



## The Screech Owl 2

My friends sit on their front porch  
Avoiding the virus, carrying the torch.

The noise comes from the oaks nearby,  
An eerie sound like a horse's whinny,  
Then movement overhead reveals the source,  
As it slips in to land on a limb oh so skinny.

The little owl always moves with stealth  
Through the Heights at night with no retreat,  
A would-be friend living right amongst us,  
The neighbor that we never meet.

My friends want us to meet their owl,  
But can we all get on their deck?  
Is it appropriate social distancing?  
Or will it make our nerves a wreck?

I want to meet the little screech owl,  
And hear again its purring call.  
I want the virus to be gone today  
And put an end to this all.

But alas I'm afraid it's not to be,  
We'll stay apart for a few weeks more,  
We'll meet with Zoom in the living room,  
And keep the virus from our door.

But do not think this will be forgotten,  
This time when all were caught off guard,  
I'm looking for the best in political signs

And will boldly place them in my yard.

We've almost lost the economy,  
Crippled by the foe we cannot see,  
And I sense the changes in the wind  
And that's the way it's gonna be.

Soon I will whinny back to the owl,  
And hope the porch call is well received,  
But I must wait awhile to hug and mingle,  
Till then I'll live with just being perceived.

## The Screech Owl

Sitting on the screen porch in Wimberley  
Watching the last rays of the sun disappear.

The evening dusk is penetrated by an eerie sound  
That floats through the limbs of the cedars  
And oaks that surround us along Lone Man Creek -  
The sound of the little screech owl that sits  
On a small branch at the edge of the canopy,  
Staring down at me without moving,  
Questioning me about the current state  
Of human affairs in the Hill Country,  
Asking about the ability of humans  
To solve the problems that are most important to  
The birds and bunnies that live in this land  
Of karst geology – a honeycomb of caves  
And underground channels that burst to the surface  
In the springs that keep our rivers flowing.

He talks of problems about water and drought  
And the large, commercial water wells  
That suck the marrow from the limestone bones  
That define the Hill Country,  
Marrow that falls from the sky and moves into,  
Through and out of the ground again,  
Marrow that is becoming a commodity,  
The stuff of life going to the highest bidder  
Without care or concern for consequences.

The little owl looks down at me and  
Asks me what I am doing?  
And I say, inadequately,

That I am doing my best,  
And my little friend winks at me  
With that beautiful yellow eye  
And says “That’s all I am asking –  
That you simply do your best,”  
A sweet message from the screeching owl  
That leaves me peaceful and serene.