

After the Solstice

By Dawn Hogue

From now on—at least for a while—

our days will be longer, tick by tick.

Not wanting to waste a moment,

I went out this morning with the dog

and wandered along the river teeming

with emerald-topped mallards, at ease

on open water, rippling deep blue

against a clear, bright sky.

Near the harbor, remnant ice floats

jam and crash against each other,

blending with a now-and-then quack

for today's symphony.

What a sublime season if all of winter

were like today, temperatures so mild

grass emits its scent, a day the Sun,

who longs to touch the earth,

travels alone through cool air to whisper

hello and wrap us in a brief embrace.

Soon enough his passion will exhaust us,

but not today.

Today is a day for breathing light.

We exhale—with carefree lungs—a breath
that does not seize with icy grasp, but soothes
and reminds us that it is a gift to breathe.

The lake knows this, too.

The shoreline is banked with mounded spray—
frozen in time, glitter-white crystal hills—but
at their edges, the lake rocks gently, taking back
one glimmer at a time.