shivering of my body.
Inside the old house, ice on the linoleum,
Made my toes stand up as I dare step with my bare feet.
The snowflakes still falling when daylight comes,
Twelve inches of snow on the ground,
Weather person predicts more on the way.

Terra L. De Lora - Cornelius, OR - terradelora@yahoo.com

The Seer

A lone crow sits on a high branch
For no other reason
Then to drink in the pure joy of the view;
It sits, stoical and settled,
Surveying the wide winter world,
Like a dark seer who waits
for the seeker.
I imagine being that crow
On the high branch,
Still and silent--
Nothing to accomplish but to contemplate
The distant bound, round bales
Spaced rhythmically, ready;
Cows on the wind-broke side of the hill,
All facing east with no destination;
The sweeping fallow fields, resting,
With some snow still in the harrows,
And all gilded by the early, slanted light.

Patricia Thrushart - Clarington, PA - patriciathrushart@gmail.com

PEACE ON EARTH
might as well wish
upon a star

William Scott Galasso - Laguna Woods, CA - scottgalasso@yahoo.com

Cranes

Their voices call to my ears,
pull my eyes skyward,
heard before sighted,
Sandhills from Michigan.

Cranes overhead wing southward,
call my thoughts to fly with them
to Okefenokee or the Gulf Coast of Florida.

The cranes arrive,
bring their news of winter,
their voice compared to barking geese,
to the bugling of wild elks.

These are no geese,
their words no honk,
no barnyard bark for them.
It is a rattling coo,
doves amplified 1000 times.

Arrows shot from a bow,
they neither swoop nor slow,
they rocket southward,
abandon me here
rooted to the ground.

Ray Zimmerman - Chattanooga, TN - znatrualist@gmail.com

In winter's white woods
The purest, coldest water
Humbled there, I drink.

Amy Melman - Croton-on-Hudson, NY - amy1melman@yahoo.com

Please feel free to share The Weekly Avocet with all those you know who love Nature poetry. Thank you! It's free, just email us your email address...

The Taste of Snow

North winds bluster all morning.
leaving behind an afternoon
too frigid for outdoor play.
Outside carved drifts rise as high
as four-year-old Meaghan
stretches on tiptoe to see
beyond an ice frosted picture window.
Look, Nanna. Cool whip everywhere!
The awe in her voice takes me back
to a railroad flat where in back of the closet
my snowsuit and galoshes waited
for just such an auspicious winter event.
I wonder what snow tastes like, she sighs
and I am undone by a plea for magic
only a grandmother must make happen.
I push hard against snow mounds
and wedge open the back door.
Hurrying to fill a large pot,
I pile mounds of unblemished snow
into the kitchen sink as Meg looks on,
her eyes the mazarine blue of a clearing sky
after a winter storm.
On a stool, my granddaughter hums,
toasty in her red hoodie,
clumsy wool mittens at work
creating snow cakes with
wooden spoon and plastic cups.
She pauses, and smiles
as she hands me her creation.
I made this just for you, Nan. Taste it.

Joan Vullo Obergh - Seaford, NY - lydia82@verizon.net

Please be the reason someone smiles today...

See you next year - 2026

Time to share your Winter-themed poems for The Weekly Avocet.

**Please read the guidelines before submitting
We love previously published poems!**

**Please send your submissions to:
angeldec24@hotmail.com**

**Up to four Fall themed poems,
Photos (4), haiku (up to 10),
Saving Mother Earth Challenge poems
(as many as you can write)**

Please do not stack your info when submitting submissions, please have it: name - town, state - email address, in a line, just like it appears in both publications. Please do not make extra work for us. Thank you.

Please send your submissions to angeldec24@hotmail.com

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

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

(Just so you know: I do not read work from a poet who doesn't take the time to address their submission to the editor, who they want to read their work.)

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

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

There is no line limit per poem.

Please no religious references.

Please use single spaced lines.

Please remember, we welcome previously published poems.

Please put your name - town/state - email address under your poem. No Zip codes.

Please send your poems in the body of an email or in one attachment, **no pdf file.**

We look forward to reading your Winter submissions.

Please think about becoming a supporting member of The Avocet community. The Avocet is only \$28.00 for 4 - 64 pages, perfectly bound issues and 52 weeks of The Weekly Avocet, every weekend, plus other poetry surprises, with the best Nature poetry by the best Nature poets in America, a steal of a deal.

Please make your check out to The Avocet and send to:

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All donations are greatly appreciated, so if you have been enjoying all the Nature poetry, please think about making a small donation. Each year it gets harder and harder to keep our doors open. Thank you for supporting The Avocet and The Weekly Avocet.

The Burning Question for us Earthlings is:

What are you/we going to do to stop or even just slow down Climate Change?

Do you feel like there is nothing you can do about climate change?

Well, there is, even if we all do small things it will make a great difference. Alice C. Hill (**the David M. Rubenstein senior fellow for energy and the environment at the Council on Foreign Relations.**) states the first thing we all need to do is not shy away from the subject. Talk about, write about, climate change to everyone you know and meet. Write to your congressperson and Senators. Let them know what you think and fear!

I want to have, at least, one Saving Mother Earth poem in each issue of The Weekly Avocet, so I am always looking for poems that address our most important issues of today, so please write about what you think and fear of the coming end of our world as we know it. A world our great grandkids will never know. A Mother Nature who is no longer kind.

But if we join together, maybe, just maybe, working together, we can make a difference to Save Mother Earth, the only home we have. Show you care. There are so many topics to write about when it comes to Climate Change. Please find one you are passionate about and write about it!

Write a Tell-off poem letting the world know what you are feeling about what is being done right before our eyes by those who claim to want what best for all of us. Think it out in your head, then put it down on the page, then

fight with it, get your rage out, then send it to us to share, so you can see your voice, your words, being read, being heard...

The American Avocet

I watch unseen this large,
long-legged shorebird,
with its pied plumage
and a dash of red
around its head and neck,
scampering along
the coastline
searching to snatch-up
some aquatic insect
or a small invertebrate
hidden beneath
the brackish waters
of this saltmarsh.

I watch unseen
it swing its odd,
long, up-curved bill
through the shallow,
still waters, catching
a tiny creature,
trapping it in its bill,
racing off to its nest to
feed her four hatchlings
with this feast she found.

I watch in awe
as the male
grows protective,
fearlessly fending off
an encroaching
common black raven,
attacking this intruder,
striking at it with its bill.

I watch in wonder
as they swim as a family
just days after
the young ones are born,
then back to the nest to
rest where its kind flocks
together in a community.

We hope we provoked you; that you leave having experienced a complete emotional response to the poetry found in each issue of The Weekly Avocet. I want to thank our Poets for sharing their work with us this week. And “Thank you for reading, dear reader!”

Be well, see you next weekend,

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

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