



The Wood Duck

Deep in the San Jacinto River bottomlands
On a cool clear day in February.

My uncles called them squealers,
The beautiful little duck of the bottomlands,
Decorated by Picasso,
Green, white, maroon, gray, black, blue –
Oh my – such a bird.

The squeal explodes into the timber,
And echoes down the meander lake,
Echoing the disdain of being disturbed,
Echoing concern about the fate of this land
That lies directly in the path of space city,
A relentless goliath on the move,
A goliath with an insatiable appetite
For more land, for more growth,
Yet goliath could have a green underbelly,
A green reality of bayous, rivers, and streams,
Waterways made up of living things
And adjacent plains that fill with water,
Waterways demanding more strongly each year
That goliath respects some limits.

The squeal becomes a message –
A communication about the need for urgency -
The need for creativity and persistence -
The need to find a way to harmoniously
Merge the squealer and the goliath,
A plea delivered as an echoing squeal

Down a cut-off meander
In the San Jacinto bottomlands.

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The wood duck lives in the flooded lands
Along the rivers, creeks, and streams,
Flood plains that attract home-building humans
That build wherever anyone deems.

The fact of the matter is that species evolve
To find their place on this good land.
The wood duck's home is wet and green -
As a place for humans, it's not so grand.

A human's place is on higher ground
Away from where the rain runs to,
With climate changing and rain by the buckets,
A flood's sure to come every year or two.

The wood duck asks as we sit on stumps
What it is with the human psyche?
What makes people ignore the clearest signals
That are blinking strong and brightly?

I tell the duck that we humans fail
To hear the news that stokes our fear,
COVID and climate and flooding impacts
Are simply facts many choose not to hear.

For some believe that we are bulletproof
That if we say it, then so it will be,
And the wood duck looks up with a big grin
From his perch upon the cypress knee.

"I knew your kind was blind to some things

But willing blindness is foreign to me,
All I can say is that when my plot floods,
My house is high up in the tree.

For I have adapted to meet my needs,
The flood plain is where I evolved to be,
Now you humans need to get it together
Or else you'll continually be having to flee."