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Trinity Musings #46:
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I've always wanted to have a pet crow so I spend a lot of time watching the wild ones. Ravens are also extremely fascinating and I'm a huge fan of them too. They are very intelligent and interesting neighbours that can live more than 20 years (some up to 40) and I'm sure they know and watch me as well.

I've noticed that they are in a very loud and raucous mood these days and there is a lot of chasing and crowing and cawing going on. Technically, they are "song birds", but like my own warbling…appreciation of their musicality is an acquired taste.

This is the season when natural music returns to our world.

While walking on Sunday, Andrea and I were serenaded by an amorous white-throated sparrow and I've started to scan the trees for the first red-winged black birds. Their multi-note trill is delightful and they are the harbinger and promise of warmer days to come.

Yesterday, I heard a male purple-finch warming up his pipes at the top of our birch tree. Another one, a long way off, was also clearing his throat.

We've also noticed that, in the early evenings, the coyotes that live in ravines nearby Thornbury are in full-voice and one of them sings almost a full octave above the others. It's beautiful to hear these "midnight choirs" celebrating life and serenading the moon and each other.

Love is literally in the air and our natural world is coming to life again.

The sunlight is growing stronger by the minute and Isaac and I both got sun burned last week while completing the ski marathon on Thursday and Friday at Highlands Nordic ski trails. It was a great escape from the world of Covid and we slept out under the stars by a campfire on Thursday night to top off our adventure.

Now is the time for making maple syrup and taps are being hammered into maple trees, even as I write.

It's hard to believe it's been almost exactly a year since our world "Rip Van Winkled" and fell asleep under the fearful spell of the pandemic. One minute we were going full bore ahead and the next life, as we knew it, essentially stopped. It has been a tough year.

We certainly did lose a lot of what we had and will not get back. Some businesses did not survive or just barely survived; almost a million people in Canada contracted the virus and although most of them have recovered, nobody yet knows the long term health implications; so far around 22,000 people have died alone and most of them were living in crowded, underfunded nursing homes; air travel has almost ceased and so on and so on.

But I don't think anyone could have predicted some of the other repercussions of the pandemic.

Suddenly, people found they had a lot of time to spend at home with each other so they decided to get a dog. Hope that works out for most of them but I've seen some really ill-behaved pooches and some very flustered new dog owners on the trails. Apparently, puppies don't immediately understand English no matter how loudly you yell commands at them.

This new-dog thing, like real estate, has resulted in some insane prices. I just checked Kijiji and found that puppies are selling for between eight hundred and five thousand dollars. No matter their heritage, they are all marketed as highly specialized breeds. One listed a litter of pups for eighteen hundred dollars each. Apparently, these are the highly sought after "Burma-Doodle-Labie-Spaniels" breed. LOL. In other words, they have no idea which neighbour's mutt dug the hole under the fence and fathered them. Pre-pandemic, I remember seeing similar looking farm-puppies in cardboard boxes at the Keady market that were selling for ten bucks. The Mennonite kid who was selling them told me they came with first shots, a vet check and if I bought two of them he would throw a baby duck in too (really). Shoulda bought them and the duck as an investment!

As spring starts to come to our consciousness in 2021, we are waking up to a very different world than the one we left in March 2020.

Although it's been a tremendous winter, I look forward to wearing running shoes, shorts, and riding my bike. I've also started thinking about what to plant in our gardens and I've been watching for the return of migrant birds.

I expect the horned larks are already back but I haven't yet seen them. The earliest robins will be here soon too.

Does it feel, to you, like we lost an entire year? Or, in the pause, has something extraordinary and potentially very good, started?

I am optimistic that we are at the start of good times and many lighter-ways of living on this planet are just beginning to take shape and grow.

Like the spring voices promise, there are brighter days ahead. This is a good time to sing out with any voice you have- you never know who might be listening….thanks be to God!