An ode, says Webster’s dictionary, is a poetic song marked by exaltation of feeling. The feeling of today’s ode by Peter Harris of Waterville is inspired by the transformation of seeds into popcorn.

**Ode to Popcorn**

*by Peter Harris*

I pour the shape-shifters out of the old Mason jar into the pan.
The color of honey, sleek in their pile of steamlined sibs, not one of them cares if they’re on top, no rivalries, no grasping, nothing falsified from skin to core, no hint about what’s pent inside their quarter inch of seed, that only gets expressed when, as now, they’re being boiled in oil.

Soon they’ll snap the strappings of their haiku form, explode ten times their size, go wild, expressionist; no two the same: fist, cloud, snapdragon, cauliflower, elephant man, barnacle, meringue, a bowl of almost weightless meteors, an orchestra of mutant trumpets all playing off-white tunes, although, in each, their husk remains, in caves or sunk in sockets like weird eyes.

For flakes like these, no way back to raindrop symmetry. A little salt and butter, then on to meet their call: to melt in mouths that crave a hint of paradise.