

GARDEN COMPANION

Sally Sparrow is a cheerful cheeper
she eats seeds from the Golden Thread Creeper,
she gobbles spiders from the Columbine,
green aphids from the Honeysuckle Vine,
fat white worms from the yellow Twinkle Phlox,
hard beetles from the blue Forget-me-nots.
Sally is happy with such a diet.
I have no present plans to try it.

- Jean MacKenzie, *The Exhilaration of Flowers*, 2002

WINDOWSILL DRAMA

Going to the bedroom window
to check on the weather eastwards
I discovered two bustling wasps
entwined in the gauzy spider web
or so I thought until one effortlessly
buzzed away off through the web
snapping threads as it flew while
the other wasp stood on the sill
nibbling steadily on the abdomen
of a dismembered damselfly whose
shining wings hung suspended above...
the wasps were robbing the spider's larder
another example of kleptoparasitism
stealing, with impunity, another's prey
desperately foraging to feed, I supposed
their August hatchlings in some nearby nest.
Thirty minutes later I felt a twinge of regret
when I spied my diligent wife outside tidily
sweeping spider webs off that windowsill.

- Bob Nero

CLOUDSCAPES

A sky full of clouds,
a sky full of dreams,
blazoned with crystallized high *cirrus* flares;
diffuse filmy wisps
sweep limitless space—
a fibrous sky streaked with tenuous trails.

A sky full of clouds,
a sky full of dreams,
mute *alto* waves in a motionless sea
are backdrop for gulls,
white, mewling, and flung
against the gray lift of mackerel skies.

A sky full of clouds,
a sky full of dreams,
cumulus masses of tow or of wool,
rough shorn they slip by
all carded by wind—
a swift sheperding, a fleecy-soft flow.

A sky full of clouds,
a sky full of dreams,
mushrooming battleships, summits bulged up,
one turreted tight
congestus display—
cream-coloured, blue dappled castles appear.

A saunterer's course
through remnants of cloud,
gorgeous in sunset, a western collage,
yield roadways of bronze,
magenta and gold—
a sky full of clouds, a sky full of dreams.

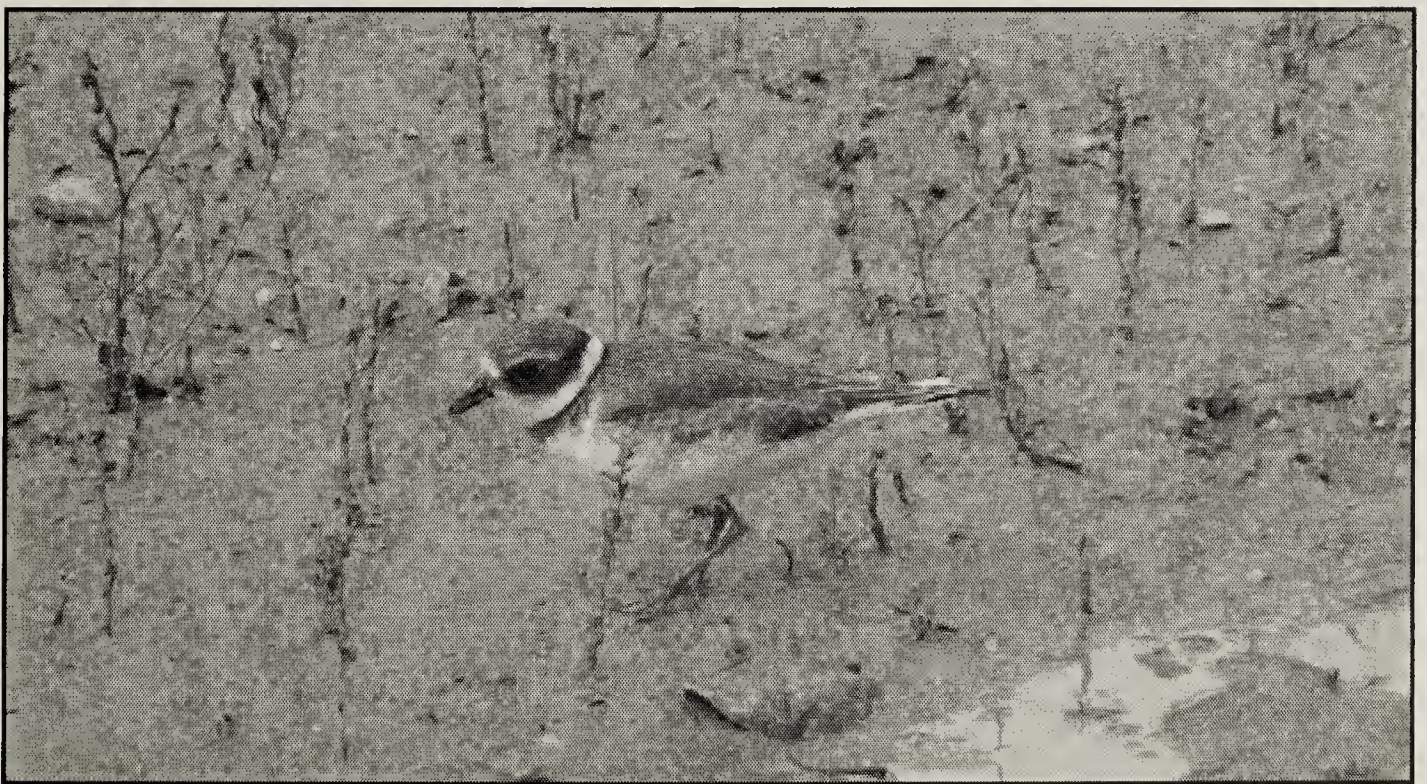
- Victor C. Friesen

GEESE IN AUTUMN

A gibbous moon, in pastel orange-yellow,
Hangs low and smudged within the harvest dust
Upon the autumn skyline. Stubble fields,
A-hum with combines threshing, are tawny gray.
The far machines, relentless and slow-moving—
I see each duly aureoled in its
Own (unreflected) light, a moted glow
That signals work undone: a thicker haze
Accumulates, ascends into the cool
Night air.

Geese, honking softly, wings a-thrust,
Sweep overhead in short diagonals,
Unisonant, resistless in their going.
Soon distant at the dim outskirts of sky,
They drift in silhouetted chains across
The dingy orange moon; break free;
And, unrestrained and silent, sail into
The coming night and to tomorrow's dawn.

- Victor C. Friesen



Semi-palmated Plover about 60 km NW of The Pas, MB on 20 August 2006.

David Raitt

*Harvest visitor near Tessier, 30 August
George Tosh*



AUGUST BOON

Bits of tan and rose fluff,
like pills plucked off
colorful wool sweaters,
appear unexpectedly
littering lawn-chairs.
Sprinkled on the grass
beneath the oak trees,
furry blooms bursting forth
from oak leaves inspired
by dancing gall-flies;
their larvae turning
within exotic galls
in an underleaf world
send down this gay confetti—
a celebration of summer.

- Bob Nero