

Morning View Kentucky
12 July 1957

Hello Mr. McCarthy,

As a rule, I can readily take care of my mail, and enjoy doing it; but the pathetic enclosed stumps me completely. Therefore, am sending it along to you, confident that you know how to handle such matters.

Furthermore, I find myself completely incapable of a dissertation on crickets. As is so often the case, it is an instance of the too-familiar being overlooked and ignored. My bug book is of little help. About all I know is that poets constantly scatter cheerily chirping crickets all over the landscape, and that the little wretches will just as cheerily dine upon any fabric from rugs to nylon hose.

I got tickled at the lady and her robin problem. She is going to have him all worn out taking care of him. No need to buy special food. Just get any canned dog food and stick little balls of it on the blunt end of toothpicks and shove it down his neck. He is about old enough to do his own eating, as he will forever let her feed him if she doesn't get him straightened out. Tell her to get him quite hungry, then hold the food on the toothpick in front of him before giving it to him. He will gradually become impatient and start reaching for it. As soon as he does that, she can readily teach him to eat from a little dish. He should be drinking now. She should put a little container of water in his house and occasionally dip his face into it until he finally figures it out for himself.

Hope you find the cowbird book. Perhaps it will have the answer to a question that has long puzzled me. How does the young cowbird know he is a cowbird? Or how to act like one? It would seem normal for him to assimilate the habits and seek the company of whatever foster parents raised him. Yet the moment he is old enough to feed and get about alone, he promptly seeks the other cowbirds, though he has never seen one at close range before. It is certainly a strong argument for heredity.

Sincerely,

Brewer