

東大過去問 2009年 第1問 (要約)

次の英文の趣旨を、70~80字の日本語でまとめよ。句読点も字数に含める。

When I was six or seven years old, I used to take a small coin of my own, usually a penny, and hide it for someone else to find. For some reason I always “hid” the penny along the same stretch of sidewalk. I would place it at the roots of a huge tree, say, or in a hole in the sidewalk. Then I would take a piece of chalk, and, starting at either end of the block, draw huge arrows leading up to the penny from both directions. After I learned to write I labeled the arrows: SURPRISE AHEAD of MONEY THIS WAY. I was greatly excited, during all this arrow-drawing, at the thought of the first lucky passer-by who would receive in this way, regardless of merit, a free gift from the universe.

Now, as an adult, I recall these memories because I’ve been thinking recently about seeing. There are lots of things to see, there are many free surprises: the world is full of pennies thrown here and there by a generous hand. But — and this is the point — what grown-up gets excited over a mere penny? If you follow one arrow, if you crouch motionless at a roadside to watch a moving branch and are rewarded by the sight of a deer shyly looking out, will you count that sight something cheap, and continue on your way? It is dreadful poverty indeed to be too tired or busy to stop and pick up a penny. But if you cultivate a healthy poverty and simplicity of mind, so that finding a penny will have real meaning for you, then, since the world is in fact planted with pennies, you have with your poverty bought a lifetime of discoveries.

*Pilgrim at Tinker Creek by Annie Dillard, HarperCollins Publishers