

The Weekly Avocet - #686

January 25th, 2026

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

**Frost-jeweled weeds glitter
crystal-garbed trees bow in awe
Winter, supreme, reigns**

Vaughn Neeld - Cañon City, CO - vaughnneeld@hotmail.com



Submitted by Edwina Kadera

Winter of My Soul

(For my husband Rex Sexton)

I live in the Arctic now
on an ice floe that drifts
aimlessly on the still,
cold sea of my existence,
the enormity of bergs
and glaciers dwarfed by the
sorrow of your absence.

I search for a sign from you,
a crimson corona, a fata morgana.
But these illusions are hidden
by the dense fog in my mind,
which obscures my vision
and muffles any sound
I try to construe as your voice.

Intruders, like immense shards
of glaciers crashing into the sea,
unnerve my precarious peace.
Famished arctic fox stalking for
morsels from my fragile psyche
disrupt my futile pursuit of
even a mirage of your being.

I am like a polar bear hanging on
to a melting ice raft, exhausted.
I lie in wait, hoping for salvation
in the memory, not of grand events,
but of those inadvertent gestures,
ordinary then, but extraordinary
now without you.

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

“It is the life of the crystal, the architect of the flake, the fire of the frost, the soul of the sunbeam. This crisp winter air is full of it.” - John Burroughs (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

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

The Sound of Silence

The sorcerer sun waves its beams of light
And we hear the snow slowly vanishing
A creak of crumbling snow falling off branches
A squish of slush under plodding rubber boots
A splash of a puddle plunged in a failing leap

But, another kind of snow does not melt
Above the snow line lies perpetual snow
Hushed in the Himalayas, Andes and Alps
Despite its peaks reaching for the warmth
Of solar rays too frail for the frigid challenge

My heart is encrusted in everlasting snow
Muted forever defying the passage of time
And the deceptive heat of the winter sun
For me missing you

There is no mourning thaw

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

“There is an instinctive withdrawal for the sake of preservation, a closure that assumes the order of completion. Winter is a season unto itself.” - Haruki Murakami (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

The Bells

The church bells toll as the storm descends.
Shanty Town is shrouded with snow.
Crystal castles, and other fairytale marvels,
cover the ramshackle houses, shabby store fronts,
clap trap shelters, toppling tenements.
The dreary mill atop the hill, glitters in the maelstrom
like a diaphanous dream dome (afloat in a cloudland).
Shape shifting spirits dance off the drifts,
fly with the flurries, twirl and pirouette.
Even the shacks and shanties, the rickety sheds,
conjure up post cards cottages and nativity scenes.
I bundle through the blizzard, bowed against the swirl,
a fragile ghost in a dream, beckoned by the bells.

Rex Sexton

Winter Walk

Frozen to the bone, I bundle home across
downy drifts of mystic whiteness.

Ice angel, lifting her winter wings - all
around me in the night, as I cut through the
city's sprawling park, like icicles dangling
from the winter sky, towers rise, sleek with
glass and reflections of the nebulous.

They almost rival nature I'm thinking,
but not quite.

Strolling below, amidst the parks, gardens,
walks, fountains, of downtown Chicago, the
quaint Victorian mansions and smug old
brownstones - most of which have been
converted into pricey eateries, watering holes
and Gold Coast condos - begin to assume an
illusion of fairyland as a heavenly lake effect
snow descends on the city and flakes as big
as dove feathers (angel feathers) transform
the spires and gables into enchanted castles.

A small stone bridge over a silver stream
cascading through the darkness and disappearing
around the bend, the raw winds blow. It
all seems like a dream. The bare park trees,
like waving hands, point spectral fingers at
a falling heaven - falling on me, on all of us,
as it transforms our mundane world into an
enchanted land.

Rex Sexton

Iced Crystals

Meringue mountain tops
sprinkled with crystalline ice
gifts tasteful design,
delectable scenery
presenting winter wonder

Alicia Ann Torres - Oakland, CA - freedom0768@att.net

Icicles

Ice ornamentals
string lights of crystalline spikes
foresightful sculptures

Alicia Ann Torres - Oakland, CA - freedom0768@att.net

“Sometimes our fate resembles a fruit tree in winter. Who would think that those branches would turn green again and blossom, but we hope it, we know it.” - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

ice pond

the ice pond
in january
is just right
for the skaters
both young and old
as they glide along
so free of stress
filled with the joy of winter
the crisp air
she watches her daughter
valerie as she
does a camel on the ice
her daughter is thirteen
her body twirling
like a whirling dervish
so precise and beautiful
a few more years her mother
thinks and she will be ready
to compete
she thinks proudly
the sky cloudy
looks like a
picasso painting
there is such a sense
of freedom
and happiness
skating on the ice pond
smoothly noiselessly
with only the woods and the
bare snow-capped trees
to complete this picture
of her daughter
an angel on ice...

