

Rant of Spring

The trouble with nature is that it's such a mess. Go to a park, take a walk in the woods, look out your window, go for a drive in the country, and what do you see? A tangle of green and brown on top of a jumble of dusty rocks. Piles of growing, dying, rotting, living stuff everywhere. Chaos.

If god existed, I assure you she would clean up this place.

For example, what a mess a beach is! Not just the flotsam and washed-up garbage. But the salad of moribund seaweed, the scattering of shells, the shreds of mysterious matter even seagulls shun. To top it all off: a dead seal. Kneeling over the carcass maybe a pair of live biologists with scalpels, doing an autopsy. You want a clean beach don't send in a biologist; send in a posse of monks with rakes.

Call me a neat freak, even a nut. But don't we all have our own sense of order? One person's collection is another's clutter.

The trees in my yard don't need to line up like a little orchard. About 12 feet apart like they are is nice. But the gopher holes? Some are clustered in a bunch, and 20 feet away there'll be another one, out there all by its lonesome. After the dog discovers them, some of them are two feet deep, the others barely six inches. That's what you get when you leave your garden design to five gophers and a dog.

The weeds spread themselves so carelessly. A mass of stickery thistles over here, a cobwebby hulk of thorny blackberries over there. Feverish poison oak spires stabbing out at random. Coyote brush anyplace it can get a toehold, offpuffing clouds of evil seed.

And right in the middle of this view, tilted willy-nilly: a cameo of three garbage cans. A little trash family, with a green Papa Bear can for yard waste, a blue Mama Bear for recycling, and little gray Baby Bear for the household trash. Sure, the cans could straighten up and shut their lids. But garbage day would come and go and they'd just be back to their crazy ways.