

HOOKED FOR LIFE

Joseph Frederick

Thrilling is such to obtain your presence
Time floats, your indication sinking
Down, NOW! pull back, reel distance
Shaking, flailing, tugging, pulling
Mystery devours, racing anticipation
Your resistance flutters adrenaline wings
Emerging from the sky's vibration
Hasty gazes, time suffocates, air clings
At last, glissful fiery amber bottom
Hintfull sporadic purple, deep blue cheeks
Scattered olive stripes, body blossoms
No matter how small, your beauty speaks
Hurry along now, thank you for the catch
Such an experience, quite a delight
You'll never know the meaning of this match
However, because of you, I'm Hooked For Life

THE ART OF FISHING & HUNTING

SONG OF THE SNOT OTTER

Andrew Cole

Beneath the rocky river clear,
Hellbenders hunt for crawfish prey,
With wrinkled skin, gills disappear,
Living fossils from yesterday.

Devil dogs lurk where currents flow,
Beneath the rocky river clear,
Flat as a board and moving slow,
Guarding nests that they hold so dear.

In stony fissures dark and drear,
Snot otters wait in morning light,
Beneath the rocky river clear,
Where startled minnows flee from sight.

Waterdogs rule the gravel bed,
As seasons pass from year to year,
They watch unseen where few have tread,
Beneath the rocky river clear.

UNDER-APPRECIATED SPECIES

STILLWATER

David Dillon

A great blue heron folds the sky
into its wings, then disappears.
The water keeps its secrets close—
the snap of frogs, the hush of deer.
Painted turtles line the log
like sun-warmed coins left in a row.
A dragonfly burns cobalt light
and hovers where the cattails grow.
I cast no shadow here, no sound—
just breath and breeze and quiet grace.
The wild accepts me as I am:
a passing part of this still place.

CHIEF'S CHOICE

THE SKY FALLS IN JULY

Lara Flaute

Quiet now, twilight dims the sky

Cast your gaze down

Watch the brilliant blinking of fireflies

Photinus pyralis, prairie glitter

A magical offering of Mother Nature in summer

Now, look up

Stars fade into view

So far away, they seem to sit still

We know, though, they are in motion.

Here in our home,

Deep in Ohio,

For a few sweet weeks,

Glitter below reflects glitter above

All in motion

And we sit in stillness, to watch

***WILDLIFE THROUGH THE
SEASONS & WEATHER***

WINGED OFFERINGS

Barbara Lyghtel Rohrer

A mourning dove brought comfort
when I had to leave that old white farmhouse,
her coos a promise. Now I live where
red-shoulder hawks cry and turkey vultures circle,
where a downy woodpecker works
his way up the cottonwood that still stands
despite the strike of lightning that blasted
bark from a ten-foot gash through my yard.
Evenings a barred owl asks who cooks for me.
Mornings my kayak takes me where blue heron feed
and kingfishers skim waters below the wide sky
graced by the crest of a single pileated woodpecker.

BIRDING

OUR WONDERFUL WILDLIFE

Aimee Bergquist

Vibrant red feathers in the morning sun—

A Cardinal sings, as day has begun.

Among the leaves, a proud Ladybug clings,

Until taking flight on tiny black wings.

Through the grass, a Black Racer swiftly glides,

Then moves upward, coiled in a branch, he hides.

At dusk, a White-tailed Deer moves through the trees—

On slender legs, she steps with grace and ease.

As light fades, together the Bullfrogs leap—

Their loud chorus resonating and deep.

When darkness takes hold and the night air cools,

Spotted Salamanders seek vernal pools.

From daybreak to nightfall, throughout the year,

Our wonderful of wildlife is ever near.

***WILDLIFE IN PLACES, HABITATS,
OR ECOSYSTEMS***