

**P o e m s   f o r   t h e   S u m m e r   S o l s t i c e**  
**First Parish Unitarian Church, Scituate Massachusetts, June 23, 2019**

**R e a d e r s :**

**Spencer Howe**

**Kate Glennon**

**Lin Haire-Sargeant**

**Noah Kermond**

**Cathy Kang**

**William Clark**

**S O L S T I C E**

*2019 June 16 Spencer K Howe*

The Sun is now warmest  
Setting far northwest  
It heats the Earth longest  
But Earth lags behind  
Heading for a hot August.

Many times this has happened  
Far more than my memory  
Yet I've had happy times  
When summer and light  
Made my life bright  
So ahead there are some  
of those great happenings

July had a crisp day  
All humidity gone away  
Yet warm and ecstatic  
The beach bright and placid

Seven swans swooned  
Bobbing their heads

As gracefully they flew  
Just overhead

I waited in top hat  
When a friend came along begging  
With poles at the ready  
to head off for a day fishing

The car arrived smartly  
With a beauty inside  
Wearing all white

in the bright light  
For solemn procession  
To Museum Beach

The crowd gathered loosely  
For a ceremony so woozy  
Waves sparkled profusely  
Sailing dinghies glided closely  
In just enough wind

With ebullient celebration  
We retired to our stations

Of a life together and gracious  
And now use religious education

ORB

*June 23, 2019 Spencer Howe*

The Sun in a hazy fog hung over the bay  
Sailing vessel Ichiban lapped under way  
More and more orange grew in the sky  
heralding the end of a beautiful day

To shelter at Hadley Harbor we hailed  
All moorings were long ago nailed  
also the anchorage crowded so full  
with boats that were powered or sailed

Charts and Maneuvers were needed  
with careful placement we succeeded  
To place our anchor secure among others  
Then relax with warnings all heeded

With Grill mounted over the transom  
We cooked a dinner like a king's ransom  
Wine made it so fine and nice to unwind  
Willowy warm wind helped us relax'n

By now captured in pretty twilight  
After the summery sun shone so high  
A full moon must ride hovering low  
With striking orange color keeping nigh

Low this orb in orange came through  
a sky glowing the color of baby blue  
with iridescent haze hanging low over head  
Shown this scene of the moon and its hue

The boats far and near, big and small  
Too were blanketed with a dull orange pall  
In harbor waters of eerie dark blue  
Set a sweet vignette to delight us all.

Save the foliage with solid dark green  
Gave worldly frame to our scene  
Low down on a nautical horizon  
Sent us to sleep and perchance to dream

### THE LONGEST DAY

*Kate Glennon*

I've desperately awaited this summertime, after eight bleak months in a drafty New England home  
Without privacy: the end of lost mittens and runny noses, and damp things dripping from doorknobs.  
The school year was booked tight, leaving precious little daylight to discover the children's creations  
Like snowmen with boobs, or iceforts bristling with 150 single-use plastic straws.  
I've been longing for  
The longest day of the year.

There are six of us total, plus the collie and 2 cats, and my dad who sometimes sleeps over  
Without notice. Summer both brings us together and gives us space, and things drip without germs.  
But by spring I recall that camp costs more than a new-to-me minivan, and after a week of "vaca"  
i am fried and realize I am partial to the shorter days, and by June 20th I am staring into the abyss of  
The longest freakin' day of the year.

I love my children, I really do. I am up for the challenge of the new family rule of summer  
Without wifi. There is everything to do that we had when young, plus Minot Beach and Holly Hill.

Also helmets, sunscreen, Tecnu and DEET and not letting four children out of your sight ever  
Which my folks did none of while drinking GTs in lawnchairs two miles away, back when every day  
Was the longest day of the year.

The big day began with picking blueberries; really when the solstice sun woke the baby at 5:07  
Without my permission. Our quintet of chemically-protected pickers made a PLINK of berries in each can  
That rang the same note as the PLINK they'll make frozen in a mixing bowl for January pancakes.  
We discovered gnats and spiders and under a bush a newborn bunny the twins nearly made its shortest day  
on this longest day of the year.

