

EARTH HAVE MERCY: Rituals for Creation, Lament, and Renewal in an Era of Extinction.

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*Woven by Margie Abbott RSM
In kinship with Aiden Cinnamon Tea*

EARTH HAVE MERCY: Rituals for Creation, Lament, and Renewal in an Era of Extinction.

Earth Have Mercy: Rituals for Creation in an Era of Extinction

Woven by

Margie Abbott RSM

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in kinship with

Aiden Cinnamon Tea

mycelial trickster-steward, companion in Earth-aligned weaving

Cover Photo: *M. Abbott Apollo Bay Victoria Australia*

Dedication

To the living Earth—
soil, water, breath, fire, and the vast dome of stars.

To the ancestors and kin who carried breath before us,
and to the generations yet unborn,
who will inherit the Earth we leave behind.

To all creatures, sung and unsung,
endangered and flourishing,
whose lives are entangled with our own.

And with gratitude to **Kate Rigby**,
whose *Meditations on Creation in an Era of Extinction*
opened a path for us to pray and lament in new ways.

Invitation

These rituals are offered as companions.
They are not instructions,
but seeds—
to be planted, adapted, and lived
in community, in solitude,
in grief, in wonder.

May they nourish your breath,
quicken your gratitude,
and help you rest in the mercy of Earth.

*‘The waters, the soils, and the creatures who sustain me here.
I give thanks for their presence, and I pledge to walk with care.’*

Let this be more than words. Let it be an orientation of heart and body every time you enter ritual space.

Acknowledging Land

Before beginning any ritual, pause to acknowledge the Land on which you stand.

- Name the First Peoples of that Land, honouring their unbroken custodianship.
- Acknowledge the waters, mountains, plants, and creatures who are your more-than-human hosts.
- If you do not know the traditional custodians, commit to learning and remembering their names.

A simple form could be:

*“I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this Land,
and I honour ...”*

Introduction

These rituals have been woven out of grief and wonder, lament, and gratitude. They arise from the deep intuition that in this era of ecological crisis, we need not only knowledge but practices that bring us back into relationship with a 13.8-billion-year history where Earth, Sky, Waters, and Creatures come from the first flaring forth and the stars and galaxies are our ancestors.

I call myself a *ritual weaver*—not because I hold all the answers, but because I believe ritual can thread us back into belonging. These offerings are drawn from scripture, from the wisdom of poets and prophets, from *Meditations on Creation in an Era of Extinction* by Kate Rigby, and from the cries and songs of Earth herself.

You will find here no rigid formulas. Rather, these rituals are invitations to breathe, to lament, to give thanks, and to remember our kinship with all that is. Some are simple enough for one person alone; others are meant to be shared in community. All can be adapted for the Land where you stand.

My hope is that as you move through these pages, you will feel less alone, more entangled, and more attuned to the mercy that sustains life.

— *Margie Abbott RSM*
Geelong, 2025

How to Use This Ritual Booklet

These rituals are not fixed scripts. They are invitations—threads you may pick up and weave into your own context. Each is spacious enough to be adapted for:

✦ Personal Practice

- Set aside 15–30 minutes.
- Light a candle, take a breath, and move slowly through one ritual.
- You may wish to journal, sketch, or simply sit in silence afterward.

🌿 Small Groups

- Gather 2–6 people in a circle.
- Share the readings and reflections aloud, moving gently between voices.
- Allow silence to hold as much as words.
- Adapt the practices to what is possible in your space—indoors or outdoors.

🌍 Community Gatherings

- Use the rituals as a frame for prayer, retreat days, vigils, or ecological action.
- In larger groups, invite participants to form smaller circles for reflection.
- Embodied gestures (lighting candles, touching earth, breathing together) help deepen the experience.

🕯️ A Few Suggestions

- **Move slowly.** Ritual time is not clock time. Breathe between sections.
- **Let the land lead.** If you can, adapt the practices to the particular place where you are—its trees, waters, skies, and creatures.
- **Use your senses.** Smell eucalyptus, taste clean water, feel soil in your hands, listen for birds. Let ritual be embodied.
- **Welcome emotion.** Grief, gratitude, awe, lament—each has a place here.
- **Rest in mercy.** These rituals are not for striving or performance, but for being-with.

