

Thanksgiving

At the time of the first one
the Wampanoags
knew how to give thanks—
and an apology as well—
to the deer or other beast
they were about to kill
so their family and village
could have something to eat.

The pilgrims, however,
only gave thanks for their food,
not to it, and did not apologize—
either to the animals who helped
provision their table or
to their dinner companions, for
the pillage future generations
would inflict upon the land,
its wild creatures, its native peoples.

Today our civilization
is more advanced.
There are fewer wild creatures
and native peoples.
The land has been cleared
of such impediments to make way
for roads and airports—
so that now our dinner companions
may travel as many miles
as they like for the holiday.
We manufacture our turkeys
and do not have to hunt them,
slaughter enough each November
to feed the entire population
of the globe back then.

Still we have not learned
to thank our food properly,
nor realize that being civilized
sometimes means having to say
"I'm sorry."

Steve Bloom
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