

RONNIE HESS

Middleton Owl

Most remarkable is not the bird,
a juvenile great grey owl, out of its usual,
northern habitat this winter, come south
so goes the theory, because of the competition,
the hunger for disappearing little voles.
No, it's the crowds, dozens of sight seekers,
straddling the train tracks, gathered around
the post office parking lot, stopping traffic,
settled in folding chairs, or perched
behind tripods and high-resolution cameras
taking him in, face to face, eye to eye.
He has made the papers, front page. You think,
such an unassuming fellow for a raptor,
scarcely moving, letting the wind ruffle
his feathers, unaware of any danger, inexperienced,
posing for the photographers without care
this Good Friday, while the flock wishes it could
touch him, wipe the blood from his beak.

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26 November 2017
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ronnie Hess is the author of *Whole Cloth* (Little Eagle Press 2009), *Ribbon of Sand* (Willet Press 2014), and *A Woman in Vegetable* (Kattywompus Press 2015). Her work has also appeared in *Echolocations: Poets Map Madison*, *Mizmor L'David Anthology: The Shoah*, *Poetry Speaks*, and *Bramble*. She sits on the boards of the Wisconsin Poet Laureate Commission, the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets, and the Friends of Lorine Niedecker. She lives in Madison, Wisconsin, and can be found online at ronniehess.com.

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