

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Inversion

By Joan S. Soble

For decades, we resisted winter:
the storms that sheathed the trees
and walks in ice, keeping us
too close to home and far from friends;
the January sunshine mocking us
with false promises of warmth;
the late-season's daily repetitions
of gray mud thawing, then freezing;
the sporadic bursts of pummeling snow
that flattened fragile snowdrops
and our hopes of spring.

Now summer was the season of
our challenge, even though our homes
lay far beyond the heat dome,
the maverick path of the tropical storm
across the inland flood plain,
the wildfire's reach. Unrelenting heat
seared the nation; humidity's
veiling haze muted blue skies
and dark shadows, tainting summer's
trusted, dreamed-of ease
with an alien strain of dread.

Restive, we recalled the paperweights
we as children flipped, then flipped again,
to watch the snow float in enclosed space,
then toward the roads and rooftops
down below—only to envision other orbs
that rendered summer changed, spheres
that, on inversion, swirled a blend of
pollen and ash that listless hung
suspended in the liquid air,
then nonchalantly sank,
settling on lawn and lung.