

# WestWard Quarterly

*The Magazine of Family Reading*



**IN  
THIS  
ISSUE**

## **Summer, 2003**

Index . . . . .	Page 3
Poems . . . . .	Pages 4-9, 16-18
Corner on Youth . . . . .	Page 10
Story . . . . .	Page 11

# To our readers . . .

Welcome to the new *WestWard Quarterly!* To those of you who are long-term readers, we apologize for the hiatus in publication. We hope you enjoy the new “look”— and, more importantly, the contents. (Your mailing label shows the issue with which your subscription will now expire.) To new readers, we say: This is *YOUR* magazine! *WestWard Quarterly* exists to give a voice to writers — poets, story-tellers, essayists, humorists — looking for an outlet for their creations. While our circulation is not large, *WestWard Quarterly* is recognized within, especially, the North American poetry community, and to publish here may lend additional credence to your work. In any case, whether publisher or writer, we need each other — and that’s what it’s all about!

**Shirley Anne Leonard**, EDITOR

## WestWard Quarterly

Shirley Anne Leonard, Editor  
 P.O. Box 1586, Wheaton, IL 60189 USA  
 wwquarterly@aol.com, 800-440-4043  
*Formerly Edited by Marsha Ward*

*WestWard Quarterly* showcases the best work of upbeat writers and poets. Our magazine’s philosophy is: “Adversity happens. Find the eternal purpose behind it.” Reflect an uplifting, positive or gently humorous attitude in your submissions. Send all submissions or inquiries to the address above. The preferred mode of communication is email; put “WWQ Submission” or “WWQ Inquiry” in subject line. If sending a submission by standard mail please include SASE for response.

Maximum Lengths: Short Stories - 2000 words; Essays - 1000 words; Poems - 40 lines. Shorter submissions have a better likelihood of being published. The Editor reserves the right to edit material. For more information, visit our web site, <http://members.aol.com/wwquarterly>.

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## Index to Summer, 2003 Issue

### Poems

Science Lesson by Shirley Anne Leonard . . . . .	4
I Dance to Live by Micki H. . . . .	4
Life Sculpture by J. Alvin Speers . . . . .	5
Atlantis, Atlantis! by Jane Stuart . . . . .	6
Water by d. n. simmers . . . . .	7
Auxana Who by Raymond Malmgren . . . . .	7
Vesper Light by Philip Kenyon . . . . .	8
Agápe by Katheryn C. Leonard . . . . .	9
Remembering to Forget by Richard Leonard . . . . .	16
On Not Asking Directions by Shirley Anne Leonard . . . . .	16
Almost Autumn by David Fox . . . . .	17
Ill by Richard Sponaugle . . . . .	17
The Thought of Tomorrow by T. Ashok Chakravarthy . . . . .	18

### Corner on Youth

Deer Teecher by Karl Erickson . . . . .	10
Where a House Should Stand by Christopher Easley . . . . .	10

### Story

Maynard’s Pretty Good Day by L. R. Campbell . . . . .	11
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### Departments

Writer’s Workbench . . . . .	19
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### Ads

Poets’ Roundtable . . . . .	15
SMILE . . . . .	15

Cover Image: *Haying in Vermont* (Richard Leonard, 1963)  
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# Science Lesson

*Shirley Anne Leonard, Illinois*

The words we speak should all be good and sweet—  
an adage from of old, so often said—  
in case, in time, their substance we must eat  
and not then find them toxic, and be dead!

And now the quantum physicist says, too,  
that research shows effects which are quite clear:  
how atoms and electrons rendezvous  
according to the stimuli they hear.

So let us speak according to a plan  
for peace, and love, and right, and so align  
our universe for benefit of man  
and beast, in harmony with God's design.

Then mind the words you speak, and be discreet,  
for what you say the molecules repeat!

# *I Dance to Live*

*Micki H., California*

I dance to live  
that I may feel  
a place so free  
to truly be  
what I was  
intended to be.

# Life Sculpture

*J. Alvin Speers, Alberta, Canada*

While the sculptor attacked a marble block  
With chisel, mallet and vim  
The janitor lady came each day  
To sweep up after him.

