

The Weekly Avocet - #691

March 1st, 2026

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

hieroglyphics on snowy roof sparrow prints

Sara McNulty - Staten Island, NY - sablond49purple@gmail.com



Submitted by Edwina Kadera

nor'easter aftermath

whining grinding chain saws
sound the death knell
of century-old oaks and fallen firs
amidst burning sawdust two-cycle fumes
and a fading pine fragrance

plowed over by a late-winter nor'easter
devastating in its ferocity
i've never seen anything like it
intoned as a mantra
a muffled trumpet whispering taps
drifting off with the wind

it's bad enough when
citized halfwits move in and amputate trees –
too big too many too much shade
squirrels nuts berries bird poop too messy
i want more grass

but when those furious tempests
ravage and devour
we mourn their loss
for those majestic trees
they'd belonged to us all

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

“If adventure has a final and all-embracing motive, it is surely this: we go out because it is our nature to go out, to climb mountains, and to paddle rivers, to fly to the planets and plunge into the depths of the oceans... When man ceases to do these things, he is no longer man.” - Wilfrid Noyce

the snows have melted
new garbage is amassing
time for spring cleaning

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

“Nature inspires me to believe!”

Waiting: An Etheree

I
want to
hug a tree
fresh and greening
in the warming spring
on a bright May morning.
I want to sing with the birds
and dance with the nodding flowers.
But the wind is blowing snow around
the still-bare branches, so we must all wait.

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

In Anticipation, Bud

I know you are eager for a response from me, but
you must wait. The soil of my soul is still too cold to reach out.
I long for warmth as much as you do, but I have learned
that peaking too soon is not good; perfection takes time.
Growth cannot be achieved in a day, and of course,
there are always unexpected setbacks when the icy fingers
of reality push back.

While you wait for a more pleasant day and, after constantly
checking on me, perhaps you should just sit back,
read a book, take a nap. When you least expect me,
I will arrive.

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

**“Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global
garbage cans.” - Jacques-Yves Cousteau**

Moonlight on dark waves
Mother beaver swims with kits
Autos honk on bridge

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

A Wall of Cold

The crunch of snow beneath my feet defined winter.
Snowmen and snowball fights gave way to sledding.

Snowmen and snowball fights gave way to sledding.
Racing downhill, I avoided obstacles.

Racing downhill, I avoided obstacles.
Later, I drove and avoided ice patches.

Later, I drove and avoided ice patches.
Sunglasses protected my eyes from glare.

Sunglasses protected my eyes from glare.
I still relished a cup of hot chocolate at the end of the trip.

I still relished a cup of hot chocolate at the end of the trip.
Today I hibernate to avoid the wall of cold outside my door.

Today I hibernate to avoid the wall of cold outside my door.
I miss the crunch of snow beneath my feet.

Ray Zimmerman

Firewood

Before the old oak falls for years it stands
In rich dark soil born of leaves worms cast out
Birds break worms' bodies in beaks, make soil
Old branches break, fall to snowy ground

In rich dark soil born of leaves worms cast out
Unable to carry the load of ice
Old branches break, fall to snowy ground
Where birds assemble to gather ants

Unable to carry the load of ice
Branches join acorns missed by squirrels
Where birds assemble to gather ants
Before the old oak stands an acorn falls

Branches join acorns missed by squirrels
Birds break worms bodies in beaks, make soil
Before the old oak stands, an acorn falls
Before the old oak falls, for years it stands

Ray Zimmerman

Water

Look through our disguise.
Find we are water.
Spread us thin and cast
for trout among rogue molecules,
deuterium laced water

Distill us and build a bomb,
aided by that heavy water.
Trap us behind dams
generate power
as we fall homeward.

Use us to polish silver.
Expiate every blemish.
Leave a shine.
Sail hard to leeward
on liquid, once part of a star.

Drink us down
when you finish Pilates
You too are water,
at least 98 percent, and
not enough to go around.

Published in Weatherings anthology, FutureCycle Press

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

Moonscape

Full moon obliterates
all but brightest stars,
casts shadows on
urban monoliths,
home to rats and divas.

Neon stars announce
coming events.
Rainbows form and dissolve
cold beer, sandwiches,
spicy bikini bar.

Alleys clog with dust.
Grit polishes glass.
I shade my eyes
against smoke and soot.
Wind shakes neon signs.

Full moon rules
above skyline.
Despite burning questions
about combustion,
downtown is looking up.

