

Robins: Winged Particles Of Greatness

March days are fickle. They begin with bright promises of sunshine, but before noon prankish clouds drop slippery sheets of snow on pavements and sidewalks. March dawns break quietly and peacefully, but within an hour boisterous winds plaster trees and houses, roads and cars, with thick layers of sleet.

March warmth invites over-wintering robins away from the shelter of deep cedar swamps and northward from their south land resorts. Then capricious winds whistle up a snowstorm to take these early birds by surprise. They huddle and fluff out their feathers, insulating their tender bodies against the cold. They face into the wind and occasionally offer to the world a gloom-shattering, happy song, as if they knew that God and creation are not nearly so well served by groans as by cheer.

Above all else an early returning robin is a symbol of brighter days ahead, a harbinger of hope. No matter how unseasonable the weather may be, no matter how heavy the clouds or severe the storm, he changes the complexion of the day for us. Snow or sleet may be falling fast, but a robin's sharp notes puncture the overcast and let a glimmer of spring shine through. We may have suffered reverses in the weather, but a robin's red breast beats with summer sunshine and gladness and its joyous pulsations echo in our hearts. The sight of a robin makes a difference in a March day.

It is this cheer-bringing capacity of our late-winter friend that convinces me that he is a winged particle of greatness, for what is greatness but a talent for making the world happier and better because we have passed this way?

Someone has defined personality in these radiant terms: "When I met him I was looking down. When I left him I was looking up." This is greatness, no matter where it is found. It is the effect that Christ has had on the world. More than any other person in the world's history, he has invited the world to look up.

If even a lowly robin can draw the world's attention upward and lift many a downcast spirit, so you can, and your ability to do this is one measure of your worth.