

The Little Bird

By Marilyn Reeves

The other day I looked in the mirror and saw a pathetic old hag staring back. And I thought to myself, How did I get to be so old? I managed to survive for 78 years without too much trouble, why are all these terrible things happening now?

When the pandemic first started, I was getting plenty of attention from family members, but now they're getting on with their lives. I miss seeing my friends and wonder when I'll ever see them again. Sometimes I feel so sorry for myself – and for the whole damn world! – I just want to sit down and cry!

A little ditty from childhood started running through my head which I repeated out loud: 'Nobody loves me. Everybody hates me. I think I'll go eat worms!'

And then through my open window I heard the sound of a bird. He came and rested on my windowsill and said, "You think you're bad off? Sometimes I can't even *find* a worm! Actually, they're quite delicious – you should try one. I flew out here in early April, thinking it was Spring. But then we got hit by a late winter storm. Remember the one that killed off all the blossoms as they were just starting to bud?"

"Oh, yes, I remember! Just one more thing to feel sorry for myself about."

"Well, think about *me* – out here in the elements! I hadn't even had the chance to find a mate yet, let alone build myself a nest. So, I'm out here freezing my tail feathers off while you're in there all snuggled up in your blankets inside your nice warm apartment, feeling sorry for yourself. Well, it's a wonder I survived, let me tell ya. But somehow I did. And after a few days the sun came back out, and I started to sing. You may have heard me when you opened your window? Well, my pretty song soon attracted a mate, and we made love on the spot. Then, with her being in the 'family way' we hurried to build our nest. If you step outside and look up under the eaves, you can probably see it.

"And with the sunshine came the bugs, and the rain brought out a bunch of worms. So, before long we were eating our fill, and soon we had enough to feed our youngsters as well. But every morning before I head out searching for more, you can hear my sweet song if you listen. I've got it a lot harder than you, but I still find it in my heart to sing my sweet refrain: 'Hello, world! So happy to see you. And sun or rain, I welcome the day. For come what may, I'm still alive and happy to greet the new day.' So, now I'm off to look for more worms. I'll be happy to bring you one, too."

"No, that's alright. I've got plenty to eat. But thanks for your offer – it was lovely to meet you." And with that, the little bird flew away.

I went back into the bathroom to comb my hair. And when I looked in the mirror the wrinkles were still there. But somehow I didn't look quite so bad after all, because this time I was wearing a smile.