

## "A Winterized Midget"

By RAY PETERSON  
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It wasn't a likely day to see any bird visitors. The red column in the thermometer had sagged to the thirty below zero mark and stayed there, as though too stiff to ever rise again.

In the lee of a small building, a small huddle of English Sparrows regarded me indifferently. Apparently they were too miserable to bother being cautious. As I stepped into the open-doored shed, a small bird flew from the floor. Promptly, I shut the door to prevent it from escaping.

Clinging to the wall plate in a dim corner was a robin-sized owl. It was a friendly looking little fellow with glass-buttoned eyes that seemed to large for its face. On the floor, from where it had been roused, lay the half-eaten body of an English Sparrow. The plump, little owl wasn't as homeless as its appearance suggested.

I captured the owl quite easily. The small warrior seemed to realize that he was at my mercy, for a time at least, and he submitted without trying to use his formidable claws or strongly-built beak. Defiantly, however, he clacked his bill to let me know that he wasn't afraid of me, not one tiny bit.

Later, Kathryn and I, with "Taverner" playing an oft repeated role, decided that the wee fellow was a Little Boreal Owl.

We would have liked to have kept the little owl. He was such a bold, handsome fellow. Fortunately, better nature prevailed. After learning his identity, we turned him free. He will be remembered, though, for he brought a wealth of interest and enjoyment on a day that had begun coldly barren.

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### EXCHANGE OF SPECIMENS INVITED

Anyone interested in exchanging insect specimens — especially butterflies and moths?

Will buy or trade material in these groups as preferred. Particularly interested in moths.

## Winter's Perfume

Elizabeth Cruickshank

On a brittle cold day I raised the cover of my little terrarium in the south window. As if by magic I was no longer house-weary. The fragrance of the plants in the soft moist earth had carried me on a long-ago quest for my fern collection. Through dim woods and tall brake we had come to the shady cliff where the sensitive fern grew in abundance, while far below on the bank of the clear little brook the dainty fragile fern enjoyed life in such a happy environment.

No other sense, says Maeterlinck, possesses such an after-call as the sense of smell. "Sight preserves pictures, but it is photographic and exclusive. Hearing deals in echoes, but smell will recreate in a way almost miraculous the inner emotion of a particular time and place."

How often we have heard the phantom music of the clover fields of home carried on a fragrant breeze. My wee bit of confined earth had put my feet on springy ground. If we cannot have the field we may in memory enjoy its wealth for the healing and comfort that "fulfils our hourly need, the daily manna gives."

On a brilliant day in late November a drive to Long Lake was an experience to remember. Uplifted as in a glory by the panorama before us—the sky such rich vivid blue high above, paler graded blue to cool green below, I felt how thankful we should be for eyes to thrill to the "fine sincerity of light and the luxury of open sky"; and the lake, ice-sealed, a valley paved with stars; paths across its milky ways in a glistening world.

Single duck tracks showed a lone bird's travels to reach open water. Muskrats, warmly red, sunned themselves undisturbed by our nearness. Far below the surface of the melted ice, near the shore, busy water bugs swam. Chickadees flitted about in the overhanging willows. "Oh, for the gift to crystallize the rich simplicity of rhythm in the woods and sky, in songs as free as—chickadee."

Caught up in the spell of the perfume of winter distilling about us from sun-drenched sodden grass,

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