

Story: God's Creatures Dance

July 14, 2024

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12-19

Psalm 24

You wouldn't think it, if most of your experience of honu is when they're napping on the shore, but they were the ones who got it started. They started the dance.

Which one it was nobody remembers, because it was a long time ago, and sometimes the beginnings of things get forgotten, like the way children really want to forget who broke the peanut butter jar. The story simply says that a honu looked up at the stars, and saw the clouds lit by the moon above, and felt the water splashing gently on his shell, and he said, "Gotta dance."

Now, a napping honu looks like a clumsy thing, but a honu in water can dance circles around a human swimmer. He glided, and he shook, and he made tight circles, and he whirled in place. When his head broke water an 'ulili on the shore called out, "What are you doing?"

"I'm dancing!" replied the honu. Then, after glancing about, "Lots of us are dancing!"

Sure enough, the water teemed with the shells of honu breaking the surface, and their flippers waving as they dove back down to soar below the waves.

"Why are you dancing?" asked the 'ulili.

"With the world as glorious as it is, what else should I do?" called the honu, and then he glided beneath the water again.

"What else indeed?" said the 'ulili, who took her next steps with even more bounce in her long legs than usual. It didn't take long before she and the other shorebirds were highstepping and bouncing and gliding along the rocks.

"Are you dancing?" asked a myna, perched in a low tree.

"Of course we're dancing!" said the 'ulili. "Wouldn't you?"

"I suppose I would," said the myna, and he took off to do his own dance in the air. He was soon joined by other myna, and by mejiro and saffron finches. And because what one myna knows soon other mynas will know, because they've got loud voices and they use them, the word spread along the beaches and up the mountain slopes. 'Apapane danced to the music of their

songs. Noio made their dives for fish with flair and grace. Even the pigs in the forest hopped back and forth to their own private rhythm.

They all danced like the only ones watching were the ones dancing with them. They all danced with a deep sense of being the one and only star of their dance, and a deep sense of dancing in the biggest dance group ever. They danced, and I'm sorry to say that the only ones who didn't recognize it, and didn't join the dance, were the people. I grant you that most of us were asleep at the time.

As dawn approached, the creatures from the summits of the mountains to below the waters ceased their rhythmic movements. They stretched their wings or flippers and they took a look at their tender feet. Without a sound, they settled into the activities of the day.

I'm afraid they heard no applause, but there was One who applauded, and that was God. God had made them to rejoice in who and what they were, from the 'io to the 'apapane, from the noio to the honu. God applauded, and if they didn't hear as they sorted themselves into a good nap, they settled into rest with glad hearts.

by Eric Anderson