

POETRY CORNER

This Day

By Seth Kaplan • sethkap55@gmail.com

It's a day like no other.
Shadow-and-dust-colored rabbits
in the field, alert and watchful.
Turkeys circle the forest oak, prim and attentive.
The deer you count every year peek out
from the edge of the woods for a better view
following your movements with anticipation.

All of this you notice, along with the gestures
of the clouds, and your ears perk to the sound
of raven wings from above. The thickening of the light
as the season progresses. Your eyes attune
to the play of color and texture across the meadow.
Your nose remembers a familiar scent.

This day is like no other.
For it is only now you understand
all of this place recognizes you
speaks your name
calls you home.

Seth Kaplan is a recent emigrant from Humbug Creek to Talent. He is eternally grateful to the Applegate Poets and a sweet community of extraordinary people who share his wonder of the Applegate Valley. Seth's poetry has recently appeared in The Rapids: A Literary & Art Journal of Southern Oregon, RavensPerch, Tokyo Poetry Journal, Cobra Lily, and Jefferson Journal. His first book of poems, Habitat: Unearthing Home, was published by N8tive Run Press earlier this year. [See book review, this page.]

Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either written by an Applegate resident or about the Applegate? Email it to *Applegater* poetry editor Paul Tipton at ptipton4u2c@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEW

Habitat:
Unearthing Home

Seth Kaplan
N8tive Run Press
Grants Pass, Oregon

BY PAUL TIPTON

My immediate email reaction after reading former Applegate resident Seth Kaplan's recently published book was, "Wow! What an impressive grouping of words, so well-chosen and arranged into poems, then gathered into this excellent collection of poetry that exposes the depths of the thinking of a great mind, and the depth of love Seth has for his family and the world around him. I feel like I know so much more about him now—his life and his background—than I knew before."

If you didn't already know, Seth and I have known each other since 2016. We've worked together on community projects, and we read poetry together monthly with the Applegate Poets. So, I could be prejudiced, but I also know quality work when I see it, and hear it, as a large crowd of people did at the launch of Seth's book recently at Red Lily Vineyards.

Habit: Unearthing Home is such a potent phrase, reminding me of archeology stories of the Middle East and the unearthing of "tells," the mounds consisting of many layers of the remnants of human activity, some thousands of years old. Similarly, Seth strips open the various layers of his personal history, exposing them for us to study and compare to our own. He is constantly searching deep into that history, yet also constantly finding his place in the world. As he says in "This Day," "This day is like no other./ For it is only now you understand/ all of this place recognizes you/ speaks your name/ calls you home."



These poems explore both physical and metaphysical habitats, as we read at the end of "In the Beginning": "Chronicling the endless cycle/ of beginnings fully realized./ All that was ever new, unimagined/ becoming known and seen." And if he sees the physical "This Old Barn," his ruminations lead him to this: "It takes some years to weather/ into what we become. This hovel/ of haphazard life honestly built,/ if not always elegantly." But these are not haphazard poems. They are finely crafted and elegant story-songs from a highly sentient being.

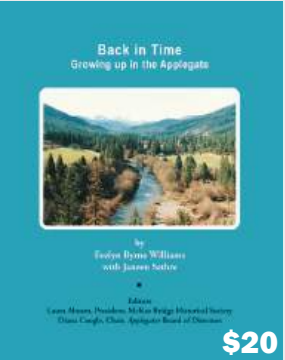
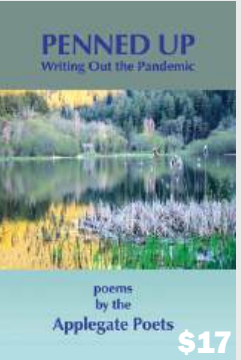
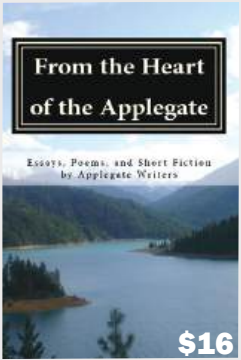
This is a book that is well worth the time to read and then come back to and read again, to connect with that "love of precious things/ By the wish to be at home" (Seth echoing Wendell Berry's words). This is a very fine first book of poetry, and I think we should expect to see and hear more from Seth Kaplan in the future.

Habitat is available at Rebel Heart Books in Jacksonville or at Bloomsbury Books in Ashland. It is also available for loan from the Applegate and Ruch libraries. To order directly from him, send an email to sethkap55@gmail.com.

Paul Tipton
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Have a happy and safe
Fourth of July!

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