

APRIL 2021

poetry month

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ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY, SOUTHERN CHAPTER

Poetry Month 2021

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Mingled

I look to the open path,
excess stripped away.
I trace the clear trail
into the woods—the detritus,
the dryness, the pulsing life
beneath the carpet of dead foliage,
the turning inward,
the pulling away, the slow
retreat brought by cold
and loss and descension.

Can I bear the expectation?
The hope? The prospect of
daffodils and delight, seeds and
smells of fertility, of brown
gone green, emerging hues, winding
swirls of pastel, the outward swivel,
the gradual creak with each bounteous sprig
of emerald to what emerges beneath,
above and beyond the fallow forest floor.
Anticipation and fear and joy
and not just a little sorrow...
mingled.

Can I bear it?

PATTY DICKSON PIECZKA

Muse With a Twist

She drops shreds of sunlight
like gold coins, and I follow,
picking them up. Each one sparks
colors in my hand—like jeweled fruit:
papaya, loquat, lemon—the scent
of the islands, the sea, call of drums.

She teaches me to grow wings,
to let the wind lift me, to look down
and see my life growing smaller
and know this is how it will be—

this expansion I haven't yet known,
this understanding that the breeze
knows the shape of every leaf
and stone, the contours of my face.

She shows me how to read minds,
to spin sorrow into magic,
scars into love, to send blessings
to serpents and to wounded hearts,
to become a mango tree
and feed the multitudes.

From Ann Arbor Review

JAN PRESLEY

The Moon and the Spoken Word

for Eudora Welty who, at age six, felt
the moon become round in her mouth

She watched the flat moon
in the darkening sky
shine into a sphere. Moon
smooth as white marble,
sweet as a grape on her tongue.
Moon, it gleamed into shape
and soon left her mouth for the sky.



The clock in the hall
clicked glass and gold on her tongue.
Star and cup, cotton and coffin,
she hoarded words like jars of summer
fruit. Not to ward off hunger
(hunger itself so lean, so good a word)

but for this:
To hold fast the night and the light.
To hold fast the shape and the weight
and the sound of a mouthful of moon.

From illinoispoets.org
Writer's Digest Writing Competition
Nonrhyming Poetry Winner (1999)

DAVID GROSS

Walking Panther Creek

April again

and lead blue point pink valentine
dance across sun-splashed hills
bloodroot and poppies
celebrate beside the swollen stream

Birdsong

choirs of chorus frogs
hymns to Spring

Brushstrokes of branches

greening up
around the edges

From *Pilgrimage*

CANDACE ARMSTRONG

Crocus in the Mud

Mother of Saffron,
your delicate stigmas
have been hand-picked
for centuries on sunny
Mediterranean hillsides.

In my humble garden,
you do not flourish.
It's neither hot nor dry enough,
but your silver-edged,
purple cup-like blossoms
still warm my heart.

Photo by Candace Armstrong

M.E. HOPE



Tipping Point

The world rights itself in one day.
The moon, a fingernail sliver of light,
pulls the sun into existence. Venus
dims over Stukel, and in the pasture
Canada geese graze.

Last night, as though on cue, coyotes
offered their opinions on the weather,
the stars, the curious new voices of frogs.
They quipped and sang long, brought
the darkness closer, ushered in sleep
with the comfort of lullaby.

And now this: day filled with sunlight,
where snow huddles in shadow like some bad dog.
The earth yawns to wakefulness
and a pair of bluebirds grace the bare
aspen, their wings dull against the morning sky.

Published in *Cloudbank 5*

Stukel Mountain is near Klamath Falls, OR

MARIE SAMUEL

Nature's Healing

Outdoor treks comfort
Weary isolating souls
All races, genders, faiths
Those healthy or not so
And wealthy or not so
Find solace in sky and earth
For all nature's creatures,
Large and small who dwell
And share our sick planet
Depending like us on bounty
Of sun-kissed foods and
Drinkable fluids so essential
For all world's varied humans
Nature's healing beckons.

NETH HASS

The Visitation

Once, I flew in my car with the redwing blackbirds:
turning a corner, they were all around me
funneling through a canyon in the trees.
I drove amongst them, close enough to touch
and long enough to count and estimate
ten thousand. We sailed along majestically,
together for a quarter-mile of ridgetop
until we came to the valley, and I had to go down.



TERESA HARRIS

The Rain Comes to Clear the Air

Spring enthusiasts please beware
Tiny grains of pollen are filling the air
Flowing from flowers, grasses, and weeds
Sometimes even from the tallest of trees
Traveling in gusts of both north and south
Clinging to eyes, skin, and the roof of your mouth
Giving birth to sneezing fits and a nagging cough
A nose that feels like it's going to fall off
A hoarse throaty voice with crusty lips
Swallowing the unpleasant post nasal drip
Nasal congestion filling your head
Dark circles enclosing eyes of red
The watery pools become swollen creeks
Streaming their way down two flushed cheeks
Sniffing much more than one person can bear
Until the rain comes to clear the air

MIKE RUHLAND

Spring Is Here

Spring is here
But still, my dear,
You must put on your coat.
For floods will flow
And chill winds blow.
We might even need a boat.

Don't be a fool,
Trying to be cool,
Wearing the clothes of summer.
Your little nose
will turn to rose.
You'll shiver and quiver—what a bummer!

I know your crowd
Is defiantly proud.
"No, I won't be a tool!"
But if the bus comes late
You'll see their fate.
Hypothermia isn't so cool.

So listen to me
Though geezer I be;
I've been to the school of hard knocks.
A day pleasant at start
Can often turn dark
And you'll wish you had woolen socks.

