

Between Light and Storm: How We Live with Other Species

Esther Woolfson

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Esther Woolfson's *Between Light and Storm* contemplates the eons-long interaction between human beings and animals. It questions what the belief that humans are superior to all other living beings has done to bring on the multiple planetary crises of the twenty-first century.

Displaying poetic eloquence and steely precision, the book first recalls Woolfson's childhood and time spent caring for injured, abandoned, and lost birds and animals. Woolfson relates that observing such creatures convinced her that they were complex beings that could love, hate, grieve, and enjoy. She regarded their actions as considered and deliberate, and noted that their feelings were as subtle and real as those of humans. Now that science is coming on board with her observations, Woolfson demands to know how the belief in human superiority can be justified, to say nothing of humanity's cruel behavior toward sentient creatures.

Woolfson brings history, theology, art, and philosophy to bear on her examination of the good and disastrous relationships between humans and animals. A moving example from Northern Jordan is presented as evidence that humans and animals have long been entwined in life and in death: a human and a fox were found buried together, both bodies painted with red ochre in the hope of a shared afterlife. But the book also addresses hard issues: the killing of animals for food, entertainment, sport, fashion, and convenience; gruesome "scientific" experiments performed on living animals; and how keeping animals as pets denies them freedom and the expression of their natural tendencies. Its narrative around these issues is heartbreaking.

Asserting that Earth's survival is in jeopardy, *Between Light and Storm* is passionate and powerful in arguing that people's attitudes and behaviors toward the Earth need to change in significant ways.

KRISTINE MORRIS (November / December 2022)

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