

# Impressions of Nature



February 26

# February

1st Imbolc & St Brigids or St Brides Day

1st Full Moon

12th Charles Darwins birthday

14th St Valentines

17th Luna New Year – Year of the Fire Horse

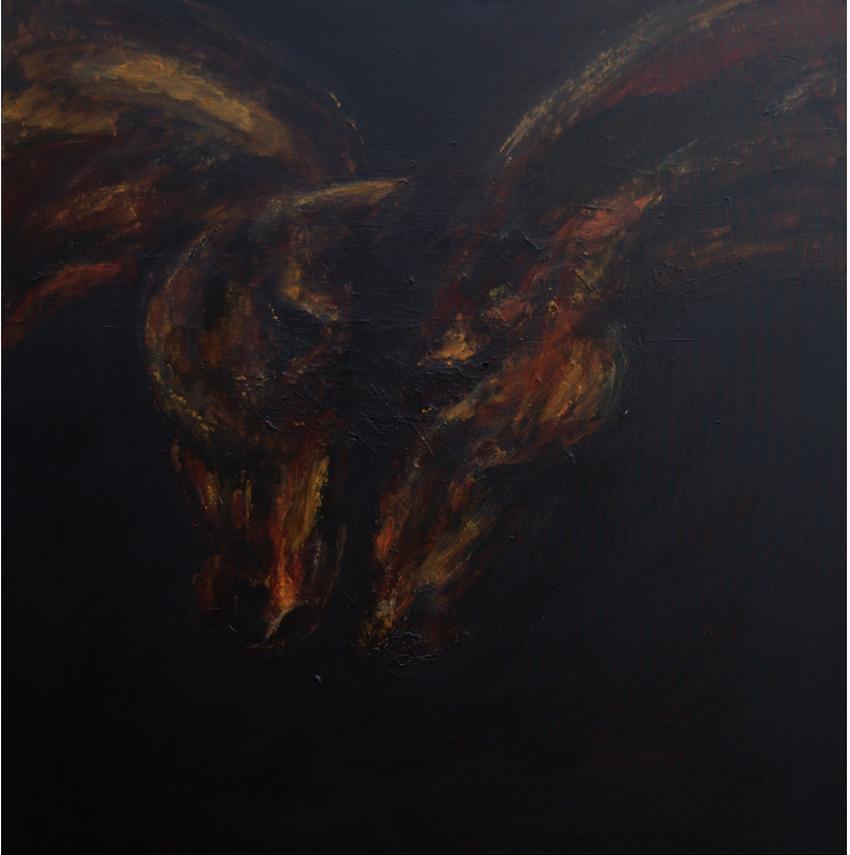
18th March 17th Tree Month of the Ash

20th World Whale Day

28th New Moon

This year seems to have announced itself with force. Storm Goretti tore through Cornwall, leaving a visible mark on the land, so many fallen trees, broken branches, familiar paths altered overnight. There is always a particular sadness in seeing trees lost, especially those that have been in situ for decades. And yet, storms have a way of revealing as much as they destroy: light suddenly reaches the forest floor, new lines of sight open, and the raw structure of the landscape is laid bare. The fallen trees will no doubt provide new habitat for insects and fungi and I know it is natures way, but it still feels very hard to bear.

The weather has continued to feel very unsettled wind, rain, sudden brightness as though the season itself is restless, unable to settle. And then, unexpectedly, came the northern lights. To stand beneath that shifting sky, such bright colour moving silently overhead, for me mostly only visible through my phone camera but I know others could see it vividly with the naked eye, it felt like a gift entirely out of scale with an ordinary winter's night. It was my first time seeing them, and the contrast could not have been sharper, the violence of the storm followed by a display of extraordinary beauty and stillness. Fire in the sky, but a gentle one.



As we celebrate the Luna New year this month. Leaving the Year of the Wood Snake and stepping towards the Fire Horse can feel like a period of physical and emotional constriction, as though the skin itself is tightening before it splits and releases. The Snake is a creature of containment and inward change, shedding in its own time, often out of sight; wood adds pressure, growth against resistance, the slow insistence of something pushing from within. As this cycle ends, there can be discomfort, restlessness, and a sense that what once held us is becoming too narrow familiar structures no longer quite fit, yet the next form has not revealed itself.