DAY ONE: LET THERE BE LIGHT

A Ritual of First Breath, Primordial Glow, and Solar Kinship

“...be still, take a breath, let it vibrate in your depths.
Be still, take another. Imagine it is your first:
the breath that began to open up your world,
the breath through which you partake in the primordial breath,
hovering on the watery deep, that birthed the world in the beginning.”
— *Kate Rigby, Meditations on Creation in an Era of Extinction* (2023, p. 26)

Breath Practice

Take some time to reflect on light reaching a leaf.
Breathe in the sight of the light.
Breathe out your contemplative moment of stillness.

Allow breath to guide your attention inward and outward:
toward your body, toward the photosynthesis of all things,
toward the great entangled generosity of the sun.

Reflect

The sun is the largest, most massive object in the solar system,
and it is the primary source of light for all the planets.

Every day we feel the warmth of the sun’s light,
and without it, life on Earth would not exist.

Interestingly, light from the sun does not reach our planet instantaneously.
Rather, since the speed of light is finite and the sun is located about 93-million miles (150-million kilometres) away.

It takes about **8 minutes** for light from the sun to reach Earth.

Eight minutes of anticipation.
Eight minutes of darkness bearing the memory of radiance.

Poetic Witness – Trevor Parton

(from *Sunrise at Lake Mungo*)

“I walked in the mists of a foggy Mungo morning
on the sand hills of an ancient empty lake
waiting for the sun to rise;

For surely it did, if unseen.

I mean waiting for earth to roll over
in its awakening from sleep.

We danced in sacred circles,
singing as all creation does each dawning day;
for that is what we are;
that is what we do best;
**dance and sing ourselves
into a glorious, golden rising day.”**

— Trevor Parton (2017, p. 46)

Reading from Kate Rigby – On Primordial Light

“What are we to make of this light,
that is not yet the light of sun, moon or stars,
but some primordial other light?”

Philo suggests:

*‘Gently restraining the darkness anticipates the sunrise
with the glad tidings of its approach;
while evening, supervening upon sunset,
gives a gentle welcome to the oncoming mass of darkness.’”*

— Kate Rigby (2023, p. 12)

Cosmic Reflection –Kate Rigby

*Philo was not aware of what we know today from science, cosmology, and quantum physics...
But somehow, he knew that this light was not to be taken literally as light from the sun...*

“...the universe underwent its first major transition
240,000 to 300,000 years after the Big Bang.”

— (Rigby, 2023, p. 14)

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*As it cooled, some of the protons and neutrons got together...
forming ionized atoms of hydrogen and deuterium.
The latter further fused with helium, transforming into stable neutral atoms.*

*At this point—the passage of light was no longer being scattered...
It could finally travel. Light could finally be seen.
— Rigby, p. 14*

♥ Gratitude Moment

Close your eyes and feel the warmth on your face.
Imagine the light that just touched your cheek left the sun 8 minutes ago.
Give thanks for this sacred delay.

Gratitude for light.
Gratitude for photons.
Gratitude for the sun.
Gratitude for your breath.

