

Fellow Mortals™



“There are still stars which move in ordered and beautiful rhythm. There are still people in this world who keep promises....That’s enough to keep my heart optimistic, no matter how pessimistic my mind....” —*Madeline L’Engle*

Wildlife Rehabilitation

SIMPLE GIFTS

Christmas always brings to mind a diminutive grey bunny, who liked to nibble on Norway pine boughs and dig in the dirt in the pot that held the miniature tree. A bunny who watched the sun rise and set from a seat in the window frame and who disdained nail clipping for rimming them with his own sharp teeth. One winter I brought in a box of snow, thinking he would find it a great treat. He tried to eat it and never went back. Arthur was the first rabbit I ever saw yawn.

These are simple memories, but then it is simple things that keep us warm at night—and it is small miracles, like those in the stories that follow—that bring mystery and hope into our daily lives.

Because *Fellow Mortals* works with critical injuries, providing emergency care on site, we see our share of

weight on release day, and he did not exhibit the behavior of a human imprint, even though he was raised by himself. The day he flew off of my hand, he made a circle of the entire property and returned once, making a perfect landing at my feet. Within minutes, he took off from the ground and flew out and away to begin his wild life—never looking back again.

An adult blue jay that came in this summer had a bad injury for any songbird—an open fracture in the humerus of the wing. A compound fracture is a serious thing by itself, and an old fracture presents additional problems. The wing could not be pinned, as the bone was fragmented, but the wing seemed to “sit” in a normal position, and so we decided to let time make the decision for us. Approximately two weeks after admit,



Two injured adult geese who remated in the wild and raised families this summer.

agedly, which is why when a creature that comes to us with only a minimal chance of release *does* recover completely, that individual will forever be held in our hearts. Sometimes I visit these memories just for a moment, long enough to make me smile, and to remind me that the world is in much more capable hands than ours.

The nighthawk pictured on the back cover is one of those small miracles. Hatched from an egg—two weeks after it was rescued from a construction site, this little male represented a very rare event in rehabilitation. Not only did he survive, but he was in beautiful condition and

the blue jay was flying! An x-ray showed that the bone had knit with a good callus and the muscle mass in the upper wing gave further support. After another month of flight training, the blue jay was released on site—against all odds.

This Christmas, I offer a simple and heart-felt “thank-you” for being part of *Fellow Mortals’* mission. Every story lived, and told, begins and ends with you—you made them possible—and so these memories are our gift to you this Christmas. We hope you open them again and again over the years, whenever your heart needs a hug.

—*Yvonne Wallace Blane*