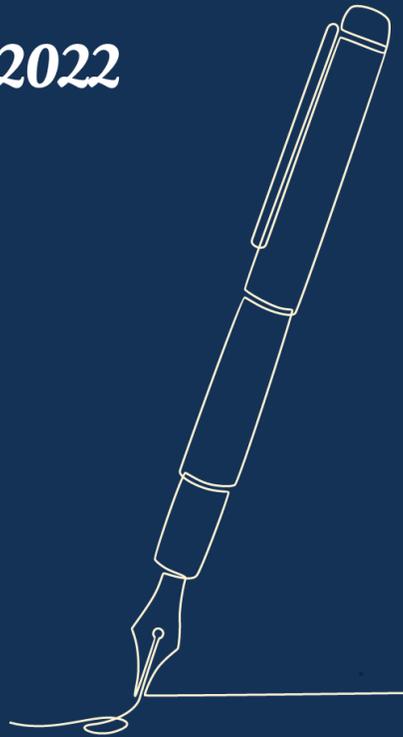




COMMUNITY POETRY SUBMISSIONS

LAKE OSWEGO
PUBLIC LIBRARY

2022



In honor of National Poetry Month 2022, the Lake Oswego Public Library invited local poets ages 18 and older to submit 1-2 of their original, unpublished poems to share with the community. We've compiled them here for your enjoyment.

Thank you, local poets!

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“Sometimes” by Tiffany Baehr

She's a sometimes poet,
Half caught, half chaos,
Scattering words across the page,
Like stars across the night sky,
Letting her pen set the order
Telling her story with its shape
A faint muse whispered
Star lit constellation
Of her very own making.
A simple complexity waiting-
For its balance to navigate by
To set her page alight by,
She's a sometimes poet,
And sometimes...
She doesn't know what to say.

“TREES & THE HUMAN CONNECTION” by Shelby Jean Bell

It's Spring: I took a little walk
And sat upon a rock

I studied the trees...
Some, 'tho barren, hinted at new life
 Waiting to burst forth at just the right time.
Some were green and healthy, swaying gently
 with the wind.

It was obvious that some had weathered many storms
 - but yet they stood.
Some were tall, straight and strong, while others had
 branches that were worn and tired.
Still, parts of them bravely carried on the fight to
 stretch their branches towards heaven.

But the one that struck me most, was
 the one that bent to lean on his stronger,
 taller neighbor
Who carried them both for a while so together they
 could reach the lofty peaks.

“On the Patio” by Betty Burke

Sitting outside on a summer morning,
 I feel a slight breeze rising—
 not enough to move
 kinetic wind sculptures—
 barely enough to sway
 leaves and branches
 of the magnificent Dawn Redwood
 tree above me.

Under the shade
 of a turquoise umbrella—
 flag of a leisure nation
 raised colorfully above
 this wrought iron table—
 I watch a black crow fly,
 squawking as he goes.
 Another responds.

Though mesmerized in Eden, yet
 I notice golden Black-Eyed Susans
 and less sturdy flowers
 seared brown
 by the heat of summer.
 The grape arbor shelters
 a few empty chairs.

Bright orange daylilies are blooming
 as the metal windhover begins
 to dance in slow circles, and I begin
 to write in slow motion—
 I ask a butterfly fluttering by
 why an ordinary mortal doing nothing
 is offered so much beauty
 on a mid-summer day.

He simply goes about the business that is his
 and I soon return to my own. Perhaps I hear him say:
 If you are writing—
 you **are** doing something
 on this hot summer day.

“The Day” by Cindy Cunningham

Sometimes the day stops before it even starts
Sometimes the start is steep
But some days the sun shines
Or the rain sweetly weeps
And we all dance with joy.

Some days, old trees flower to expose open hearts
Filled with fertile seeds of hope
And a growing sense of wonder
That lifts us with swelling song
And lyrical celebration.

“World” by Cindy Cunningham

In a world being crushed
By a pandemic, a war, climate,
Cruelty, brutality, bullying, banality
What to do, what to do
Knit like Madame Defarge, in rage
Rejoice that we're not or barely affected
Unmindful of the violence and turmoil
Take action to assist
With donations and candle light vigils
Pray and send the useless thoughts
Get angry
Answers
Amends

“Mt. Hebo” by Stephanie M. Davis

Early morning
two rabbits at the tree line,
pickpocket jays and campfire ashes.
Salt clouds
in a bowl of pines,
the Pacific’s pewter swells.
Our hearts are lanterns
phosphorescent in the waking prime.