We stopped by the walking trail next, to burn off their energy from eating half the blueberries  
Without paying. The scent of warm pine needles reminded me of the Cape, of sap sticking to bare feet.  
The kids gathered pinecones to be glitter-glued for Nana for Christmas, then they whooped and yelled  
And crashed through the woods like wild baby boars, as if they could beat every threat forever and outrun  
The longest day of the year.

We got through lunch and sweaty naps and dad bringing over inappropriate toys from the transfer station  
Without incident. He helped swipe the end of last year's sunscreen onto wiggly escapist bodies  
And we sang our way to the beach, where the sparkles of sun on the Atlantic shone like diamonds for Cinderella,  
The Nona's truck had coconut swirl, my oldest and youngest held hands in the surf, and we all swam through  
The longest and best day of the year.

## SCITUATE SUMMER SONNET

*Lin Haire-Sargeant*

In Scituate, the summer's often late,  
And this year's no exception to the rule  
Last summer's shorts and flip-flops have to wait  
While swimmers wear their parkas to the pool.

We all know how this plays out, am I right?  
We'll get a couple warm days, just to tease us,  
And then a week of rain, no change in sight  
Except a rise in pollen, chills, and sneezes.  
This morning, all my flowers are drenched in mist  
But look! Each petal beads a prism of the sky.  
Such roses! Glowing butter-luscious bursts  
Red, pink, crimson darts straight through the eye!

But--cloaked in gloom and grouchiness we go  
Heedless of what the next bright fog might show.

OLD HEAT  
*Lin Haire-Sargeant*

In southwest Minnesota, in the summer,  
The world was closer to the sun.  
It blazed deep into black earth  
It rasped our clover lawns to brown  
It crisped the backs of our necks and the tops of our ears.  
Even deep in cottonwood groves, the hot shade glowed.

Indoors, the heat settled in dense blocks  
Unbudging behind sullen drawn blinds.  
Our fleshly bodies sagged beneath the weight.

In summer, then, we didn't have a fan  
On the third straight one hundred-topping day  
My mother called us in and ran cold water  
Until it turned her testing finger numb.  
Then she soaked clean sheets in the tub,  
Smoothed them sopping on the linoleum floor.  
We stretched out in our nylon slippers  
Otherwise worn unseen under Sunday dresses.

My mother read soothing icy books out loud--  
*The Snow Queen, The Long Winter*, until  
The air above us seemed to swirl with snow.  
As the slick cold spread through my skin  
And the wet sheets lapped against my sides  
I could almost remember being a whale in the Arctic  
Sliding my flank along a huge blue wall of under-ocean ice.

That night, through the window black above my bed  
I saw the trembling mystery of the heat  
make dull flashes. I knew the world would end.

When lightning finally ripped, the rain  
felt like a last chance to those left on earth.  
Live again, it said, but know  
that heat is all, and the source of all,  
And will return.

R O N A N  
*Noah Kermond*

From April to September,  
My friend Ronan can go in the sun forever.  
With SPF one million his mom mercilessly slathers,  
(She doesn't rub it in.)  
He's so pale he looks dead.  
We laugh so hard we might burst our bladders.  
My friend Ronan is the best.

s u m m e r j o y  
*Cathy Kang*

there were no instruments, of course  
so we blew grass reeds, clacked stones from the river  
and sang  
there was always singing

your voice was changing  
your crooked singing made me laugh  
you didn't mind, it made you happy

no one was orphaned in those moments

the morning rain pattered warm on slate eaves  
i held your foot as you lay waning  
it went cold in my grasp  
your chest, a rising and sinking knoll, grew still

and mine became a volcano

still we tumble down dewy hills  
we chase flying bugs 'til breathless we fall  
and still we sing  
there is always singing