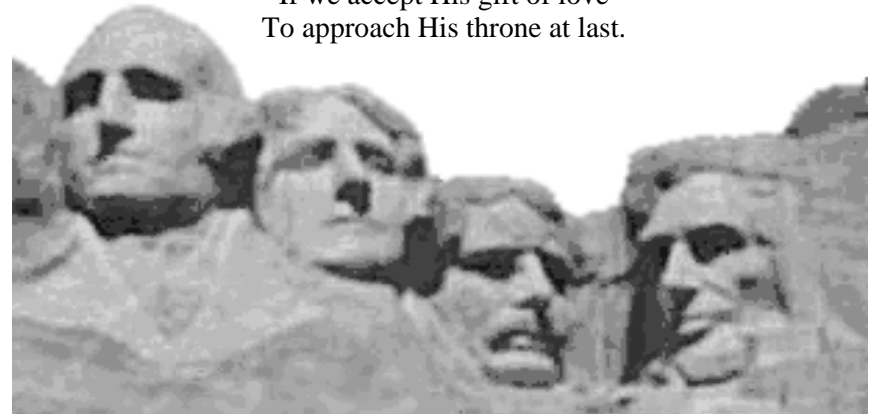
Gradually a bust took form.  
He worked from a vision he saw  
To reproduce in marble  
A man that he held in awe.

The cleaning woman came after his shift  
And little attention paid  
To the slowly altered material  
As the fellow his progress made.

One day he stayed some later  
To finish the work with care.  
The cleaner exclaimed, "'Tis Lincoln.  
How'd you know he was in there?"

Our Creator knows that within us  
There's a masterpiece to bring out.  
The experiences that wear us down  
Should never fill us with doubt.

They just carve and sand or polish  
To enhance the image we'll cast  
If we accept His gift of love  
To approach His throne at last.



# Atlantis, Atlantis!

*Jane Stuart, Kentucky*

A fragrant shell glides over opened seas  
on foamy waves lighted by strips of sun  
that build a bridge from great transparency  
for Venus' meeting with Calliope.

A simple rain falls out of blackening skies;  
one owl cries, birds fly.

Again the darkened world, a growing storm  
that threatens light! Our candles dim,  
rain drips on beaded wax,  
the seal of fresh beeswax  
sizzling under each seraphim's imprint  
that stamps the world with a new Form.

Cherry blossom day  
memory of springtime hours  
spent in time's flowers

Northern candlelight  
flames all sleeping stars of night;  
Life rests at today

Circles of gold stars  
halo earth with golden light;  
tapers reach the moon

So, day is here! We lighten with the wind  
and take our places under silent stars.

# Water

*d. n. simmers, British Columbia, Canada*

Clouds  
soften the day,  
wet smooth wind  
crosses the street  
to say hello.

Flowers give birth,  
life for the next generation:  
make colour,  
climb out of dirt.

While the sun  
streaks—

breaks through,  
a broken white mirror;  
lasers through  
the pale;  
still too dry to stop  
letting the hose soak  
through brown grass.

Water gurgles  
new life  
into the ground.

# Auxana Who

*Raymond Malmgren, Georgia*

Auxana who is red curls  
and green eyes and laughter  
runs to hug me  
when I get home  
D-a-d-d-y-y-y-y!  
who likes to find  
flowers and trees  
in the woods  
dances in a swirl of  
pink and purple frill  
punches her brother sometimes  
and cries if I scold her too loudly  
who chases boys at school  
to kiss them

sometimes talks in class  
but still gets A's and B's  
who wants me to help  
find her a husband someday  
so she can live next door  
to Mom and Dad  
is still learning to ride her  
bike  
Don't let go yet, Dad!  
who sometimes needs to be  
carried to bed  
wakes up in the morning  
and smells like a snuggle  
and smiles  
because it's Saturday.

# Vesper Light

*Philip Kenyon, Kansas*

At dusk  
on a sweat-soaked summer's day  
a lone man standing upon a Kansas knoll  
beholds the commonality of the dusk-brown hills.

The setting sun leaves the worn day,  
Mellowing the hot air.  
The receding day graciously ennoble the hills with an  
evening benediction of vesper light.

The tight grip of day loosens as the vesper light  
begins to knead the tired old hills.

The pure bright vesper light—still day, not yet night—  
hymns a trinity of life.  
The end of the passing day—  
the reality of the present moment—  
the expectation of what is to come—  
they all meet in the vesper light.

As the vesper light caresses the bluestem grass  
its blades echo back their changing tone.  
The waning sun begins to transform the sharp light-blue sky  
into a faint purple haze.