“The Jazz of Nature” by Bernie DeFrancesco

The sun warms the earth,
a soaring hawk greets the day,
a fusion of sound.

The rhythm section,
freezes in fear of the shrill,
prey in progression.

Nature’s melody,
the union of wind and stream,
strike an upbeat chord.

The feathered drummer,
strong riffs and syncopations,
in search of his food.

The swinging motion,
of the tall grass in the breeze,
its ragtime movement.

Sparrows and house wrens,
bebop from bushes to ground,
eating seeds and bugs.

The buzzing base tones,
flying flower to flower,
of hardworking bees.

Polyrhythm plays,
of the black crows and magpies,
layered dissonance.

Improvisation,
of animals big and small,
nature’s performers.

Deep in the mountains,
the bugle of the bull elk,
bellows his bass notes.

Perched on the treetops,
the timbre of the eagle,
emits a sheer sound.

Night silence takes hold,
the harmony of the frogs,
grooving through the dark.

Day's end also brings,
a chorus of cricket songs,
polyphonic tunes.

The grim great horned owl,
peering through the black for prey,
orchestrates a kill.

A lone wolf crooning,
howling and crying the blues,
filling the night air.

All singing the praise,
rejoicing and being heard –
Cool jazz emanates.

“A Child’s Garden” by Julia Dragu

After many years away,
One spring day I did return
To the garden where I played.

While the chimney billowed steam
(A sign of soup bubbling
In the red cast iron pot
And apple cake baking
To be topped with clotted cream—
A child’s wondrous feast indeed!)
I would play among the trees.

On summer days I did lay
In fields of forget-me-nots;
When autumn painted the land
I would collect leaves with spots
And dry them in books by hand.
In winter I did pretend
That I was a Narnian
Journeying towards World’s End;
In spring when all came to life:
I found little shining trails
Left behind by traveling snails;
There were upturned water pails,
A tree with a rusted nail,
And a short way down the street
Was a pond framed by cattails.

Upon my return I saw
All these very fine things and more!
Aye, though I heard no fairies
Laughing like dear little bells,
And though there were no children
Playing as we did back then,
I knew the joys of childhood
And I felt them all again.

“Moonlit Dance” by Julia Dragu

Come dance with me o’ little star
For on this day I’ve travelled far
And now this night is time for song!

Sway in the wind with the birch and I,
O! won’t you twinkle in the sky
And be our merry guest tonight?

See how the owl doth bob his head
And leaves swirl about overhead
To the beat of this jaunty tune!

Come dance with me o’ little star
For on this day, I’ve travelled far
And now this night is time for song!

Hear the little mice sing with glee
At the base of the old oak tree
Aye come with me, o’ come with me
Won’t you join our glad company?

“Today” by Mindy Hardwick

Poem inspired by “The Present” from Where Hope Comes From (p. 48) by Nikita Gill

As I was hopeful today, I went out walking again.
And some people will say that we hope too soon
New Variants, more boosters loom
But hope lives in the spring
Where trees bloom white and pink cotton candy flowers

And though it was cold
I wore sandals, my unpainted toes bare and exposed
I also stood under a blooming pear tree, inhaled the sweetness
While an old man, bundled in jacket hurried by not noticing me, my dog or the blooming tree flowers.

I stopped at the old tree stump
to notice the pink toy dragon
and the gifts others left
two books, an old bottle of perfume, a painted rock
and one pink flower from a blooming tree

On the way back home,
I thought of all these signs of spring
And how they might not have been noticed before
the masks and quarantine
Despite, a beckoning world, hurry back to normal
I returned to find yellow tulips blooming in crevices of railroad tracks.



