

# POETRY SUNDAY



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***Unitarian Church of Montpelier, April 26, 2020***

*A collection of the poems,  
all created by members and friends of UCM,  
read as part of Poetry Sunday 2020.*

# VICKY VIENS

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Cool breeze, cool mind.  
Shadows left far behind.  
Hope is here, I hope it stays,  
To cheer my heart and light my days.

Written coming out of a dark depression.

Spring is arising.  
Winter is foresworn.  
Birds are again singing.  
The Earth is being reborn.

# LIZ BENJAMIN

## ARS POETICA

---

it grabs me as I dust the cluttered coffee table  
shifting New Yorkers and yesterday's news  
as I scrub the spaghetti sauce pot  
tomato-red water twirling down the drain  
as I scoop cat food equally  
into two cobalt porcelain bowls  
as I watch golden light peek  
over the east mountains  
as I warm my fingers  
on the green umbrellas  
on the mug from Victoria

it grabs me  
by the wisps of hair beside my ears  
by the multi-colored threads  
on my sweater's fraying cuffs  
by the instep of my purple sock

it rings my wrist  
with pale strings of nouns  
and bright bangles of sparkling verbs  
until I am as tied up and tied down  
as Gulliver by the Lilliputians

and yes, I cry, yes- poem

# BETTIE BARNES

## DAWN

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the sun warms the sky  
sliver of moon  
day meets night

# JOANNE VYCE

## OFFERING OF LIGHT

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Six a.m. light rounds  
the corner, illuminates  
tassels hanging from maple  
leaves' tiny fists.

In Hafiz's poem  
the sun never says  
to the earth, "You owe me."

Its constancy lights the world.  
In a darkened theater,  
his words burst open my heart,  
rivers thaw and trace  
the contours of my face.

I thought I knew what love  
was – a bargain forged –  
rather than a quiet offering of light  
from a heart that can only burn.

# MARGARET BLANCHARD

## COURAGE COMES IN SMALL PACKAGES

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A squirrel  
scampers across the road  
which bisects his ancestral route  
to acorn stores—  
only to find himself halfway across  
with one machine roaring up behind him,  
another bearing down upon him.  
What can he do?  
He spins in place, like a top,  
on the traffic-fevered white line,  
he spins on one paw,  
he pauses,  
he dances  
between the passing cars  
as they drive by.  
Next in line,  
I slow down to gaze  
at his amazing acrobatics,

exhale as he dashes to safety.

The chickadee with her pithy body,  
lucid markings, lively songs  
chirps through frost and ice,  
local resident all year long,  
moved not by ancient flight plans,  
nests in harshest weather,  
here when migrating birds arrive,  
here when they fly away,  
reminds me daily  
of our friendship with the winged.  
Wondering how she endures,  
my soul grows feathers,  
grasps why we must listen with care  
to the music of our birds.

Small packages,  
small messages  
about how  
to survive.

Spin when you need to.  
Stay if you can.

# AMY WALES

## MUSINGS FROM A BALD EAGLE

---

When I lose my hair, I have decided to become a bald eagle.

I will spread my wings and let the wind carry me wherever it may.

I will not resist, for the wind already knows where I am meant to go.

This must be what it truly means to let go...This is what it means to be free.

“Is this the same as dying?” I ask.

My spirit voice inside tells me: “I am a bald eagle-Strong, Brave, Majestic and Alive!”

When I fly with an open heart, I will soar.

There is a certain kind of peace when I soar above the earth, above it all.

I am in a state of grace. To be alive on this beautiful earth, swaddled in love by so many.

There is only gratitude flowing inside my blood.

I bend into the wind and it lifts me up! I am not afraid of its power or its currents.

The wind and I make a pact to trust in each other. There is harmony in this.

From high above I can see everything.

The trees, the rivers, the mountains. A field mouse. A blade of grass.

They are all one now.

And as the wind suddenly shifts direction, my eyes turn and everything has vanished.

I keep my heart open, with wings outstretched. I am flying with my eyes closed.

Fearless.

# LYDIA LOWERY BUSLER

## INSATIABLE IRRELEVANCE

---

Every child is coming on home  
Insatiable irrelevance won't leave me alone  
Curled up like a kitty got my head on my phone  
That insatiable irrelevance won't leave me alone

Curled up like a cornhusk got the sun on my face  
And the crows be squawking all over the place  
Cuz the squirrels be bad and the cat, she's got grace  
And the wind blew a dark cloud and took that sun away

Every heart is looking for a home  
Insatiable irrelevance just won't leave me alone  
Under my arm chair found me an old dry bone  
Relic of the former occupant of this here throne

Time an amorphous continuum can't fit all I need to do  
Walkin' down the road tickin off my one n two  
Beatin beats, lickin wounds, standing tall, makin do  
Sayin nothin but my friendships still true blue

Thoughts a wanderin all bent on real true home  
Insatiable irrelevance keeps me company dontcha know  
I'll get over it, the feeling will be gone  
But right now irrelevance won't leave me alone, no  
Insatiable irrelevance won't leave me alone

# ERIN AGUAYO

## STILL

---

The World stops Still.