The Fire Horse brings a very different energy: outward, fast, uncompromising, and fuelled by instinct rather than strategy. But the transition is rarely clean. There is often a pause where nothing is resolved, where the body knows change is coming long before the mind understands what it will look like. This in between can feel unsettling a mix of anticipation and grief, urgency and uncertainty. And yet, this tightening is not a failure to move forward; it is part of the transformation itself. The release will come, carried by momentum rather than planning, and when it does, it may take us somewhere we could not have imagined from within the coil. I am definitely feeling all of this...

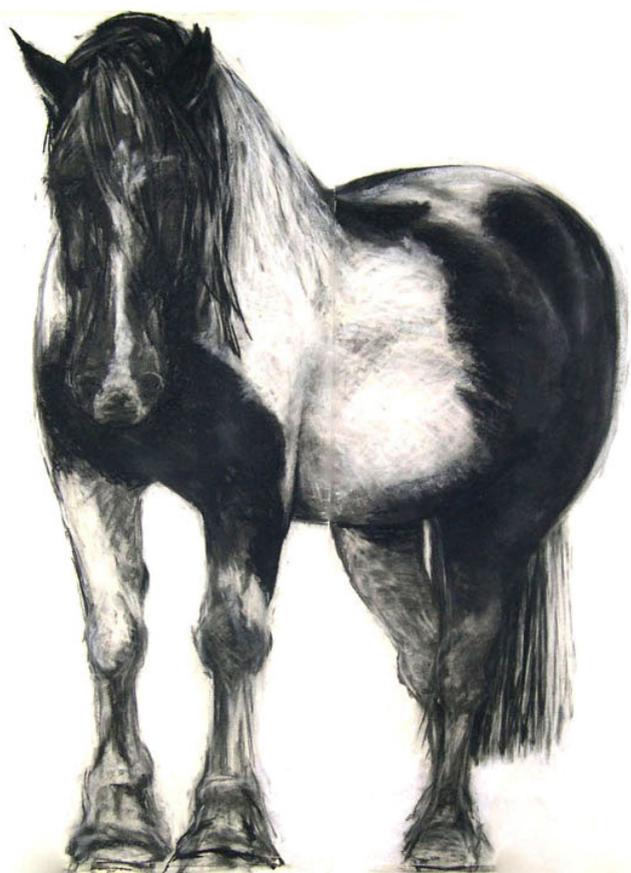
Despite the turmoil, nature has not paused. Birdsong has been steadily increasing, even on the windiest mornings. The song thrush may have been the first to start singing this year, Robins are holding territory, blackbirds are more vocal, rooks are already carrying nesting material. Some nest boxes are being lined with moss, quietly prepared against the odds. Snowdrops are flowering, and the commercial daffodil fields are in full flower, while many garden daffodils are still in bud. Hazel catkins have been around for a while now, willow buds are swelling, and ivy berries dark and ripe are still sustaining birds through this hinge-point of the year.



From sunset on February 1st to sunset on February 2nd, Imbolc marks the midpoint between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox. It is both a time based turning point and a tradition associated with the first stirrings of spring, the preparation of life quickening beneath the surface. The name is often linked to “ewe’s milk”, a reminder of nourishment returning, of the land beginning to support new life again. Imbolc is also St Brigid’s Day, honouring a figure who bridges pagan and Christian traditions. Brigid is associated with fire, healing, poetry, and smithcraft the hearth flame rather than the wildfire, the fire that transforms and sustains. She is deeply connected to birth and renewal, to thresholds and beginnings. In a year marked by both destruction and illumination, her presence feels particularly resonant.

Gorse embodies this moment perfectly. Flowering almost year-round, but feeling at its brightest now, it brings colour and that gorgeous coconut scent to the hedgerows. Long used as kindling and known locally as furze, gorse carries warmth quite literally. There is an old saying that ‘When gorse is out of bloom, kissing is out of season’ seems very appropriate for Valentines day!

I would normally share a poem about February with you but instead I have decided to focus on the wind as it has been so dominant recently.



The Wind At Night By Madison Julius Cawein

I.

Not till the wildman wind is shrill,  
Howling upon the hill  
In every wolfish tree, whose boisterous boughs,  
Like desperate arms, gesture and beat the night,  
And down huge clouds, in chasms of stormy white  
The frightened moon hurries above the house,  
Shall I lie down; and, deep,  
Letting the mad wind keep  
Its shouting revel round me, fall asleep.

II.