“What I Would Put in a Museum for Our Times” by Mindy Hardwick

Poem inspired by “I Wonder What They Would Put in a Museum for Our Times” from Where Hope Comes From (p. 23) by Nikita Gill

“Closed to Visitors.” Vast, empty April beach. Only the dog and I see the puffins return to Haystack Rock. We take walks to the creek, Harlequin ducks and their ducklings float in the peaceful waters, undisturbed by Humans who are all in quarantine baking bread and emptying shelves of flour and TP. Zoom and Learning Management Systems. Handsewn masks mailed to Mom, Sister, and Aunt in colorful patterns of spring, summer and fall holidays. Pass to every student. They are in a pandemic after all. We can’t expect much from them. But you, as their teacher, you must still show up, daily. There is no pass for you. BLM. Protests and helicopters over Portland. East Wind and Fires. I park outside the library, borrowing internet to participate in a Zoom meeting. First Day of School. In February, ice storm and power grinds to a stop. Three days of no on-line school. Long car lines at the airports, waiting for shots in arms. Can you get an appointment? Keep trying. I sit beside a man, waiting our turn for a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Black Man and White Woman. There are no colors in vaccine appointments, only anxiety. Afterward, he drives away in a car with an AA sticker. One Day at a Time.

“ON GETTING OLDER” by Linda Healy

I feel myself a carefree,
Autumn leaf, bright colored,
Fluttering down,
Cradled by a warm and whimsical wind
To safe and certain spot in
Verdant loam, where I can
Dare to let go, and turn
Gradually brown.

To disassembling, piece
By piece,
Depositing my tiny
Carbon treasure back
Into the earth,
Where it will nourish
Future,
A future I need not
Comprehend.

And then the tiny
Spirit spark
I call my soul,
Free from ordering
Lumps of atoms
Into living cells,
Will frolic back into
The armless arms
Of Living Love,
The lasting Joy
From which it came,
And yet, may
Come again.

“A MOMENT WITH MY MELODY” by Linda Healy

Tiny burst of vapor,

Millisecond shiver.

I think; I don't; I almost felt...

I feel the shadow of some sound

Rounding the corner,

Tumbling over forgotten

trunks and basement boxes.

Ghost of a miniature seahorse hiccup

Gurgling up from the bottom of the crack

beneath the footing of the

well.

Misty whisp, mere breath of breeze

Swirling saucily through ancient

temple ruins of unstrung voice.

A kiss.

Then gone.

“Reading the Sunday Times” by Linda K. Hoard

I tiptoed past the photo essay of war
Refugees lugging bundles, and slipped into
The orchid story. Hundreds of hanging baskets
Floated in a greenhouse with sun-splotched

Blossoms: ruby, lemon, apricot. Pale pink woodland
Orchids poised sky bound like angels. Ivory
Wedding orchids spilled like waterfalls. Emerald
Leaves crowded every space but a walkway

For a narrow man with a watering can.
“Survivors,” the article said of orchids.
They flourish in inhospitable climates
With names like ghost, mirror, stream, calypso.

Sunlight explodes into the steamy hothouse.
Velvet air soothes the petals.
Moisture pearls the windows
Like a thousand lost faces pressing against the glass.

“Water Ouzel at Short Sands” by Linda K. Hoard

Bobbing songbird that swims,
the slaty dipper sips river.
Smolt wriggle down mountain

streams into an ocean which
cannot taste a saltless river.
Imprinted in each sea-breathing cell,

every salt-glazed scale is the channel
home, the water under the bridge.
What if we knew every

rapid, chute, cascade
of our passage home?
Perhaps, after we bruise

down bouldered currents,
our spirits lift in river mist
or float like loose spider silk

or zip off like the dipper
leaving the stony stream,
water dripping off her wings.

“Old Town *between the River and the Lake*” by Corina Laws

Under blue skies at times opaque
You can dream while wide awake
Of clever things for one to make
Like the pioneers who did partake
Of smelting ore for heaven's sake
Between the River and the Lake

“Lady of the Pearl” by Brendan Lee

Lady strides w/ black
Pomeranian puff dog,
Leash in hand.

Cell phone in other hand,
conversation in stride,
unknown caller to passersby.

Lady dressed in black,
high cut trench coat,
high cut skirt beneath.
dawned in black stockings,
& red high heels, trim dancers’ legs.

She is a bleach blonde, from
brunette to blond,
overdue long golden blonde locks.

Dog barks as streetcar passes by.

No flying monkeys, Wicked Witch,
Wizard of Oz, Good Witch, Tin Man,
Cowardly Lion, nor Scarecrow.

Yellow Brick Rd is a
figment of our imagination.
Or the illusion that the
Wizard will get Dorothy &
Toto home to Kansas & Auntie Em.

Yes, Dorothy—there is no place like home!

