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On a nice winter day looking over Armand Bayou
Just off Bay Area Boulevard down in Texas not Ohio.

Urban Houston surrounds the water
Named for Armand Yramategui
A man of insight and great vision
Who sought to protect this place of beauty.

Armand unfortunately passed away
But Hana Ginzburg continued his works
A woman of fierce resolve and intent
Going nose to nose with the worst of the jerks.

I got involved early in my career
Trying to obtain more land and money
To create a nature center next to NASA
A place for birds and the cottontail bunny.

Hana and others ultimately prevailed
And created a wonderful nature preserve
A place where one can find peace and quiet
A place that we all clearly deserve.

So today I came and stepped on the boardwalk
I needed a place to mend and to talk
To myself about how to take care of me
And then my eyes rose to the bare tree.

There sat an osprey majestic and calm
And for my heart it was a balm
I remembered the vision of Armand and Hana
And I sang out with a loud “hosanna”.

The osprey and I had an Earth Church event
Near to chemical plants I usually lament,
It’s wonderful to act to create special places
I’m a lucky lawyer to have had such great cases.

So thanks to Hana and Armand and all
For fighting and fortitude in answering the call
So now it’s time to get off your rear
And protect our church - now do you hear?
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On the Christmas bird count at
The Mad Island Marsh Preserve
Run by the Texas Nature Conservancy.

Our group of watchers gather on the pier,
Gazing out over the lake
That connects to the Intracoastal Waterway
That connects to Matagorda Bay
That connects to saltwater in the Gulf of Mexico
At Pass Cavallo and the Port O’Connor jetties,
The focal point, the nexus, the pathway for
Saltwater that comes with the tide to mingle
With the freshwater flowing down the creeks
Draining the prairie lands to the north,
Creating a place that is both salt and fresh –
An estuary - a special chapel of Earth Church,
A place that nurtures marine life,
A place where the shrimps brown and white
And the crabs of blue meet the drums,
Both black and red,
A place where the hardhead catfish
Is well fed.

Amidst this water teeming with life,
The masked white bird drops
To the water’s surface, talons out,
And then the osprey’s feet retract,
Holding a big fish, a seriously heavy fish,
A fish that barely clears the water,
The osprey flying low,
Finally reaching an old fence post,
The remnants of long-gone “bob wire” fence
Where the osprey sits and eats its catch
Where a lonesome cowboy once rode.

How perfect – the fence that once
Marked a line in the kingdom
Of coastal cattleman Shanghai Pierce,
Now turned over to the birds as is
The ranch, a gift of the Runnells family,
Heirs to Mr. Pierce, heirs to the abundance
Where the osprey feeds today
And where the old cowboy smiles.