

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

Shhh! Let's not make a sound. I don't want to scare him away. We've spent the morning with each other. He's been ignoring me, acting as if he didn't see me, but I'm sure he's aware of my presence. I don't have a camera, so I'll have to use this Bic pen to bind him in my memory.

Today I was given the surprise gift of a day off at the gulf. Last night I was a little disappointed to find out the house we were staying in was on the intercoastal waterway and not on the beach. My disappointment was based on ignorance, for I had never experienced the backside of the gulf before and assumed that if there were no surf or sand, there'd be no surprises. I thought brackish water was sure to be boring.

Upon awaking, I saw the first signs of daybreak and went upstairs to find coffee made. I poured a cup and walked outside, thinking surely even if the backside is boring, the dawn would be good. They always are, for they're always resurrection reminders. In the gray of the pre-dawn, I carefully walked barefoot down a steep stairway to a pier. It was one of those grand old docks, which seems to stretch out for a mile. As I began my walk, I noticed the parallel pier of the next-door neighbors had a statue of a crane under its dock. I thought, "How strange," but didn't think much more about it except that I thought it was a little tacky, you know,

like one of those concrete pink flamingos you find on the front porch.

I continued my walk to the end of the pier. It was perfectly appointed with two crab cages, a sink and hose to wash caught fish, and a wonderful old built-in bench. There I took my seat and drank my coffee and watched a glorious dawn develop. I started reading my morning devotional. I gave the surrounding water a nonchalant gaze. It looked pretty boring and brackish to me.

Then all of a sudden, this world seemed to come alive. The water seemed to be shimmering with activity as if it were a big bubbling cauldron of liquid. There were flying fish doing a three-jump dance, and schools of minnows making the surface shimmer. The birds joined in the play. Big ones. Little ones. Short ones. Skinny ones. They went about their business - performing their daily morning rituals of the dance of the flight and the song of the dawning and I tried to continue my morning devotional. It usually is a thirty-minute requirement and it was stretched today to an hour and a half, for I couldn't keep my mind focused on the reading. Instead of becoming frustrated, I decided to become part of their play. A fish would fly, then it would be my turn to read a line. A seagull would skydive, then it would be my turn to read a line. We kept this up, as I said, a good part of the morning.

Remember that tacky bird statuary I had observed under the dock? Well, much to my surprise and delight, he's real and

alive and has spent the morning with me. Instead of a crane, he's a blue heron. He seems to have two favorite observation spots: under docks and on top of docks. He's very patient and slow. He remains totally still and seems only to move when I am not watching. Thus far he's stood on and under three docks and has caught one fish. Now he's coming towards me and I do hope he comes close enough for me to thank him for his companionship. It's been nice having him share the morning with me.

He reminds me of a wonderful story I recently heard. An Alabama state senator has an isolated vacation home in Alaska. The house is situated near a body of water where killer whales come and sleep. He decided to take his small boat and see if he could find one of those sleeping whales. He did. This huge mammal lay perfectly still in the water with his back curved and sticking out so he could breathe through his air hole. The man and his boat remained silent and still as he floated nearer and nearer to the big fish. Finally, he realized he had to crank the motor, for he was getting too close to the whale for comfort. As the realization of the danger began crippling his psyche, he saw the whale awaken and swim by, and then dive deep, and then it soared out of the water like a rocket. This great mammal then rolled his body as if to salute the man with his fin and then looked him straight in the eye. There was no doubt in his mind that the big old fish did know what was going on and would have playfully winked at him if

he could. At that moment how incredibly connected the man must have felt to this God-created creature and to the world which surrounded them both.

At this moment, I also feel that connectedness to God's handiwork, "And it was good" is the repeated refrain in the Genesis creation hymn-like story. "And it was good." And so it is now, just as it was then.

I just came to the last page of today's devotional. Guess what poem the meditation ends on - "To a Waterfowl" by William Cullen Bryant. What a coincidence, don't you think? Peace. Briney water is beautiful once you get to know it. Most things are. May I read "To A Waterfowl" by William Cullen Bryant.

To a Waterfowl

*Whither, 'midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?*

*Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.*

*Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?*

*There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast -*

*The desert and illimitable air -
Lone wandering, but not lost . . .*

*Thou'rt gone. The abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.*

*He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.*

Peace, pilgrim. God bless.

I am your intercoastal loving sister in Christ,

Lucy