

DANCING WITH HERONS

Bearing Witness to Local Natural History

An Excerpt From The Preface & Prologue

THIS BOOK is a collection of personal observations, experiences, and musings. Most events are gleanings from the journals I have kept for over thirty years.

Except for those included as Prologue here, the encounters and observations occurred in what might seem a very unlikely location—goldfish hatcheries located in and around a city of ten thousand people in south-central Indiana. The area in which I live is home to what was formerly the world's largest producer of goldfish. Grassyfork Fisheries was established in 1899. Ozark Fisheries purchased the hatchery from Grassyfork in 1970. They currently have three fish farms in this county. All of my adult life I have birded, studied nature, and photographed at one or another of these units.

This writing is not meant to be pretentious. I am simply one woman who has been blessed to experience these outdoor encounters. I have been moved and spiritually shaped by them. Perhaps they will motivate others to value their own local wildness. . . .

I HAD come that evening to the summit of Maine's Cadillac Mountain to photograph the setting sun. Reflections on the water amid the islands had dissipated and a glorious full moon began to rise from the ocean. Sitting on the ancient granite rocks, I tasted pine and listened to the wind's music as it rushed through conifers. I watched as the ocean gave birth to the luminous, deep orange orb. A rich salmon light was cast for miles across the surface of the water, as the moon was released from the depths of the ocean. The light far at sea was silky, ethereal, and mystical. Rising from far below on a hidden lake, came the call of the wild loon. The primordial sound climbed to the summit and seemed to fill the top of the world. It was elemental. It was rapture. And I wept. Ecstasy.

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EPILOGUE*

My Personal Invitation To You

I invite you to journey with me through the depth and breadth of internal experiences of acceptance, ecstasy, revelation, beauty, unity, compassion, and spiritual awakening – all through my local wildness. Bearing Witness.

Joni

If you would like to share in the journey, this book may be ordered from:

Joni James

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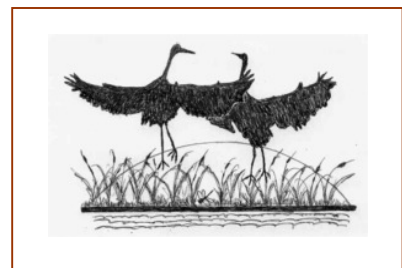
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