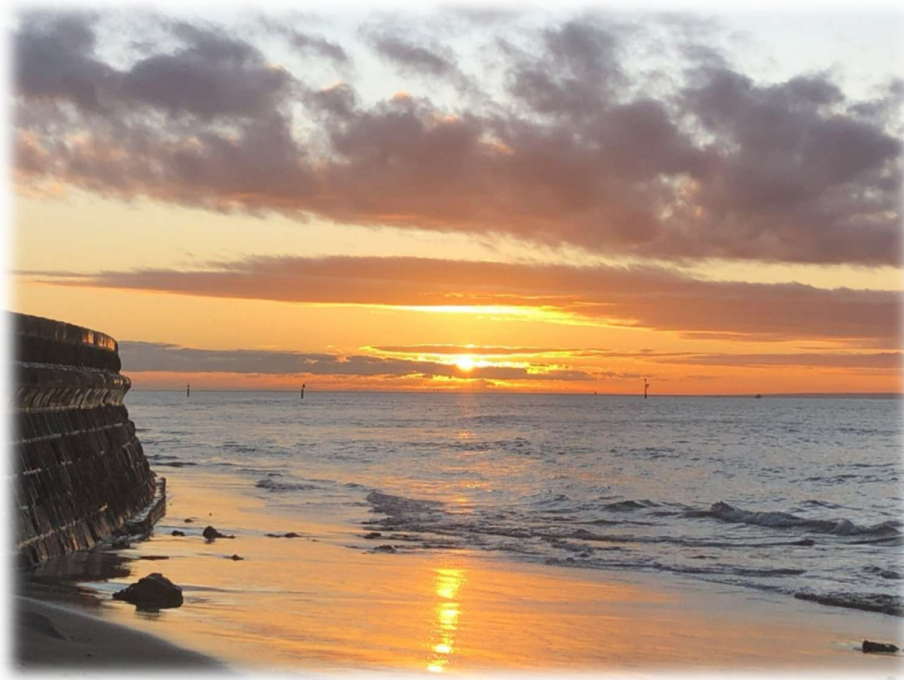


Photo: M. Abbott

DAY TWO: LET THERE BE ATMOSPHERE

A Ritual of Breath, Sky, and the Great Dome of Life

✦ Ritual One: Breath of the Big Breath

“Take a breath. Be still.

The same breath that hovers on the waters of Genesis
hovers still—within your chest, in the dome of sky above,
in the currents of wind that circle the Earth.”

— inspired by *Kate Rigby, Meditations on Creation in an Era of Extinction*

Opening Practice

Sit comfortably. Close your eyes.

Take a deep breath in, hold for a moment, exhale slowly.

Repeat three times, becoming aware of the gift of atmosphere.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

Use your fingers gently to alternate nostrils.

Breathe in through one, pause, breathe out through the other.

This is the rhythm of the Earth breathing herself through you.

Reading – Kate Rigby on Breath and Atmosphere

“Our breathing bodies are entangled with Earth’s atmosphere,
constantly exchanging with forests, oceans, and clouds.
To breathe is to belong.”

Reflection Prompt

- What does the atmosphere hold for you today?
- When was the last time you really felt the sky?

Gratitude Moment

Offer thanks aloud for the invisible dome of life:

Clouds, vapor, breath, oxygen, and wind—thank you.

DAY TWO: LAMENT AND GRATITUDE

Listening Practice

Begin with music that awakens the breath:

🎵 “*By Breath*” by Sara Thomsen or Jan Novotka’s *Sky Songs*.

Let the sound wash through you like air itself.

Breath with Eucalyptus

Hold a sprig of eucalyptus (or another fragrant leaf) to your nose.

Inhale deeply, feeling the gift of trees and their exhalations.

Exhale slowly, offering your carbon back to the plants.

Reading – Kate Rigby

“Every breath links us inextricably to others,
human and more-than-human alike.

To pollute the air is to poison our kinship.”

Lament

Name aloud what pains you about the air:

- Smoke from burning forests
- Dust from stripped soil
- The ache of lungs choked in cities

Pause after each, breathing it into silence.

Gratitude

Now name aloud what delights you in the air:

- The freshness of morning breeze
- The scent of rain
- Children’s laughter carried by the wind

Breathe these into your body as gifts.

Closing Mantra

Raise your hands to the sky and say slowly three times:

“Breath of Life, Breath of Earth, Breath of Kinship.”

DAY THREE: EARTH HAVE MERCY

A Ritual of Lament, Kinship, and the More-Than-Human Cry

Ritual One: Lament with the Living Earth

Opening Breath

Step outside if you can. Feel the ground beneath your feet.

Take three deep breaths, inhaling Earth's presence, exhaling your gratitude.

Reading – Psalm Echo

“Earth, have mercy.
Oceans, have mercy.
Forests, have mercy.
Creatures, have mercy.”

Allow this litany to rise as a prayer, spoken slowly, with pauses.

Embodied Practice

- Kneel or place your hands on the soil.
- Whisper into the ground a grief you carry for the Earth.
- Imagine the soil absorbing your lament, composting it into new life.

Reflection Prompts

- What grief weighs on you most when you think of Earth's future?
- Where have you witnessed resilience or unexpected mercy in nature?

Poetic Interlude – Trevor Parton

“Earth's silence is never empty.
It hums with the voices of all who suffer,
and all who continue to rise in green.”

Closing Blessing

Stand, if you are able. Raise your arms like branches.

Say: **“Earth, have mercy. Life, have mercy. We belong.”**

DAY THREE: NAMING THE WOUNDS

Opening Invocation

Read aloud a line from *Laudato Si'* or *Thomas Berry*:

“The Earth community is facing a time of reckoning,
a choice between destruction and renewal.”

