



# “Musing from the Hill” by Susan Crossett

as seen on the *Dunkirk Observer* on Fridays  
and the *Jamestown Post-Journal* on Saturdays



## Small Wonder

Published January 15, 2021

I hardly, if ever, find myself lacking for ideas for columns but I never expect one to fall onto me.

My bathroom has a nautical decor so a small set of shelves with a buoy at the peak fits right in. The three shelves are filled with shells, sharks teeth, coral, a sand dollar and probably more. They are of some interest and definitely appropriate for the room. Many, if not most, have been there since the shelf was hung soon after the room was finished.

Inanimate objects usually behave as they should, i.e., going nowhere. Well, they were until one took a notion to fall out of its place on the shelf. It landed, as it were, on the back of my neck. I washed it off and set it on a towel to dry.

I never would have given it a second glance were it not for its “Leap.” I don't know shells so can't tell you what it's called though expect to have an answer long before this goes to press. Still, that's not what I want to tell you about.

It was its pattern that caught my eye, leaving me quite in awe of the intricacy of that design: more straight lines than I'd care to count on the almost three-inch surface. Most form triangles or more exotic geometric designs except where the tiny critter got carried away and made just big blobs, a lovely warm brown on a beige surface.

How very easy, it struck me, to overlook the fascinating designs that nature has given us. How often do we truly stop to look? And then pause to admire – as we should.

Spider webs have long fascinated me. (I have never willingly harmed a spider since my columns appeared. I've even been known to help a spider in distress – as it continued to slide back down the



concave side of my bathroom sink.) All right, I do readily admit my spiders are just little guys, not the big monsters they have in Florida and other parts of the south.

Have you ever taken the time to watch a spider spin its web? Some of these get pretty big – certainly in comparison to the little one who does it “all by self” with no break until the design is completed.

Admittedly, there are times when I wish she was a little more discerning about the spot she chooses for her work. One of the favorite sites seems to be across the door leading out to the garden and clothes line. I walk into it every time. (How could I avoid something like that? And of course I never remember to look – too eager to get down the steps and into the yard.) But she's back again right away, starting over. Honestly, as I reflect (well, it's the end of November and spiders are on hiatus) that's the only spot regularly “webbed”.

There is one at the front door but there's little web and, more likely, just a spider hanging straight down in the middle. Obviously, for reasons not entirely esoteric, I'll try to avoid this when possible. (But, guys, that's the only door!)

My third beautiful example also concerns bugs – at least I'm presuming it's bugs. I'd never seen one – or, truly, any clue of an insect. But something has been eating – no, has eaten – the leaves of my hollyhock. I don't think the plant cares, not by then anyways. I love hollyhocks – they remind me of old days and, for whatever reason, farms. Only one grew this year – tall and straight and put out perhaps a handful of scarlet blooms. Then kaput – over it went to just get in the way.

But while all this was going on, insects – invisible things, mites? I will not know – nor does it make any difference any more than what kind of shell it is.



Because my point is some critter – or perhaps an entire invisible colony – munched away (I presume) until just the outline of the leaf remained, true lace. We could never make anything that intricate or, to my eye, as awesomely beautiful.

I'm sure there are countless other examples. I just need to take the time to look – to SEE.

Our world is full of such wonders. They surround us –indoors as well as out.

Take a deep breath and see for yourself.

The headless mouse at my feet – thanks, Gloria – probably needn't count.

Written November 30, 2020.