

Creation

"In Sufflok, England," the writer says, "the east wind never blows. It suctions. A few days ago, I took a walk on the most bitter day of the year. And then I stopped. The bank of the sunken path along which I was walking had changed since the last time I was there. It was, almost absurdly, in flower. Primrose. Etymology: *prima rosa*, or first flower. It was a sight that brought a feeling of incredulous relief.....well, I thought, and — even now — there is spring.

And as if this wasn't enough, a sound. The sky looked like a a large clump of filthy cottonwool, the east wind was a-sucking the warmth from my bones, especially my feet, but above me, more ludicrously even than the primrose, I heard a skylark in full song.

As I stood and listened, I picked out a second skylark singing in both sympathy and rivalry a couple of fields off, and then, in the opposite direction, a distant third. Normally, it takes a day of sunny anticipation to make a bird sing and a flower flower: but out there, in the worst that winter can throw, was a world pulsing with life and hope. I saluted the bravery of the skylarks, if not the sanity, and headed back for a nice cup of tea, wondering whether or not to pour it into my boots. The skylarks sang on: tell me this, when do they take a breath?"

If Skylarks can sing in the dead of winter, cannot we, who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Psalm 148

LEADER

Praise the LORD.

CONGREGATION

Praise the LORD from the heavens,
praise him in the heights above.

LEADER

Praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

CONGREGATION

Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars.

LEADER

Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.

CONGREGATION

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for he commanded and they were created.

LEADER

He set them in place for ever and ever;
he gave a decree that will never pass away.

CONGREGATION

Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,

LEADER

lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
stormy winds that do his bidding,

CONGREGATION

you mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,

LEADER

wild animals and all cattle,
small creatures and flying birds,

CONGREGATION

kings of the earth and all nations,

you princes and all rulers on earth,

LEADER

young men and maidens,
old men and children.

CONGREGATION

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

LEADER

He has raised up for his people a horn,
the praise of all his saints,
of Israel, the people close to his heart.

ALL

Praise the LORD.

Praise The Living God

We have handed down to us a manuscript of Anglo-Saxon verse written originally sometime between the 7th and 10th Centuries A.D. It is generally thought that the work does not represent the work of a single poet. Let's think on the marvelous retelling of Creation from the perspective of these ancient saints.....

(FOR POWER POINT)

Then our Lord took counsel in the thoughts of His heart how He might people, with a better host, the great creation, the native seats and gleaming mansions, high in heaven, wherefrom these boastful foes had got them forth. Therefore with mighty power Holy God ordained, beneath the arching heavens, that earth and sky and the far-bounded sea should be established, earth-creatures in the stead of those rebellious foes whom He had cast from heaven.

As yet was nought save shadows of darkness; the spacious earth lay hidden, deep and dim, alien to God, unpeopled and unused. Thereon the

Steadfast King looked down and beheld it, a place empty of joy. He saw dim chaos hanging in eternal night, obscure beneath the heavens, desolate and dark, until this world was fashioned by the word of the King of glory. Here first with mighty power the Everlasting Lord, the Helm of all created things, Almighty King, made earth and heaven, raised up the sky and founded the spacious land. The earth was not yet green with grass; the dark waves of the sea flowed over it, and midnight darkness was upon it, far and wide.

God of Wonders

(FOR POWER POINT)

Then in radiant glory God's holy spirit moved upon the waters with wondrous might. The Lord of angels, Giver of life, bade light shine forth upon the spacious earth. Swiftly was God's word fulfilled; holy light gleamed forth across the waste at the Creator's bidding. Over the seas the Lord of victory divided light from darkness, shadow from radiant light. The Lord of life gave both a name. By the word of God the gleaming light was first called day. And in the beginning of creation was God well pleased. The first day saw the dark and brooding shadows vanish throughout the spacious earth.

The day departed, hasting over the dwellings of earth. And after the gleaming light the Lord, our maker, thrust on the first of evenings. Murky gloom pressed hard upon the heels of day; God called it night. Our Lord sundered them, one from the other; and ever since they follow out the will of God to do it on the earth.

Indescribable

(FOR POWER POINT)

It did not seem good to the Lord of heaven that Adam should longer be alone as warden and keeper of this new Paradise. Wherefore the King, Almighty God, wrought him an helpmeet; the Author of life made woman and brought her unto the man whom He loved. He took the stuff of Adam's body, and secretly drew forth a rib from his side. He was fast asleep in peaceful slumber; he knew no pain nor any pang; there came no blood from out the wound, but the Lord of angels drew forth from his body a growing rib, and the man was unhurt. Of this God fashioned a lovely maid, breathing into her life and an eternal soul. They were like unto the angels. The bride of

Adam was a living spirit. By God's might both were born into the world in the loveliness of youth. They knew no sin nor any evil, but in the hearts of both there burned the love of God.

Then the Gracious King, Lord of all human kind, blessed these two, male and female, man and wife, and spake this word: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the green earth with your seed and increase, sons and daughters. And ye shall have dominion over the salt sea, and over all the world. Enjoy the riches of earth, the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air. To you is given power over the herds which I have hallowed, and the wild beasts, and over all living things that move upon the earth; all living things, which the depths bring forth throughout the sea, shall be subject unto you."

And our Lord beheld the beauty of His works and the abundance of all fruits of this new creation: Paradise lay pleasant and inviting, filled with goodly store and endless blessings.

Praise To The Lord

OFFERING Wonderful Maker

SERMON

How Great Thou Art