



ALL CREATION WAITS

The advent mystery of new beginnings

Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God. Every creature is a word of God. If I spend enough time with the tiniest creature, even a caterpillar, I would never have to prepare a sermon. So full of God is every creature.

--Meister Eckhart



This is a book about God's creatures, and "how a healthy soul responds to encroaching darkness. And there's more than one response. There's the turtle response, the loon response, black bear's response..."



"Each in its way says: *The dark is not an end, but a door. This is the way a new beginning comes.*"

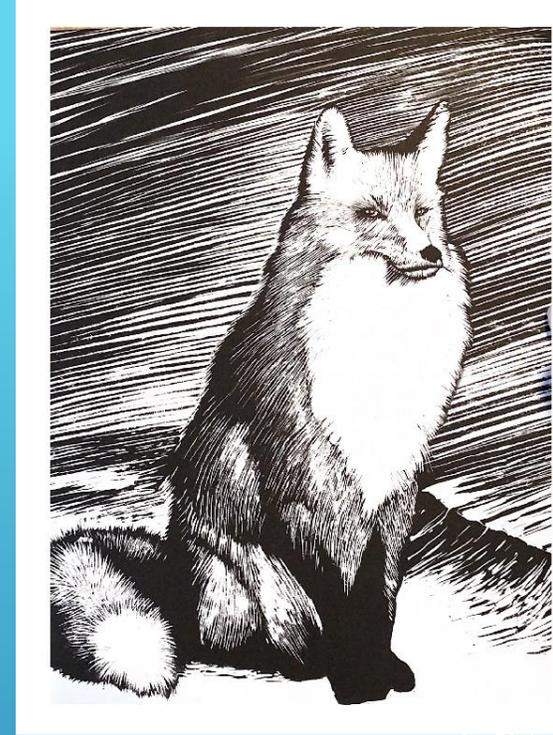
“...the roots of Advent run deep beneath the Christian church—in the earth and its seasons...”

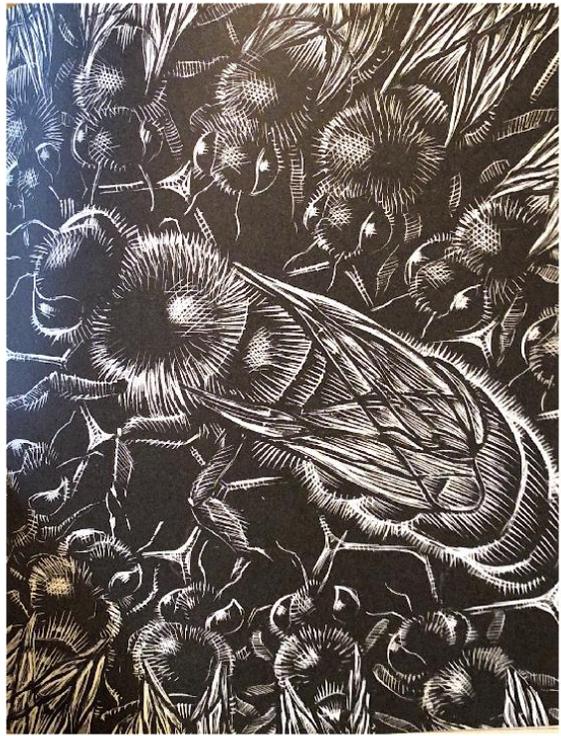
After the harvest, our early ancestors celebrated. “The group body called out, *Feast!* But they also looked to the darkening sky and the growing cold. ...they felt the shadow of primal fear—fear for survival—crouching over them. They were feasting, and they were fearful, both. Yes, last year the sun had returned to their sky. But what if, this year, it didn’t? Despite their collective memory, people wedded, bodily, to the earth, couldn’t help asking the question.”



“Our bodies still ask that question.”

“The early Fathers of the Christian church read the ebbing of light and heat and vegetable life each year as a foreshadowing of the time when life as we know it will end completely....To their and our abiding fear of a dark ending, the church spoke of an *adventus*: a coming. Faith proclaimed, *When life as we know it goes, this year and at the end of all years, One comes, and comes bringing a new beginning...*there is One who is the source of all life, One who comes to be with us and in us, even, especially, in darkness and death. One who brings a new beginning.”



