

[From Spring 2000]

UK Visitor Waxes Poetic

As a consequence of a recent visit to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in February, a visitor from the United Kingdom penned the poem "Morning Light" -- about an early morning visit to the Lighthouse Trail. It appears in the adjacent column [below].

Mr. Roger Norman, who hails from Romney Marsh, in the county of Kent, is a frequent visitor to the refuge. In fact, during his Chincoteague vacation last September, Mr. Norman wrote a poem about the (in)famous Chincoteague mosquitoes. He gave it to a refuge staff member, and we'll try and track it down and include it in a future issue.

In both instances, Mr. Norman kindly gave his permission to share his work with others, including publication in the *Piping Plover*.

If you've ever visited the Lighthouse Trail in the early morning, I hope Mr. Norman's poem will recreate that experience for you. If you haven't, perhaps Mr. Norman has provided an incentive to do so on your next visit to the refuge.

Thank you, Mr. Norman!
Frank V. Moore, Editor

Morning Light

On wooded bluff against the eastern shore
I stand and view the sombre post-dawn day
the silent trees still in shadow merged,
no breath of wind their pendant leaves to sway.

A sturdy lighthouse nearby rises tall,
distinct in painted banding, red and white.
Stands ready for mariners to guide
by flashes, in the darkness of its light.

Weary avian travelers up aloft,
southward by winds boreal swiftly borne
were to those circling beans attracted
when fell sweeping rain before the dawn.

As the morning sun, fresh from sleep, arose
and peered above the rearward sylvan rows
it sent across the clearing, golden shafts
to capture topmost branches in their glow.

They filter down from branch to yielding branch
like brilliant drops of purest liquid gold
slowly peeling back night's darkening veil
revealing every leaf in outline bold.

All at once I was aware of movement,
at first so subtle, though I was not alone.

Above me, on a slender branch of pine
a bird appeared and just as quick, was gone.

Eagerly I glanced about, saw to my left
not one but three together, and a sight
beyond them, so marvelous, of warblers
Magnolis, Parula, Black-and-white.

A Prairie Warbler sang its high-pitched trill,
the air was filled with calls from all around
as migrants slipped like quick-silver thro the trees,
in path-side plants and some even on the ground.

Bespectacled vireo, grey-plumaged,
and oriole, white, orange and black,
with tanager, nuthatch and phoebe
had arrived with the wind at their back.

Suddenly, as if struck by a fairy wand,
the sound was gone, the sun-lit woods lay still.
Not a movement, not a half-seen shadow,
I was alone on that abandoned hill.