



In Bounds: Isn't Our Lot in Life Grand?

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Each year at about this time I make a pilgrimage across the course, through rapidly melting snow and over rivulets of fast moving free water to a spot on the 15th hole. Along the way my eyes are caught by the bright red buds of the sugar maple trees as they prepare to flower. If I listen closely I can hear the snow melt as it meanders underneath the last white vestiges of winter. The smell of stale leaves and potential green turf growth tickles my nostrils.

Under an oak tree, south facing into the intense spring sun, I sit and take in the mystery of rebirth. Each year is the same, yet different. My mind is full of what lies ahead: projects, new employees, the remnants of winter and expectations of the players. Yet above the cacophony of work thoughts, there floats a more abstract pattern. Wow, I think, almost talking out loud. The amazing transition I bear wit-

ness to takes my breath away.

Spring! In my eyes, ears, nose and upon my tongue I can feel the changes unfold just as I can sense the sun upon my skin. What a miracle I am living. If this isn't heaven than what possibly could it

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be?

Although not a religious individual from the perspective of going to church, I do consider myself very spiritual. Through my life I have attended Catholic, Episcopal, Unitarian and Lutheran services and even did a time at the Jesus People Church gaining a new insight into another dimension of Christianity. However, I feel closest to God when I am on the course

touching, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting and sensing the wonderment surrounding me at any given time.

Soon within my Cathedral I will watch in anticipation the funny waddle of the mallard ducklings as they hatch and progress from their nest under the clubhouse eave to the pond on the first hole. Barely audible, I will hear the muscles in the wings of geese as they fly overhead, hopefully to land at another course. With abandon the fox kits and deer fawn will entertain me as they frolic, darting into the natural areas and again out into the rough; playful, enchanting. Until then I pull a hand-

ful of dormant grass and dirt from next to the tree, place it to my nose and breathe deep.

The musky odor doesn't evoke death, but rather the potential of life to come; the miracle of a brilliant morning sunrise resplendent in hues of orange and red, so breathtaking I want to shout, but won't as it may spoil the moment, a torrential thunderstorm explosive; dangerous and violent yet always followed by a greener venue of turf; fresh and invigorated, or the transition of zinnia seeds as they turn brown soil to green and the rainbow of colors: red, orange and yellow.

Under my nose I hold the miracle of life.

Isn't our lot in life grand?

Everyday, if we look hard, we can observe more of life's magical phenomenon than most will see in a

year of casual encounters. Are we more attuned to the wonders of life or is it our proximity? When questioned why they chose to work on a golf course most superintendents say it is because they like working out of doors. Perhaps this fondness is really a subtle expression of faith.

Faith that life, although often traumatic, will renew itself in a new cycle, just as the trees and turf will break dormancy or regenerate from seed. Faith that droughts will end with blessed rain and floods will recede, the soil to dry. Faith that the grass will grow in spite of what we do. Faith that the changing of the season will bring comforting consistencies to buoy our confidence when we overmanage our land in an effort to create unnatural conditions. And faith that our daily marvels won't balance upon the economy, distant wars or famine.

Often through the year I will shiver with a sudden chill when I encounter something of natural grandeur; a crab apple tree in full flower, the coyote running across a fairway with a rabbit locked in its jaws, the dancing flight of two bald eagles as they tease each other in the sky above or the gold and yellow hues of a sunset reflecting softly as I lay down for a good night's rest. Yes, I am blessed. We are each blessed in our vocation.

During my time under the tree I close my eyes and give thanks for the opportunities ahead. Warm upon my eyelids, the afternoon rays of sun lull me into a deep peace. Vaguely I will hear a robin sing in the distance. A cool, but not cold breeze tingles the skin on my neck and I can feel the first hints of moisture as it soaks into my pant bottom. Time to get a move on, time to begin another great season of my life.

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