Just click your heels!

SHAZAM!

Come my pritty!

Beware not of the Wicked Witch!
Fore she represents the alienated self.

Be kind to self & others.
Fore no one chooses the alienated path.

We all want and need love.
From birth to death & the spirit world.

May you shine brightly!

“Flight of the Blue Jay” by Brendan Lee AKA WalksAlone

Downed at the alley on
“D” St. between 2nd & 3rd St.

It was just another Summer Day in Lake Oswego.

Birds squawking & chirping,
A few of my feathered friends.

Cats lounging & eyeing my
lovely friends: The Crows,
Sparrows, Robins & Blue Jays!

Near left front fender of old neighbor gardener’s truck.

Under feathers nearby, sign of cat’s deadly claws.

And nearby, I laid to rest.
Flying days gone as a feathered Jest.

Spirit take me a sufferajet!

“The Forgotten Garden” by Paul Lyons

The dark rock walls, so old
Hold many stories of another time.
Tiny white flowers shine light
Into the cracks that is their home.

Brick and moss hold each other softly
To guide footsteps to a quiet place.
Small hedges, long overgrown
Stand in line with no place to go.

A small wooden bench waits patiently
For the company of lovers, but none are near.
Swollen bark bears the wounds of many
Who carved their young love here long ago.

Rain gently washes an old maple above.
Leaves turn and twist and fall.
Below, the one past rose petal holds on
For one more day of sun.

A song bird prays a litany of this day.
A tarnished wind chime answers.
It rings on and on and I wonder
If anyone else is listening.

“Painting Clouds” by Paul Lyons

The clouds roll infinite shapes across the sky.
Painting blue, white, grey on canvas with no end.
The billows and tufts, streaks and wisps,
Each alive for a second and then gone,
Like my breath into cool evening air.

Tell me the purpose, for my eyes to absorb.
Let me lie in the hallow of a great cloud.
Let my mind wander, caress my face with dew,
As green grass below grows quietly, so slowly.
Clouds pass and nourish each blade to its fullest.

As I watch, the sunlight gives life to the clouds.
It is a mystery to me how clouds stay in the air.
Like an artist finishing the last stroke of a painting
Moisture turns to rain, clouds give birth to life,
Giving all that they have, until they are no more.

“Concrete Poem #2—Transformation” by Penny Mc Donald

Division.hate.conflict.impasse.inthestreets.quarantine.family.TheCapitol.defund.nonviolent.violent.homicides.homelessness.policeunions.FirstAmendment.protest.resist.advocate.staysilent.ignore.counterprotest.Covid19.abandoned.hydroxychloroquinebleach.masks.sixfeet.vaccines.mybody.socialjustice.misinformationdisinformation.information.dismantlingsystemicracism.BlackLivesMatter.SayherName.ProudBoys.shame.science.hope.hopelessness.immigration.kidsincages.distancelearning.returntoschool.worriedparents.schoolboards.angryparents.disproportionatelyaffected.artmusicliteraturetheatrethedance.ourcommonhumanity.horror.theWall.mean.caring.yearning.death.healing.NativeAmerican.historynowfuture.smallbusinessesrestaurants.frontlineworkers.uncertainty.gratitude.risk.nursedoctorjanitorclerk.Getoutthevote.suppression.womenleading.womenlosing.childcare.MeToo.infrastructure.teenagerwithassaulttrifle.right.independent.left.bipartisan.whoknowswhat.unity.representation.Blitzer.Carlson.LGBTQ+.sadness.anger.globalrespect.blunder.fragility.ParisClimateAgreement.onoffon.timerunningout.pretend.survive.languish.flourish.familyseparation.ashamed.oblivious.SecondAmendment.guns.guns.guns.unemployment.economicfairness.enablingwhitesupremacy.BuildBackBetter.knowledge.uncertainty.emotion.right.wrong.Trump.Bannon.Biden.Harris.conspiracytheories.crying.power.financialworry.loneliness.stressanxietydepression.AsianPacificIslander.negotiation.filibuster.mybody.RoevWade.personalprivate.threatenerodeeliminate.Nancy.Bernie.Liz.Folkswedonotknow.CRT.ignorance.fear.Mitch.McCarthy.Marjorie.“Thecentercannothold.”smokefire.116degrees.floodsislandscoasts.denial.safetynet.poverty.inflation.The1619Project.January6th.“Ican’tbreathe.”

