

Things that Warm the Cockles of My Heart

By Marilyn Reeves

Every year since I've lived at Windsor Gardens I have been blessed by the sound of a song sparrow singing to his mate. Try as I might, I can never see the little fellow, but his sweet song warms the cockles of my heart. It is a sure sign that spring has come!

I'm a sucker for animals. Whenever I hear the Canada geese swirling around overhead in V-formation, calling to one another, my heart soars. Whether it's Lassie rescuing Timmy from the raging river, or the poor wolf being shot down for no reason in *Dances with Wolves*, I bawl my eyes out.

I watch TV in the evenings, but mute the sound during the commercials. Which is not to say I don't see them. Recently, there's been one featuring a man lying on the grass playing with an itty bitty beagle puppy. I have no idea what they're advertising, but that sweet little pup looks so cute and cuddly, I can almost feel the softness of his fur.

Then there's the one showing a young man, all muscle and virility, sitting in a chair, probably watching football. But he's doing so very quietly, because, lying against his shoulder is a sleeping baby.

Music moves me. Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue.' The songs from 'Les Miserables' or Andrew Lloyd Weber's 'The Phantom of the Opera.' Music lifts me up and carries me away from the cares of the day.

Acts of heroism move me. Despite all the vitriol and violence happening in this world, there are those who try to set things right. When those Boy Scouts were stuck in that cave in Thailand, I – along with the rest of the world – held my breath. I thought they'd never get those boys out of there; there was no way they'd survive! But their rescuers worked tirelessly to find a way to save them, putting their own lives in peril in order to free them. And when I learned that each and every one of them, including their leader, had been pulled out to safety, I was overcome with joy!

The innocence of children often moves me. I recall a story in which one child was asked to share a kidney with his brother, so that his brother might live. As the two boys were being prepared for surgery, the donor asked his mother if it hurt to die. That little boy was prepared to give his life for his brother! Then his mother explained to him that he had *two* kidneys – he was just giving his brother the extra one.

At the reception for my wedding back in 1963, people lined up to kiss the bride. As I stood there in my veil and gown, everyone told me how pretty I looked, as they do with every bride. But there was one little boy – perhaps nine or ten years old – who whispered to his mother, "Mom, that lady has the softest cheek!" I was so moved – it just warmed cockles of my heart.