

The Deceptive Reflection

IT WAS A HEAVY, RESOUNDING THUD that told me a very large bird had just struck one of the windows in the sun room. The occurrence is not uncommon. Small birds often strike the glass and, in most cases, are just winded as a result. They will lie there awhile, gasping for breath until, once recovered, they fly off none the worse for the experience. Sometimes, however, the impact is strong enough to kill them or, in their helpless, stunned condition, they become easy pickings for any predator happening by.

The sound of this most recent collision told me this was no sparrow that had just made unfortunate contact with our house. Looking outside the east-facing windows, I discovered an immature red-tailed hawk headfirst in a snow bank, its feet clawing at the air, struggling to right itself.

Fast as I could, I jumped into my boots and put on leather gloves. It took me only a moment to get to him, but by the time I did, his feet were no longer moving. Lifting him out of the deep snow, his head flopped to one side like a broken doll's head. He had probably broken his neck on impact.

Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

2 Kings 6:17

Birds are injured or killed when they are deceived by the pretty images of trees and blue sky they see reflected back by the window glass. They recognize no difference between the reflection and reality, but see their pathway clear and unhindered, as familiar as the

path just left through the open spaces of the earth. But in a split-second they are done in, as illusion gives way to hard reality.

Mirrors and black glass throw back only images of this earth: familiar, yet fleeting and base. Nothing seen in a reflection is real, for even if what it reflects is tangible, it will eventually be consumed. It is only illusory—at best, fleeting. When we race toward the familiar, seeking to make contact with more from this temporal plane, we invariably make contact only with the hard reality of shattered dreams and empty expectations.

There is a place more steady and real. It consists not of abstracts and dreams, but of truth and wisdom and light. Though our gaze is drawn like a magnet toward the dust from which we have been made, it takes small effort to lift our gaze higher, toward the unbounded skies of God.

Racing heavenward we find not the hard surprise of death, but the soaring joy of eternal life.

For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we *are* dust.
As *for* man, his days *are* like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
And its place remembers it no more.
But the mercy of the Lord *is* from everlasting to everlasting
On those who fear Him,
And His righteousness to children's children,
To such as keep His covenant,
And to those who remember His commandments to do them.
The Lord has established His throne in heaven,
And His kingdom rules over all.

Psalms 103:14-19 NKJV

