

Day's Dawning
January & February 2022

“By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high has broken upon us, giving light to all of us who sit in darkness” That message, from the Bible, specifically Luke 1:78-79, is such a message of hope.

I turned the December page of the calendar. No more months remained. Just the final glossy back page, with photographer credits. I lifted the calendar off its nail and, nearly reverently, stored it with the many others I have saved, all having honorably served as exact-date reminders of events, appointments, celebrations, and sadness. Each day-square, if ever again consulted, will merely serve to stir memories.

In this early hour of the first day of the new year, on the tiny nail where just yesterday hung the record of 2021, is the new year's pristine calendar, its day-squares devoid of scribbled notes, its memory store empty. This emptiness is characteristic only of this human invention. In contrast, the new year's first day has begun with unique and busy splendor, that of its dawning.

A delightful feature of the small apartment I lived in many years ago while completing a graduate degree was a pair of windows that opened to the north. During my several years of study, I spent many an all-nighter putting final touches on research papers and projects. Just as sleep was daring to decorate my brain with cobwebs, the black of night outside my windows turned to glowing gray, and the robins began their matin song. Someone had once told me that if birds chirped at the dawning of the day, a witch was lurking. Let witches lurk; nothing was going to block the sudden surge of energy and clarity that I felt as day dimmed brighter, with dazzling color. I was wont to whistle with the birds.

The dawn comes with pageantry. If color were music, the silent morning would instead open in symphony. The house still dark, my husband asleep, I grope into the hallway, meeting the pups halfway. They gallop to the back door, but I turn to peer through the large living room window and suddenly wish I were painter or poet. I cannot describe the shades and hues and blends against the fresh, soft blue of the sky. The design is beyond an artist's palette. I whisper, “How beautiful!”

Dawn itself is a whisper, as delicate as the fog. In the softest hint of light, the robins quell their morning song. If the wind had been blowing during the night, it ceases, or at least calms as if it has received orders to allow the clouds to hold the display as long as possible. Perhaps for just one more person to witness the spectacle. The dawn is gentle and slow. No dawn has ever crashed in abruptly. Even the huge orb of light, the sun, peaks over the distant horizon, holds for a moment, and then resumes its ascent at a pace not unlike a ballet dancer's adagio.

The adagio hints of time to spare, but the mortal must be quick. A half-minute may be all the time between the richest of colors and the gray of dawn's final seconds. Too many times I have sought to capture the glorious sight in the eastern sky only to aim the camera on what was no more. Dawn's slip into day happens in the slow blink of an eye or a sip from the cup of tea.

The dawn is benevolent. It does not push back the night. It does not extinguish the stars. The night and the stars bow and exit on their own. No discord exists. No rivalry. The phenomenon is Nature's ceremony of harmonics. Night flows into day as in a dance. Dawn is gracious: the moon still glows icily, in the western sky.

The sun's rays are gracious. They take their time in entering our homes, our barns. The earth's animals are given the luxury of stirring. The dew is provided a moment to glisten, to offer crispness and what we call the fresh smell of morning.

Dawn leaves behind no remnants but morning. Morning breaks to the light of a new day. Routine? No, to the contrary. What we step into is renewal and hope.