

Turtle Poetry

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TURTLE POETRY

Editorial Introduction. — This section is devoted to poetry involving turtles, representing either reprinted previously published or new unpublished material. We encourage our readers to submit poetry or songs for consideration, either their own material or work by other authors. Poems may be submitted to Anders G.J. Rhodin at Chelonian Research Foundation [RhodinCRF@aol.com].

Our desire is to share with our readers the beauty and wonder of turtles as expressed through the art of the poem or song. In the sense that the relationship between man and turtles is multifaceted, so too is turtle poetry. The poems we publish here will reflect that complexity, from poems of pure admiration for the creatures themselves to others reflecting the utilization of turtles and their products. Some poems will reflect man's use of the turtle for sustenance, others will stress man's need to preserve and protect turtles. Some will deal with our emotional interactions with turtles, others will treat turtles light-heartedly or with seeming disrespect, but all will hopefully help us to better understand both the human and the chelonian condition, and remind us that the turtle holds a sacred place in all our hearts.

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To a Turtle

MAXINE McCRAY MILLER¹

Taciturn turtle, Sparton of simple space,
Of what do you think as you make slow pace
Across the humming highway's span?
So small a life to immerse
In the ferment of the Universe!
Yet, someday, you, too, are akin to man.

What man of words could more assure
That simple things will e'er endure
Tho centuries never pause;
Tho civilizations fall and rise,
Nothing ever falsifies
The immortality of God's great laws.

Tenacious turtle, bent on destined ways!
Unyielding man no more conveys
His faith in future dawns.
World-bound in spinning, sonant space,
He lifts his resolute, little face.
Salute the turtle thrusting on.

Editorial Comment. — This poem about a turtle, making his way across a dangerous highway (Sparton in Greek mythology made a journey), surrounded by rushing cars and humming tires, represents the challenges and risks we all face as we push forward against forces beyond our control in order to make progress. Yet progress we must make, whether we are turtle or man, and persevering in the face of challenge and change is our inherent nature. On a personal level, as I gradually turn the reins of the production of this journal increasingly over to others, I reflect on the journey that has brought us this far and the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, and like the poet who wrote this poem, I salute the turtle thrusting on, as we gradually build an increasingly connected international chelonian conservation community dedicated to helping the turtle persevere and persist.

¹ Published 1976 in Rephibia.