

The “Lost” Deer – by Lorelei Pepe

I live in Elmwood Park, New Jersey and my backyard is really a park. We have about 40 duplex apartments in a co-op and from the front they look very unassuming.

But once you enter the back you are surprised to see winding paths, park benches, with lots of grassy areas filled with a dozen different tall trees, - pine, maple, oak etc. The bushes are in full bloom with all the bright colors of the rainbow – from pinks to oranges and lovely lilac colors. Each individual homeowner has a patch of garden to tend too and we share in the planting of rose bushes, irises, lilacs, daffodils, tulips, geraniums and more. And we even have herb gardens to share and tomato plants!

To me, I like living in the country here and awakening to the constant singing of all the birds! The squirrels I could live without, but they are part of God’s doing, I guess.

Early one morning around 7am doing my bathroom run, I looked out my tiny window and saw a huge, lovely tan colored deer standing in the middle of a valley in the grass. He was right next to our clothesline and until I put on my glasses he didn’t look real. He was so regal looking, moving his head slowly back and forth surveying the land. It gave me the feeling of sadness and he stood there still as a statue. He was so lost, out of his element and I am sure a bit confused. I thought maybe he was hungry or tired from his travels and wished I could help him. But, after a few more minutes, he walked slowly to the highway out of our park and the cars were speeding by along River Road. He quickly disappeared from my view before I could even get down the stairs and out the back as I live on the second floor.

I silently prayed he would not get hit if he crossed the road and headed across to the river. I hoped he would eventually find his “home”.

But where is our home? Right now, I don’t know anymore. The older I get and the more hardships I endure I realize my home here is only temporary. No one gets through this life unscathed or without fighting some kind of battle. Life is not easy and often unfair, and many of us go to our grave with the pain and injustices done to us with many unanswered questions.

But what keeps me going through this difficult time of Covid and the protestors filling the streets with cries of racism and injustice, is my faith. My faith is my only stronghold right now. Days that I feel like I am “sinking in sand” and have become totally unglued is when I need God the most. I look up to the sky and pray, for somewhere in that great blue sky is my God reassuring me He is there and giving me Hope!

I am human and I often have to remind myself of that as I soon forget but the Bible verses help me believe like Hebrew 11:13: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”

It’s in the little things I see God, and when I am down, I just look out at my park, the blue sky and sun in the daytime and the stars and moon at night. I put my hope in Him, not in anyone else or anything. He can and does comfort me.

So on the days when you feel lost, sad and alone just look up and pray. Remember God is our constant, our Redeemer and our salvation. He can and will save us. I look forward to meeting Him one day and being with Him in Heaven – my real “**Home**”.