

FEAST OF CRUMBS

Outside our window hangs a little green bird feeder, about five feet off the decks, with a clever spring that shuts off the supply when Squirrel weighs it down. We fill it with black-oil sunflower seeds in the morning and watch.

Birds start coming about 7:15 a.m., later when the temperature falls into single digits. Nuthatch approaches upside down. Starling sidles up, fat with sparkles, and probes with a sharp yellow beak. Male cardinal pops red, female mutes tone-on-tone. Chickadees share amiably with others, but they throw a lot overboard, too. Underneath the feeder, juncos and sparrows hop among the cast-offs. It's a feast for them, a feast of crumbs.

Feasting on crumbs is learned behavior for me. Usually I cram as much activity into a day as I can, aware that at 74 I don't have many years left to save the world. This year, the day after New Year's, I fell while skiing and "racked myself up," as we used to say. Now I sit in the recliner, my right leg up on the stool and my head very still. I rest and see who comes by, feathered or not.

Most days the birds are enough. One friend is comforting, two a stretch, as my mind is easily boggled. Like a sparrow, I feast on crumbs. A verse keeps running through my head, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made." I know I will mend.

After 3 weeks I have had enough of mending. I want it to be over, I thought it would be over by now. I wake up thinking of Earth Day 50, which I have tasked myself with organizing. I read the Scripture for the day. Paul reminds me, "My power is made perfect in weakness." I do the little I can do, and wait.

Susan Gilpin, January 22, 2010