Above, a hawk makes a last slow circle in the sky.  
The cattle graze around their watering hole.  
That muddy watering hole  
now reflects itself like a jewel of imponderable depth.  
Its water is now garbed in untarnished beauty.

Slowly, ever so slowly,  
the vesper light ushers in  
the gentle stealing night.

The face of the rolling, sloping, hills wanes,  
Fading into the surrounding darkening hues of the oncoming night.

Hooded darkness slips in around the man.  
The shadow he casts under the sun can be seen no more.

The purple haze is now gone.  
The hills breathe in the evensong of the vesper light . . .  
The deep soft night begins to make itself at home.

# Agápe

*Katheryn C. Leonard, 1910-1995*

Who is my brother? Need he be  
Of flesh and blood which siréd me?  
Or need he be of visage fair  
With features fine, and bright-hued hair?  
And need his raiment seem to be  
Of finest cut and quality?

No— my brother's whom I meet  
In any town on any street,  
Of any race or any creed,  
Who stands alone in deepest need—  
Who dares to hope that one will care  
About some stranger standing there.

My brother's one who seeks, with me,  
God's peace for all humanity.

## *Writing Contests*

*WestWard Quarterly* often runs writing contests, offering a cash prize to the winners. Writers pay a small entrance fee, and the proceeds are split between the winner and *WestWard Quarterly* to help with the expenses of publication. Watch for contest announcements in

# Corner on Youth

*Contributions from Younger Readers*



## Deer Teecher

*Karl Erickson, Age 12*

Deer teecher  
Pleez xcuz my sun  
Hes sik and sos his bruther  
Heel hafta mis the speling test  
That's hiz tuff luk.  
— His Muther

## Where a House Should Stand

*Christopher Easley, Age 11*

Some people say that if a house is on a hill  
Then it is rightly fit.

But others say it's only good on flat ground,  
So others can stand by it.

As for me I cannot say,  
For both at times are true.

That is my parable of houses:  
What does it mean to you?



# Maynard's Pretty Good Day

*L. R. Campbell, Vermont*

The chicken feed was disappearing faster than usual, but the hens didn't seem to be producing any more eggs. Maynard was not worried. After all, it was only chicken feed compared to his other farm expenses. But it was a mystery. The feed bin was emptying quickly. Maynard knew he would soon get to the bottom of it.

He had almost finished his chores, but made a last minute check. He wanted to be sure he had swept out all the other bins. Bin there, done that. Satisfied, he stuffed the check into the pocket of his overalls and filled the feed troughs for the swine. They ate like pigs. Maynard headed for the house.

Entering the kitchen, Maynard found that his elderly neighbor, Zeke, had arrived and was seated at the table with his daughter Molly. They were playing a game of cards. Molly was wearing the pearl necklace her grandmother had given her. Myrtle, his wife, was fixing something on the stove. The pipe had come out, and she was trying to reattach it. To protect herself from dust, she was wearing her stovepipe hat.

"I don't know why the chicken feed is disappearing so fast," said Maynard.

"Do you think those wild geese in the meadow are coming in and eating the feed?" asked Zeke.

Myrtle spoke up, but Maynard couldn't understand her. She was talking through her hat. Besides, a grimy storm window, stored behind the stove, was in the way. Finally, Myrtle wiped off the window and made herself clear. "Yes, Maynard! Yesterday I saw a couple of females come into the barnyard. And then one of the males followed. What's good for the goose is good for the gander."

"That would explain what I found this morning," said Maynard. Reaching into his egg basket, he pulled out a large, gold-colored egg. "This must be a goose egg. Do you think it's any good?"

"Put a candle behind it, Molly," said Zeke, "and see if you can tell if there's a yolk."

Molly, standing next to him, tried to lift the egg. "It's a pretty heavy egg," she said. "I can't hold a candle to that." Before she could catch it, the egg slipped out of her hand and landed on Zeke's bald head, breaking apart.

"I guess the yolk's on me!" exclaimed Zeke. Myrtle wondered if their neighbor had been hurt by the impact, and after cleaning off the mess she examined his head. But there was no goose egg there.

"I need you to get me a chicken for dinner," Myrtle said to Maynard.

"Give me a hand, Molly," said Maynard.

Molly gave him her cards. He stuffed them into the pocket of his overalls. Molly rose to follow him into the barnyard, still wearing the necklace.

