

## Tyranny of the Tiny

31Oct2019

Mary, my beloved is enthralled with hummingbirds. I am, shall we say, somewhat less enamored of them but my attempts to ignore them are to no avail, as we shall see.

It's not that I dislike hummingbirds; I just don't put watching them up there with, say, reading a good book. Cool little birds, but not objects of endless fascination. In my world "Hey, there's a hummingbird; wanna go for a drive?" is a perfectly reasonable sentence.

Not so with Mary. She became enthralled with the little flitters while visiting a dear friend whose backyard is a veritable hummingbird social club. Susan always has at least one feeder hanging in both front and back yards, so that visits to her house are year round adventures in bird spotting.

I'm not saying I don't understand their interest. I'm just more of a dog person. But hummingbirds have this aura of being a bit otherworldly and of course, small. And quick, did I mention quick? But mostly, fragile. And that's the facet of their existence that gives them an unfair advantage.

You just can't help worrying about them. Especially when it gets down to 25 degrees overnight and then, while letting the dogs out for their morning pee you notice that the hummingbird feeder has frozen solid. The same hummingbird feeder that Mary always (okay, almost always) keeps well filled with sugar water and that the birds rely on for their sustenance, especially after a night below freezing. But Mary's away on business and well, you see where this is going, right?

The hummingbirds have come to depend on Mary's sugar water and now it's probably too late in the season from them to fly south and there they are, flitting about outside the back kitchen window, hovering and staring in at me with the hummingbird version of a pitiful countenance. And the thing is, somewhere down deep, they know.

They know that I'm a wimp who can't stand to see an animal suffer, even one that I half suspect decided to stay here for the winter in the sure and certain knowledge that they could guilt us into providing a reliable feeding station. So, yes, I made fresh bird juice and refilled the feeders, all the while cursing the little bastards.