

Comparisons (Vinny 2)

I was born in Brooklyn, New York decades ago. The Bronx Zoo was a long train ride away. It was the only big place to see wild animals except for the time that the circus literally came to town and the elephants were paraded down our unpaved street. There was the petting zoo at Prospect Park, not as dramatic. We were witnesses to the last of the horse drawn wagons that the fruit peddler drove down the street. And with him came the horse manure followed by the one-armed man with his shovel. He had commandeered a large empty lot to grow his vegetables and the manure was free.

Since our street was treeless (that tree grew somewhere else in Brooklyn) we didn't see a single squirrel. There were birds, mainly sparrows and lots of pigeons. They belonged to the Italian men who raced them when they were not on the roofs of buildings sitting in their coops.

Nevertheless, it was a good life of street games, the Saturday movie matinee, Coney Island in the summer and subway rides into the City. Manhattan. The magical place of special days at Radio City Music Hall, the museums, Macy's, Gimbel's, Abraham & Strauss department stores and the August Feast of San Gennaro in Little Italy. Being a city kid had its advantages.

The past is where it belongs. The present will become the past soon enough. In this present I've become surprisingly old. I see the immediate world through eyes now focusing on what is closest to my windows. The long view shortens

as the trees surrounding the house reach out to The number of birds on the deck has increased. Mature birds are feeding their young. Cardinals are now adept at clinging to the feeder hanging off the deck. The deer have claimed their territory all around the house. Surprisingly, we've watched a family of deer settling down to rest in the drain field. The several meadows are their dining areas. I've stepped away to give them space. I consider this relinquishing my right to the land is my legacy for each part of my natural world that once witnessed our arrival with a degree of tolerance.

Last night the oh-so bright moon cast its light onto our bed. It was a sort of blessing prompting me to say, "Good night, Moon, and thank you.

And as for Vinny, thank you for having been here.