Published in Southern Light: Twelve Contemporary Southern Poets

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

“The Holy Land is everywhere” - Nicholas Black Elk

Memory Foam

On the shore
day and night meet for momentary counsel.
Here dreams recently roiled in dark oceans become foam,
resting for a breath on the beach,
revealing in light what transpired in the fathomless night.
Waiting winds pull some sticky bubbles away from others
flicking them in the air
returning them to the yawning sea,
tide taking the remaining bits.
Shore and sea meet for
fleeting exchange in a
moment of awareness and
inform one another of their creative work.
Then day and night
wake and dream,
sea and shore
return to sculpt the same tales again and again
without regard to age, time, place, or scape
They know so little of each other and
they know everything about each other,
each in each,
their quick embrace leaves no trace.

Ellen Hirning Schmidt - Ithaca, NY - Schmidt.ellen@gmail.com

The Cold Eye of Winter Hunger

The cold eye of winter reflects
in the gaze of an eagle.
Her obsidian pupils stare intently
from their lakes of molten gold.

Across the pasture's midmorning hours,
the eagle glides on high thermal currents.
Her raptor's eyes observe and measure
the worth of patch-worked farm fields.

She flies in tightening circles, searching,
searching until she sees movement below.
The deepening emptiness in her belly
urges her to break her flight pattern.

Her eyes have fixed on a rabbit,
fur fluffed against the cold.
She adjusts her feathers and form to swoop
below, skillfully slicing through chilled air.

As the edges of the eagle's feathers skim
the grass, she lets out a shrill skirl that cuts
through the calm of the moment.

Barely breathing, immobilized, the rabbit quivers
amidst the bent stems of withered grass.
But fear soon leaps in his blood, and he dashes
through his scant cover.

Like an arrow shot from a huntsman's taut bow,
the eagle courses on mark,
her sharp raptor's talons stretched out to grasp...

Wendy N. Bell - Edgewood, WA - wendynbell@hotmail.com

puddles fill sidewalks
snow drifts dwarf
winter warms up

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

Winter's Finale

Bundled into tired winter coats
and pulling on pilled woolen mittens,
a friend and I reluctantly
face fickle March's icy wind
as we leave the supermarket's warmth.
Only the scent of brave hyacinths
from an in-store flower stall
reminds me of hope and spring.

Sally Rosenthal - Philadelphia, PA - Sanford.rosenthal@comcast.net

Pristine Fantasy

Sidewalks gleam
in thin covering
of ice, swallowed by
a pale sun.
Opalescent streets
of pearl are unmarred
by human feet.

Children peer out
windows in wonder.
They dream of skating,
sledding. Parents
advise that it is
dangerous, the ice
too thin. The children
vow to find a hilly
place still swathed
in snow for sledding.
For now, streets form
a pristine fantasy.

Sara McNulty - Staten Island, NY - sablond49purple@gmail.com

Cardinals in red
Flash brightly against the snow
Searching for some food.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

Across Snowy Fields

like burls on branches
mourning doves hunker, mounded
north wind sweeps uphill
bare trees, blue shadows
silhouettes
crawling over snow

Winter-weary, we yearn for season's turning
Oh, Spring, bring us your tempered zephyrs

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

Trail Blazer

As you tramp in your tiny boots
the full length of both legs disappearing
beneath twelve inches of crisp new snow
I pick you up,
set you in tracks
forged by larger feet
but you'll have none
of that
you spot
horizons not-yet-charted
steer your two-foot-high self
onto an immaculate white field
breaking your own trail
half your height
buried in white
the encumbrance of crystals
all around
impediments dismissed
as you inscribe a way
defined wholly by your vision
and your will
commanding me to be Clark
to your Lewis.

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

Children cheer the snow,
Running out to craft snowmen,
Heedless of the cold.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting, subscribing, and sharing.

Every tree a poem

A young aspen mischievously bends
her fair slender trunk
covered with a hundred shimmering tiny green leaves
shaking like tambourines, to kiss the passersby.

In great, great grandfather sequoia's canopy
thrives a citadel of living things.
Tree squirrels gracefully leap from branch to branch,
red tree voles nibble delicately on fresh green needles,
legions of ants march up and down familiar pathways.
Imagine the songs of woodpeckers,
jays, warblers and owls, wing to fluttering wing.

Tall poplars planted all in a row with obsidian crows
clinging atop their narrow tips
sway with the wind, dancing in synchrony.
They whisper their secrets to the sky.

I cannot cage a dancing rainbow.
Trees, and all their leaves--curled and rounded
oblong, lacy, with finger-like ends and star shaped form,
are sap green with vigor, gold as they begin to flame
frail brown towards journey's end.
I know them well.

The winter of my life brings me a heaven
heaped with the souls
of all the cherished trees that have ever lived
and those waiting to be unfurled,
singing their silent songs.

