

THE INK'WELL

By Lynn Berry
Guest Contributor Christopher Sedlmeyer

Although we often speak of poetry in terms of structure, theme, and the artifices of language, ultimately poetry is about one thing—beauty. Like all art, poetry takes its shape and power from the experience it creates in the listener. In poetry, more so it seems than in other art forms, numerous senses are engaged simultaneously in the medium of words. The rhythm and music of sound; the color, texture, and arrangement of images; and the resonance of meaning and memory are all brought to the listener in language. A good poem makes an impact using all three aspects; a great poem blends them in such a way that they become for the listener a moment of awakening to an entirely new version of life and all it has to offer. In the poem below, Portland poet, Kareem Ali, has achieved the latter example in his poem “Leaving.” Using ordinary images of newspapers, the night sky, and birds in flight, Ali evokes the gentle sadness and remembrance that accompanies a separation in poetic language that is at once familiar and surprising:

Leaving

The breath of your smile
Lingers
Past the well soaked Sunday papers

Beyond the unshowered night
Your face appeared as a form of memory

Outside
The only sound I could hear
Were drunken bluejays
Whispering between themselves
While rising
On crutches of air.
----- Kareem Ali

---**Writer's Idea:** When approaching a topic in your writing, try approaching it in terms of things that are not immediately evident to the listener—challenge them to enter the poem to find the connections.

---**Writer's Tip:** In your poetic writing, try using descriptive language that surprises the listener. Ali's descriptions of the “drunken bluejays”, that “whisper between themselves” as they rise on “crutches of air” are not typical descriptions of birds, their calls, or their flight, but the interesting use of language wakes up the listener and invites them to see and experience the bluejays in a new and fresh way.

---**WE ARE LOOKING FOR LOCAL POETRY. WE NEED YOUR POEMS!!!!** Please send your original submissions to InkwellVernonia@gmail.com or by mail: PO Box 333 Vernonia, OR 97064. Please include your name and contact information.

Write--Express--Expand.

Chris Sedlmeyer holds an M.A. in English, specializing in archetypal criticism and medieval spirituality. He has written for the American Benedictine Review and currently writes a weekly blog on Carmelite spirituality and discernment for the American Province of the Order of Carmelites of the Ancient Observance.

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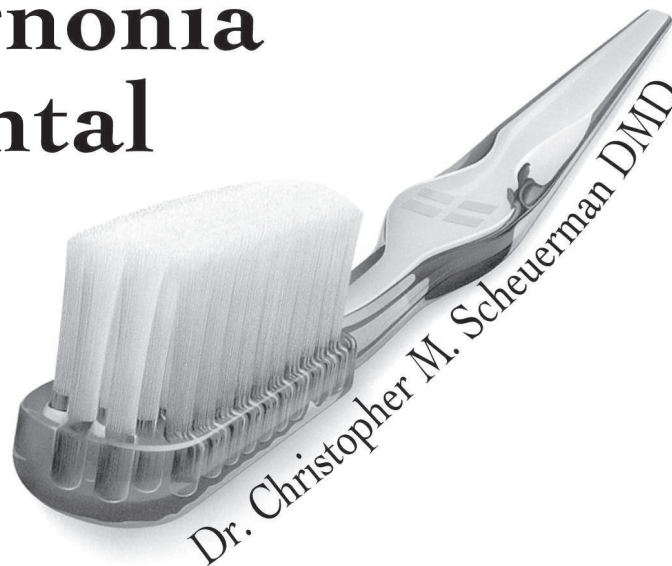
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