Drought

by Jake Barnes

It's a dry year, so the walnuts are falling early. They are black walnuts, too, and they make an awful mess. I guess we'll have to redo the decks and wooden walkways in the back yard when the tree is done shedding its crop. That may be awhile; the walnut is a huge tree. The trunk is close to five feet in diameter.

Where we live, at the edge of the foothills at the east edge of town, fire is always a worry during the summer, and this has been an exceptionally dry year. No fires so far, but I am holding my breath. A spark would set the lawns on fire, too. You are permitted to water only twice a week.

Wild life is still abundant. We feed the jays and red squirrels. They gobble up the peanuts we put out every morning. The smaller birds crowd our feeder. The squirrels raid the feeder also, hanging upside down by their toes.

There is a good sized flock of wild turkeys that comb a plowed field across the street. Sometimes they invade our front yard. One day not long ago one of the huge birds perched on the fence in our back yard. We've lived here twenty years, and I've never seen that before. Everything is at sixes and sevens. Maybe even in the turkey world, too.

I love to have the critters around. The squirrels and crows, the turkeys and moles, the Oregon juncos patrolling the deck, looking for bugs and worms in the fallen walnuts. The jays, too. Yesterday morning my wife spotted a mama raccoon shepherding her babies along the fence in our back yard, no doubt teaching them to forage for food in a lean year.

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What does it all mean? Global warming? Probably. The suicidal human race is still doing what it does best. Fighting, plundering, destroying, making life miserable for everybody and everything. What hath God wrought? Well, take a look around.