



REFLECTIONS

May 5, 2019 Refreshed from the Archives of 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

Resting in the shadow of winter's gray hillsides, a small pond awakened to the soft glow of morning rising slowly above the hilltops. Its stillness looked like a photograph—stillness that is except for ripples from two migrant ducks that made their way gracefully onto the pond's glassy face. Toward winter's end, ducks often passed through on their way to somewhere. These seemed careful to keep the silence as they swam effortlessly about the pond with but an occasional dive below to go fishing.

The beauty of the scene offered a refreshing contrast to winter days. Those always feel so gray to me, especially toward winter's end. By then I'm ready for gray to be repainted with the promise of spring, the freshness of budding trees and of green birthing from rested soil. I'm ready for birds to appear with renewed vigor and insects to mobilize along the ground. I'm ready for the whole earth to arise from its long sleep into its annual transformation that is part of the mystery in earth's beauty.

The beauty of the earth lies in colors, in shapes, in movements, and in sounds orchestrated in amazingly elaborate and balanced symphonies. All pieces fit together, each part having a special place yet dependent on all the others. Tiny details encompass it all, details beyond the power of the naked eye to see or the most brilliant mind to fully understand.

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 sat in awe of God's creation, the magnificence in its nurturing beauty, the simplicity within its immense complexity, moving each day so fluently that we fail to see it all. But I became aware of something deeper that day when I paused to see the beauty of the earth. Hidden within the serenity of that the peaceful little pond was God's provision for two migrant ducks.

They fished there a while then disappeared as silently as they came—but filled.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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