

REFLECTIONS

February 12, 2006

**All the birds of the air nested in its boughs,
all the beasts of the field gave birth under its
branches;
all the great nations lived in its shade.
It was majestic in beauty, with its spreading boughs,
for its roots went down to abundant waters.**

Ezekiel 31:6-7

Beauty of the Earth

The morning was still and gray. From my window all looked silent. Resting well below the horizon, the pond was like a photograph in its stillness—stillness except for the ripples that were made by two migrant ducks. The ducks pass through about this time each winter on their way to somewhere. This day they seemed to make no sound at all as they moved smoothly about the pond with but an occasional dive below to go fishing.

Winter feels so gray. Especially this time of year I see the grayness. I am ready for the gray to be repainted with the promise of spring, the freshness of budding trees and the emerging newness from the soil. I am ready for birds to appear with renewed liveliness and insects to mobilize along the ground. I am ready for the whole earth to awaken as from a long sleep into its annual transformation that is part of the mystery in the beauty of the earth.

I sometimes pause to look at the beauty that God provides us. The beauty lies in colors, in shapes, in movements, and in sounds that are all orchestrated in such intricate and balanced ways. Everything fits together, each part having a place yet depending on all the others. Tiny details comprise it all, details beyond the power of the naked eye to see or the most brilliant mind to comprehend.

How well the words of the hymn express, “For the beauty of the earth, For the glory of the skies, For the love which from our birth, Over and around us lies.” One cannot help but feel the presence of God when we gaze upon the beauty of the earth and lift our voices to say, “Lord of all, to Thee we raise, This our hymn of grateful praise.”

In the quiet of the moment that day, I was in awe of God’s creation, the magnificence in its nurturing beauty, the simplicity within its immense complexity, moving each day so effortlessly that we fail to see it all. I was glad that I paused to see the beauty and to discover in the secluded serenity of the stillness that our peaceful little pond was God’s provision for two migrant creatures in his world.

The ducks fished for a while then disappeared as silently as they came—*but filled.*

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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