



Gods of the Morning: A Bird's-Eye View of a Changing World

By John Lister-Kaye

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Gods of the Morning: A Bird's-Eye View of a Changing World By John Lister-Kaye

A celebration of birds that reflects a year in the wild, revealing how these amazing creatures embody our changing world, by one of Britain's foremost naturalists.

Gods of the Morning follows the year through the turning of the seasons at Aigas, the Highlands estate John Lister-Kaye has transformed into a world-renowned wildlife center. John's affection, wisdom and lyricism sings off every page, bringing the natural world around him to life: from the rookery filled with twenty-nine nests and distinct bird calls to descriptions of the winter morning light, from the wood mice and the squirrels preparing for winter to tracking a fox's path through the snow. In particular it brings John's lifelong love of birds?his gods of the morning?to the fore.

In the Highland glens, bird numbers plummet as their food supplies?natural fruits and every kind of creeping, crawling, slithering or flying bug?begin to disappear. Not just the swallows and house martins have vanished from round the houses. Gone are the insect snatching wheatears, whinchats and stonechats from the hills, and redstarts and flycatchers have fled the woods. Pied wagtails no longer flicker across the lawns and sandpipers and grey wagtails have deserted the river banks. Farmland and hedgerow species have vanished in the night: the linnets, yellowhammers, and all the warblers have decamped from the thickets.

By the first frosts the hills will have emptied down to a few hardy stalwarts such as the golden eagles, the raven and the irrepressible hooded crows. Silence settles across the land. The few species that are left frequent a changed world. Soon only the buzzards and wood pigeons will hang on in the woods and the coniferous forests will be host to flocks of chaffinches, tits, siskins, and crossbills passing through.



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Editorial Review

Review

“An earnest and impassioned meditation on the natural environment. Insightful. Whether dealing with small birds or larger animals, Lister-Kaye reminds readers of the connections humans forge every day with other creatures?and the emotions that result are unquestionably real and significant.” (Publishers Weekly)

“Though Lister-Kaye warns of the damage caused by humankind, and sometimes strikes an elegiac note, he sings full-throatedly in praise of the persistence of nature.” (The Times (London))

“Lister-Kaye is a gifted writer, braiding memories of childhood and wide-ranging journeys as a naturalist with the rhythms of life at Aigas, a place he knows intimately. Aigas, however, is becoming less familiar...he knows too much to settle for simple answers. *Gods of the Morning* perfectly encapsulates the paradoxical relations human beings have to the natural world. The sense of personal stewardship and individual responsibility that Lister-Kaye embodies is a vital element of conservation, as important as the understanding that wildlife belongs to nobody, and to everybody. We are all lords of the manor; the only question is how well we will do our jobs.” (The Wall Street Journal)

“I love this book. No one writes more movingly, or with such transporting poetic skill, about encounters with wild creatures.” (Helen Macdonald, New York Times bestselling author of 'H is for Hawk')

“With an untameable enthusiasm and generosity of spirit, Lister-Kaye translates those languages into a kind of inter-species friendship.” (Jay Griffiths, author of 'Wild: An Elemental Journey')

“To read *Gods of the Morning* is to sink back into the grass, slip away from rush-hour traffic and conference calls, and notice once again the bugs circling in the dirt and that first hint of fall in the air. Lister-Kaye, who time and again homes in on familiar subjects, stripping away pretensions and introducing the vigor and realism that’s often missing from nature writing. After all, what is nature writing if not a tacit endorsement for bucking the trail? *Gods of the Morning* is a book you’ll want to put down, not because you’ve lost your interest, but precisely because you’ve found it?in the birds outside your window, in the grass beneath your feet, in the moonlight between the trees.” (Audobon)

“A distinguished British naturalist reflects on his encounters with the birds of the Scottish Highlands and how global warming has impacted these populations. An evocative and heartfelt examination of a beautiful landscape and its fauna.” (Kirkus Reviews)

“A quiet but rousing call to action for anyone who loves the natural world and wants to help preserve it.” (Sunday Telegraph)

“Compelling. A tour de force of forensic observation and imaginative reconstruction. The prose carries a deep, rich polish.” (The Spectator)

“Exquisitely observed and deeply evocative, *Gods of the Morning* is a joyful affirmation of the changing seasons, the wonders of wildlife, and the value of living close to nature. Generous, poetic, and wise.” (Patrick Barkham, author of 'Badgerlands')

“A triumph in nature writing.” (Tristan Gooley, author of 'The Natural Navigator')

“Lister-Kaye's writing hums with enthusiasm, and his observations are acute.” (Country Life)

About the Author

John Lister-Kaye is one of Britain's foremost naturalists and conservationists. He is the author of eight books on wildlife and the environment, including *At the Water's Edge*, and has lectured on three continents. He has served prominently in the RSPB, the Nature Conservancy Council, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. In 2003 he was awarded an OBE for services to nature conservation. He lives with his wife and family among the mountains of the Scottish Highlands, where he runs the world-famous Aigas Field Centre.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Calvin Fischer:

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Michael Johnson:

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