ed galing

“Great poems have a Universal voice. They speak to the reader’s heart... they let the reader see even when their eyes are closed.” - Charles Portolano

full circle

there was a time
when the snow fell
in January
that my best friend
was a snow shovel,
though i hated to go
out there to
shovel ten inches,
i was young at forty
and my muscles were
tight like an oiled spring
through the window i
would see my wife
watching me shovel
and i felt so much like a cave man
that's how proud i was of shoveling
when i had enough i would
go back in the house
and have a nice glass of wine
and hug my wife, and kiss her too
these days when the snow comes
i am no longer that young man
but an old man of ninety-six
and my wife has left me
and the house is not the same anymore
i sit in a wheelchair
and reflect on all
the snows i have always
seen in so many years
and all the sleigh rides we had
and think of christmas carols
and bing crosby on television
and listen to christmas carols
and shake my head and
drop a tear or two
as the snowflakes
fall outside on the lawn
and i wish i had my
shovel again.

ed galing (1917-2013)

Please be kind, write to each other...

Favorite winter scene

Snow coming down
is so beautiful.

Watching it covering
streets, driveways, yards,
tree branches.
with no footprints
made by humans or animals
is a winter wonderland.

Watching it snow
from the comfort
of your cozy recliner
erases all the hassles
of the day.

Children walking down
your street with their
sleds dragging behind
to arrive at a nearby
hill to sled down.
Reminds adults of
their childhood,
when they too
were that age.

Snow is a winter
wonderland for all
of us to enjoy.

Snow is what makes
our lives a winter
wonderland.

Patti Colleen Bond - Forest Grove, OR - bondp5781@gmail.com

“One kind word can warm three winter months.” - Japanese Proverb (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

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...

Flat Light

When the barometer drops
and white flurries begin to fall,
I feel the excitement of the storm
and want to be out in it.
I don parka and boots,
scarf muffled to the chin
and walk out to our back field.

Snow changes stubbled grass
to white hummocks,
furrows to patches of ice.
The wind becomes a boxer's fist
hitting my face with recurrent blows.
My eyes glaze with the storm's
pummeling; my sense of direction goes.
Everywhere I look
white ghosts skirl off the drifts.

The pale sun sinks,
masked like a pantomime player
by the driving storm.
The world turns gray. I cannot find
the path. I trip on a drift
and fall, lost in the flat light.

Snow bees drive through the air,
thicken on eyelashes, wet my face.
I am numb under the clinging mask.
I want to sleep like an ice sculpture in snow.
The silent falling of flake on flake
eases my drowsy soul.
But into this peace I dare not go.
I rise, shake off the cold whiteness, and move on.

Margaret Bobalek King

"A garden in the winter is a gift wrapped in snow." – Anonymous (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

First Signs

Down trails sodden with snowmelt,
stepping on oak leaves, sliding
on melting piles of last year's debris,
I see trees lifting their branches
red candelabras burning at their tips;
below, green shoots tear through earth.

Rushing streams run through runnels,
pitch through moss tunnels
melting ice in the warm season's sun.
Its blaze breaks the surface on the peat pond,
wakes larvae in fly-dimpled shallows,
where I stop by the muddy shore.

My line loops out for my first fish.
It will rise beneath overhanging willows
avoiding tangles of cattails. I see
the lure jig in ripples over tea-colored water.
My line dips, I have one on! –I catch a snag
and the trout is free, -- as I am meant to be.

Margaret Bobalek King

“The poetry of the earth is never dead.” - John Keats

Ode to a last lone maple leaf

Obstinate One, why do you
hold on as men come sugaring
and bud wood wakens? You
do not belong at a bare branch
end. Winter wants finishing.
Dry, brown, withered; against
rain, frost and snow, you resist.
Your seasons have passed, what
fuels this strange perseverance?

Ralph Long - Oakland, CA - rjlji1957@gmail.com

Early Winter Tapestry

The early morning montage,
knitting together a lingering moon glow,
a slowly setting Selene's sharpened scimitar,
a fast dimming morning star and
a sun just breaking the far horizon.

Early light shows darkest jade pine needles
amid the crystal encased limbs and boughs,
each crystal reflecting the morning light
as though from a gleaming diamond tiara,
the shuttlecock speeds back and forth
across the lightening yellow ribbons,
across the lightening dun colored branches,
across the few lingering orange-yellow leaves,
across the deepest ochre and russet foliage
of quaking aspens' season's final dancing leaves
weaving each morning a more austere tapestry.

