



RELIGIOUS NATURALIST ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Photo by Tobias Bjørkli:

created by religious naturalists for religious naturalists

January 2024

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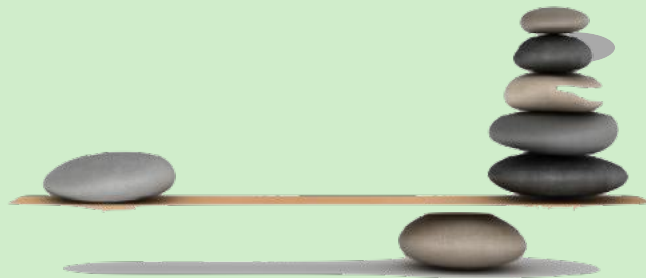
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Feature Article - January 2024

Sharing Thoughts and Information on the Wonder an Value of Nature by Todd Macalister



With plans underway for people from RNA to start and contribute to conversations on social media, I've been considering types of posts that I might want to contribute.

Some of these could start with a focus on religious naturalism as a growing option for religious orientation. But with concern that an initial focus on things "religious" could be a turn-off for some, I've been looking at Nature as a lead (and enjoying the view) and ways that the beauty, wonder, and value of nature can point us to the spiritual/religious.

Starting with the broad topic of Nature, we can ask:

What more-specific topics or themes might be worth pointing to?

What types of images or headlines might draw attention?

What types of statements might prompt interest, ideas, and conversation?

How might particular aspects of nature be shown and discussed in ways that are engaging?

Some themes can include:

simply observing (and often prompting a sense of wonder, or

beauty, or just plain fun), learning about aspects of “how things are”, and questions (and offering perspectives to consider) regarding “which things matter” and why, and what we might aspire to and do.

A wide range of topics can be shown and discussed in many ways, looking at how themes or principles in natural processes (such as the balance among varied parts of the natural world) might help or hurt our personal lives, our social groups, and our planetary ecosystems.

This approach to planning for postings is only one approach. As a counterpoint, after reading this draft, a fellow RNA member said: “Don’t overthink; just post or re-post everything that is compatible with RNA, and let the internet do its natural selection thing.”

In recent months, [the RNA Facebook Group](#) has been enriched by frequent postings from Steve Jones in Alabama, who offers cell-phone images of sunsets, snowfalls, and other vistas from his surroundings, along with some uplifting RN-centered comments. Even our urban members can offer photos of their local park or their houseplants or pets.

If any of you would like to contribute occasional or regular postings, we encourage you to join in. A good place to start can be [The Religious Naturalism community](#) on Reddit. Some pages at RNA website contain materials that may contribute, such as links to video, photo, and acoustic resources at the [Natural Wonders page](#).

Todd Macalister



Help Wanted! RNA is looking for volunteers with abilities in Accounting, Volunteer Coordinating, Spotify, Google Workspace, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Grant-Writing. Do any of those sound like fun to you? [Say so here](#) and we’ll get you started!

News and Events

RNUU Discussion Group--Beauty

Thursday, January 25th 3:30 PT, 4:30 MT, 5:30 CT, 6:30 ET

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9291456582>

This month we will discuss an episode of the podcast, "Hidden Brain" called "the Mystery of Beauty" which aired Dec. 4th 2023. <https://pca.st/chj1ju9y>

Our discussion facilitator, Elizabeth Sollie considers beauty to be one of the four pillars of Religious Naturalism. Three of the pillars neatly emerge from the creation story of the big bang and evolution, but beauty is more confounding. The host of the podcast, Shankar Vedantam wrestles with this very question--where does our sense of beauty come from and why is it so foundational to who we are? Do the answers satisfy?

RNA Store

RNA “Swag” Now Available!

We are now offering RNA branded merchandise on our website. Get yours here: <https://religious-naturalist-association.org/shop/>



Flexi case

\$12.73 – \$18.18



Heavyweight Unisex Crewneck T-shirt

\$15.93 – \$26.96



White 11oz Ceramic Mug

\$12.60 – \$16.04

News and Events continued...

Regular Events:

Deep Transformation Network Monthly Meeting

Attend the live monthly network meeting on the **first Tuesday of every month at 1:00 pm Pacific** (check your time zones carefully!) <https://deeptransformation.network/spaces/10286307/feed>

Sacred Depths of Nature Presentations and Podcasts

Follow this link for the latest presentations and podcasts on *The Sacred Depths of Nature* with Ursula Goodenough. <http://sacreddepthsofnature.com/conferences/>

A calendar of JD Stillwater’s upcoming events can be found at <https://www.jdstillwater.earth/events/>

Membership Map:

Who are we and where do we live? JD Stillwater has created a map showing where our worldwide members reside. You can zoom in and out on the map. Click on a markers for info about that location.

