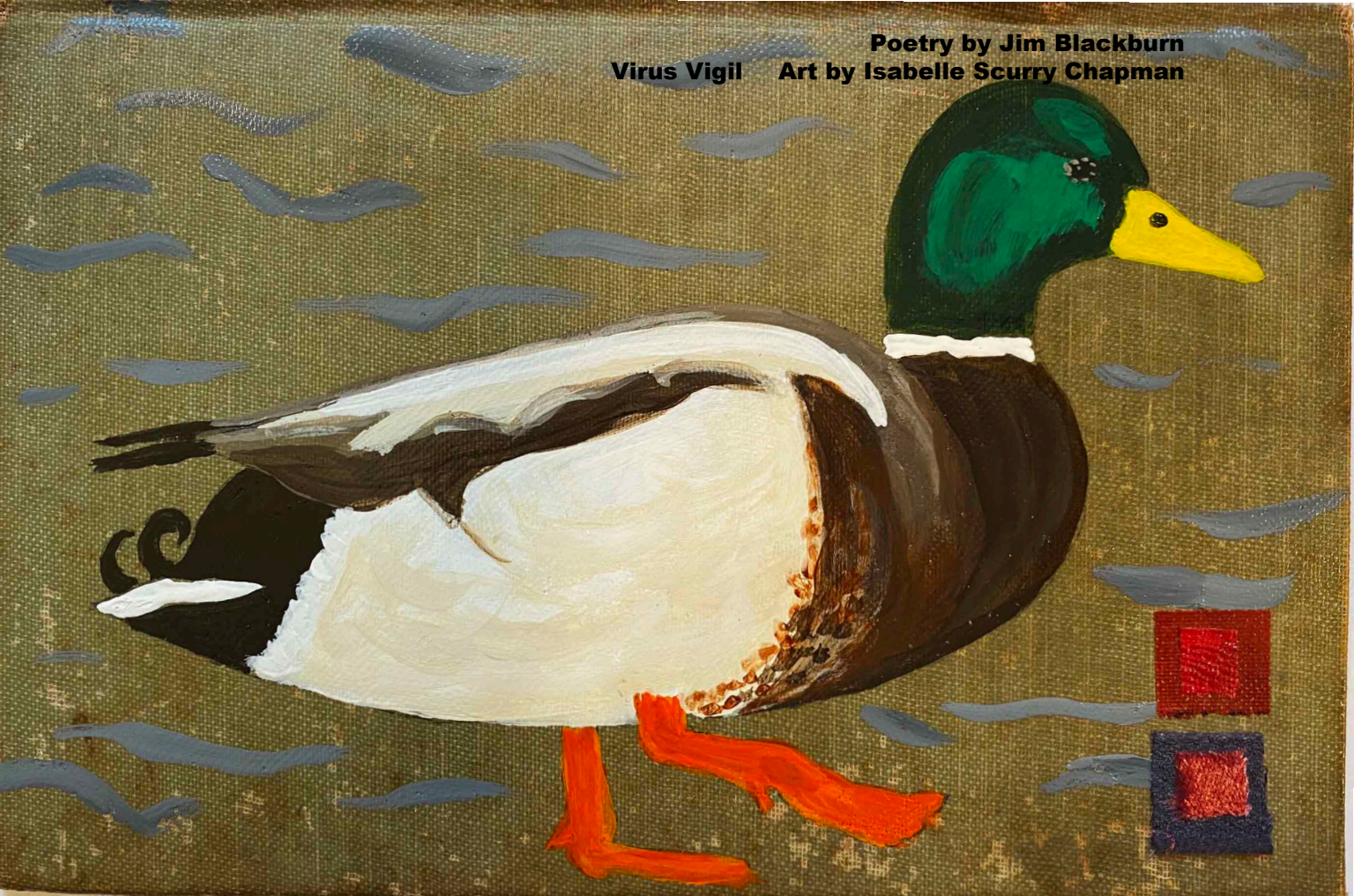


Poetry by Jim Blackburn  
Virus Vigil Art by Isabelle Scurry Chapman



## The Mallard 2

The north wind blows cold,  
Stripping away the heat  
That I need near my body.  
I'm cold, but it's neat.

The wind carries with it a mist of sleet,  
My face is raw but pure,  
My eyes are watering, and I can't feel my feet,  
This is duck weather for sure.

The flight emerges out of the north wind,  
Twenty or so flying in formation,  
The distinctive sound of quack, quack, quack,  
The hen putting out some serious information.

She leads the mallards across the prairie,  
With the gurgling sound of the feed call,  
The image clear over forty years later,  
Mallards on the prairie, late in the fall.

Today, those quacks cycle in my brain,  
The wonderful interaction seldom viewed,  
You have to observe, watch and listen,  
Your head has to be in the right mood.

Today those quacks are Earth Church's choir,  
The church reverberating with sound,  
The quacks conveying thanks for life,  
The quacks assisting my spiritual rebound.

Quacks about how we succeed together,

Quacks of gratitude for connectuality,  
Quacks about how we are lost without it,  
Quacks conveying an Earth Church reality.

Quacks reminding us that all living things  
Need a home, a sanctuary, a space that is open,  
A sacred place of peace and love,  
For those that exist, we are grateful. Amen.

So welcome to Earth Church  
Pull yourself up a pew  
Join a prayer of gratefulness  
For sacred places for you.