The Perennial Season

Habits, the morning routine, automatic behaviors strung like beads on a necklace. There is comfort in this: it begins in a chilly urgency to pull on my bathrobe and slip on my fat, furry slippers; descending the stairs in the darkness of dawn, and feeling a muscle ache, or a stiffness in my left knee; adjusting the thermostat; quietly moving on ward to the kitchen making the floors squeak in protest; measuring water into the coffee pot; then the final best bead of all, going outside to wander through the garden.

How does everything change so? Yesterday’s garden subtly becomes today’s, I notice. Early crocus blooms are done and gone. Trout Lilies bloom their yellow trumpets and the graceful pink-petals on delicate stems of the Spring Beauty’s rule the woodland floor for now. The doppelganger Dicentra with their lacy leaves appear: The Squirrel Corn bloom resembles that of the Bleeding Heart and Dutchman’s Breeches who’s blossoms hang from the stem by their pantaloon legs. I’m impatient with the creeping phlox, their foliage is sparked by the first flowers of lavender, white and red, a promise to become a beautiful blanket of blooms.

As I ascend the garden steps, I hear wings flapping sounding like the shaking out of a sopping wet bath towel. It is a wood duck that takes flight from a nearby towering maple tree. At my feet I’m delighted by the richness of colors of the small and mighty primroses along my primrose path.
The first of the daffodils are fading as the Redbud tree dons buds adorning branches and twigs to trace a lovely magenta lace against the sky. So too, the Dogwood trees sneak toward exquisiteness as clouds of white or pink blossoms.

Retracing my steps, I note that dawn glows in shades of warm pastels as clouds blanketing above promise another sprinkle, soon. The bird song grows louder and louder with too many phrases and too many divas competing for attention. A feeder filled with meal worm hangs from a low branch on the dogwood tree at the kitchen window. My visitors include the Nuthatch, Chickadeees, a pair of Tufted Titmouse, Dark-eyed Junco, a Downy Woodpecker, and Blue Birds. Another bird at this feeder is the indomitable House Wren who may nest in the wreath at the front door, or builds the nest inside the garage and willfully refuses to move out. Out in the grass a couple of Northern Flickers search for bugs and Robins “listen” for worms. I pause when I hear the soothing “coo” (the first musical note sliding upward) followed by “coo, coo, coo.” She repeats the call and she is my Morning Dove. Tonight, if she calls, she is my Mourning Dove.

And each morning is the same, but different. Time sweeps the seasons through my year. Suddenly in this moment of reflection, I notice and understand that my life has seasons and years and changes. I tremble, and trust less, the comfort in my comfortable necklace of habits.