

A Holiday Poem

While on a post-Thanksgiving walk through a New Hampshire neighborhood that accommodates the laws of both nature and society, I encountered a rafter of wild turkeys. They reminded me of life's simple blessings and complex web of connections. The next day, I wrote this poem.

Coexistence (Wild Turkeys)

Unarmed, unafraid,
slow across the green,
a truce conspired
for another year
to ask for justice.
Startling, enchanting,
calm and deliberate,
Surely, they were a sign.

Bellies unstuffed, swollen with a dignity
that knows life's sorrows and its sense.
Wattles fire-red yet no blood shed
upon this field of peace.

Six proud survivors,
testifying for all their brothers,
those martyred, those spared.
I stood in awe and watched them,
long-necked, striving for a fuller truth.

More holiness in their presence,
more humanity in their tragicomic form,
than in a tower of science
or an abstraction of philosophy.

And when their path crossed mine
the day after Thanksgiving,
one day after our feast
of interdependence,
I felt acknowledged,
my heart opened
and, in my gut,
there cleared a way toward grace.

In this season of light and reflection, when we take stock, most of all, of what we know and feel about the people in our lives, I wish you the gifts of heartfelt relationship and the full experience of being human.

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