Still the schools

where there was just joy.

Still the shops

Where there was just purpose.

Still the squares

where there was just Life, teeming  
summoning itself new each day.

Still the highways

and offices

and ships

and bakeries

and bars

plays

parties

cars

Playing Safe from the invisible unknown.

But I go into the Woods

Fresh with snow.

And the stream Still sings its Spring song  
all giggles to the stones smoothed by its call.

And the geese Still call to each other  
perfect impossible wedge headed North  
no need of compass or alarm.

And the hawks Still circle  
on silent waves  
terrible beauty seeking the smallest spark.

And the trees Still proffer tiny buds  
hidden tips of a thousand thousand  
naked branches

And the snow Still rests on eager crocus and fern  
careful yet to poke out.

The woods are Still lovely, dark and deep.

The world

Still

Waits for us to understand.

# KRISTIN GLASER

## SAY THEIR NAMES

---

Once a year at church, we light candles,  
share names of our recent and past dead.

I am lighting a candle for my father,  
who died last year; for my uncle John.

I am lighting a candle for my cousin Betty  
who died from cancer;

I am lighting a candle for my brother  
and long-time friend Nancy.

I am lighting a candle and reading  
the names of all church members  
not mentioned who died in this decade.

Each person leaves the microphone accompanied  
by the shadows of others. The church fills with  
the presence of our ancestors, departed friends.

Frank, next to me, is joined by his parents. On my other side, Brenda sits with her mother and father.

When the last name is spoken, there are over five hundred living and dead swelling the pews.

# VICTORIA BATTIN

## HEALING TREE

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Healing can be a source of anger,  
a source of fear, a source of sadness.

Healing is the light,  
the beauty within, the beauty outside.

Healing is the act of grounding,  
finding our roots to bloom, into a tree that flows.

Flowing with the wind,  
it grows with the sun, is nourished by the rain.

Healing is the tree, under which we seek shade.  
Healing is nourishing our mind, body, and soul.

# BETSY UNGER

## MERCY

---

We all know mercy when she arrives.

She shines.

She flips the switch  
in the darkened room.

She sees us.

She places a hand on our chests.

She gentles us  
beneath her palm of light.

# KATE HERRINGTON

## AFFINITY

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When the sun lays its hands on you,  
even as the snow lifts a chill  
up your arms in a broad hello,  
it comes from something greater than yourself,  
an intelligence you know,  
like a circle in a circle,  
something you can rest in,  
ponder and trust,  
and this is what you do,  
sitting on the porch with ice in your boots,  
breathing in from the land of life,  
pondering your place in it.

A small creature the size of a bee arrives,  
inches from your head,  
zigzagging through the air around you,  
bee-sized because that's who she is,  
a bee taking measure  
of anything growing above the snow.

You wonder where her home is  
and you remember last year's hyssop,  
flowering all summer, alive with bees late into fall.  
And you recall how good it felt  
to be partnered with life,  
one of many lives  
in the interlocking circles of Earth.  
Last week you doubted,  
and yet the heat is on, the bee is back,  
and Spring is larger than you remembered.

# ELAINE BALL

## SENTINEL OF SPRING

---

Sun changing snowflakes to melting droplets,  
wind fingering red feathers of this patient robin  
while snow, rain, hail, and sleet lightly blow and swirl

Why are these flakes falling,  
while the Springtime sun shines bright?

Sentinel of Spring, elegantly perched  
gazing up toward the white clouds  
passing through the crisp blue sky  
knowing, in mere moments,

I can fly.

# BARBARA THOMPSON

## PRAIRIE: AUGUST

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Let me go to a sun-dried prairie,  
where grass plumes rasp songs to the wind,  
where cumulus crowns rule the sky.

Let me lie down in a boundless prairie,  
where seed pods catch at my clothes,  
red clover sweetens the breeze.

Let me be one with a squadron of dragonflies,  
who hover over waiting Earth.

Tell me how you do it, Dragonflies—  
your Tiffany wings crinkled like cellophane—

How do you make that leap from water birth to Air?

# JULIE BOND

## BIRD OF PRAY

---

They say you are an emissary of the spirit realm.  
Please bring this message to God from me.  
Take flight, aloft on angel currents.  
Carry this dispatch,  
Beyond clouds, beyond realms,  
So that the distance you travel  
May help my heart forget.

Days and months go by, and  
Suddenly you return on the wings of change.  
Your luminous body of land and air  
Is the return envelope of the divine.  
My long-awaited response from God  
Is gently tucked into the perfect geometry  
Of your feathers.  
Yet you sit in perfect silence.

I suspect you knew that  
God has been writing to me all along on  
The stationary of my soul.

# SUE STUKEY

## JOY

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Joy it is  
To live,  
To love,  
To swallow the world!