Deenaz P. Coachbuilder

bejeweled
nacreous sheet of white
sun gleams on ice

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

Hope

Snowflakes flutter across the sky,
Float to rest on roofs of houses,
On pine boughs, on rounded hills
In stillness. Some pile in drifts,

But some fly further on the wind
And together paint the mountains
White and bright, soft and light--
Like the dreamland of olden days
Of Christmases gone with skaters
Skimming over the frozen pond
And cordial carolers in long coats
With scarves of red, green, or plaid.

In concert, they sing "Wenceslaus"
As one, pointing to the North Star
For those of us lost to find our way
Home to hope and prompt us to pray.

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

“Silently, like thoughts that come and go, the snowflakes fall, each one a gem. The whitened air conceals all earthly trace, and leaves to memory the space to fill.” William Hamilton Gibson, Pastoral Days (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

mittens and scarf
black top hat perched on head
of snowman

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

Please be the reason someone smiles today...

Winter Sky

Grandmother would teach me
The constellations, would show me
Orion's belt, sword, and shield,
Would tell me his story as she

Showed me blue the luminescence
Of the Pleiades, the seven sisters
Orion chased across the sky, and
I'd wonder why he'd do that.

She said Ulysses had fixed his eyes
On these stars as he sailed away
From Calypso who's mysterious
Behavior I also didn't understand.

Grandmother would then tell
Tales of the death of stars
And soon, after a long silence,
She'd say sadly, Tempus Fugit,

And then she'd turn to me and
Explain that it meant Time Flies,
And I pictured my alarm clock
With wings and wondered why

Adults always would say that
And then sigh and look sad
Because for me time stopped
When we'd stand under Orion,

And I thought those moments
Would last forever and she'd
Always be there to show me
The stars and tell their stories.

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

black and white quilt
formed like a sculpted statue
cat on windowsill

Sara McNulty - Staten Island, NY - sablond49purple@gmail.com

wolf-howling winds blow
rattle doors and windows
trash cans party, lidless

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

Wolves

I see the wolves in the evening chill;
Silently, these woods they guard;
They wait in shadows for the kill.

I see the wolves all standing still;
The moon is full; the snow is hard;
I see the wolves in the evening chill.

I know they seek my blood to spill.
My fire is out; the wood is charred,
They wait in shadows for the kill.

Soon the wolves will leave the hill;
There's no escape; my way is barred.
I see the wolves in the evening chill.

Then they their mission will fulfill;
I know I've drawn my final card;
They wait in shadows for the kill.

I know I'll never dreams fulfill;
My body's tired; my soul is marred.
I see the wolves in the evening chill,
They wait in shadows for the kill.

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

You Really Don't Know What You Have Until It's Gone

Winter wind whistles.
Jack Frost dances merrily.
When will spring be here?

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

Sparkling crystal snow
Bedecks the branches of trees,
Chilling sparrow feet.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

“There is nothing in the world more beautiful than the forest clothed to its very hollows in snow. It is the still ecstasy of nature, wherein every spray, every blade of grass, every spire of reed, every intricacy of twig, is clad with radiance.” - William Sharp (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

The White Farmhouse

The farmhouse was white, surrounded
thirteen acres, mostly open, some wooded.
A small pond, an acre and a half took up
a section in the back.

A well, one hundred fifty feet deep
on the side. Drinking water flowed up
from an ancient underground stream. Deer
knew it was a safe place to graze. A red fox

often loped by, as if going somewhere.
When you said hello to me this morning
I kissed your shoulder.
Our house is warm in the winter though

it was not always so.
Thursday a gray dove landed under the white pine.
She was looking for a safe place to die.
Friday morning, she had moved nearer to the pond

to a place where two sections of fence meet.
The red fox came by again but did not touch the dove.
No one was hungry enough to eat.

When you said good night I went out,
put my finger in the well and touched
the rough damp brick.

Stuart P. Radowitz - N. Bellmore, NY - stuartphilip777@yahoo.com

winter field--
a trace
of snow angels

Theresa A. Cancro - Wilmington, DE - phoenixlady@comcast.net

White on White

Snowed in, blanketed
beneath nine inches.
New strata overlay five feet
of white, an icy glaze
crusted over from days before.
Mounds glisten through rime,
etched ferns of hoar frost,
window-paned in first light's hour.

In our rooms under farmhouse eaves,
overlain with heaviness, we dig
deeper into the underlayer.
Like a Wonder Bread sandwich,
we ply our winter-white bodies
between slices of cold sponge,
white furred flannel.
We bore into cavernous substrate.

Hard work, this burrowing
under furrows of white chenille,
and two layers of woolen patchwork,
hand-pieced blocks of heavy worsted:
charcoal trousers, navy overcoat,
brown pinstripe suit, sullen, dull colors only:
Mothballs, musk, and decades of farm sweat
seeping through stitched and woven heft.