KATHY LOHRUM COTTON

Spring Rain

Umbrella closed, I walk where April rain
perfumes the air with scent of dampened earth
and arcs her pastel rainbow once again
with colors signaling a season's birth.

The woodlands, softened with first signs of green
in auras cast around awakened trees,
lift darkened limbs with buds still barely seen
and stir with birdsong in the warming breeze.

I splash through puddles, let the water seep
into the edges of my walking shoes,
as skies rouse from the drowse of cloudy sleep
and heavy grays give way to sunny blues.

No gloomy winter in my heart remains,
for I have felt the joy of April rains.

From *Encore Prize Poems 2020*

JACOB ERIN-CILBERTO

in just----ice

for some,
no spring
no pear trees blooming
or soft pink petals on others
no life
for another of the children

bad rep
harsh winter criticisms
falling apart
the leaves screamed
for justice

evidence is a bud opening
but eyes shut only imagine
color exists
and the rain of April
drowns sense.

Trial April 2021, Floyd Death

Kermit's Demise

Kermit died yesterday
bathing in his favorite pan
failing to turn down the heat.

Reassured by caretakers
the water was not going to boil
so failing to jump out in time.

Caretakers are being investigated
for fraud and dereliction of duty
in claiming the rising heat was a hoax.

Commemorative services
will be conducted to support
frogs surviving worldwide in

African desertification
Caribbean hurricanes
Australian bush fires
Pacific islands
flooded coastal cities and
interior lakes and rivers dried.

Kermit is the subject of a movie script
written and titled by his family as
Out of the Pan into the Fire.

Conversation on a Rainy Day

I'm broken, she says.

Are you? I ask.

Look at the scars, she says.

Where are they? I wonder aloud.

Everywhere, she tells me.

I search for scars, seeing none.

I've stitched myself together, she cries.

Tears flow from us both,
cascading waterfalls to match the weather.

But aren't you stronger now?

Yes, but I'm not the same, she says.

I want you to see what I see.

It's impossible, I'll always be broken.

I describe the strong embroidered lines
of a beautiful tapestry,
no broken threads, no ordinary stitches.

I don't see what you see.

Look at the reflection in my eyes, I tell her.

What do you see?

A tapestry sewn with vivid colors. It's beautiful.

Of course, I say.

I'm looking at you.

CAROLE BOLINSKI

The Screech of Spring

I'm not ready for the flowers to bloom
or the green to get greener.

I need to break free from winter's hold,
its choke around my psyche.

I need time to decide
where the next season will take me,
time to unskin my melancholy and prepare
for the stampede of cicadas.



LEO GHER

Hummingbirds

Faithful hummingbirds
zoom zoom the promise of spring
on wild daubs of sun

Raging Spring

Ride the black racer
head held high above the grass
zigzagsss the hunter

JIM LAMBERT

■Spring Squared■

Splendid	Splendor
Pretty	Perfection
Renaissance	Renewing
Inspiring	Incredible
Natural	Nature
Gorgeous	Garden



CAROL DOOLEY

March

Gray. Rain. Gray. Rain.
Plenty of both.
It is called Spring, I guess.

But Thursday, a gray morning,
at the gravel edge of a parking lot
sheltered against an old building

a row of daffodils,
each yellow flower
bent in prayer
giving thanks.



IDELLA PEARL EDWARDS

God's World of Flowers

Have you ever looked closely at the beauty of an iris,
Or studied the center of a rose?
With colors so vibrant and soft and deep,
Each flower literally glows.

Have you ever buried your face in a lilac,
Deeply inhaling its treasure?
A haunting fragrance so enchantingly sweet,
It fills the soul with pleasure.

How long since you gazed at a bright, yellow daisy,
Or studied a pansy's sweet face?
How long since you truly admired an orchid,
A flower of beauty and grace.

God's world of flowers awaits you, my friend,
Worthy of admiration.
There is beauty to behold and velvet to touch
In every pink carnation.

Spring Fever

When Henry, our cat, starts watching the door
And Mother decides, we're both quite a bore,
I know they've got Spring Fever.

When the man who lives here,
And hates to get dirty,
Starts messing with flowers
And gets a little flirty,
I know he's got Spring Fever.

When Annie, next door, comes over, no coat, no hat
And doesn't bring patchwork, (Can you believe that?)
I know she's got Spring Fever.

And when I forsake the typewriter
To listen to birds,
And all my thoughts,
Come in sing-songy words,
I know I've caught Spring Fever!

Creativity

**Tell me to write
a love song,
and I'll ask,
"What's wrong?"**

**Search me
for favorite words,
and I'll ask,
"Haven't you heard?"**

**Love is not weighed
by verbal count
but by thoughts
that mount**

**Each time you say
in your own way,
"I love you."**

BILL HARSHBARGER

Life's Illusion

It's finally so fragile
like the wind's hand moving
on the prairie in the fall,
caressing for a brief time
the last life of the season.

We are compelled to let it go
with the maple's golden glory
into life's naked winter
that arrives like the dawn
with no secret or reason.

Some wanderer will slide his arm
into the sleeve of the old house
and pull over his shoulder
the same sleepy illusion
that both can dodge this treason.

HUGH MULDOON

She

she the valiant one
mother earth
in love with the sun

not to be denied
grounding the ages
ruling far and wide

she serves the old and new
with sun-made bread
and cosmic stew

She says what's best to do
councilors, elders, queens
ignoring her will rue

she picks up debris
that degrades her face
and pollutes her sea

the valiant one
mother earth
beholden to none

she holds the newborn tight
arms round each child
defending with love and might

give her some space
she is there for you
every species and race

she will wash and heal
with strong hands and heart
her compassion all creatures feel

sing and dance with her
in multicolored harmony
with all alive and all that were

return her love let her thrive
mother earth
we will then survive