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**Assignment Essay 1 Pre-draft**

**Analysis of “The Judgment of the Birds”**

*“One specimen of Epeira observed building a web in a street light”,* page 533. What luminescent light might Eisley be trying to shed upon us with this clear, concise way of documenting an experience “*It was better, I decided, for the emissaries returning from the wilderness, even if they were merely descending from a stepladder, to record their marvel, not to define its meaning”,* page 533. Why would Eisley elaborate in such an effective manner, thus neglecting what his definition of what he felt the spider truly symbolized: “*In the days of the frost seek a minor sun”*, page 533. Clearly he thought his interpretation of the spider was important, “*Here was something that ought to be passed on to those who will fight our final freezing battle with the void.”* yet he refused to document it, my question is why?

Was Eisley merely examining a spider in a stoplight, or was he contributing to the greater wealth and general well being of human kind? Don’t you agree that it’s a bit ironic how Eiseley’s argument “*It was better, I decided, (...) to record their marvel, not to define its meaning”,* page 533, is a direct contradiction to his original interpretation on the previous page *“... [I]t has gotten itself a kind of courage by looking at a spider in a street lamp.”* At first, one might’ve thought they’ve been fooled by an elaborate trick created by Eiseley. While indeed it was not until my fourth reading in which I caught on to Eiseley’s trickery. “*It was better, I decided, for the emissaries returning from the wilderness, even if they were merely descending from a stepladder, to record their marvel, not to define its meaning. (...) In the end I merely made a mental note: One specimen of Epeira observed building a web in a street light.”* Thus I proceeded to re-read that quote from page 533 again and again and again. Clearly I’ve put a lot of thought into those few lines, mostly because it was unclear to me as to why he would tell us about his experience and define what it meant to him, then proceed to persuading us into thinking that we should only record our marvels rather than define what they symbolize to us. I thought “Well, then why would you of defined it yourself then Eiseley!?” But as I delved even deeper into the essay and reread those lines over and over again, I knew there was something important about THOSE particular lines. *“In that way it would go echoing on through the minds of men, each grasping at that beyond out of which the miracles emerge and which, once defined, ceases to satisfy the human need for symbols.”* And that is when it hit me. The events “*once defined, ceases to satisfy the human need for symbols.”*

Have you ever read an article in a horoscope? Would you not agree that they always seem a bit vague and can match majority of people regardless as to whether you’re a Virgo or an Ares? Now why do you think the articles are purposely kept vague? The answer is simple. Symbolism. Everyone needs it, the problem is that if a person writing a column that Virgo’s will be reading, they can’t assume as that all Virgo’s are in need of courage today. They would have to define the least amount of things as possible, in order to please the max amount of people. One may take into account the morals of this, such as that while it could be a Utilitarian idealistic approach, it also condemns the proper intentions as well, albeit if it’s to make money as a writer, but when applied to Eiseley, I conclude amongst myself that Eiseley is indeed morally correct, and I do agree with Eiseley.

To summarize in Lehman’s terms, what I think Eiseley is trying to say is “Look, this spider gave me courage, but maybe someone else in the world is in search of a symbol for hope, purpose, or even just a sign of peace.” “Why should we limit the definition strictly to “courage” and bar it from letting people define their own meaning to it, for whatever it is they are in search for?” If you were in Eiseley’s shoes, would you not agree that it would be wrong to define this spider as to representing courage, knowing that someone of a future generation might not get the symbolic resonance in which their mind desires? “*The mind, it came to me as I slowly descended the ladder, is a very remarkable thing; it has gotten itself a kind of courage by looking at a spider in a street lamp (...) But as I hesitated, it became plain that something was wrong, the marvel was escaping...* ”, page 533. What would the marvel be escaping? “*[T]he human need for symbols*”, Eiseley clearly answers to himself on page 533.