TRANSFORMATION

Breathe deeply.

This isn’t us. This can’t be us.

Opportunity.

Our souls.

Who am I? What do I stand for?

Reflection. Calm.

Bravery. Courage. Strength.

Individual. Collective.

Conscience. Civility. Compassion. Caring. Connection.

Who are we?

Integrity. Morality. Empathy. Fairness.

Common sense. Intellect. Will.

Behave. Be nice. Do your part.

Dream.

Stand up. Reach out.

Boundaries. Intellectual emotional.

Read study listen learn.

Understanding. Dialogue. Debate. More debate. Decision.

Resilience. Progress. Perseverance.

Yes No maybe. Forward back. What if. “Try, try again.”

Get to yes.

Collaborate. Compromise. Create.

Shared problems shared solutions.

“A more perfect Union.” The United States. Unity.

“We can be. Be and be better. For they existed.”

Senator McCain, Justice Ginsburg, General Powell.

Folks we do not know.
 "We shall overcome."
 Fact: Slavery.
 Policy. Action. Results.
 Equality. Equity.
 Rights. Mine yours theirs.
 "It bends toward justice."
 Imagine.
 Reimagine. Repair. Reform. Remedy. Rethink. Respect.
 At the table. Talk it through work it out.
 Thoughtful words kind words honest words.
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty."
 The Constitution. Balance of power.
 "I too sing America."
 One step forward. Baby steps. Giant steps. Marching. Running.
 Journalism.
 Whistleblower. Investigation. Subpoena. Indictment. Testimony. Verdict.
 Accountability. Responsibility.
 I'm sorry. I see. I hear. I can do better.
 Leadership. Government. Corporations. The people.
 Doing what's right. You and me and the other.
 Health. Safety. Democracy. Mother Earth.
 Elders. Wisdom. Role models.
 Our children and grandchildren and their children's children...
 Support for children of the pandemic. Now.
 Education for their future. Their future, not our past.
 Youth activism. Greta. Malala. X González.
 Children, teens, young people we do not know.
 Fact: Climate Change
 Our beautiful world.
 Pale blue dot.
 Urgency.
 Global responsibility. Everyone. All of us.
 "There is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."
 The greater good. The common good.

“Just Another Four-Letter Word...” by Linda Morris

This pandemic's had me cornered,
I could hardly leave the room.
But now I won't need therapy,
I view the world through zoom.

My weekly girlfriend sessions
That I so longed to resume,
In person could not happen,
But we meet each week on zoom.

Mandatory Happy Hours
Help us dispel the gloom,
Prost, Noroc, Santé Salud,
We cheer ourselves on zoom.

Our backgrounds are what we decide,
Tropic island or lagoon,
Sometimes we choose to blur our mess
We'll clean up after zoom.

The screen now dictates how we dress.
We've learned which parts to groom
We let our bottoms all hang out
And dress our tops for zoom.

That I learned to speak Romanian,
Is too much to presume.
The teacher was so patient,
But her hair turned gray on zoom.

Some students choose to hide their view
In class and the chatroom
I learned to speak to a black box
In the brand-new world of zoom.

La langue française I also taught,
To a woman who was doomed,
She'll now survive in la Belle France
Vive les leçons sur zoom.

We watched our grandkids do their best,
To sing and play their tunes,
We clicked the links sent by the schools,
Missed nothing, thanks to zoom.

We had a special Christmas Day
And tech was such a boon,
An ornament and mask exchange
Which all took place on zoom

Bat Mitzvahs, birthdays, funerals,
Loved ones who left too soon.
The family marked these milestone dates
Togetherness on zoom.

Our memoir members write their thoughts,
One likes a nom de plume,
On Tuesdays language reigns supreme,
We read our lives through zoom.

Can I share the screen? Now who's the host?
It's Terry, I assume.
"Can you hear me now?" "No, please unmute."
The lexicon of zoom!

My memoir friends are virtual
Still not in the same room,
I'd pass them on a street unseen
Because they weren't on zoom

When this pandemic's been and gone,
And in-person can resume,
I might just say "No thank you.
I prefer we stay on zoom."

“Oregon Trees” by Stephen O’Connor

Walking with Sean here in Oregon
has me looking for masts in the trees.

