

Happy Heron

I'm Happy Heron. That's what they call me. Pesky cheek of them all. Why should I be happy anyway? Look at me. Bent over, up to my knees in cold water. Nothing to laugh about, is there? Ouch - pesky kingfisher, speeds past you like you wasn't there ever, him and his pesky flashy blue coat. Bloody bling, if you ask me. As for that dipper, making a fuss and upsetting all the fish. Pesky dipper. What fish? Eh, what fish - you stand here for hours on end, waiting for your breakfast, beak pointing downwards until tears from your eyes drips off the end, waiting for some fish to swim within striking distance. They never do. Pesky fish. Pesky tears - they always cause a ripple just at the worst possible moment. There, what's that? I told you before - pesky dogs barking with their pesky humans wandering about like bears in the wood, only half as bright. Pesky dogs. Have to fly away upstream now.

There. Here we are upstream now. Look at me. It's eleven in the morning and I still haven't managed to get any breakfast. Might as well just go for lunch now then. Pesky breakfasts. Oh great, there's another of them humans. Gaping at me like I was in a zoo. Happy places, zoos, eh? What do you think? Wouldn't catch me there. No, I'd much prefer to stand for four hours - four hours, mind you - in the freezing cold water, waiting for breakfast to swim by. It's a grand life. Not. Rheumatism in the joints, no one cares. That's why I'm Happy Heron. Not.

Newspapers in the river, floating past. Can't abide them. Pictures don't look interesting. Anyway, they're always at least three days old. Old news, carried exclusively to Happy Heron in his haunts. Crumpled, wet newspapers at breakfast-time. All we need now is some pesky blighter being jolly on the radio. That'd be a proper breakfast. Weather report: generally cold, wet, miserable. Plenty of rain forecast. Pesky bloody winter.

Last summer, pesky swallow comes up to me, says, why don't you fly south for the winter? I laughed. Laughed in a hollow manner. Fly south, I said, that'll be right. Have you seen me flying? About two miles an hour and that's pushing it. Never mind, says Mindless Swallow, just do some exercises, you'll be as right as rain. Right as rain - I ask you: do you think he's ever been in the rain, hours on end?. Once, I flew about ten miles. Nearly did for me. This pesky swallow says, oh we fly about six thousand miles for the winter. Great fun, says he. Buggar off, says I.

Pesky dipper again - can't he go and squeak somewhere else? Always there when you don't need him. Pesky fish. Never there when you need them. Oh look, there's a fish. Jab, poke, blast. Why don't you just dart away, pesky fish? Go on, it don't matter to me, because I'm Happy Heron. Sore knees, battered beak, sore head. No breakfast. Happy day.