The Great Blue Heron 3

Looking at a painting by Isabelle
On the wall of my wife Garland Kerr’s office.

The great blue heron waits at the feet
Of the high priestess of the Earth’s Church,
The sage also known as Mother Earth,
The one who keeps me from the lurch.

“So tell me Mother, how do you survive,
How do you make it from day to day?”
“I look to the sky and know I am well
Each time the sun comes out to play”.

“I breathe in the air and smell the scents
And listen for the songs of the birds,
And I’m filled with awe for life is sweet
And fills me with hope beyond words.

“I live my life from day to day,
And I try to remember to be thankful,
For the birds and the bees and bright green trees
And the gifts of the Earth which are plentiful.

“And when the sun sets and the moon and stars
Come to fill up the empty sky,
I close my eyes and float up amongst them,
As upon the prairie grass I lie.”
And the great blue heron flew off to the bay
Excited about its meeting
And told the flock at the roost that night
That Mother Earth sends her greeting.

So, hello to the roost from Mother Earth
Who says she is alive and well,
May you all be safe and from the virus escape
And live to have this story to tell.
The Great Blue Heron

The great blue heron stands motionless,  
Behind the marsh grass out of the wind,  
Waiting and wishing for the tide to change,  
Calculating its plan in order to fend.

The computations are made on automatic,  
All programmed by DNA,  
Knowledge passed down from long ago,  
The key to survival gained along the way.

Integrating the moon, the wind and salinity,  
Figuring out the best place to fish,  
The heron computes complex formulations  
The result of which its belly will relish.

Now humans disrespect these computations  
That occur without any heron cognition,  
Patterns of survival that have worked for ages,  
Nature’s gift that is well beyond our recognition.

Today the patterns are challenged by change  
In our Earth’s regime of the climate,  
More rain at times and then much less,  
And the bay’s balance falls out of alignment.

The freshwater inflow is needed by fish  
For it sweetens the Gulf’s salinity,  
And brings nutrients and silica needed for growth,  
For freshwater the bay has a natural affinity.
So, who are we to change the food chain
Upon which the ecosystem depends?
To take away food from the beak of the heron,
It seems to me we must make amends.

So, when I’m asked to act and change my style
And my carbon emissions to reduce,
I think upon that great blue bird
And vow to quit being the train’s caboose.

So welcome to Earth church
Pull yourself up a pew
Say a prayer for the climate
And for yourself too.