

## The hedge around Eden

Hedgerows weave their way through history, telling stories as they go, of enclosure acts, of boundary disputes, of nature's changing face, even of their age, as wild species gain a foothold in the quickset hedge, marking the years of colonisation. They tell of the downfall of the mighty elm and now the horse chestnut and the ash. They create mysterious tunnels of green between two fields, arching over occasional streams in wayward ditches, and homes for a myriad of insects, birds and mammals as they meander or drive their paths across the world. At their feet spring flowers, like little bursts of sunlight, speckle the ground and at their head the thrush's full-throated song announces proud dominion.

And in the dawn of time, as angels sang creation's song, God looked upon the hedgerow and saw that it was good.

Perhaps the angels did not see its worth. They had gloried in the rush of the jet stream, plunging coldly from the north and had left its glacial breath to ride the scorching Sirocco across the newly forming earth. They had wooshed their way over ocean and seas, burrowing through the tunnelled rollers, circling eddies, rushing at shorelines and confusing all those new creatures of the deep with their sunshine shadows on the sea surface.

But the hedgerow just stood there, hosting its guests, the insects and the birds, giving nectar to the bees, tickled by the excavations in its roots as mice built their homes in its shelter. And it was good.

It hadn't just come about. It wasn't an accident, or a by-product, or even a temporary expedient, something to surround a garden. It was there because, well, because it had to be, because it was.

The Word had come to the Creator as he was planning this garden and Wisdom joined them, the three to view and know and speak this garden into being. It was their project. And all knew it and saw it and spoke it into being. But with their longing to speak the hedges and the trees, the blossoms and the bees into being there was a heaviness in their hearts. Word said, freedom and Wisdom uttered self, and the Creator nodded.

The hedgerow, its flowers and birds, insects and creatures shivered for they knew. They knew that they were bound to be as they were, endlessly

hedgerow, bird or bee but this new creature would not be bound by the love that had been lavished on them.

It was then the angels, delighted by their joyous exploration of the new fastly filling world, danced to a halt beside the hedge. And they questioned the Creator, the Word and Wisdom as to its meaning. What was it for or who?

Finger-lipped silent the three parted the hedge to reveal then newness of the world's first humans and answered the angel's unspoken question

The hedge is for them, to wonder at its mysteries, to revel in its beauty, to marvel at its timelessness, to glory in its overflowing bounty, to be enthralled, enraptured, fascinated by all that grows and winds and flowers and hides and nests and sings and shows all nature's beauty in self-giving love. And unlike us, whose nature is love, they have the choice to see all, or stop their eye on the boundary that is theirs or anothers.

And yes, we have to teach them love in all its self-giving wonder or the hedgerow becomes the limit of their vision and the boundary between heaven and earth.

Until I give them the rules of heaven to see possibilities, said the Creator

Until I build a bridge to cross it, said the Word

Until I breath into their hearts the yearning to see beyond and cross the bridge, said Wisdom

And the angels sang "Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth."

VMW

Lord help us to see beyond the boundaries of our existence to the glory of heaven through the wonders of creation, in Jesus' name, Amen