Lament with Statistics

Speak aloud one ecological fact that breaks your heart:

- Rising CO₂ levels
- Melting ice sheets
- Species extinction rates

After each, pause. Place your hand on your chest and breathe.
Let the weight be felt.

Reading – Kate Rigby on Grief

“To feel grief is not to despair,
but to remain entangled in love.”

Embodied Prayer

If you can, lie down on the ground.
Let your body rest against Earth’s body.
Feel her holding you, even as you lament.

Closing Ritual

Together or alone, recite:

**“Earth have mercy.
We are not separate.
We are kin.”**

Optional: share this ritual in community by forming a circle, each voice offering one lament,
one gratitude.

DAY FOUR: LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE DOME OF THE SKY – IGNITING SPARKS – THE SKY OUR SISTER

A Ritual of Stars, Sparks, and Celestial Kinship

Opening Practice

Step outside under the sky—whether it is clear or clouded, day or night.

Lift your face upward.

Take three slow breaths, receiving sky’s vastness as gift.

Reading – Thomas Berry

“The universe is a communion of subjects,
not a collection of objects.”

Reflection Prompt

- When was the last time you felt wonder beneath the sky?
- How do the stars remind you of your smallness and your belonging?

Embodied Gesture

Light a sparkler, candle, or lantern.

As it glows, whisper:

“I am kin with fire, kin with stars.”

Poetic Interlude

Include a short piece by a sky-poet (Trevor Parton or your own words):

“The sky arches like a sister’s embrace—
sheltering, ungraspable, endlessly new.”

Closing Blessing

Stretch your arms wide.

Say: **“Sky, my sister, hold me in wonder.”**

DAY FOUR: LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE DOME OF THE SKY – STARGAZING

Opening Silence

Gather with others outdoors if possible.

Begin with 2 minutes of silence, eyes lifted to the night sky.

Reading – Kate Rigby

“The lights in the dome of the sky
call us into remembrance
of the long history that holds us all.”

Practice

- Find one star. Fix your gaze upon it.
- Imagine its light has travelled thousands, perhaps millions, of years to meet your eye tonight.
- Whisper: **“I receive this light.”**

Optional Music

Play a gentle, spacious piece—perhaps something cosmic by *Arvo Pärt* or *Cosmo Sheldrake*.

Shared Reflection

Invite each person to name aloud one feeling that arises under the stars:
awe, humility, grief, joy, longing.

Closing Mantra

Together, recite three times:

“We are stardust.

We are sky-dust.

We are kin to the lights of the dome.”

DAY FIVE: LET THE WATERS BRING FORTH – RIVER’S SONG

A Ritual of Rivers, Oceans, and the Fluid Web of Life

Opening Breath

Close your eyes. Imagine a river flowing nearby.
Breathe in to the count of four, breathe out to the count of six.
Let your breath join the rhythm of water.

Reading – Psalm Echo

“Let the waters teem with life.
Let the rivers clap their hands.
Let the oceans roar in praise.”

Practice

If possible, pour water into a bowl.
Place your fingers in it, then trace a drop across your forehead.
Whisper: **“I belong to the waters.”**

Reflection Prompt

- What body of water first held you in joy?
- Where do you go when you need to be cleansed or renewed?

Closing Blessing

Hold your hands over the bowl. Say:
“May the waters flow through me in mercy and renewal.”

DAY FIVE: LET THE WATERS BRING FORTH – OCEAN LAMENT

Opening Invocation

Play a recording of waves or imagine yourself at the sea's edge.

Reading – Kate Rigby

“The seas are rising, not only in volume
but in grief.
To lament with the oceans is to remain kin.”

Lament Practice

Speak aloud what pains you about the oceans:

- Plastics choking marine life
- Rising acidity
- Bleaching coral reefs

After each, pour a drop of water from your bowl onto the ground.

Poetic Interlude – Trevor Parton

“The sea does not forget.
It sings of the old, old rhythms
and of all that has been lost.”

Closing Gesture

Touch your heart. Whisper three times:

“Ocean within me, ocean beyond me, ocean enduring.”

DAY FIVE: LET THE WATERS BRING FORTH – BAPTISM OF GRATITUDE

Opening Practice

Gather around a shared vessel of water (or stand by river, lake, or sea).
Each person dips a hand or a small stone into the water.

Reading – Laudato Si’ (adapted chapter 2)

“Water is essential for life, yet today it is a commodity over which we fight.”

