2nd place “Humor” – SBWC 2019

The Mouse Murders

I’m usually an easy-going guy. “Live and let live” is my motto. You don’t bother me; I won’t bother you. And I think I’ve explained my position to the mice, more than once. The boundaries of good neighborliness stop at my doorstep, and that includes the garage. The rest of my “God’s little acre” is shared equally and everyone is free to go about his or her business. Yes, I do feed the birds, and maybe that shows a bias. Still, that’s no excuse to sneak into the garage at night, get into my car, chew up the insulation and short out the wiring. I understand that it gets cold in the winter and the warmth of the car’s engine, just returned from a trip to the market is like an invitation to spend the night. But for God’s sake, at least go back outside to use the bathroom! Mouse droppings and that lingering smell of rodent urine just don’t cut it, especially with my wife. And I suppose it goes without saying that the inconsiderate beast who nested and raised a litter in the Mitsubishi’s heater vent while we were on vacation for a month was totally out of line. My car is not a rolling mouse day-care center.

So, I murder mice. There may be a better mousetrap but my first line of defense, or attack, is the old standby, the springboard. Even these “old-fangled” spring traps have improvements. They come with a piece of plastic swiss cheese as part of the bait mechanism, but this swiss cheese is bright yellow not white, so who’s that going to fool? I’m not sure if the fake cheese is scented to attract mice but I always slather it with peanut butter, and a dab of bacon grease, if I have some. The thought of someone’s last meal being plastic cheese is too much for me, even in my murderous state of mind.

When times are bad and the enemy is particularly aggressive I buy ‘em by the dozen at the hardware store and set several at a time in the garage and one in each car. I have my technique down. I place each trap in the lid of a shoe box so all I have to do is dump the dead mouse still attached to the trap right into the garbage; kind of a miniature open casket ceremony. Each morning during hunting season, I go out to the cold garage and check my traps.

Usually, in three or four days I’ve repulsed the current attack and can resume my normal live/let live lifestyle. But, once in a while, I encounter a particularly wily beast who learns to avoid the traps, or worse, gets a free lunch on me without getting caught. And then, just for spite, in a kind of victory dance, goes and pees in my car. These situations call for my nuclear option – mouse pads. These aren’t computer accessories. They are plastic trays, about 4 by 6 inches, impregnated with some scent that attracts mice and are coated with a powerful glue that stops them in their tracks and keeps them waiting for me, and their demise.

They do seem to work for the little buggers that avoid the traditional trap but then I have a live “mouse over glue” to deal with. The unforgiving glue requires that I finish the job; no option for catch and release. I’ve considered tossing them outside into the bushes to let nature take its course but then I worry that some predator, an owl perhaps, might get stuck to the glue. The quickest is if I just stomped on the trapped creature but I’m squeamish and I could end up with mouse guts glued to my shoe. So they mouse dies by drowning. I line my five-gallon bucket with a plastic trash bag with a very small hole cut in the bottom, fill it with water, and add one mouse on a glue trap. I close the top of the bag and lift it out of the bucket. It takes the mouse about the same amount of time to meet its maker as it does for the water to drain back into to bucket and then it’s off to the trash.

Now I can’t say I’m proud of this but it does keep peace in the family. Of course, my chances of becoming a Buddhist are rather limited.