

## 4 Poems by Michael Lee Johnson

**Introduction:** **Aldo Leopold** (January 11, 1887 – April 21, 1948) was an American author, scientist, ecologist, forester, environmentalist, and conservationist. In the 1920-1930 eras, he moved to the Baraboo, Wisconsin area. The grey wolf was viewed as a predator, to be killed and sold for their skins. Even then, the grey wolf population was diminishing. Leopold help restore the value and dignity of the grey wolf to Wisconsin farmers and residents. Musical credit on YouTube: Sound Of The Wolves - Music and Nature Sounds For Relaxation

### *Dead Grey Wolf Skins* (V2)

(Tribute: Aldo Leopold)

By Michael Lee Johnson

1935.

Dead grey wolf skins hang  
on white clotheslines across Baraboo, Wisconsin  
the dark surface, dirty old shack, side of the moon,  
that only exists in memories hung high, long before.  
Hunters in the past did their job well,  
sold skins, collected a few bucks,  
increased deer for hunting, saved cattle,  
decreased fear, told tales, short stories, adventures.

The grey wolf face now emergent,  
opens his mouth wide in the safety  
open in blue sky.  
Shows his white teeth against  
background of black sky, shadow,  
hears thunder again, releases  
fireflies at night, monarch butterflies  
during the day, guts down pine tree spikes.  
He walks once again over landscapes of turquoises.  
He consumes dirt road dust, tracks trails, 114.4 miles from Milwaukee to Baraboo.  
His keen eyes are sharp for growth of skyscraper, Pabst brewery building.  
Traveling side roads over many years brings him to the present.  
No more violators, hunters with guns, fake Jesus people  
slender in His bathrobe Christ repeats two fishes, 5 loaves and the wolf survives.

Aldo Leopold feeding inmate in small jail cells only kills a few wolves for research.

Aldo a Saint of conservation a consumer of cigarettes and butts,  
heart wings of doves attached, broken, stroke fire, a neighbor field  
heart stroke drops into history.

***If You Find No Poem*** (V3)

By Michael Lee Johnson

If you find  
no poem on  
your doorstep  
in the morning,  
no paper, no knock on your door,  
your life poorly edited  
but no broken dashes  
or injured meter-

if you do not wear white  
satin dresses late in life  
embroidered with violet  
flowers on the collar;  
nor do you have  
burials daily  
across main street-

if no one whispers  
in your ear, Emily Dickinson-  
you feel alone-  
but not reclusive-  
the sand child  
still sleeping in your eyes-  
wiping your tears away-

if you find  
no poem on  
your doorstep-  
you know  
you are not from New England.

## *Schizophrenia Night*

By Michael Lee Johnson

(Devoted to John Nash, A Beautiful Mind Movie, 2001)

I am a chalkboard computer brain.  
I have updated drawn raw  
images even the classroom  
students cannot see, hear, nor understand.  
They sit quietly in Disneyland  
wondering about my eccentricities  
I capture there stillness, then I speak.  
I am the professor, special agent of government  
dream tracer of crossroad puzzles.  
Photographic memory in private rooms,  
did I hear a critic, erase  
destroy dissociative thoughts.  
I walk out unsteady in disbelief.  
Is there a shadow of storybooks following me?

I am a genius; I know who I am.  
I spend nights in formula construction  
drawing full color images of my brain,  
percentages of gray matter lost.

I stick my ego to the eagle of the sky.

When on a high on an airplane, self-love,  
full bloom, I keep my enemies at bay.  
I shelter the skeletons of thought.

I trust Jesus because His image is stable,  
every group I have ever known says "The Lord's Prayer."  
Even then, new members leave, disappear, I hear what they said.  
I had an MRI to trace all my youthful abuses.  
There were no images there but voices I remember.  
I cast there shadows, audio, visual for show, in the background.  
In time, they quiet their voices. I walk beyond their images.  
I pass on, they still screenplay.

You have to stretch lean, refer to sanity,  
drink Asian tea, smooth out hallucinated sounds  
before that stage, I took that Nobel prize,  
even before, I forgave you.

**Footnote:** John Nash has suffered most of his life with severe paranoid schizophrenia and has gone on to be a celebrated American [mathematician](#) whose works in [game theory](#), and [differential geometry](#) are appreciated around the world. The movie ***A Beautiful Mind***, portrays Nash's mathematical genius and his struggles with schizophrenia and how he went on to win a Nobel Prize.

### ***Possum Slim (V2)***

By Michael Lee Johnson

105 years old today  
Possum Slim finally  
gets his GED,  
drinks gin,  
talks with the dead.  
“Strange kind of folks  
come around here,  
strange ghosts”  
he says, “come  
creeping pretty regular.  
Just 2 ghosts,  
the only women I ever loved,  
the only women I ever shot dead.”