

The adventures of everyday living come in various degrees of intensity. Here in our corner of a very rural part of Michigan, we find as much pleasure in the small variations in our usual experiences as in the more dramatic ones.

It is a thrill to see a black bear and cubs, and such things as the Northern Lights or a spectacular comet are sights we will never forget, but the little delights that make each day different enhance our lives even more.

In the milk room that adjoins the barn, there is a little tree frog (tree toad to us) that has been our companion for three years. I read that this specie's life span is five to nine years, so hopefully, we will enjoy his or her company for some time yet. The tree frog situates itself wherever the eating is best. Sometimes we see it in the window, other times it migrates to another area of the milk room. We appreciate its work, too, as there have been considerably fewer insects present since the tree frog has been in residence.

Every fall, he or she disappears, probably into the hole around the water pipe. This would give the frog access to winter quarters in the damp earth. This spring, I waited and waited for the return of the little creature, but it was not until a week or so ago that we saw it. I had heard other tree frogs and expected "ours" at any time. Sure enough, one day there he was--sitting in the window waiting for his meal. I look for him every morning.

We are presently coexisting peacefully with another animal of the wild. A skunk has made itself at home in our barn. We see it every few days, sometimes meeting the little black and white fellow waddling his way to or from the barn, sometimes seeing it at the barn cat's dish, happily finishing off the kibble or milk in the bowls. It never seems to have mischief--in the form of its pungent spray--on its mind, but just accepts our presence as a natural association with his barn forays.

The spiders on the outside of our east windows also provide their share of entertainment. Their beautifully crafted webs hang there, ready to catch any unsuspecting insect that ventures too close to the window. But, the predator can easily become prey, and a phoebe bird recently

began making frequent fly-by excursions near the windows, and if a spider were present, it became food for the bird.

When we look across the meadows at the flowers and grasses waving in the wind and see birds, deer, and other wildlife species, we begin to lose that human hubris that puts us at the top of life on this planet. We see how interconnected we all are, that sometimes each of us is prey, sometimes predator, sometimes uncommitted observer. And when we dig in the garden and find earthworms, we know, too, that their part of the world is occupied by life much smaller even than they are. The wonder of life on Earth isn't the "creation of man myth;" it is the way everything works together in such an elegant system. It is a shame that mankind spends so much of its energy and resources on destroying this balance of nature. It is even more frightening that our imperfect species is becoming so successful at this unholy task.