Not till its dark halloo is hushed,  
And where wild waters rushed,  
Like some hoofed terror underneath its whip  
And spur of foam, remains  
A ghostly glass, hill-framed; whereover stains  
Of moony mists and rains,  
And stealthy starbeams, like vague specters, slip;  
Shall I, with thoughts that take  
Unto themselves the ache  
Of silence as a sound, from sleep awake.

And much can go,  
And yet abide the world!

The Storm. By Emily Elizabeth Dickinson

There came a wind like a bugle;  
It quivered through the grass,  
And a green chill upon the heat  
So ominous did pass  
We barred the windows and the doors  
As from an emerald ghost;  
The doom's electric moccason  
That very instant passed.  
On a strange mob of panting trees,  
And fences fled away,  
And rivers where the houses ran  
The living looked that day.  
The bell within the steeple wild  
The flying tidings whirled.  
How much can come

Plant Focus  
Common Gorse  
(*Ulex Europaeus*)



# Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)

The Gorse is a plant of paradox, an emblem of “love in all seasons” or Anger. It is fiercely spined yet exuberantly golden with delicate flowers, resilient yet fragrant, wild yet deeply woven into rural life and folklore. Flowering throughout the year, but especially radiant in late winter and early spring, gorse has long been associated with love, fertility, and endurance. The old saying, “When gorse is out of bloom, kissing’s out of fashion,” reflects both its near-constant flowering and its symbolic link to affection and vitality making it an apt plant for February and Valentine’s Day.

In Cornwall and other parts of the British Isles, gorse is often known as furze or furse. Its highly flammable nature made it invaluable as a traditional fire lighter, used to start hearth fires and ovens. This fiery quality gave gorse a protective and purifying role in folklore; burning gorse was thought to ward off evil and invite renewal. Its bright yellow flowers, smelling faintly of coconut or vanilla, were seen as sparks of sunlight caught in the hedgerows during the darker months.

Medicinally, gorse has been used sparingly and with care. Flower essences made from gorse have been associated with lifting despair and restoring hope, particularly in folk and later Bach Flower traditions, where it is linked to feelings of resignation and emotional exhaustion. Historically, gorse was also crushed for animal fodder, its sharpness softened through labour another reminder of its theme of transformation through effort.

As a symbol, gorse embodies resilience, optimism, and the persistence of warmth and affection even in harsh conditions. It is a plant that flowers against expectation, reminding us that love, light, and fire can endure year-round, even when the landscape appears dormant.

Across literature, gorse often appears as a plant that resists simple symbolism. Writers have returned to it not just for its brightness, but for the tension it holds between allure and abrasion. Romantic poets

were drawn to its sensory presence: its colour blazing against bleak ground, its unexpected sweetness cutting through solitude. In one of Coleridge's reflective poems, "Fears in Solitude", the scent of flowering gorse breaks a spell of inward withdrawal, pulling attention back to the physical world. Elsewhere, the shrub becomes a mirror for emotional severity. Emily Brontë evokes landscapes of thorn and stone to express the inner desolation of her most difficult characters, in *Wuthering Heights*, the troubled anti-hero Heathcliff is described as "an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone". while Thomas Hardy situates gorse firmly within labour and survival, describing environments shaped by endurance rather than comfort, where its branches are gathered for warmth and necessity, in *Return of the Native*, "heathy, furzy, briary wilderness". Wordsworth explicitly stated his preference for wild landscapes, noting that hills "in their wild state covered with furze and broom... delight me the most".



Lessons from the Gorse by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Mountain gorses, ever-golden,  
Cankered not the whole year long!  
Do ye teach us to be strong,  
Howsoever pricked and holden,  
Like your thorny blooms, and so  
Trodden on by rain and snow,  
Up the hill-side of this life, as bleak as where ye grow?

Mountain blossoms, shining blossoms,  
Do ye teach us to be glad  
When no summer can be had,  
Blooming in our inward bosoms?  
Ye whom God preserveth still,  
Set as lights upon a hill,  
Tokens to the wintry earth that Beauty liveth still!

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us  
From that academic chair  
Canopied with azure air,  
That the wisest word man reaches  
Is the humblest he can speak?  
Ye, who live on mountain peak,  
Yet live low along the ground, beside the grasses meek!

Mountain gorses, since Linnaeus  
Knelt beside you on the sod,  
For your beauty thanking God,  
For your teaching, ye should see us  
Bowing in prostration new!  
Whence arisen, - if one or two  
Drops be on our cheeks - O world, they are not tears but dew.



