

Creativity during the pandemic

Prompted by a 2014 workshop and suggestion by former Poet Laureate of Oregon Lawson Inada, a group of local poets came together to share and support each other's work. So began the Applegate Poets. Meeting once a month, poets brought new work, revised old work, and encouraged each other's creativity.

In April, due to the pandemic, we were forced to meet virtually. Thus began a six-month practice of weekly prompts offered by different members of the group. Sometimes the prompts were theme-oriented; at other times, we worked on a certain poetic form, all shared online. Each of the Applegate Poets has chosen one poem birthed during this period to submit for this issue of the *Applegater*.

—H. Ní Aódagáin

1645

You were built
to house families,
blacksmiths,
and coaches.

Your front house
faced the street;
the arched coach's gate
led to the courtyard and back house.

You were three stories high
with an attic under the steep roof
you withstood many wars
and the bombs that fell on the city.

You've seen much history.
You housed my family
on the second floor;
my brother was born here.

You were part of our family
my grandmother's property
when it was unusual
that women should own it.

You were home
to children's play
your three-story-deep basement
gave shelter during the wars.

You protected tenants and neighbors
from encroaching soldiers.
Enemies looted the floors above
but did not bother to search below.

Now you are a hotel.
A cousin renovated, modernized,
and converted the first floor
into a restaurant for guests.

The only thing familiar
is the historical façade
that was not allowed
to be changed.

Unchanged are my memories of you,
of children playing carefree,
of summer heat and zinc tubs,
and splashing each other with water.

Only happy memories as a child
to whom post-war politics did not matter.
Grandparents lived in the back house
always present for comfort and love.

—Beate Foit

Beate is currently working on a memoir: a reflection on her life that encompasses immigration to America, loss, infertility, work, and family stories from past generations.

In this poem, she remembers her grandmother's house, where she lived for the first seven years of her life. Her email address is beatefoit@gmail.com.

Elisheva

My dear beloved,
Your times have become a tumult
Your house near collapse
Your habitation without air or water.
You are broken in the fissure of Elisheva.

I know you.
I am at the meeting place.
You know me.
You have been told of these times.
You have heard the whispers and felt the wings of that which comes.

I am the Oak
On my branches perch the hawks
I am the Terebinth
See my red berries
See my coral colored burls
I tower above the People.

I am beauty and I am bitterness.
Break me open
Taste.
I am the fissure.
Ravaged.

Do This:
Cry out for those who cannot speak
Weep for those who have no eyes
Dig in earth for those who hunger
Plant the seed.

Feel This:
Agony of the fawn who has eaten poison,
Silence of the bee from the abandoned hive,
Ache of the child left on the rocks,
Fear in the belly,
Dark in the mind.
Hold out your being like open hands.
Release it all.

—Christin Lore Weber

Sheva in Hebrew means "a fissure or wound—a house broken." El means Divine Oneness, so Elisheva implies the coming together or paradox of opposites—a divine fissure or wound.

*Christin is a multi-genre writer whose books are available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/author/christinweber) ([amazon.com/author/christinweber](https://www.amazon.com/author/christinweber)). Newly published are *A Dance in the Sky: A Memoir* and *No This But This, a novel*. You can contact Christin at storyweaver1@gmail.com.*

Useless Knowledge

The news is full of numbers:
Body counts, virus tallies
Number of acres burned
Number of houses destroyed.

I can't hold these numbers
In my head. Instead I see
The forest full of trees, the endless
Sky, the ocean's horizon.

I want to erase useless numbers
And count only what I see:
A forest so green it beckons me
A sky so wide it fills my heart

An ocean that takes me
To a new world in time
When love wins the battle
Over lies and deceit.