“Don’t wear those in the barnyard!” Myrtle warned her. “If the string breaks, you’ll just be casting your pearls before swine.”

Removing the necklace, Molly went to help her father catch a chicken. The hens, as if sensing their fate, began crossing the road to get to the other side.

Maynard snagged one of the chickens, but was able to free it from the barbed wire fence. Grabbing his hatchet from the shed, he put the chicken on a block of wood and asked Molly to hold it there.



“Poor chicken!” sighed Molly. “Your head is on the chopping block now!”

Raising his axe, Maynard dispatched the chicken with one fell swoop. Molly released the chicken, which began to run about the barnyard like a chicken with its head cut off. In the process, the hen dropped the dispatch that had been tucked under her wing. Maynard picked it up and stuffed it into the pocket of his overalls.

“If you feel sorry for the chickens, you can’t be my helper any more,” said Maynard sternly to Molly. “Here, put this away.” He gave her the axe.

Father and daughter returned to the house, where Zeke was still talking to Myrtle. She had

finished her task at the stove and was now mounting a large number 7 on the kitchen wall.

“What’s that for?” Maynard inquired.

“I was thirsty and just wanted a 7 up,” explained Myrtle.

Bored with the card game, Molly went to rouse the aged Pal, asleep in the corner of the kitchen.

“Let sleeping dogs lie,” said Myrtle. But Molly persisted, trying to get the dog to jump through a hoop. The dog had never done that before.

“You can’t teach an old dog new tricks,” Maynard warned her.

“Good exercise,” said Zeke. “I was thinking of learning that trick myself. But I figured I would have to jump through too many hoops. I calculated it would be about 6,453. And figures don’t lie.” At that point the large number 7 fell off the wall and landed on the floor, where it lay. “I guess I was wrong,” Zeke admitted.

Maynard picked up the number 7, tucked it into the pocket of his overalls, and went back outside for another barnyard chore.

Frustrated with the dog, Molly resumed her card game with Zeke. But in a few minutes Maynard broke in.

“Why did you do that?” asked Myrtle. “You could have just opened the door like anyone else. Now I’ll have to fix that, too.”

“If it’s fixed, you won’t be able to budge it,” Zeke observed.

“Our family finances are none of your business!” Myrtle retorted.

“Never mind all that,” said Maynard. “I just wanted to read the paper for a while.”

Myrtle handed him the morning paper. Maynard settled into the rocking chair and began to read. But in a moment he spoke up again.

“Myrtle, we’re going to have to move!”

Myrtle was wiping the dishes. “Why? Don’t you like this place?”

“Yes, but it isn’t safe. It says here that most accidents occur within five miles of home. So I think we need to move.” He stood up.

“Are you off your rocker?” Zeke asked.

“Oh, give me a break!” exclaimed Myrtle. At that moment the two dishes she was holding shattered in her hands.

“And, look at this!” Maynard exclaimed to Zeke, “These wild geese are such a problem that they’re offering a bounty on them.”

Zeke didn’t answer right away. He was looking at Myrtle, who was on her hands and knees, sobbing. “What’s the matter?” he asked.

“Things have fallen apart,” she answered. “And I’m just trying to pick up the pieces.”

Maynard helped his wife, and she composed herself. Actually, some of her songs were quite good.

“I think we need to go after those geese,” said Maynard. “Will you go with me, Zeke?”

The old neighbor was still playing the game with Molly. “I’m not sure,” he answered after a moment.

“Why not?” asked Maynard.

“I was looking here for advice on whether to go with you. But it’s just not in the cards.”

But Zeke finally agreed to go. Maynard went to the cabinet and pulled out a couple of the eleven shotguns he and Myrtle had received as gifts when they had married. They often fondly recalled their shotgun wedding.

Just then the phone rang. Myrtle answered it. While she was talking, Maynard and Zeke started for the door, with the dog Pal following.

Myrtle ended her conversation. “Where are you going in such a hurry?” she asked.

“Out to look for geese,” Maynard answered.

“Now, just hold the phone!” exclaimed Myrtle, handing him the receiver.



Myrtle left the room. Maynard stood holding the telephone for a while, but finally decided he had held it long enough. He stuffed it into the pocket of his overalls, and went out with Zeke and the dog.

