

Russell Rowland

To Be Alive at Springtime

Dialysis candidate Max did not expect to be alive this year at springtime, yet there he stands at the bay window, as Dark-Eyed Juncos pace, pecking over seeds that have fallen from his feeder.

And here come black bears, in twos and threes, that all winter Max forgot weren't far away—to wrestle down birdfeeders, plunder trash. After all, berries aren't ready and one must eat.

Pale Ann, her posture picture-perfect, buried two sons, one husband. They do not return, but she steps out today: multi-colored crocus tips are pointing upward; earth can't keep them under.

Thus Veronica's paperwork has gone: marriage license, to restraining order, to divorce decree. Now she will draw her curtains on May's Flower Moon, though its eye is not the dreaded one.

New Hampshire poet **Russell Rowland** is widely published in small journals. A seven-time Pushcart Prize nominee, he is a past winner of *Old Red Kimono's* "Paris Lake Poetry Contest" and twice winner of both *Descant's* "Baskerville Publishers Poetry Prize" and the *Plainsongs* Award. His chapbooks *Train of All Cabooses* and *Mountain Blue* are available from Finishing Line Press.