

**FOR THE BIRDS** by Joan, tenant April 27, 2020

Since living in silent aloneness for longer than I imagined or wanted, I notice how easily I can become fascinated by the simplest of things! Like a bird call, especially when it trills all the right notes and sounds happy with life. When I looked out into the distance, I caught sight of two flashes of red with familiar peaks of head feathers. Cardinals. Males. Since it is Spring, I was expecting to see a "couple" Then I guess in today's society seeing two males together is common, and socially acceptable.

Birds. When I first came to Oak Meadows and read the literature that welcomed me, I paused at the paragraph referencing pets. When I read I was free to have a bird I passed over it and went on with life. However, several months ago I read of a man, a veteran, who founded a company called "Parrots for Patriots". He claims a bird helped him overcome post-traumatic- stress. He explained that birds, (the talking kind, parrots, parakeets, etc.), were loyal, intelligent, lived longer than dogs and made wonderful companions.

My experience with birds goes back many years raising a family in a big house on a lake on the outskirts of civilization. Our domestic birds were sleek and graceful and provided song but, for the most part, were up-staged by our menagerie of cats and dogs. The wild birds rescued by the children, we were never able to keep alive, in spite of encouragement from "bird people". . That is, until "Ugly" joined our family. He was a large baby with ruffled faded black feathers in constant disarray. He thrived to become the "comic" residing on our back porch. He was a plucky little guy with a big heart. We were so proud of ourselves for saving one bird and impressed by his grit. Alas! One night Ugly met his demise. The pillows from the outdoor furniture, piled in the corner, tilted during the night and fell on poor Ugly. Of all the birds, those we housed and those we tried to save, Ugly defies time and lives vividly in memory.

The moral of this story? For those of us mourning the closure of salons and barbers, may we never judge ourselves or others by our feathers.

The Mower: An essential worker