Still earliest morning renews my faith,
renews the forest's contour and shapes,
brings on the hope and dreams of a new day,
encourages me to throw back the coverlet,
to let the phantasms of night recede.
I lower my feet into lamb's wool slippers,
I tie the obi around the heavy cotton robe.

Rising slowly to take up the steaming cup,
to turn on the oven warming my morning bun,
to turn the computer to the Times and Guardian,
to read of what happened and what was only imagined,
to read of this war and that uprising here and there,
of this rebellion and that oncoming genocide,
to ponder Sheinwold and Doonesbury,
to wander through the arts and editorials,
to take up the cudgel of another day,
still there is the weaving of a new forest day,
as I linger for a nonce over my steaming latte.

Sam Doctors - samdoctors@att.net

“Plant seeds of happiness, hope, success, and love; it will all come back to you in abundance. This is the law of nature.” - Steve Maraboli

Abiding Winter

i.

No sharks live
in Shark River
but teeth of ice
jag the vista.

ii.

Ice floes drift down
the Hudson through the mouth
of New York Harbor.
Across the near expanse of sea
the ice has reached the Jersey coast.

iii.

A steady wind rips at my parka.
I stand a lookout on Battery Lewis.
Here we fortified ourselves
against the Germans, forged
big guns, more deadly weapons.
I wonder, what did the German-
Americans of my dad's family do?
Take up arms against distant cousins?
As a boy my father plane-spotted
from our shore for the Civil Air Patrol.

iv.

I could not bring myself
to do the last thing
he asked of me: give
his ashes to the brine.
In the spring new begun
I'll christen him
with a marble stone.

Lynn Palumbo - Knoxville, TN - lynnpsychotherapist@gmail.com

"The snow is sparkling like a million little suns." - Lama Willa (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

After the Blizzard

Elation comes in many forms:
the joy of power restored
the pink and blue variegated sky
the wolf moon rising with the tide.

The wind is done hurling waves,
lobbing snow, the shore subdued
by snow-swept dunes.
In twilit windows televisions flicker.
Neon signs light pub windows.
There weary linemen and road crews
drink firewater before turning home
down lamp-lit streets swept of snow.

Lynn Palumbo - Knoxville, TN - lynnpsychotherapist@gmail.com

Opalescent snow
blankets endless horizons
giving illusions
of diamonds weaved into lace
fabric hugging earth with love

Alicia Ann Torres - Oakland, CA - freedom0768@att.net

January Sky

As morning meets afternoon
And afternoon meets night
The sun starts to shiver
The night imperialising the day
Until there is no more
And now the moon is dictator of the sky
As silence creeps over the land
Hours seem to fade away
The stars seem so close
Telling a beautiful story
The cunning moon even wants to disappear
Disappear from his duties
And listen to the story the stars tell

Zoe Savishinsky - Seattle, WA - savvyzoe@gmail.com

“The long whisper of winter fills nature’s sanctuary with the silence of her wintry breath.” - Robbie George (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

On Track: Hegel and the Wolverine

Their footprints are stitched across the earth’s mantle of snow:
marten, squirrel, ermine and, down near the creek, mink,
while under the black spruce, the delicate lacework of
ptarmigan toe-marks write a transcript of clues,
of silent statements...anonymous, ubiquitous, confessional.

Trailing these tracks, a trapper’s snowshoes leave
their own wake of frames, tails, and rawhide webbing,
all pointing out the way for wolverine, who comes a day later
and last in line. Dogged, methodical, powerful, fearless,
he is a top-tier predator, taking up the rear, mile
after mile of well-marked path, a dutiful robber
of the labor, the lives, the scent of those who have
fed or hunted before him. He takes bait from un-sprung traps,
and frozen catch from those whose jaws have closed shut,
finding something every stage of the way, even if
only a gnawed-off leg or small libation of dried blood.

Hegel, the philosopher who once wrote that the course
of history is shaped by the cunning of Reason, probably
never met a wolverine, else he might have chosen this mammal
for metaphor, as stand in for his final word, our fierce future,
the Logos, the point of it all, the un-named master race
of his ponderous and often impenetrable books.

But having entertained that thought, I quickly re-consider:
maybe the wolverine’s secret is really the cunning of
Unreason, of instinct married to opportunity,
wedded by winter’s way of ordering its world.
Like the humans it shadows, a wolverine fulfills its fate by
following its prey, the sinuous course set for it by others.
It does not choose its nature, but simply figures how to use
its gifts, proving, along the way, that one creature’s dinner
can come at the cost of another’s despair.

