

A Seagull Lunch  
and  
Other Nature Poems



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*(SAVE OUR PLANET!)*

S T KIMBROUGH, JR.

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A SEAGULL LUNCH AND OTHER NATURE POEMS

(Save Our Planet!)

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# Introduction

WHAT IS MORE EXCITING than a walk along a forest trail, an evening sunset stroll along a sandy beach, a moonlight sail down a bay, a soaring flight above a glacier, the sound of a whippoorwill by morning light or a nightingale at dusk, a hike along a mountain trail, a swim in a fresh-water stream? One can go on and on with delightful descriptions of nature experiences. It seems that the moment one experience is described another transpires, sometimes taking one's breath away.

I have been fortunate in my life to travel through many countries of the world and to behold amazing wonders of nature. In Nepal, I have seen the splendor of the mountains and been astounded at how nature provides the network of life for small villages and towns. I have watched the domesticated, majestic Brahminy bulls in India tolerate dire heat and even drought with astounding stamina, almost impossible to humans. At the Masai Mara Game Reserve in Kenya I once saw the annual migration of the Wildebeests from Kenya to Tanzania and asked myself, "What does nature know that I do not?" There also I marveled at the freedom of animals I knew in my youth only in domesticated zoos: giraffes, antelopes, zebras, hyenas, etc. Along a river in Bangkok I have seen huge schools of fish that would burst a net if one were to try to catch them all at once. I have seen the reborn herds of buffalo in some of the US western National Parks and wondered how these regal animals could possibly have approached extinction? At the Jarong Bird Park in Singapore I was amazed at the scores of species of birds from around the world graced with a gorgeous breadth of colors. Many are stunningly beautiful. In East Malaysia, I have stood in awe at the foot of Mount Kota Kinabalu with its snow-capped top. In Mongolia, I have gone to the edge of the Gobi Desert and been struck by its breathtaking beauty and indescribable vastness. Nearby, I have seen innumerable herds of horses, camels, and yaks, so characteristic of one of the last, but diminishing nomadic cultures.

I remember a Boy Scout trip as a teenager that took me to the wonders of Carlsbad Caverns and Mammoth Cave. In the latter, in a river flowing deep below the earth's surface I saw a fish with no eyes. Mother Nature had simply adapted this fish to its circumstance of total darkness where eyes were not needed.

## INTRODUCTION

As a young boy, I adored a Boston Bulldog I owned, who in contrast to most other dogs had one blue eye and one brown eye. I was extremely curious when she had a litter of eight puppies whether one of them would have eyes like the mother. Much to my disappointment all of their eyes were brown.

On one occasion as a young man, a state conservationist enlisted my assistance to mark trees in a forest for cutting. While I had learned to identify many trees and their species in a high school botany course, I marveled at how many more trees I did not know and could not identify but my conservationist friend knew the name of each one we marked or passed by.

By now perhaps it is clear that I have had marvelous encounters with nature throughout my life. Some of the more intimate encounters are described in the poems of this volume. Many of them are simple descriptions of the wonders of nature. Some address the tragedy of nature's suffering caused by human thoughtlessness and negligence. Others are a response to the magical change of seasons, a cycle which transforms the colors of the earth's foliage, brings the advent of animals' change of habitats, along with hurricanes, monsoons, and other storms. From one season to the next the earth bears fruit, yields crops, and its meadows bloom.

One group of poems (6–7, 53–56) was precipitated by a trip across the vast expanse of Canada with its radically changing landscapes, its multiplicity of fall leaf colors, and its varied population of animals.

Many of the poems are from real life experience, while others are products of my imagination peaked by nature's numerous gifts. Nature is one of the most precious gifts human beings have. It is for enjoyment, sustenance, and preservation.

Job. 12:7–8:

“But ask the beasts,  
and they will teach you;  
the birds of the heavens,  
and they will tell you;  
or the bushes of the earth,  
and they will teach you;  
the fish of the sea will declare to you.”

Some of the poems (56–62) offer words of caution about human carelessness in preserving nature and its wonders. In another section of poems, I write about nature's enchanting seasons. But do we ever pause to consider



what it would be like if the advent of autumn, or any other season, no longer came? Yet, the truth is that in some parts of the world autumn already ceases to appear. Once fertile lands are now barren wastes and hills once populated by trees and plant life bear nothing except, perhaps, stubble. Gushing rivers and flowing streams are no more. We must ask: Do we want this fate for the rest of the world when we know there are things that human beings can do to slow and turn the tide of climate change?

We cannot stand idly by in silence when there is proven scientific evidence that *destructive climate change is a reality*. Shall we do nothing about: the elevation of worldwide temperatures, the rising of ocean levels that could eventually destroy some island nations and their inhabitants, the loss of farm land and crops, the steady crumbling of glaciers and ice caps that forebode the demise of sea life and its food?

Will there be winter, spring next year  
and what of summer, fall?  
Will loss of seasons cynics sneer?  
Will they have that much gall?

A major source of the diverse problems we face is simply greed. How can we possibly believe the illusion that the retaining of the production of fossil fuels for the sake of jobs is sustainable? The evidence of science clearly proves that the increase of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases precipitated by the increased use of fossil fuels gradually does irreparable damage to the ozone layer of the atmosphere surrounding the earth. This could eventually lead to the demise of the conditions for life sustenance.

Throughout many parts of Africa, one already sees the decrease of rainy seasons which foster the growth of food for humans and a vast array of animal life, as well as the sustenance and rebirth of forests. The human handprint of greed is seen on nature across the globe. God forbid that the days come when we can no longer enjoy the delightful sound of raindrops on a roof or enjoy a bird sipping water at a stream's edge.

People and nations must rise and say, "No more." We will commit the funds, energy, and effort to turn the tide. We will initiate programs for a green world with a plethora of jobs, even though they require re-training of a work force, to replace outdated jobs that ultimately harm nature and our world. We will preserve the beauties of nature for our enjoyment and their aesthetic elegance. We will preserve the forces of nature that sustain life and make life worth living.