

Survival Song

Who are you, little beach bird,
your double-time tiptoe across the sand?
Your quick stick legs chasing each succeeding wave,
reversing shoreward to flee
when the foaming surf pounds too near.

Wave upon wave, it looks like play.
Until your beak shoots out like a bullet
to slay in the wash a bit of fish,
tip your head skyward to gulp
whatever it takes to survive this day.

And who are you, limping with aching feet,
villager bedecked in your fiesta best and smiling?
Poised at the docks where cruise ships
spill forth wave upon wave of wallets
and wads of cash. Looks like play,

to catch an eye, risk a quick step forward
offering your wares — blankets and sombreros.
The rush of crowds pushing you aside
if you approach too near. Then a beckoning.
Fistful of pesos. A swift sale.

Gracias, El Señor, you say, lifting
your head heavenward.

Whatever it takes to survive this day.



Lowell Jaeger (*Montana Poet Laureate 2017-2019*) is author of eight collection of poems, most recently *Earth-blood & Star-shine* (Shabda Press in 2016). He is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Montana Arts Council and winner of the Grolier Poetry Peace Prize. Most recently Jaeger was awarded the Montana Governor's Humanities Award for his work in promoting thoughtful civic discourse.

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