—Joan Peterson

*Joan has created a chapbook of poems, *Brilliant by the Door*, and a published book of poetry, *Looking for a Place to Write*. To contact Joan, write to joanpete5317@gmail.com*

Walking the Talk

Sometimes I want to do less and be more.
I worry too much, too often
I fail to practice what I know
the answer to all dilemma

Breath in, breath out

A pandemic has struck, global in scope
the worst feared has become true, nothing
will be as before,
but what hasn't changed:
I am still here with these thoughts
that only I can silence

Breath in, breath out

**** **** ****

If there were no tomorrow,
I'd start the day with a crystal flute
of ice-cold champagne, sip it slowly
and watch the first light of morning
wake from its dreaming

I'd turn on Verdi to full volume
and aim it at the mountain tops
so the valley would be filled with song

I'd sit in the garden long enough
to witness the sprouting of seeds I've sowed
the unfurling of a spinach leaf,
the reaching of a pea tendril toward its trellis

**** **** ****

My wild, wry, wicked friend
Liza died last week
I sat at her feet, anticipating

her last breath

Time ticked by on the bedside clock
but in that room,
as she labored to be released,
there was only

breath in, breath out

until there wasn't.

**** **** ****

Can I permit myself
to just sit
for as long as necessary
till I become only

breath in, breath out

and the illusion of a finite life merges
with the reality of the infinite?

—H. Ní Aódagáin

H. Ní Aódagáin is seeking publication of her novel, "If Not for the Silence," which explores the silences we live with, silences that frame our choices and our destiny. To see more of her writings, go to hnauthor.com.

In Praise of the Emerald Pool on the Middle Fork of the Applegate River

For I will sing in praise of the
Emerald Pool.

For it is aptly named, a sparkling jewel.
For its waters are deep and green.

For it is round and large.

For it is embraced by steep banks
of greenery, studded with stalwart
dark trunks.

For its shoulders are rock.

For it is fed by white-tumbling rapids.
For the sun dapples its surface with
brilliance, and the shade of the
woods is dark and cool.

For it is the embodiment of all
forest song.

For legato is its rhythm, pianissimo
its melody.

For serenity is its name.

For it is snowmelt cold.

For it demands strength to enter and
endurance to swim.

For it cleanses the body and
bathes the soul.

For it washes away the sweat of the trail.

For it washes away the tears of grief.

For it washes away the ashes of the dead.

For it takes them to the sea.

For it is beautiful of color.

For it is life-giving water.

For it is eternal.

—Diana Coogle

From Diana Coogle's new book of poems, "From Friend to Wife to Widow: Six Brief Years." Contact: dianacoogle@gmail.com. She blogs at: dianacoogle.blogspot.com.

Below is a Corona Haiku, or a Crown of Haiku, a poetic form I invented in August. The structure I impose with this form is a sequence of five stanzas in haiku form plus an ending couplet, totaling seventeen lines overall (to echo the seventeen syllables in a haiku).

A recurring image links the sections of the poem, a nod to the origins of haiku in the *renga*, another Japanese form.

The two lines in the couplet must rhyme and must be seven syllables each in length to create coherence with the haiku's middle line. Also, the fourteen-syllable count in the couplet echoes the fourteen-line structure of sonnets, the most recognized form to employ an ending couplet.

Late Summer Field Guide

Now August arrives—
Canada geese flock in fields
before the Fall flight

From the field's far edge
the sound of water running—
wind in cottonwoods

A richness of blue
above these vast fields of green—
Red-tail has domain

Second cut of hay—
timothy, rye and clover—
horses' winter feed

Shadow of an owl
cast in waxing half-moon light
stirs a young field mouse

Summer to Autumn must yield—
flock, wind, hawk, hay, mouse and field

—Lisa E Baldwin

Lisa is currently planning new workshops for her "Something About Poetry" series, which is set to resume in 2021 through the Josephine Community Library. For more information, send her a note: LEB.97527@gmail.com.

YOUR HAIKU HERE

The *Applegater*
welcomes your haikus to fill
spaces like this one
Send yours to bert@applegater.org.



We want your letters! Email to gater@applegater.org.

