

## OLD GLORY

With easel set not far away,  
but far enough to miss its shade,  
the pastel painter launched his day  
to capture oaken glory's staid  
and stolid, stalwart, sad display.

As contour sketch, laid steady down,  
outlined the edges of the tree,  
he felt a mesmerizing frown  
cast from the trunk in mystery,  
as from an ancient king's renown.

At once, the artist's tutored hand  
seemed caught and taught in measured dance,  
as pigment pure spread out unplanned  
to paint the old oak's steadfast stance  
beside the lake and forest land.

The limbs that dangled graybeard moss  
took on an ageless majesty;  
the gnarled bark, with purple gloss,  
declared its royal sovereignty  
midst summer's gain and winter's loss.

The painting draftsman's fervent skill  
applied each otherworldly hue  
as chosen by another's will—  
“Impressionistic rendezvous!”  
he muttered then, and says so still. . . .

— *David L. Hatton, 5/1/2016*