

Let's have lots of room here

So I'm driving home through the Springs in the direction of Agua Caliente Road. It's 7 am and I have just bought a large coffee from the *Barking Dog*. No traffic, the world just waking up. I don't notice anything – the usual buildings, trees, an oncoming car. Kind of like nowhere. I notice a telephone pole. I think: that pole can't see, can't hear, can't move, can't think; it simply *is*. As such it shares its *isness* with me who also *am* - a human *being*. The same may be said of that tree, the asphalt paving, that house: they can't see, hear, move, think (although the tree can be moved by a breeze). Actually, unlike the telephone pole the tree *is* alive . . . it grows, reaches out, generates leaves . . . it drinks from both the earth and sunshine. Differs from a rock or raindrops. Then there is that bird also alive and even able to chirp something meaningful to another of its feather. But think, wonder, care what it is - the way I as a human being do?

Within but a moment, I found myself noticing things. Ordinarily I just drive with my eyes on the road, thinking about tomorrow or yesterday, errands I have to do. And now gradually I sense myself within a limited enclosure of space that has somehow *opened up to* me, populated by other things, beings that, while worth seeing, do not share my way of seeing, hearing, even speaking, listening, thinking; I notice that I am in the center of things with which I share this space and begin to feel responsive to all these other beings which I even have the power to manipulate into the houses I see around me, the asphalt paving, the lamplights, orienting beings to my human needs . . . creatively, with an authority similar to that of the very Source of all things that be.

And now I begin to feel something. I begin to sense my relationship to all these things no longer as merely "objects", impersonal, useful but of transient interest. I begin to sense them as *sharing my* being and I *theirs*. I become emotional, I endow each of them with the kind of personality I have as human. I begin to speak for them, speak to them, think about them in more than a useful way. Whereas I had been driving along as if nowhere worth noticing, I sense I am enveloped, environed as if within the world as my home, "our" home – with the desire, this human capacity to care for all these, my fellow beings – like the person who wrote: *All things bright and beautiful, / All creatures great and small, / . . . He gave us eyes to see them, / And lips that we might tell . . .*

Which reminds me of Old Fezziwig in *The Christmas Carol*. He ran a small workplace and at Christmas he transformed it into a dance hall – set up for dinner and a fun evening for his employees and others. *Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here!* As Dickens continues: *Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on.* Make room! Open up! Throw away the blinkers! Wake up to reality! Emerge from tunnel vision! As at Christmas, as when as a three year old on Christmas Eve I ventured to the head of our staircase to see in our living room the transfiguration of its space – cleared away – rich with the aroma of pine, a tree standing tall, illuminated, ornaments hung with care – and underneath a village gathered to welcome the birth of that being in John's Gospel who, when later asked *Where do you live?* replied, *Come and see.*

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