Joel Savishinsky - Seattle, WA - savishin@gmail.com

“Winter is a season of recovery and preparation.” - Paul Theroux (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Winter's Full Moon

Winter's full moon
calls to us
through the bare branches of trees
and by its nature
illuminating all things in its path
releasing magnetic forces
to play in human
and animal worlds
suddenly a dog's bark
exalts it in the here and now,
everything is clear and still
The moon moving quietly
over and beyond the horizon
still calling out.

James Carney - Middletown, NJ - jrcarney19@gmail.com

“And don't think the garden loses its ecstasy in winter. It's quiet, but the roots are down there riotous.” - Rumi (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Ice Storm

All of Oklahoma stretches skyward,
awakes to strange disequilibrium.
Beneath weakened soil, strong entangled wood,
though coiled interweavingly, will succumb

and genuflect involuntarily,
boughs bowing, bending, breaking violently,
occurring gradually, then suddenly
an inch of ice de-limbs, destroys, a tree

unlike ice of earlier this year
when trees were spared but streets in disrepair
forced us to gather in safe barricades.
Now trees bring to mind felled Roman colonnades.

Thomas Locicero - Broken Arrow, OK - thomaslocicero@gmail.com

Winter's Edge

Who knew,
when the first burst of Spring's beauty
engulfed us in its fragrance and color
that one day we would find ourselves
moving toward a precipice
of quietude and slumber.

Or that
in the midst of Summer's long, lazy days
and warm, inviting nights,
we would deceive ourselves long enough
to think that time could stand still
rather than shrink into the coming darkness and cold.

Perhaps our preoccupation
with the majesty of Fall's fullness,
when orange, yellow, red, and brown
mingled together as they swirled on the ground,
becoming landscape portraits that took our breath away,
had fooled us into thinking
that nature had lost track of its own destiny.

But there is no denying that December had come
and now we find ourselves standing at the edge of winter.
There is no turning back,
not unless we are willing to sacrifice everything...
all the beauty and fullness of Mother Nature's yearly cycle,
and forfeit what awaits us just beyond the coming season.

On the other side of crunching snow and frozen breaths
there is alchemy at work,
whose recipe is a divine mixture
of physics and mystery, faith, and formulas.

From this bleak mid-winter's edge
we can see just far enough ahead
to know that Spring will one day come again.

Lowell Greathouse - Forest Grove, OR - Lgreathouse55@gmail.com

Please be the reason someone smiles today...

“To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake, it is necessary to stand out in the cold.” - Aristotle (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Whiteout

Like a deer in the forest

stopped cold in its tracks
stone-still and *en garde*,
ears perked, eyes wide
in the stillness of snow;

the only sound
a whisper of breath
from the nearby town,
the only movement

sunlight on white;
the clock of being
unwound and rundown,
the hands of time

cuffed with flakes,
the only alarm
the melt of ice
adrip from the branch

of a hickory tree;
as if anyone cared
about tasks left undone,
as if anything mattered

but this gift of repose,
this respite from hours,
this stitch out of time
by the mender of days.

Peter Leverich - Manhasset, NY - peterl@techsoftware.com

“If this were a rooftop covered with snow, these words would be bird tracks instead of a poem.” - William Michaelian (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Night Star

*"Shooting stars pass
into sparse-branched trees."*

- Chia Tao (779-843), Chinese Zen monk poet

A star
shoots across the sky,
a meteoric rise
and fall
across the horizon,
first star
I see tonight,
bright and luminous,
an arc across
heaven's gate.

I stand
under the awning
of black velvet,
Italian lights
sparkling,
thousands of diamonds
in a jeweler's case,
I watch the firs
wave their limbs
in an attempt to distract me.

The largest fir
dances in the breeze,
a solo performance,
for some reason
out of sync
with the other trees,
I watch closely
as it sways
in variance
for I identify closely.

Father Benedict Auer

"Even the strongest blizzards start with a single snowflake." - Sara Raasch (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Winter Frogs

"...when the world is mud-luscious..."
e.e. cummings

Like the ten plagues of Egypt,
the frogs have croaked
back into existence.
They are everywhere.
We hear them while we eat.
We hear them when we pray.
We hear them before the sun comes up,
and sometimes after it has gone down.
These are not small frogs,
but the type you could almost
have a French dinner with.
Their sound is deep and rhythmic,
it accentuates our chanting,
gives a rap beat to our table reading.
It is only the second week of January
so if they continue to grow
we will have the makings of
a horror flick,
"The Frogs Who Ate a Monastery."
Every day it has rained
causing Winter to turn tropical,
or at least wet enough
for the ferns to spurt a growth.
January thaw in the Midwest
springs in the Pacific Northwest,
next comes the crocuses
and then the daffodils.

Father Benedict Auer

**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 Winter 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 hatchings
with this feast she found.

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

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

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

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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