

I AM BUT A SPRINGTIME OBSERVER.

I am but a “bench” sitting near the edge of a river. It is becoming springtime and everything is changing, evolving, once frozen and sparse, now life begins again.

Early morning ducks waddle by my base looking for fallen crumbs of food dropped by passing visitors or seeds thawing from the snow and ice. They chatter among themselves as they move down the shore always in search of food.

Shortly a short man all bundled up in a muffler and coat comes by with a fat bulldog on a leash. The dog is sniff sniff sniffing at everything he passes. Only the dog knows if he is sniffing for food or if he is just experiencing who or what has recently visited these places using his best sensing device. Both seem to be making small huffing noises as they move by.

The bench would like someone to sit and visit or rest awhile. Use him, the bench, for what he has been put here for, but at this time of day, early morning, most creatures are on the move, between morning coffee and picking up the newspaper from the corner store, walking the dog or on their way somewhere.

The voices are loud as a middle aged couple approach the bench. They are arguing, about money it would seem, their voices get louder as they reach him and luckily they pass quickly, voices fading as they move down the shore path.

Finally someone sits! An older gent, he unfolds his newspaper and with a quick snap, turns and folds it again to the sports section. Muttering to himself, he goes through scores of games, second hand and after the fact coaching of missed plays and mistakes. If only he were young again he would show them a thing or two. Ah, but he isn't young and before he stiffens up, he groans to his feet and shuffles away.

Now comes a pretty girl in a yellow dress. She is busy with her cell phone, what else, of course, and hums a current song while her fingers fly over the buttons trying to find a person to share some information or arrange a time or place. A quick mumbled conversation ends in a giggle so she must have been successful.

Mornings are usually like this...a passing crowd...not a resting or passive visitor, not someone or something a bench can get to know.

Oh, there are always a few regulars during the day, some pleasant some not so nice, like the older fellow who regularly raises his rump to pass gas right here on this bench.

A young Mother with a stroller visits often and if her baby sleeps she reads a book in the sunshine but if the baby is fussing, she lifts him out and feeds him making soothing and cooing noises. That is always nice, for the bench, folks seem to forget he is there, a witness to it all. Yes it is not a bad life, seeing and hearing bits and pieces of life.

A bicycle whizzes by and then another, they are not supposed to be on the walking path but as always happens, kids take short cuts and hope to escape detection.

It is amazing the way folks move by him. Most take no notice of him at all but today he thinks he will have a few "sitters". The swan family has been active on the river for the last few days and people love to watch them, coming with a variety of cameras and wanting to freeze the moment to take home to share with family over dinner perhaps.

He has been wishing and waiting for a few weeks now for a regular happening in spring, young lovers, walking hand in hand, talking quietly, sitting close and often whispering words to each other he cannot quite hear but knows it is about love. If a bench could smile, he would be smiling, he thinks of the many couples who have sat here talking, remembering, planning, they are by far the best visitors.

Old lovers are nice too, so much reminiscing but it might surprise you to know that old lovers are sometimes new lovers too. Having been given a second chance in the golden years they cherish the moments. Yes if a bench could get teary eyed he would do that too.

Yes, I am but an observer but the things I see are marvelous, life in all forms, and I will testify that life is good!