In my mind, re-rigging from storms on the coast,
“This one lads will get us home soundly!”
Natives and trappers mostly here then,
David Douglas out finding firs of his own.

Not that I could go home any more,
30 years here on this coast.

Though it feels like these trees, ramrod straight, aligned, strong,
Unfurling as one, could put the world on its heel,
Catch and turn us back south round the horn...

Ten, Sean still holds my hand, and we steady ourselves.
Not from the wind, down here just the sound in the trees,
But him leaning over, on rocks, to face down a newt,
Me oblivious, on a salty pitched deck

Back to the house now we go, driving slow,
My little car straining,

The perfect mast up on the roof

“Leaning on Crows” by Stephen O’Connor

I think we’re relying too much on the crows.

Working, typing, outside in the Summer,
 you get used to the “Oy!” of the caws of the crows.
 Top-tier security escorting some hovering threat onto nextdoor back yards.

But this morning our hens were all over the place,
 Two missing, the rest all a mess,
 The brief step outside in the March morning sun, a regret.

While investigating the fuss,
 The pull I felt to pivot and see
 The steady stare silent “hello” of a hawk at the top of a fir, quite far off,
 Had me thinking of senses, I’ve never considered before,
 Bird-brained me

But where were the crows?

The lower tiers, are all here
 the usual chorus, present, correct
 The jays and the junkos, the bird-feeder crews,
 Unfazed by clucks and nearby distress

Then later we saw, over the river,
 a parliament assembled in the trees
 Discussing, no doubt, ongoing arrangements, human relations, the hawk situation,
 Crowsnests unguarded, a minor concern, no eggs or chicks there yet,
 no need or cause for alarm or fuss.
 Two hundred Corvid, with things to discuss.
 A branch meeting.

Two days on, hens back in the roost.
 None lost, a relief; really they’re pets.
 And an overnight stay on the lam for that one.
 The one in the flock that can fly, and we guess got away,
 from whatever swooped down that day.
 I have my suspicions, but she knows, and would say, I suppose
 “Perhaps we shouldn’t lean quite so much on those crows”

“Yoga Class” by A. Peach Ortega

Mats cover the floor like
a lopsided checker board
all around strangers are trying to make
the same shapes with their bodies.
My legs and arms warm
and I entrance myself with my own
rhythmic breathing.
Three dozen pairs of eyes
directed towards the mirror
but only one pair is fastened to me,
I am amazed that I can bend and angle
with such composure.
My limbs stop trembling and I am calm,
my mat becomes a small blue boat at sea
the men and women on all sides are close enough
that I can feel their breath
but I pretend I am outside
and that the ocean air
is touching me.

“Near Depoe Bay” by A. Peach Ortega

We drive placidly through long grass
licked to peaks by the wind
slanting trees puffed with moss
leaning over the highway.
Sun on our pale skin
baby sighing between the shadows.
Mother tells us of a vine
100 years old
not celebrating existence
nor centennial achievement
the vine does not fear death
nor the elements,
it is sure of itself.

Near the wetlands llamas
peak over the hearty bushes
encircled in sun
white and brown,
the crias close to their mothers.

We, all young
prematurely confounded by
time, elusive in essence
time, unmoved for the sleeping baby,
his young mother,
the ancient vine.

At last we arrive at the sea
sunset like a crown
beginning and beginning again.
Obedient time,
all that matters is
how it ends.

“Mother’s Anguish” by Shelby Bell Rickert

Please God, Keep my soldier safe,
 My son, my brave young son!
 I’m proud he serves his country
 But wish the war was done.

Just yesterday, I held his hand
 As he walked by my side;
 The little boy with shining curls -
 His love and joy - my pride.

His shorts were changed to blue jeans
 As years rolled swiftly by.
 I watched him grow in splendor -
 The apple of my eye.

I saw him plan and hope and dream -
 Watched friendship turn to love.
 So now, I hope you’ll keep him safe
 Dear Father, up above.

A SHAMEFUL waste of strong young men!
 What reason for this war???
 How many lives will die for naught
 Dear Lord, before it’s o’er???

What must we do? How can we know
 The wisest way to say -
 We don’t believe in taking lives
 And that for peace we pray.

Our students wage their protests
 And their anger as they shout;
 But most of us just sit around
 Wond’ring what it’s all about.