To reach the woods, they had to follow a long path back through Maynard's property along the edge of a park. Because the path was often muddy in wet weather, Maynard had laid boards down over it. As he and Pal moved along, Maynard looked back to make sure Zeke was still lumbering after them.

Before long they came to the ruins of an old foundation. Maynard remembered there had once been a few houses here on the boardwalk, at the park place. From here, they could take a chance and head directly for the woods. No one had a monopoly on the short lines. They would Go for it.

As they neared the woods, Maynard thought he saw a goose. He took aim and fired. But it was just a blue jay, and Maynard's shot only grazed the top of its head. Crestfallen, the bird flew off. Then Maynard spotted another bird, a black starling. The bird did not appreciate the drops of white paint Maynard had sprinkled on it.

Soon they saw the large flock of geese feeding in the meadow at the edge of the woods. Pal took off after them, but found he could not stay airborne, and continued the chase on foot. The men followed.

The geese flew towards the trees, the dog in pursuit. When the men caught up with him he was standing at the base of a tree, gnawing on one of the lower branches. Maynard pulled him away, noticing that the branch was hardly damaged. Then the old dog tried to make noise, but only hoarse whispers came out. His bark was worse than his bite.

"You're barking up the wrong tree, Pal," said Zeke. "The bird you want is over there."

Maynard saw the bird Zeke had pointed out, and raised his gun.

Zeke was alarmed. "Are you going to kill the goose that laid the golden egg?"

At the sudden sound of Zeke's alarm, the geese flew off again in another direction. Finally he managed to silence the device. Exasperated, he exclaimed, "Maynard, this is just a wild goose chase!"

"True," Maynard agreed. "Let's get a few, and collect that bounty."

The geese were not hard to locate again, for they were making quite a racket. Maynard thought he could give it to his brother, who played tennis a lot, but he decided he wouldn't be able to carry it back.

Zeke finally shot one goose, and Maynard two. He couldn't carry both geese with one arm and the gun in the other, so he uprooted a sturdy shrub, tied his geese at each end, and hung them from his shoulder.

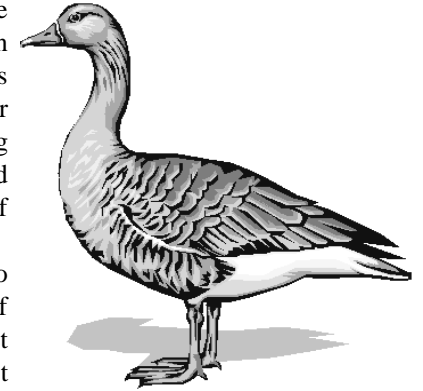
Returning to the house, the men laid their geese in the back of Zeke's pickup, which he had nicknamed Silence. They rode in Silence down to the village to collect their money.

Zeke handed his goose across the official's table, and the man gave him a dollar. Maynard then laid the shrub with his two geese on the table. The man also gave him a dollar. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," the official explained.

Maynard stuffed his dollar into the pocket of his overalls. The men rode in Silence back to the farm. Zeke made his way home, borrowing Maynard's bulldozer to grade the road. He gave it a passing grade, in case of slow traffic. Maynard watched him drive off, emitting a cloud of fumes from the tailpipe.

Maynard was exhausted, and wanted to retire early. But Myrtle dissuaded him. "If you do that," she explained, "you won't get the full Social Security benefit." So he just went up to their bedroom. Myrtle had not yet made the bed, but thoughtfully she had left some lumber in the bedroom along with a hammer, a saw, and some nails. Maynard finished the job and put on his pajamas.

Then he emptied his overall pockets, and contemplated all the stuff he had put in: the check, the hand of cards, the chicken's dispatch, the large number 7, the telephone, and his dollar. Hanging his clothes on a peg, he stood back and spoke to his pants: "Well, we had some problems today, didn't we? But, overall, we had a pretty good day!"



## Poets' Roundtable

Market and Contest Information

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# Remembering to Forget

*Richard Leonard, Illinois*

Sometimes, it seems, when you're with me  
And days go laughing by,  
I forget who I ought to be,  
That I'm supposed to cry.

Sometimes I feel such happiness  
I miss the former pain,  
The comfort of that old distress  
That I should know again.

What right have I to laugh and smile  
When sorrow is my lot?  
I ought to lament all the while,  
But— sorry!— I forgot.

When we're together now, it seems  
It's always been this way,  
And memories of faded dreams  
Are spared the light of day.