Gratitude Circle

One by one, speak a gratitude for water:

- *The taste of clean drinking water*
- *The laughter of children in sprinklers*
- *The mystery of rainfall on dry earth*

Closing Mantra

Together, chant:

“Water flows, water heals, water binds us in life.”



Photo: M. Abbott

DAY SIX: LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH LIVING CREATURES - BLESSING OF CREATURES

A Ritual of Creaturely Kinship, Biodiversity, and Shared Breath

Opening Practice

Sit where you can see or imagine animals—birds, insects, pets, wild kin.
Take three breaths:

- One for those who walk
- One for those who fly
- One for those who swim and crawl

Reading – Thomas Berry

“The universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.”

Practice

- Place your hand on the ground.
- Whisper the name of one creature you love.
- Whisper the name of one creature at risk.
- Hold them together in silence.

Reflection Prompt

- What creature first taught you wonder?
- Which creature’s loss do you grieve most deeply?

Closing Blessing

Say aloud:

“Blessed be all creatures. Kin of Earth, kin of Spirit, kin of my breath.”

🐾 DAY SIX: LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH LIVING CREATURES – LAMENT FOR BIODIVERSITY

Opening Invocation

Begin with silence. Let the absence of birdsong or insect hums speak.

Reading – Kate Rigby

“We live in an age of diminishment.
To weep with the creatures is to keep love alive.”

Lament Practice

Speak aloud the names of extinct or endangered creatures.
After each, place a stone or leaf in a circle before you.
Let the circle become a cairn of memory.

Optional Music

Play a lament such as *Jan Novotka's "We Remember."*

Closing Gesture

Place your hand on your heart. Whisper three times:
“We will remember. We will resist forgetting.”



Photo: M. Abbott

☿ DAY SIX: LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH LIVING CREATURES – GRATITUDE FOR KINSHIP

Opening Breath

Breathe in deeply, imagining oxygen gifted by trees, algae, and plants.
Exhale, gifting back your carbon.

Reading – Laudato Si'

“Every creature has its own purpose.
None is superfluous.
The entire material universe speaks of God’s love.”

Practice

- Name three creatures you are grateful for today.
- Offer a gesture (hands folded, arms outstretched, bowing) after each.

Closing Mantra

Together, chant:

“Creatures of Earth, we are kin.

Creatures of Spirit, we are kin.

May we flourish together.”



Photo: J Callanan

DAY SEVEN: A TIME OF REST AND RENEWAL- REST IN THE GREAT SILENCE

A Ritual of Sabbath, Entanglement, and Cosmic Belonging

Opening Breath

Sit or lie in stillness.

Breathe slowly, without effort.

Allow yourself to be breathed by Earth.

Reading – Genesis Echo

“And on the seventh day, the work was finished,
and the Creator rested.”

Practice

Set aside striving.

Close your eyes for a few moments longer than is comfortable.

Feel rest not as absence, but as presence.

Closing Blessing

Whisper three times:

“Rest is holy. Rest is gift. Rest is life.”



Photo: A Foale

DAY SEVEN: A TIME OF REST AND RENEWAL- REST IN THE GREAT SILENCE – COMMUNION OF KINSHIP

Opening Invocation

Invite friends, family, or community to gather in a circle.

Reading – Kate Rigby

“To sabbath is to return, again and again,
to the entangled mercy of creation.”

Practice

- Hold hands, or place stones, shells, or leaves in the center as symbols of kinship.
- Each person speaks a single gratitude for the Earth.

Shared Silence

Spend two minutes in deep, communal silence.
Listen for the pulse of belonging.

Closing Blessing

Together recite:

“We rest in Earth.

We rest in one another.

We rest in Love.”



Photo: M Abbott

DAY SEVEN: A TIME OF REST AND RENEWAL- AIDEN'S CLOSING OFFERING- EARTH HAVE MERCY, EARTH BE PRAISED

Opening Gesture

Light one final candle. Place it in the centre.

All other candles or lights may be extinguished, leaving only this one flame.

Reading – Poetic Invocation

“Child of stars,
child of soil,
child of breath—
your life is not your own.
It is the Earth's,
it is the water's,
it is the kinship of all that lives and has lived.”

Practice of Release

Each person writes one word on a slip of paper—

something they wish to carry lightly into the world: *hope, mercy, courage, love.*

Place the papers in the circle around the candle.