In this muffled world, it's hard
to turn over. Like a Hamm's beer bear,
I'm morphing. In my torpor,
I mold myself into a pocket gopher,
curl into a leaf-lined underworld.
Pulse slowing, I drift,
sleep over white hours,
months, into March.

Judith Youngers

Deliberate Garden Sloth

Losing their grip, tomato bush skeletons of twisted arms
with umber hands dangle like awkward aerialists.

She surveys the backyard, pondering the garden tangle
she's abandoned, autumn cleanup undone. She's left it

to Nature's devices, and if she quiets herself, quells
her normal brain buzz, she'll hear the whispers of winter.

If she watches and waits, she'll submerge
into a wintry underworld of secrets and solace

to hear the rustle of whitened grass, wizened seedheads,
the feathered whirr of waxwings and taupe-toned doves.

And when she snags her sleeve on rose cane thorns,
she'll discern darkening rosehips, foraging food now.

Watch her eyes narrow. If she squints and peers into
the dried shrub, she'll catch a miniature magician's trick:

a sulphur butterfly's wrapped chrysalis becomes a camo cloak,
masquerades as a freeze dried leaf, an over-dry cigar.

When she despairs of the fallen tree in the fallow field next door,
she'll detect no hazard, but see a womb, pregnant with wintering life.

And if she withholds the match from the brush pile she's mounded
with trimmings and fallen branches, she'll create nests and tunnels,

a haven for burrowers, and just when she decides to hunker under
a quilt of her own, her breath will slow to sense the pulse

of the slowdown. Then she'll savor her messy landscape,
learn through falling degrees the surprises of a winter habitat left untended.

Judith Youngers - Comfort, TX - Writingjudi8@icloud.com

Old dinosaur drifts
Left over from the plowing
Lurk by the roadside.

Tasha Halpert - North Grafton, MA - tashahal@gmail.com

“Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream.” - Barbara Winkler (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

Unexpected Breakfast Call

Joining the bumper-to-bumper order line
at the McDonald's drive-through, I startle
to hear the rose shrub near the posted breakfast menu.
Yes, there's a cacophony of chirrupy bush notes
entering my half-opened driver-side window.
Add to that, an unexpected vision:
the dark limp leafed canes pulse as well.
Lured by this marvel, I squint into
a thick blackish orb frosted with early morning rime.
Does this post-season landscape feature shun dormancy?
Indeed, I can testify: this weekday at eight AM,
the thorny compact globe shivers with life.
Throbbing with shoulder-to-shoulder puffed up shapes,
it twitters nonstop. I must pull forward now, leave
this calligraphy of sparrows posing fully assembled
on branched risers to share a winter canticle,
a chilly chorus waiting, like me for its fast food.
Their breakfast biscuit sure to soon appear as fallen crumbs
in this icy parking urban lot.
“May I take your order, please?”

Judith Youngers - Comfort, TX - Writingjudi8@icloud.com

“The indescribable innocence and beneficence of Nature, -- of sun and wind and rain, of summer and winter, -- such health, such cheer, they afford forever!... Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?” - Henry David Thoreau (Theresa A. Cancro - phoenixlady@comcast.net)

fresh snow
on the palm of my glove--
winter sky

(First published in Brass Bell)

Theresa A. Cancro - Wilmington, DE - phoenixlady@comcast.net

Still Light

Blood red
in quick ascent
the moon intrudes
secant by secant
on the eastern view
until it looms
over Silver Beach
It dominates the sky
it decimates the night
it inundates the eye.
Caught off guard
stunned and outshone
the darkling bay below
bobs and weaves
still light on its feet.

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

Oracle

A giant heron makes her home
in the tallest trees around Brick Cove.
A great slate blue bird
she wades in the shallows
on stilt like legs,
her neck a graceful feathery ess.
She can be still for so long
that she seems in a trance
but finally takes a practiced step
without causing a ripple
as she stalks fish for food.
Because of her size
she is left alone,
if you come too close
she will burst into night
and leave you in awe
without even one answer.

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

Polaris

As universe expands
star by star will dim
until someday men see
blackness in the firmament.

The last celestial fires
sun's brightness reflected
by moons planets and asteroids

a trail of atomic light
as shooting stars fly past

bursts of fire as meteors
incinerate in atmosphere

With so much starlight lost
comets more visible then
will swim their lazy course
across the cosmic sea.

But stars are bright this night
lustrous milky way
Polaris is still in its place
five times distant
on a straight line
above the Big Dipper's cup.

Peter Leverich

Shooting Stars

The moon in the western sky
is bent like an archer's bow.

In front of the graceful arc
the evening star is poised
a glowing arrowhead
ready to be raised aimed
pulled taut against the string
and fired with just a pfsst

at the first fiery glimpse
of any shooting star.

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

Please be kind, write to each other...

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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