Sometimes when I should make my head  
Remember with regret,  
I get it mixed up, and instead  
Remember to forget!



# On Not Asking Directions

*Shirley Anne Leonard, Illinois*

We left the road map way behind,  
the road goes on and so do we —

Science says energy overcomes inertia  
and momentum carries us on —

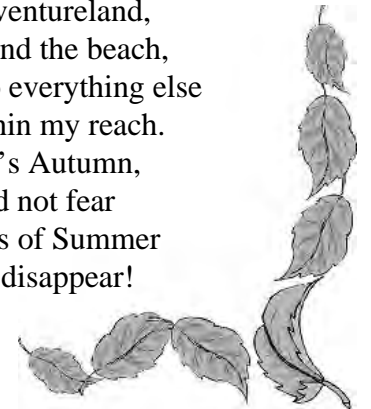
There is no stopping us now  
unless perhaps  
the road itself ends.



# Almost Autumn

*David Fox, New York*

Summer is coming to a close  
Around the third week of September  
But, with it, there are things  
I will always remember.  
Camp, barbecues, a dip or two in the pool,  
Or just sitting by my air conditioner  
Trying to keep cool;  
Going to Adventureland,  
the museum and the beach,  
And trying to do everything else  
That was within my reach.  
Yes, now it's Autumn,  
But I need not fear  
My memories of Summer  
Will never disappear!



# ILL

*Richard Sponaugle, Virginia*

“What did Lois die of?”  
“I can't say.”  
“Huh? Was she sick?”  
“No, she was in perfect health.”  
“Then how'd she die?”  
“I can't say.”  
“Why not?”  
“My parents told me never to speak ill of the dead.”

## The Thought of Tomorrow

*T. Ashok Chakravarthy, Hyderabad, A.P., India*

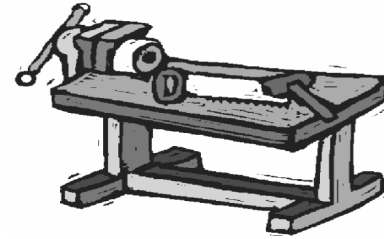
Look at the glowing sky, the twinkling stars—  
Fascinating and soul-stirring is nature.

Yes, the breeze with a gentle Jove-song flows,  
The moonlight with a golden brilliance glows.  
The delicate treetops swing in an euphoric glee,  
Ablaze is the beautiful horizon with stars set free.

The nocturnal blend is indeed memorable;  
How fine if passing time remain at standstill.  
Peace will reign the range of every thought,  
The fortress of love will submerge in delight.

Lucky are the flowers that during nights bloom,  
Lucky are the buds which for a tomorrow dream.  
Lucky are the clouds adorning the sky each night,  
Lucky are those who cherish the adorable sight!

The thought of tomorrow, the dawn of tomorrow  
Engulf the very delight with a tide of sorrow.  
Time does not pause— we may stop, but not time.  
This phase will disappear, paving the way for other rhyme.



## Writer's Workbench

A writer started a project with the following idea:

*Dawn transforms  
The slumbering town on the bay  
Into a mural lacquered with sea  
And dusted with flowers  
Forever changing color.*

It's a lovely image as it stands, and an apt metaphor. We visualize the sleepy seaside village as if in a painting; the artist has lacquered his completed work with the transparent sea, then "dusted" it with wild flowers from the surrounding fields, which now stick to the lacquer (in our mind's eye) for a colorful textured effect.

Can we improve upon it? Perhaps not, but we might be able to transform this image into a short traditional verse. Let's try:

*The village hugs the misty bay  
in slumber through the shadowed hours,  
awash in tint of ocean's gray,  
as yet to know its Artist's powers.*

*Comes now the Painter, rising slow  
from beyond far horizon's mist,  
then climbing higher, all aglow  
and casting color with each twist.*

*His canvas spread across the town,  
he daubs his final dab with glee  
and, with a smile of pride, scoops down  
to seal with lacquer of the sea.*

*With one more touch the Painter's through—  
he dusts his canvas all the while  
with flowers of ever-changing hue  
to give it feel as well as style!*

The poem adds another dimension, casting the sun as the Artist and portraying its post-dawn movement across the sky as the work of a painter. Also, it makes explicit the texture or "feel" aspect of the "dusting with flowers" that was implicit in the image. Not an "improvement," but a different creation. — THE EDITORS