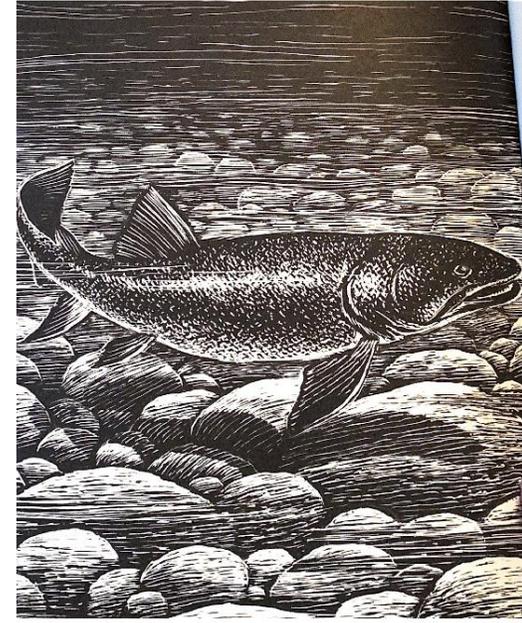


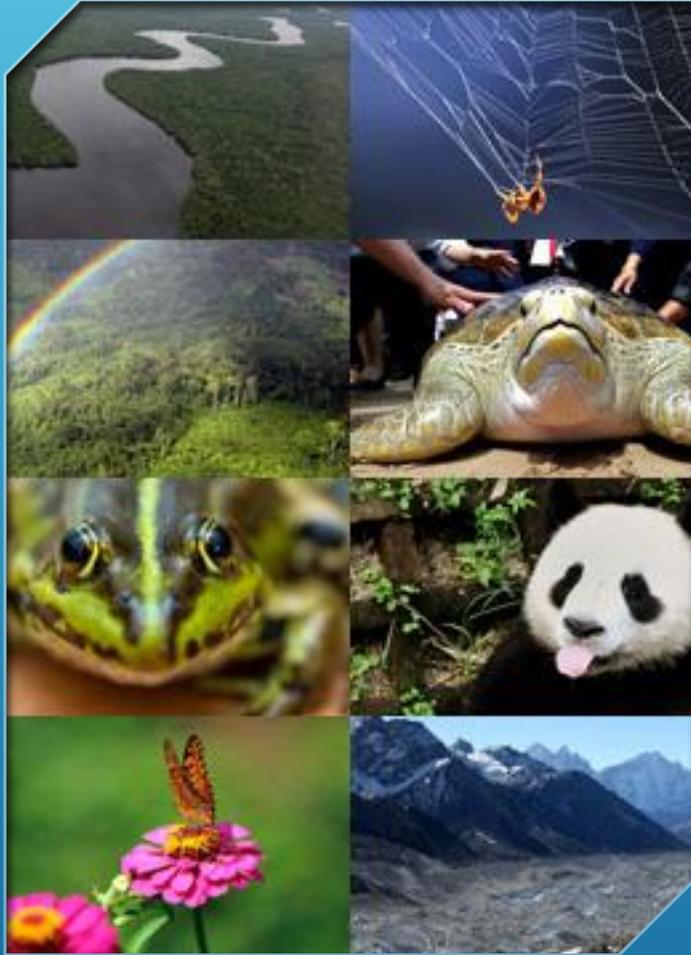
*“This is Christian tradition at its best,
moving in step with creation.”*

“When the sun’s light and heat wane, the natural world lets lushness fall away. It strips down. All energy is directed to the essentials that ensure survival. Engaging in Advent’s stripping practices—fasting, giving away, praying—we tune into the rhythms humming in the cells of all creatures living in the northern hemisphere. We tune into our own essential rhythms.”

“The practice of Advent has always been about helping us to grasp the mystery of a new beginning out of what looks like death.”