Monoprint on Paper

Featured Creatures  
Horses



# Horses

For thousands of years, the horse has shaped human culture in ways few other animals have. Long before machines replaced muscle, horses transformed how we travelled, worked, farmed, traded, and fought, expanding the physical and imaginative boundaries of human life. They carried people across landscapes, connected distant communities, and altered the pace at which ideas, goods, and power could move. This deep partnership left an imprint not only on economies and empires, but on language, art, and belief. Symbolically, the horse has come to represent freedom, vitality, and momentum, but also trust and mutual dependence — a reminder that human progress has often rested on interspecies cooperation. Across cultures, horses appear as guides, messengers, and liminal beings, able to move between worlds, carry heroes, or escort souls. Even now, long after most horses have vanished from daily labour, their image continues to stir something instinctive in us: a memory of speed, strength, and embodied movement, and of a time when human life was more visibly bound to the rhythms of animal life and the land itself.

The Fire Horse appears only once every sixty years, marking the completion of a full cycle of the Chinese zodiac combined with the Five Elements. Its last arrival was in 1966, a year remembered globally for upheaval, cultural shifts, and a fierce questioning of authority. The return of the Fire Horse signals another threshold moment not simply repetition, but a deepened reckoning with themes that have been quietly accumulating over decades.

This year's transition is especially potent as we move from the Wood Snake into the Fire Horse. The Snake is a creature of inward motion: strategic, contained, observant, and often associated with periods of restriction, gestation, and hidden transformation. Wood, as an element, adds growth and tension



like branches pushing outward but still bound to a central trunk. Together, the Wood Snake can feel like pressure held under the surface: a time of waiting, coiling, and careful navigation.

The shift into Fire Horse is a release of that stored energy. Fire dissolves what can no longer be sustained, while the Horse demands movement, truth, and momentum. Where the Snake plans and sheds in private, the Horse runs openly, fuelled by instinct and desire. This transition may feel like emerging from containment into exposure, exhilarating, but also destabilising. There can be a sense of urgency, restlessness, or a need to break free from structures that once offered safety but now feel restrictive.

Fire Horse energy is passionate, uncompromising, and transformative. It asks for courage, authenticity, and a willingness to act rather than observe. While it can bring volatility if resisted, it also offers immense creative force and renewal. As winter turns towards spring, this moment invites us to honour what has been endured, release what has become constraining, and step forward with renewed vitality allowing movement, passion, and purpose to return to the body and the world.



We are delighted to have you join us on this journey of discovery. This newsletter and research project explores a different bird, animal, plant, or tree each month, inviting you to look more closely at the seasonal wonders of our natural world.

You can find more of my work on the website, including step-by-step guides, tutorials, and online workshops.

You may have noticed I love gathering poetry, songs, facts, and stories that celebrate the profound connection between humans and the natural world. Drawing from medieval bestiaries, mythology, folklore, and fables, I aim to uncover the often intriguing lessons and allegorical meanings behind these tales in this newsletter.

Disclaimer: Please remember that this booklet serves as a starting point for your own exploration. Some of the information is rooted in folklore, storytelling, and non-scientific hearsay, so please approach it with caution and always conduct further research.

I hope you will join us in exploring your own creative practice and perhaps discover something that resonates with you.

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# Things I try to do

- Join conservation groups
- Support Charities who protect habitat and wildlife
- Share good practice in Fishing, Farming and Land management
- Vote with my purse, dont support substandard practice in anything.
- Sign petitions to protect birds and habitat
- Share my love of wildlife with friends and family
- Sign petitions to end persecution and improve understanding
- Dont use pesticides, herbicides or poison in the Garden
- Let the grass grow, insects love dandelions and daisies.
- Grow wildflowers, plant native trees and plants that support pollinators.
- Encourage insects to the garden, it all starts with the insects.
- Put up bird Boxes
- Mulch flowerbeds to keep moisture in
- Grow some food... no matter how little.
- Have as many waterbuts as I can.
- Leave the leaves to provide habitat for insects etc.
- Plant trees
- Only ever forage sustainably and responsibly

Some links for further information:-

[British Trust for Ornithology](#)

[RSPB](#)

[Birdlife](#)

[The Wildlife Trusts](#)

[The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust](#)

[Plantlife](#)

[The Hare Preservation Society](#)

[The Badger Trust](#)

[RSPCA](#)

[Woodland Trust foraging guidelines](#)

[Curlew Action](#)

See You In....



March 2026

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