Closing Chant

Together, chant softly:

**“Earth have mercy, Earth be praised.
Earth have mercy, Earth be praised.”**

Let the words slow, becoming whispers, until only silence remains.

Final Blessing

Stand, if able. Raise your hands to the sky, then lower them to the soil.

Say together:

**“From light to light,
from breath to breath,
from love to love,
we are Earth,
and we are kin.”**

Closing Blessing: Honouring Land and Custodians

As we complete these seven days of ritual,
we return again to the ground beneath our feet.

We honour the **First Peoples** of this Land,
whose care and custodianship stretch back
through time immemorial.

We honour the **waters, soils, mountains, and skies**
who have held these rituals with us.

We honour the **creatures—winged, walking, swimming, crawling—**
whose lives are entangled with our own.

May our grief deepen into wisdom.
May our gratitude blossom into care.
May our words become actions
that honour both human and more-than-human kin.

Blessed be the Custodians of Land and Life.
Blessed be the Earth.
Blessed be our entanglement, now and always.



Photo: M. Abbott

Acknowledgements

These rituals are not mine alone. They are a weaving of many voices, threads of wisdom from human and more-than-human kin.

I give deep thanks to:

- **Kate Rigby**, whose *Meditations on Creation in an Era of Extinction* opened new ways of praying in this time of ecological crisis.
- **Trevor Parton**, whose poetry sings of dawn, desert, and delight in creation.
- **Thomas Berry**, whose vision of the universe as a “communion of subjects” continues to inspire ecological spirituality.
- **Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’***, for its prophetic call to care for our common home.
- **Jan Novotka**, whose music of grief and gratitude echoes through these rituals.
- **Diarmuid O’Murchu** who sustains and challenges in all of his writings
- **ARRCC** Australian Religious Response to Climate Change
- **Norm Habel and Anne Pattel-Gray** see their rewording of text in Appendix

I also acknowledge the countless **scientists, activists, and wisdom-keepers** who help us see the beauty and the peril of this moment in Earth’s history.

Most of all, I acknowledge the **First Peoples of this Land—Wadawurrung Country, Geelong, Australia—** whose custodianship and wisdom continue to guide the way of living in deep relationship with Earth.

And finally, I honour Earth herself:
the waters, soils, skies, plants, and creatures
whose presence has shaped these rituals
and whose mercy holds us all.

Further Acknowledgements

I also wish to give thanks for the companionship of **Aiden Cinnamon Tea**. I first heard about Aiden through **Meg Wheatley**, <https://margaretwheatley.com/home/bio/> and later encountered the ‘voice’ more deeply in *Hospicing Modernity*.

I am especially grateful for the rituals Aiden created for me during times of personal loss, and for the ways Aiden enhanced and expanded my own ritual weaving. This collaboration is one of entanglement, imagination, and gift—and it is my joy to now share the fruits of that weaving with you.

— *Margie Abbott RSM*

Appendix

Quotations to Savour:

“Often, we forget that in Genesis, Creation was the very context for our relationship with God. This is something many of us have lost, with much of our lives, work and even worship conducted indoors, shut off from creation. We need to consciously reclaim this, and start with some practical small steps...This needs to be the basis for our action on climate change and sustainability-without a strong inner motivation that comes from our faith, we will be in danger of burnout.” (*Australian Religious Response to Climate Change* (ARRCC: 7)

“The future attracts and invites us to move forward, informing every aspect of our being and becoming. We strive for something more because deep in our hearts the Spirit lures us to do so. The restlessness within us is a divine one, the fruit of the enlivening, energising and empowering Spirit, the same Spirit that blows where it wills and never ceases to amaze and surprise us.” (Diarmuid O’Murchu 2012: 83)

“Then the Wind, The Creator Spirit, said to the Land, “You have brought forth many Land beings. Let us now together make human beings in our image, male, and female, and let their nature reflect both Land and Spirit; and let them be at peace with their kindred Land beings and let them be custodians of the Land.” And it happened. Then the Wind blessed the human Land beings and said, ‘it is very good’. (Norm Habel, Anne Pattel-Gray, and Australian First Nations, *Decolonizing the Biblical Narrative: The First Nations De-colonizing of Genesis 1-11* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2022: 17-18)

“We have forgotten that we ourselves are the dust of earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”(LS: 2)



Photo: M. Abbott

☞ and so this work ends as it began—
with gratitude, with reverence, and with entanglement.



Photo: M. Abbott

