

## Tick Tock

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Well, this variety of clematis is now at its peak. But the peonies are done.

I had a vase of peonies in the downstairs bathroom and the combination of their beauty and aroma made it tempting to visit the bathroom much more often than nature required. But their time was past. The blossoms were browning at the edges and drooping. So this morning I took the whole vase to the kitchen in order to empty it and discard the dead peonies. But by the time I reached the kitchen I was carrying nothing but a vase of bare stems. I looked back and there, in the hallway outside the bathroom, were all the petals...white and pink...on the floor; and in the midst of them, like a show-offy flower girl at an aunt's wedding, Lulu the cat was prancing and tiptoeing.

I have been at my desk non-stop for two days...have not been hiking, picnicking, somersaulting, or anything else involving grass or woods. Nonetheless: I just removed a tick that was burrowing into my neck. Second neck tick in two days! What is this?! Probably not a deer tick...too big...but revolting nonetheless. If I wanted someone to suck on my neck, I would...no, never mind; I am not going to go there.

I have already had Lyme Disease, and it was NOT FUN. I do not want to have Lyme Disease again. But they say this is the year...because of the weather (very little snow all winter)...of the tick. All kinds. I have deer galore in my meadow. I have seen them walking majestically across...fourteen at one time, once...and in apple season I have woken to see seven or eight munching at my apple trees, some up on their hind legs to hit the higher branches. Once, at night, I took the dog out on a leash and had a close encounter with a very large deer in back of the barn...startled us both, and we fled in opposite directions.

I like having the deer nearby. But I do not like their ticks, do not want their ticks, *especially not on my neck.*

At the BEA convention, my publisher gave out beautifully printed broadsides quoting a passage for my upcoming book "SON". I brought one home and took it to be framed at the framer here in my small Maine town. This morning Annemarie, the framer, who has a British accent, called to say it was ready. When I told her I'd be right down to pick it up, she replied, "Cool beans." Is that a Britishism? I kind of like it.

And I also like the job that she did of framing. I couldn't get a photo without reflections on the glass, but even so:

Cool beans, right?



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