

Morning View Kentucky
17 March 1959

Congratulations, Colonel,

You should simply sparkle when bedecked with one of those big, black colonel's hats and matching necktie.

One morning last week, I missed part of your program due to the fact that I was over in the pond-field digging out doves.

When Cincinnati was receiving its traffic-tangling afternoon snow, this area was just enough farther south to be pelted with a mixture of sleet and freezing rain for the greater part of the day. Only occasional periods of pelleted snow and of warm rain prevented the icy deposits from building to the danger point on the big trees, which, however, were sufficiently burdened by their glassy sheathing to crackle ominously when touched by winds.

By the time Cincinnati was struggling in deep snow, the ground here lay hidden beneath a white, crusty admixture of snow, sleet and ice, frozen almost to the hardness of concrete.

When they came in for their evening meal shortly before dark, the doves were flying badly, and I realized they would be in real trouble by morning, should the freezing downpour continue after dark. Already, ice beaded their sleek backs and clung thickly to their long, tapering tails. Several were so encrusted that it was impossible for them to spread their tail feathers in the customary landing fan. Others still maintained some degree of control over the long feathers, which flared in spiked disarray.

Next morning, a miserable group of doves arrived for breakfast. Their backs and tails were whitened by clinging ice, and many lacked some of their tail feathers, having torn them out in their struggles. They had frozen to the ground as they slept. One big fellow was completely tailless and resembled a strange flying capsule.

While many doves departed northward earlier in the month, there should have been about twenty hungrily eating the small grains, and there were no more than a dozen. Somewhere, the others crouched helpless, imprisoned by the steel-hard crust.

Knowing that many of them sleep amid buckbush clumps on the far side of the pond-field, I made haste to hunt them. As I gathered my equipment of one old-fashioned market basket and a little Army shovel, I considered taking my tiny radio, but decided against it because of the slippery footing.

I progressed satisfactorily across the uneven iciness of the field until I incautiously advanced upon a little slope more glassy than the rest, whereupon my galoshes became as skis and I skidded