

Natural Splendor in America

by Phyllis Chesler



Florida sunset taken by Barbara Chasen

In the midst of horror, at a time of fear, natural marvels still abound—they are all around us. Who would have guessed that green and blue really do go together? Blue Seas, blue Skies, and green earth. Could these colors have been tossed together accidentally, or are we looking at the work of a

Master painter who literally colored the world as if it were a painting that would soon come to life?



Ducks photographed by Donna Hughes in Pennsylvania

Gerard Manley Hopkins said it well in his poem *Pied Beauty*:

“Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;

.....

Landscape plotted and pieced

All things counter, original, spare, strange;

...

He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.”



This emerging shoot will soon open, and become a fragrant hyacinth... But even in bud, it is interesting, Words and photo taken by Bob Brannon in Brooklyn, New York

Shakespeare, divine in his own way but still a descendent of God's "dappled" Eden, boldly proclaims the eternality and steadfastness of human creativity (his own) over and above the changing nature of the seasons. Here he is in Sonnet #18:

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

His love for her—the Dark Lady? The Gentleman?—of his sonnets does live on. As uncanny, as wondrous, as all briefly living things.