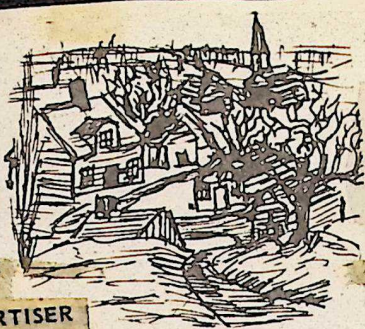


Village View by Andrea Leonard



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A week or so ago, late one afternoon, I noticed one pair of geese were back in the golf course pond.

The next day there were three pair. Today I counted ten geese at first glance; then I looked again from further along, a dozen more were feeding under the hill. Spring's here.

The crocus are all in bloom and have been for a couple of weeks. They've survived snow, frosts, heavy rains and high winds. They should peak this week. Spring's here.

The robins and blue jays are singing love-songs; the redwing blackbirds are searching out nesting sites. A flicker flicked past the other morning. Spring's here.

You'll find your favorite pussy willow all pussied out. Spring's here.

Town Meeting's in full swing. March gales and rains sweep and scrub the wood; warm days alternate with cold ones, bright days with dull ones. The earth stirs with new life. Spring's here.

Such as it is.

In the bright hazy days of October when it it's pleasanter than full and humid summer, we cherish the fine weather, knowing winter's icy blasts come next; we yearn for spring.

We forget how chilly Cape Cod springs nearly always are. Though days are longer and sunshine lies warm through the windowpane, outside there's no escaping the raw cutting edge of wind-off-the-water.

Small bulbs are oblivious to the chill; pushing up through leaves, snow, and winter's debris, they bloom on schedule.

Birds migrate according to the days' length, not temperatures; when due, they arrive at breeding grounds, ignoring cold.

In a few short weeks forsythia, jonquils and narcissus will split fat buds into golden blossom, brightening every dooryard. Usually spring's promised warmth, here on the Cape, remains but a promise. Icy waters of Bay and Sound permit only cold breezes until late May and early June. Then, suddenly, it's summer.

Nature's creatures, flora and fauna, live spring regardless of the weather.

Man, that single species in Nature's limitless variety of life that supposes itself possessed of superior powers, remains trapped in winter's grip. We've no instincts, anymore, to guide our seasonal behaviors.

Yet, here in New England, even Man responds to some rituals of spring. We rake and prune and clip and snip. We spread manure and fertilizer, order plants for the garden-to-be, start housecleaning chores -- and hold Town Meetings.

How many of you will participate, this year in spring rituals of local government? How many will come to listen and learn? How

many will come to speak on Warrant Articles?

Or do you, good citizen, believe you've done your full duty when you cast your vote?

Your representatives will be at Town Meeting, two hundred and more strong. Yes, they ran for the job. Yes, they agreed to serve. They know what's involved; and still they ran.

work and until well after seven o'clock.

Yes, changes are uncomfortable, but we soon become accustomed to new patterns.

We get used to new stop signs and traffic lights on the highways, to new gadgets like seat belts, automatic transmissions and power brakes. When we trade cars, we spend a few days learning the dimensions of the new one and adjusting to its different "feel".

Perhaps the hardest adjustment we make in our physical surroundings is moving from one house to another. A new place must be found for all our possessions.

In the old house, the refrigerator stood at the left of the sink; in the new one, it's on the right. In the old house there was a pantry, but few kitchen cabinets; the new kitchen is lined with cupboards but since there's no pantry, a spot must be found to store the ironing board, the vacuum cleaner, the broom and mop.

The problem's compounded if the move is from a large house to a smaller one. There are too many things for every room, closet, cupboard and drawer.

Pictures, lamps, occasional tables, draperies and rugs all present new spatial problems.

Further complications are faced if a new neighborhood is involved. Choices must be made about which service station to use, the most convenient dry cleaners, the best laundromat, which bank to patronize, and where to park for maximum convenience.

These decisions can be stressful when they all come at the same time. There are new neighbors to think about; you wonder if you'll like them, and if they'll like you.

You wonder if they'll be annoyed when your dog barks, and if your cat will dig up their garden or disturb the feathered friends at the their feeder.

Will the children find friends in the neighborhood; how will they manage the transfer to new schools?

Inability to cope with change presents a true crisis. Any person who can't make the necessary adjustments is acutely uncomfortable and may even require professional help.

Most of us adjust to ordinary disruption of routine without trouble, particularly if we have had a voice in the decision and enough lead-time to accept the idea.

For animals, however, special care can help your pets through major changes.

It's often thought cats are more attached to places than people, and dogs less threatened by moves because their allegiance is to individuals.

In my experience cats can adjust readily to changes of residence if they're given an opportunity to explore the new location for a couple of hours prior to being dumped into it when all the turmoil of moving is in process.

They're also comforted to find familiar family possessions when finally introduced to the new home. The next to the last thing I move, when I must move my cat, is clothing and shoes. The last thing -- the cat.

When I bring the cat into the new home, I find she's quite frightened; during the upheaval of moving things around and unpacking, I make a soft bed for her in my clothes closet, and close the door to muffle the sounds of household confusion.

Once things are straightened out and Puss rejoins the family circle, she's curious to explore every corner, but no longer frightened.

When things can't be explained, they can be made easier by thoughtful consideration of how the animal must feel.

If similar consideration is given to people, they too handle changes more easily.