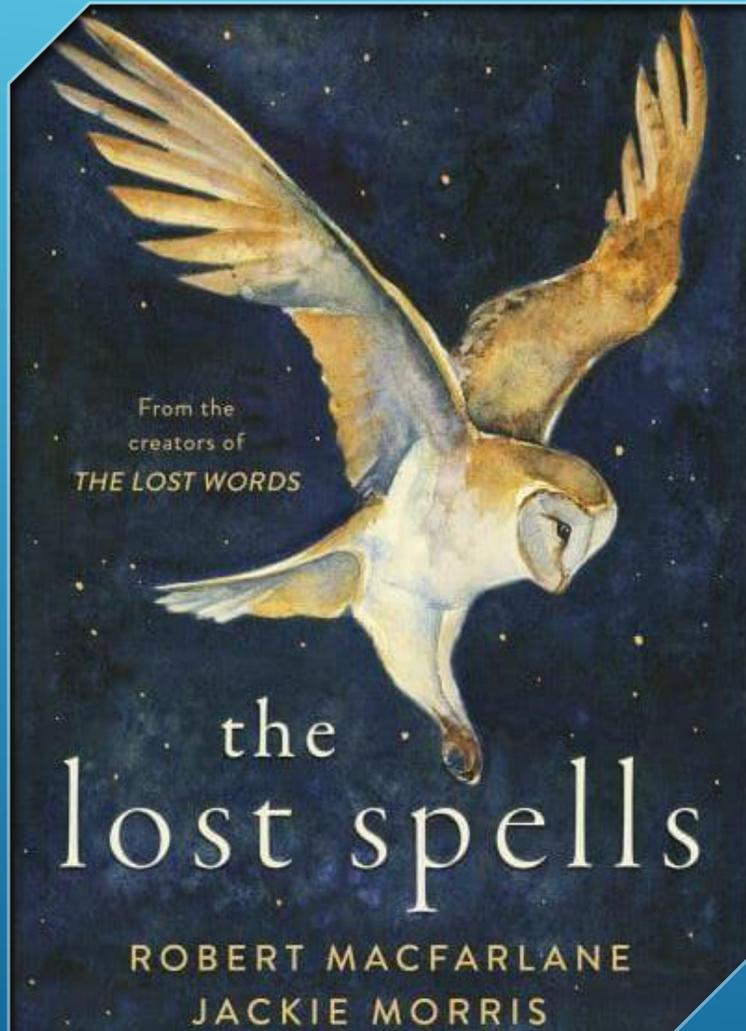
“Other-than-human creatures—sprung, like us, from the Source of Life—manifest this mystery without question or doubt. The more I’m with animals and the more I learn about them, the more I know they can be more than our companions on this planet. They can be our guides. They can be to us ‘a book about God...a word of God,’ the God who comes, even in the darkest season, to bring us a new beginning.”



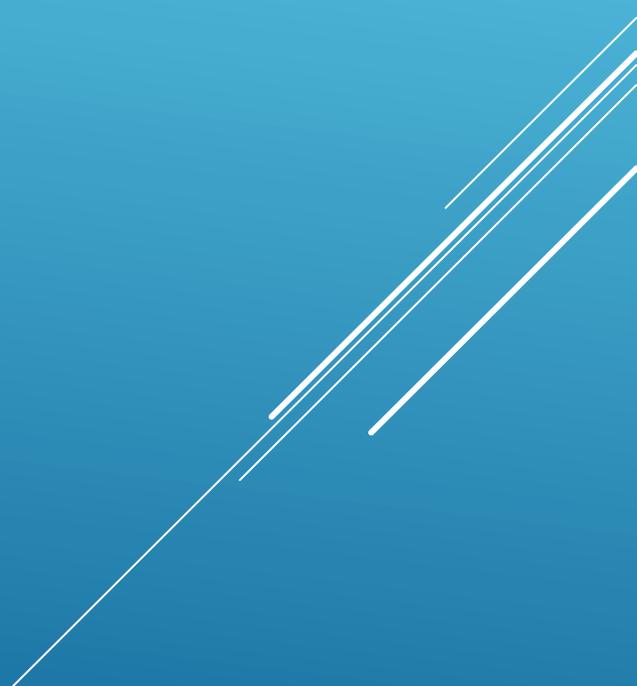


But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done this?
In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of every human being.

Job 12:7-10



“Loss is the tune of our age, hard to miss and hard to bear. Creatures, places and words disappear, day after day, year on year. But there has always been singing in dark times – and wonder is needed now more than ever. ‘To enchant’ means both to make magic and to sing out. So let these spells ring far and wide; speak their words and seek their art, let the wild world into your eyes, your voice, your heart.”



Red Fox

I am Red Fox – how do you see
me?

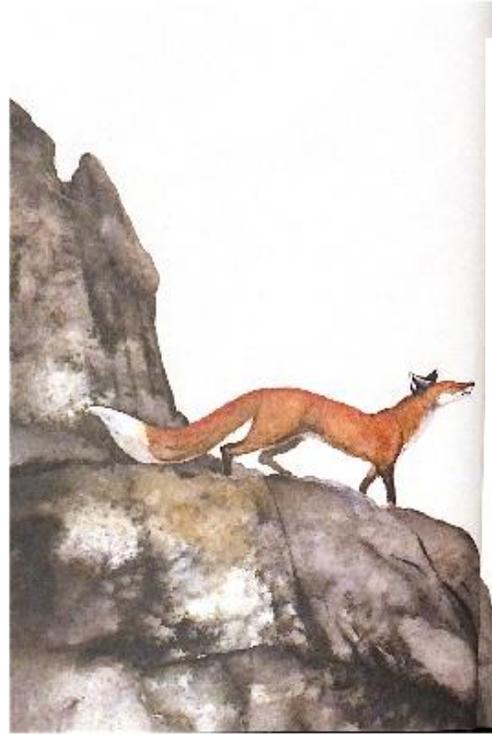
A bloom of rust
At your vision's edge,
The shadow that slips
Through a hole in the hedge,
My two green eyes
In your headlights' rush,
A scatter of feathers,
The tip of a brush.





