



Wood Stork 2

Fishing the backwater of Copano Bay
With Marshal and J.C.

The boat slowly enters the channel
That cuts inland from the bay,
A channel lined with marsh grass
And oyster reefs visible at low tide
On the adjacent flats where the gulls
Loll and the reddish egret chases mullet.

Ever so slowly we push up the channel,
Becoming surrounded by riparian trees,
Making it hard to see far ahead
When we suddenly stop and stare
At the tree full of wood storks before us,
A collection of prehistoric birds
That gaze back at us with cautious eyes,
Eyes set within a black, featherless head,
A head only a mother could love,
A head that sits atop a white body and
White wings tipped with black,
Black tips that can be seen when the storks
Ride the thermals, capturing the wind.

For several minutes we share time and space
With the collection of wood storks,

Time and space that I recall today
As I try to avoid the virus,
Time and space that I wish to revisit
When we are free to gather again,
With friends, fishing rod in hand,
Watching nature, attending services.

The Wood Stork

Driving over Cox's Creek on State Highway 35
Near Point Comfort and the Formosa Plastics plant.

The vast plant penetrates the western skyline,
Cracking towers and processing units clearly visible
As is the striking, prehistoric-looking wood stork
Standing in the shallow mud of the damned-up creek,
A strange bird of riparian woodlands and waters,
A bird that causes me to pull over today,
And I see that this Texas stork is looking up at me,
Nodding thanks for the existence of the radical center,
The type of thinking that led to improvements here
Years ago in air and water and hazardous releases
From the chemical maker that knew
It could and did do better.

I smile as I think on the words – the radical center -
A beautiful concept that is rare these days,
A concept defined by taking risks not at the edge
But within the center,
Risks associated with departing from the pack
That insists on fighting beyond utility,
Centrist because of opposing parties each
Finding ways to meet their goals,
Seeking and finding what some disdain -
What some decry - as compromise,

Solutions accepting the existence of the plant
Yet mandating improved coastal air and water quality,
Water that can support the wonderfully diverse life
Of the Texas coast like the wood stork
Looking up at me by the side of the road.

I enjoy my moment at roadside with the wood stork,
Knowing that there will be further issues,
Knowing that new problems will arise,
But also knowing that they can be resolved
With good faith and effort by all,
Finding satisfaction in seeing a stork fishing
Where there once were no fish,
Rejuvenating the radical center in my soul.