

The old man gratefully sat down in his chair on the porch overlooking his back yard. It had been a long day, and he was tired. As he started to relax and unwind from the day's efforts, he looked around his yard. It was not a particularly large yard, but it looked nice to him, and was bordered by trees that were waving in the dying breeze of the late afternoon. It was warm, but the air was moving and he began to reflect on how peaceful it was in his yard.

He closed his eyes and listened to the rustling of the leaves. Then a bird began to sing from high in one of his trees and it seemed to harmonize with the low whisper of the leaves brushing against each other. He opened his eyes and looked at the golden setting sun giving such a ethereal glow to the trees he almost thought it could be a vision from heaven. Then he thought about it, and began to wonder what really was the difference between his backyard and heaven ?

In heaven, he thought, perhaps there are choirs of angels; but in his back yard he enjoyed the sweet melody of the birds in the trees and he wondered, could any heavenly choir be as sweet ? Then he surveyed his back yard with the trees outlining his lawn, and wondered again, could any view in heaven be as peaceful as this ? He began to wonder, what then might be the difference ?

He thought about what heaven might have that would be special. He knew it must be filled with kind and loving people, and again, he recalled his family and his friends, and thought again, he had that covered right where he was. But, he supposed, there must be something different about heaven, isn't there ? As he thought about it, he began to wonder about a story he heard about someone that was in an accident, and said they thought they went there and came back, and while there they felt this wonderful love all around. So the old man began to think about whether there was love in his back yard.

First he thought of the bird, still singing his joy for everyone to hear, and yes, the old man loved the bird, not just because of his singing, but because he was part of his yard. He thanked the bird in his mind, and felt that the bird sang ever the more joyously. Then he reviewed his lawn. It was not perfect, there were a few warn spots where the grand kids had played kickball, and as the old man began to recall all the fun parties and birthdays and dinners they had enjoyed together in the yard, he began to love the yard for giving them such a wonderful place to be together, and then he felt the yard began to shine just that much greener and happier as it seemed to return his love and gratitude. Then the old man looked at the stalwart trees on the edge of the lawn. He thought about the way they shaded him from the sun and waved in the wind as though greeting him whenever he came out to visit. He thought about all the squirrels that ran up and down and all through the branches, and again, he began to feel love for the trees. He loved the shade and the squirrels and the wonderful sounds of the leaves, but also, he loved them just because they were here and were part of the family.

The old man slowly began to realize he loved everything about the yard: the way the light changed through the day, from a hot bright day to a gently loving twilight; and the way the lawn and trees just grew so happily together and give him and his family such a wonderful place. He loved it all, and all began to return his love. Then he realized he love his family in this same kind of divine way. And he loved his house and all his friends too. Suddenly, as he continued contemplating this love and the feeling began to dissolve into himself, he found he really couldn't find any difference between his back yard and heaven. Both were worlds of glory.

The old man was surprised – He had never thought he was living on a world of glory. But he heard the dinner bell, so with an afterglow of love and joy, he got up went inside to have dinner with his family, feeling very very grateful for how lucky he was to have such a loving family and loving world all around him,

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