I am Red Fox – when do you hear
me?

A scream in the night
that stops you dead;
Dark torn from dark,
a bolt through the head,
My sorrowful love-song
howled to my lover,
My trash-can clatter
From twilight's cover.

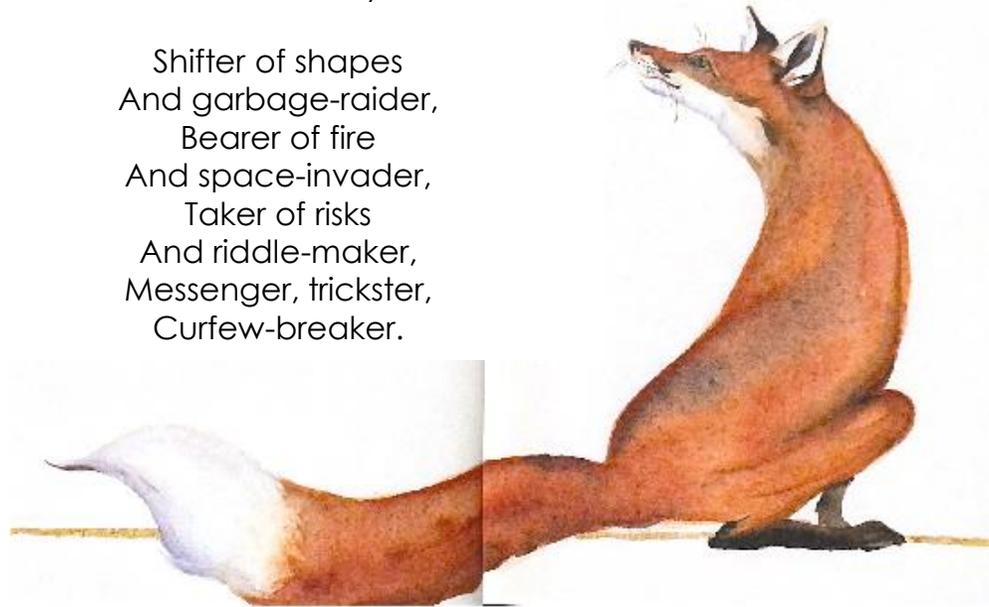


I am Red Fox – where do you find
me?

In copse and spinney,
ginnel and alley,
For I haunt city
as I haunt valley,
Climbing the fell-side,
crossing the pass,
Walking the high street,
bold as brass.

I am Red Fox – what do you call me?

Shifter of shapes
And garbage-raider,
Bearer of fire
And space-invader,
Taker of risks
And riddle-maker,
Messenger, trickster,
Curfew-breaker.



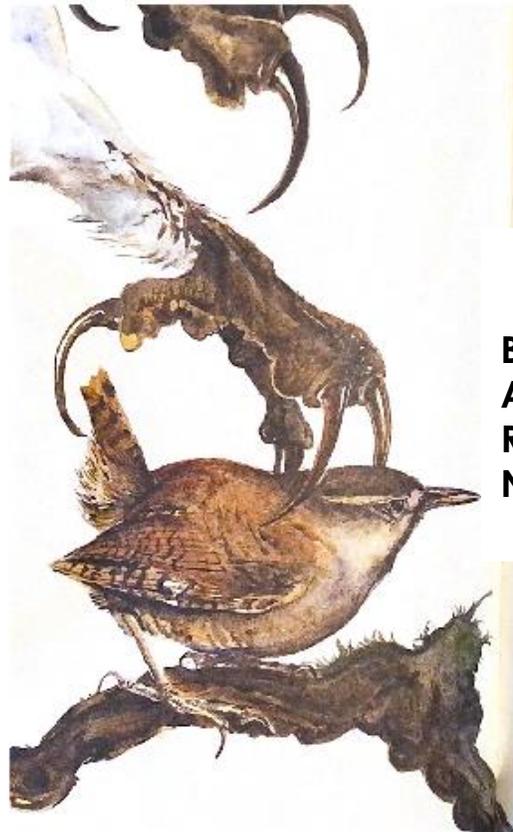
I am Red Fox – why do you need
me?

I am your double,
your ghost, your other,
The spirit of wild,
the spirit of weather,
Red is my fur and
red is my art,
And red is the blood
of your animal heart.









Barn Owl

Below Barn Owl spreads silence;
All sound crouches to ground,
Runs for cover, huddles down.
Noise is what Owl hunts,
drops on, stops dead.

Over rushes, across marshes,
Owl hushes –

Will you listen with Owl ears
for a while?

Let the wild world's whispers
call you in?

