

Labors of love

by [J. Barrie Shepherd](#) in the [June 13, 2006](#) issue

Spring did not officially arrive
until two this afternoon,
or so the weatherspinner had informed us,
so that when, at morning prayer,
my still wintered words were interrupted
by a pair of honking calls,
I laughed aloud
to think that my Canadian neighbors
of several springtimes had beaten nature's clock
by seven hours and more to seek
their customary lot along the creek
for hatching this year's brood.

Minutes later—the creed
and half a prayer, no less—
and their first raucous pass to reconnoitre
was followed by the splashdown run,
low now across our deck
and through the clustered trees
onto that quiet pool stretching above the rapids
where, over the next few days, they will be joined,
most likely, by a familiar pair of mallard ducks
who share their taste in shoreline real estate.
Meanwhile a red-tailed hawk
orbits high aloft
in leisurely anticipation.