

POET'S CORNER

OCTOBER

I noticed them suddenly,
the V-wedged flocks nearly overhead
flapping and gliding over the pine woods.
Strange, I had not heard the boreal honking
that comes before the big Canadas.
I did not breathe, listening
for the faint trumpeting I used to hear over our farmhouse.
Mother and all us kids plummeting into the yard
when Father shouted up from the pumpkin field,
"Hurry, everybody ! The geese are flying south!"

We waved and I believed
the "honkers" were waving their wings and calling back to us.
Today, I waved....waited. No sound.

It was like a medieval procession
of monks passing to bury their brother.
These were not geese, but cormorants. Mute birds.
Elegant dark forms against the shrouded sky.
Trappists going down the horizon
into winter.

Maxwell C. Wheat Jr.