

Fellow Mortals™

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Wildlife Rehabilitation

“...I have felt a presence that disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns and the round ocean and the living air, and the blue sky, and in the mind of man.”

—William Wordsworth, 1770-1850

ACCEPTING OUR WINGS

BY YVONNE WALLACE BLANE

From hand to hand is the connection of our hearts, all hearts, hawk, rabbit, swallow, human. Each heart makes its own promises, each heart finds its own place. Each heart is the sacred repository of hope, of joy, of love. Of change. Of freedom.

The sky brightens in the east. A new day. The air crackles with mosquitoes, with gnats, and the lone, swooping black and white flight of a swallow is suddenly in their midst, mouth agape to gather hundreds of tiny insects in this, the first flight of morning...
...a light goes on in the living room, a bright, black eye, round with intelligence, studies the waxworm offered at the end of a forceps, and suddenly gapes—a fraction of an instant delay and the mouth will be sealed, obstinate against unnatural food, unnatural light, unnatural existence. But one day, today, now, that bright black eye will lead the long swooping flight to freedom, where the tree swallow will climb and claim the dizzying, thin, pure air—and there, once there, will join its brother. Free.

Drops of heavy wetness ripple down the sensitive fur that is the rabbit's ear. Down his nose, into a nostril, making him sneeze, and sneeze, and then stand up on hind legs to brush the offending moisture away and off into the grass, where it



belongs, where it is needed. Dandelion yellow, fuzzy, sticky, coats the rabbit's front paws and he sneezes again. Jumping straight into the air, he twirls hindquarter first into the sun, up and up and where he comes down is...An incubator, warm, fragrant with clean bedding, a wet nose is cradled on the cast that cradles the delicate bone of the front paw of the rabbit, who dreams of dandelions and sun and sneezing and jumping and in his dreams he falls back to earth and lays flat out at the foot of a raspberry bush, succulent with heavy fruit, dripping lazily above his nose. Gentle brown eyes close in satisfaction at seeing the young ones safe near by.

Smashed, smashed into the pavement. The bones grind, the heart is bruised against the breast, eyes, ears burn. Panting, hurting, helpless, the hawk waits, waits for what? A screech, a roar, a metal wall, a gentle hand, a dizzying movement, a jolt, a noise, human voices, gentle hands, prick of needle, wing, hurting wing, quiet place, sleep, sleep, and wake to look into foreign eyes, but also into familiar eyes. Food, time, light, dark, trust, fear, food, wing, stronger now, hungry wings, power now, honor now, hungry heart, brave now, freedom. Now. Wings embrace the sun. Freedom!