And as we sit and contemplate,
 And while we wonder why –
 We wait for all the answers
 And we watch our soldiers die!!!!

“You Are No Longer With Me” by LeeAnn Rooney

Be good.

Run, walk, crawl, to your snug destination,

life is a thousand mile journey through light of day and darkness.

You must be true to the animal within you, love all creations,
the spiders, the snakes, the ticks and the worms.

Love me if you can, but at least...

remember the excitement of our first encounter.

Tell others about your sadness, your madness, your seductive powers

tell me about your unkind deeds,

tell the world about the truth in your heart.

I will un-tell my thoughts of you and my own despair.

If only I had courage enough to say come home.

Meanwhile life is for the living, man fights man, women love a child,
some laugh, some cry, without regret or concern.

As the sun shines on meadows and rain falls on rocky cliffs
so the story repeats itself, your story and mine.

Mountains wash away into sand and trees become forest, always dark.

Meanwhile the wildebeest and terns migrate, going home.

Hear them calling to each other – announcing their arrival.

I arrive home.

Home is lonely now,

I am lonely, you are no longer with me.

“Succulent Ornamentation” by Scot Siegel

When the virus finally mutates
into a rain-soluble sugar,
shrivels into non-matter,
lifts off, and returns to the
Fourteenth Century,
let’s socially isolate
for one more day.

What shall we do? Let’s fast
and be gracious, be reverent
for the stars that once saved us
on the high seas and desert;
and for the Moon’s amorous pull
and nourishing tug; and the Sun, too,
because where would we be

without its stubborn light,
which is not preserved for us,
but for the Earth itself, such
resplendence, of which
we are an afterthought
in a garden, some succulent
ornamentation, an aberration,
a beautiful blip in time.

“For A Moment” by Scot Siegel

No curve
No smoke
No drought
No death-count
No invisible threat
No need for a mask
No recoil from a hand
 that only wants
Your touch
Your tenderness
Your breaking-bread
Your heaven-sent
Your wishes and gifts
Your latent caress
Your *shhhh*...

“CONSIDER LOVE” by Patricia (Patty) Waalkes

Consider Love
 And How It Is,
 Consider It;
 As All Things One,
 Adrift
 And Meeting,
 Coming Back Together.

Nothing Comes & Nothing Goes
 But That It Always Was.
 From Dust To Earth,
 To Risen Form,
 One Sigh Depletes No Other;
 A Cloud Is But Our Own In Passing,
 Celestial Breath Rehearsing Vespers.

All Fleeting Pulse,
 All Wind,
 Is But A Lisp Of Air
 That Gathers
 As It Quickens Limb And Bough
 In Me.
 For I Am Tree,
 I Am Stone,
 I Am Space And Moving Water
 Pooled & Filling From All Other.

We Become The Thing We Put To Heart;
 We Take On Light.
 Spirit,
 Wing.
 If There Be Separateness In Us,
 Distinction Or Disunion
 It Is In Looking Only—
 How We Look
 And In Whose Direction.

Consider Love
 And How It Is;
 I Ask No More Than
 That You Consider It.

“AND SO IT IS TODAY” by Patricia (Patty) Waalkes

With Every Sun That Crowns The Dawn
Upon The Melting Of The Stars,
There Comes A Time For Laughter
And For Whispers;
A Time For Leaping
And For Sitting Still.
And So It Is With This Day.
And So It Is Today.

With Every Tide That Ebbs & Rises
Upon An Altered Stretch Of Sand,
There Comes A Time For Bending
And For Standing Firm;
A Time For Going Forward
And For Looking Back.
And So It Is With This Day.
And So It Is Today.

With Every Day That Mounts The Hills
Upon The Shoulders Of The Wind,
There Comes A Time For Meeting
And For Parting;
A Time For Holding
And For Letting Go Of.
And So It Is With This Day.
And So It Is Today.

“Winter Eaves” by Daniel Weldon

There is something of an icicle
Reaching down from the eaves
In winter when the snow has bent
In fingers formed of water seized
By temperature and humidity

Is it prerequisite that it's just
Warm enough to melt crystalline
Water which then falls as rain
From fingertips to ground; some of them
Captured again, and, as such, constrained?