[View the map](#)

If you see that there are members near you and would like to connect with them send a request for their contact information to our membership manager, [Ursula Goodenough](#). If they are willing to share their contact information It will be sent to you. No one’s contact information will be shared without

Forum Topic of the Month

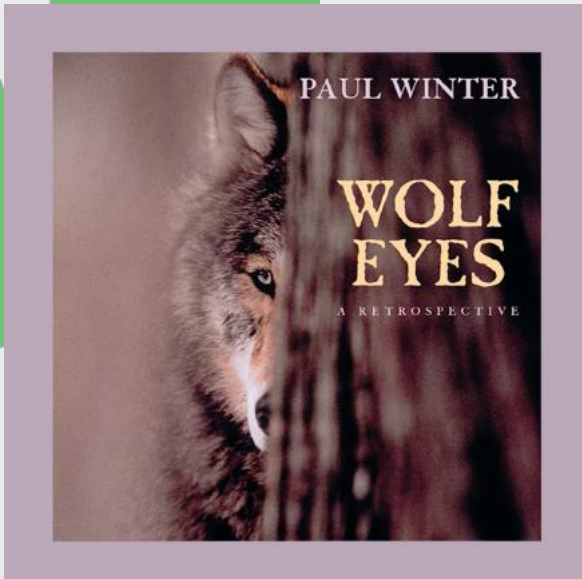
Can AI Care About or Want Anything

Some fear that AI will someday take over the world and leave human beings behind. What do you think?

<https://religious-naturalist-association.org/forums/topic/can-ai-care-about-or-want-anything/>

Music of the Month

Wolf Eyes by Peter Winter



Wolf Eyes by Paul Winter Consort which begins with, and builds from, the sounds of a wolf in the wild . . ."

[watch and listen on YouTube](#)

Suggest Music

Help Build Our RNA Songbook

Do you know of a song or poem that we could add to our songbook? Click this link to nominate your item.

[Song Nomination Form](#)

[View Songbook](#)

Video of the Month

Cohabitation of Predators

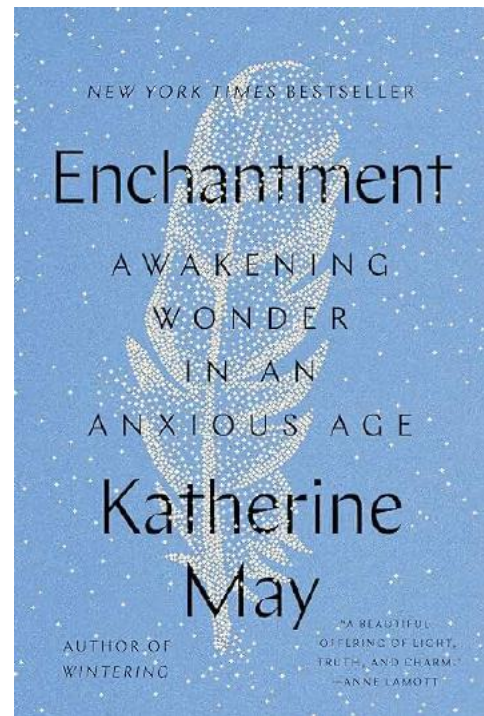


Catching your prey is one thing, but keeping it is another on the savannah.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNsNkBqnShA>

Book of the Month

Enchantment: Awakening Wonder in an Anxious Age by Kathrine May



For Katherine May, a low hum of fatigue and anxiety made her wonder what she was missing. Might there be a way for all of us to move through life with curiosity and tenderness, sensitized to the subtle magic all around? [View on Amazon](#)

Living Thing of the Month

Hefty Hippos



After elephants and rhinoceros, the hippopotamus is the next largest land mammal. They are also among the greatest threats to human life in Africa.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippopotamus>



Website of the Month



In this age of mass extinctions, we feel compelled to invite people into intimate relationship with some of the most vulnerable victims of our destructive culture: the land, waters, and creatures with whom we share our homes.

New Wild Churches are emerging all the time, offering invitations to reconnect with the natural world. As kin. As sacred. As beloved co-participants in a larger story of grace and inter-being.

<https://www.wildchurchnetwork.com>

RN Links

Members Contributions: Our members contribute sermons, articles, videos, music and other material related to the Religious Naturalist orientation. Go to <https://religious-naturalist-association.org/members-contributions/> to check them out. Please consider contributing your own material. There is a link on the page for submitting items.

Elle Harrigan has contributed new articles to the Sermons & Articles section. Take a look.

Members' Projects:

The RNA website has a section called [Members' Projects](#). This page provides links to projects of RNA members. If you have a project related to RN that you would like included on this webpage please email a description to projects@religious-naturalist-association.org.

One of the latest additions to this section is **The Book of Continuing Creation** by J.X. Mason. <https://religious-naturalist-association.org/the-book-of-continuing-creation/>