

Early Life

Richards Phillips

Literary Criticism

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In Central Park it is the mornings and the evenings to remember. Then it is a series of pictures that you find yourself in for one fleeting moment; you turn to look back and it is no longer there.

In the Spring when the half-awake monster that is the City still lies somnolent, the air of the park is filled with the great sunrise excitement of birds voices; Grackle chatter as they hop along the water line of the ponds paying no heed to the Mallard Ducks that call to each other as they dip in and out of the reeds; Yellow Hammerheads sing as they perform their ritual mating dance on the newly-green hillside; Bank Swallows sing through the air as swift and straight as arrows flashing their brilliant blues. The bell call of the Phoebe can be heard throughout the park; the little Hairy Woodpeckers run busily on tall Sycamore trees, grasping their way around and round. There is Mrs. Jenny Wren sitting on the branch adjacent to the knot-hole she has turned into a snug home, taking in the morning's doings and reporting to her young inside. There the great Blue Heron stands majestically on one leg, fishing with one eye closed, as nonchalant as though he didn't have to earn his livelihood that way. The giant water turtle comes out of the lake to creep up a small fall where water cascades over his feet and sides, leaving only the ridge of his back warmed by the

brilliant morning sun. During the Spring migrations, Central Park is a stop-over point for birds such as the Black and White Warblers, Lark Warblers, Warbling Vireo (a little green bird with black markings), Fox Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Black Ducks, Canadian Geese - who all supply color to the Park for a short rest period and are then on their way ⁷⁰⁰⁴ South.

There are Japanese print mornings when only beauty is revealed. The man-made symbols of power and greed are hidden in soft mists; only the curve of a small bridge, the branch of a gnarled pine tree are visible. On such mornings the Cherry Blossoms take on new proportions of beauty as they appear to continue on endlessly into space. This evidence of perfection in nature's machinations brings moisture to the eyes and the great wish that time would stand still.

There are mornings when it is pleasure to walk on paths interspersed with huge slabs of flat rock that have the Northwest to Southeast striation markings showing the direction of the flow of the rivers of ice that once held this section of the continent in its grasp. It is in the early mornings when voices in another tongue speak of the deer and bear, of day-long voyages to Staten Island, and other teepee small talk. There is a glint of brightness, the Hackberry with its hundred green nests quivers, the mist rises and the park becomes the world of Man.

Evening in the Park is filled with the cry of little Green Herons as they fly to their roost; the muffled sounds of ruffled feathers settling into comfortable positions for the night. It is now that the greatest of all lacemakers shows his wares, as intertwining branches and leaves are silhouetted against the dusky sky. The Shinko, most ancient of trees, closes its fan leaves, and the words and thoughts of daytime visitors float in silence through the night sky. Then the heart of the eternal lies in the depths of Central Park and the passing, that lies all about, passes on its way.