

A Worthy Caws

by John Olson

It started with crows. I'd walk the switchback trail to the top of the park with its outlook of the city and if I didn't see any crows I'd whistle and they'd come swarming from everywhere. I'd give the peanuts a toss and the crows would caw their heads off and peck at the peanuts on the ground or pick one up and fly to the top of somebody's roof and pick it apart there. They'd follow me down the street for a mile their wings pushing air against my ear as they'd come swooping down past my head. Then some blue jays joined in. Some seagulls. An osprey. A heron. A pterodactyl. Then a seaplane with a handful of hungry passengers. Then a Boeing 737 with 215 hungry people. That's when the neighbors started to complain. Those engines are loud. And the planes tend to block traffic. And the peanuts were costing me \$1,787 dollars a month. Something had to be done. Or undone. I thought about mailing peanuts to my crow buddies. But crows don't have addresses. Crows live in nests. The postal service doesn't require its carriers to climb trees. I could just stop feeding peanuts to crows. But I couldn't do that. A bond had been formed. A rapport. A kinship. A communion, if you will. A planet is just a rock without grass and trees and kinship and the tacit covenants that form between living creatures to do what is right or do what is wrong if wrongness is right and rightness is wrong. This includes peanuts. And crows. And that ape called human beings living in houses with a keen sense of ownership. Human beings are apes that like to own things. That is their defining characteristic. The more a human being owns the more respect and power they're able to enjoy. It's a strange outlook. But deference must be made. Human beings know how to grow peanuts. And I needed peanuts. Peanuts to feed the crows. Which I continued doing. Agreeing to limit my practice to birds. And the occasional visitation of extraterrestrials. Who wore robes of black feathers. And had a fondness for peanuts. Which are a member of the pea family. And ripen underground.

