

untended 1.3
Summer/Fall 2022



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Morning Walk
By Judy Belk

Exploring morning on Whidbey Island backdropped by Mt. Rainer and Useless Bay which is anything but.

Another glorious wake-up call forcing me to open eyes and heart.

Sharing this day with hushed birdwatchers hauling telescopes, binoculars, cameras.

Each hoping to be the one to catch a rare glimpse of the Eastern Phoebe far from its cross-country hometown.

I meander along the pathway splitting Deer Lagoon in a double take of calm serenity.

A small dog gets ahead of his owner.

Sniffing at my shoelaces.

An elderly white lady struggles to catch up.

Eager to engage.

She's here from Texas. Twenty years.

She's a local. I'm a visitor, like the Phoebe, far from home. Another rare island sighting.

We go deep quickly, speaking of our love of books, morning walks, and this place.

But she's ready to share more than I want to know.

"I have a biracial granddaughter in Texas who I've never met. My fault."

I cringe, hopes dashing that maybe for once, my blackness might be inconsequential.

And we could just be two beings meeting on a morning walk.

But she's in colorblind pain, desperate to connect with anyone.

She turns from me, quietly weeping.

"She's twelve. I want to show her this place."

She wipes away tears and snot.

The silence and discomfort broken by the honking of geese.

Hundreds of them.

Watching the two of us watching them.