

# Labors of love

by [J. Barrie Shepherd](#) in the [June 13, 2006](#) issue

Spring did not officially arrive  
until two this afternoon,  
or so the weatherspinner had informed us,  
so that when, at morning prayer,  
my still wintered words were interrupted  
by a pair of honking calls,  
I laughed aloud  
to think that my Canadian neighbors  
of several springtimes had beaten nature's clock  
by seven hours and more to seek  
their customary lot along the creek  
for hatching this year's brood.

Minutes later—the creed  
and half a prayer, no less—  
and their first raucous pass to reconnoitre  
was followed by the splashdown run,  
low now across our deck  
and through the clustered trees  
onto that quiet pool stretching above the rapids  
where, over the next few days, they will be joined,  
most likely, by a familiar pair of mallard ducks  
who share their taste in shoreline real estate.  
Meanwhile a red-tailed hawk  
orbits high aloft  
in leisurely anticipation.