

Morning View Kentucky
13 September 1957

Sorry, Mr. McCarthy,

nothing dramatic or even mildly exciting about my temporary inability to use one hand.

Despite all ministrations of the ducks, the pond, of a sudden, was dotted with floating blobs of a bright, iridescent, blue-green hue -- sort of a peacock color -- and most evil to look upon. Though the pond had never been so afflicted before, I had heard all about the repulsive stuff. It indicates, according to the bulletins, a dangerously poisonous condition resulting from a particular combination of algae and temperatures and water chemical content. The vicious looking blobs are a danger signal that the water can be deadly to anything utilizing it. I had visions of the ducks coming to an untimely end, and, more disturbing, the sudden demise of all my nice fish.

Those Tunnel-Mouths (large-mouth bass) and the Blue Gill who serve as the staple food for their ravenous cousins, represent many hours of relaxation. I carefully put back all bass weighing less than two pounds, aiming for the grandpappy Tunnel-Mouth I cannot catch.

Immediate action was necessary, so I put powdered copper sulphate in a 55 gallon drum at the side of the pond, pumped it full of water with the tractor pump, then, when the copper had dissolved, sprayed the solution over the surface of the pond. The tractor stood beside the drum with me between them. Starting or stopping the pump necessitated working the clutch and the little power take-off shift. Rather than move away from the drum and the hose snaking into it, I worked the clutch with one hand and the shift with the other, instead of scrambling up on the tractor and doing it properly with my feet.

Somehow, it aggravated an ancient shoulder injury, thereby immobilizing my arm for several weeks, which was infuriatingly inconvenient. Try brushing your teeth with the wrong hand some time.

That is all there is to it. The pond returned speedily to a healthy condition, the ducks and fish are thriving, and the big fellow still eludes me.

As I write, I envy you bitterly. While the tree patch is having the faintest of misty drizzles, your rain sounds like a busy day at Niagara Falls. There has been no hard rain here -- in fact, there has been almost no rain since that of which I wrote you.