Tree branches which easily bear
the weight of leaves must bend a knee
To snow, succumbed to winter weight,
Wilting, sloth-like, across the plane
Introduce branch to root again

“THE WEIGHT OF AIR” by Daniel Weldon

The Rhodies are blooming
It happens over the course
Of maybe a day or two
Like when the first goose takes flight
And within a single beat of its wing
The rest of the flock catapults into the air
Beating and compressing hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen
Into stair treads which climb into the air
Past my balcony over the fields
Across miles of this nothing which
I fall into as I trip and land scorpion
Like absorbing pebbles and bits of glass
Into my knees and the palms
Of my hands from the street

How is it ... the air that lifts them on their
Journey does nothing to soften my
Sprawling landing and does nothing to
Guide my foot away from the raised
Asphalt, but it gently lifts these geese
As perhaps water might me?

It is heavy to them? Do they feel the
Weight of it passing under their bodies?
And how can that be so
When we, the goose and I
Are made of the same stuff – roughly
Equal in mass and density.

I feel the weight of my bed under me
And slowly fall through it and
Sift off to sleep.
Dreaming of Rhodies
Flipping the sun a pistil finger
Knowing I appreciate their blooms
Far more than a clear day
Though transiently so

“Forever Love” by Kenneth Wulf

Lying supine, the Milky Way exposing a surfeit of stars
 Against a black-and-blue spilled-ink firmament,
 Reflections shimmer in a still-simmering Lake Isabella below,
 In the dark, a quality of anticipation sublimates at the surface,
 One life, or two, among many, so little, and still so much,
 A moment in shared recognition of wonder rises with the moon,
 And, this is my forever love

Sitting across a table filled with bright tertiary colored dishes,
 Crying Tiger crouches on the teal ceramic oval in front of me
 Though, I am already captured, in your eyes, and by your smile,
 While your essential equanimity disseminates calm about the place,
 Sunset casts a golden hue, and a notion of perfection drifts by, leaving only a tingling memento,
 And, this is my forever love

Standing on asphalt at a faded paint center line, Highland Grounds behind me,
 The late night air imprints a cooling sensation on my forehead,
 You, gone ahead, I pause, imagining the impression of your lips on mine for the first time,
 My heart pounds as you draw near, and I become acutely aware of the energy in the universe,
 In all of life, this quiet moment between us, a connection to something larger,
 I envision somewhere in some other instance, another pairing, like us, hopeful, smile,
 And, this is my forever love

Pressing my body in to yours in the tall grass, a faint whisper and sigh blend with foxtail,
 Quiet pervades, but for leaves fluttering among oak branches in sway in the midday breeze,
 Sunlight, having made its eight minute journey, fragments in a speckled caress of your skin,
 Chalk-like cirrocumulus clouds etch in rows on a southwestern azure slate,
 A bittersweet intuition swells in me, this place, this time, we two ...all evanescence,
 Downslope somewhere, an eddy in the Boone River imitates our union in an aquamarine swirl,
 And, this is my forever love

Walking side-by-side, your hand in mine, now years shared between us,
 Under an overcast imbued, splintered sunlight sky,
 Floating at the dark water's edge,
 An accumulation of fallen leaves,
 Canary, amber, taupe, beige, co-mingle among the ripples,
 A solitary crimson heart-shaped blade makes a furtive reveal,

And, this is my forever love,

Still

“Life is Open” by 3 Hand Stephen

we are outside, looking in, and inside looking out. it feels as if everything is closed until further notice.

but birds are singing, trees are talking, distant stars are shining **life is open all around us**

“FLOATING AWAY” by Anonymous

Light and buoyant,
 Soap bubble floating
 On currents of air.
Then, POP! I’m gone
 Without a trace.

Weightless, transparent.
 No gravity dragging
 My feet to the earth.
I float off one day
 Melt into the sky.

Lighter than air,
 Helium-filled,
 No strings attached.
I’m out there somewhere,
 And won’t soon be back.

“BEYOND THE LAWN” by Anonymous

Where the tidy lawn ends
 At the edge of the woods.
Where the dirt path starts down
 Through the dense growth.
Where the familiar is left
 For places unknown.
Where tall cedars rise up
 Offering shelter beneath.
Where tree houses appear
 Inviting me up.
Where rain drops drip down
 Putting gloss on the leaves.
Where a creek churns by
 Too wide to leap over.
Where the path travels on
 Beyond the wide creek.
Where I want to go
 Just to see what's there.