

SACRED WINDOWS



Sunday, September 17, 2023

Nature Reveals God's Extraordinary Sense of Humor

*"All things bright and beautiful / All creatures great and small / All things wise and wonderful /
The Lord God made them all."
~C. F. Alexander, 1818-95*

Dear Thomas,

Some days, when I come out of my house, I look up and see **my friend Mr. Mockingbird** perched on the telephone wire above my street. He's often singing his little heart out...until he hears the door close. Then he stands there, still as a statue, and just stares at me. He's testing me.

He knows I'll give in. I always do. In a second, I pucker up and whistle a little tune. **And I wait for his response.** Silence.

I whistle it again, knowing full well that Mr. Mockingbird has **heard my challenge**. He's just calculating the precise amount of breath and vocal power needed to reproduce my tune.

More silence. **Then a weak chirp.** Then a series of muffled tweets. Finally, he lets out a full-throated song that nails the tune I had just whistled. And then he just keeps singing away, as if he were proud of himself for making it clear who the boss of this neighborhood really is.

Of course, I'm fully aware that he's **mocking me**, but I don't take it personally. After all, *mocking* is what mockingbirds do, right?!

Such a funny little guy. After that, I just smile and go about my day **on a happy note**, so to speak.



God, the Supreme Humorist

If you have eyes to see it and a heart to embrace it, you'll probably see some bit of humor everywhere you look. My theory is that **God has programmed humor** into our world because He knew we would need it to balance out the sufferings we must endure as we journey to heaven.

And if humor can be found in creation, imagine how wonderful **the Creator's sense of humor** must be. He's got to be the supreme humorist. In fact, the famous historian Paul Johnson, in his book *Creators*, notes that the first recorded joke in human history is **in the Bible**.

It dates back to about 2750 BC when Sarah, the wife of Abraham, sarcastically laughed out loud (the first recorded laugh in human history too) and **joked about the angel's message** that she could bear a child at an advanced age (Gen 18:12,15).

Can you blame her?

That's just one witness to God's sense humor, but his "jokes" can be found everywhere. They seem to spill out in many little sacred windows of human cleverness as well as in **raw expressions of nature**.

For the sake of brevity, I can't go into the complexities of *human* funniness (which I've written about in other places: [Abbot and Costello](#), [Johnny Carson](#), and [Tim Hawkins](#)). I'll just focus on the ways in which God's extraordinary sense of humor is **revealed in the natural world**. Let's start with the not-so-obvious joviality of the plant world.

The Trees

If you ever read a **Dr. Seuss** book to your kids, you'll probably remember the wild and fun trees that he drew as features of his fantasy world.

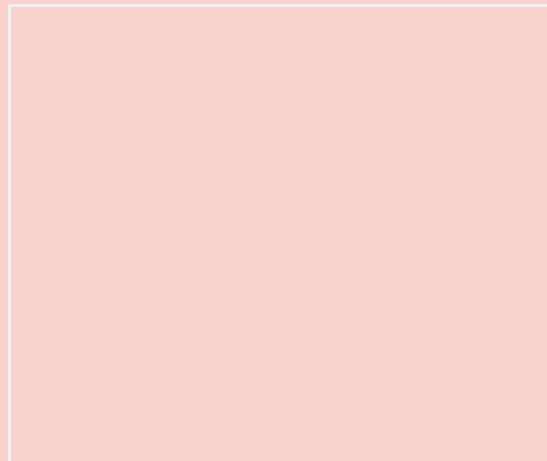
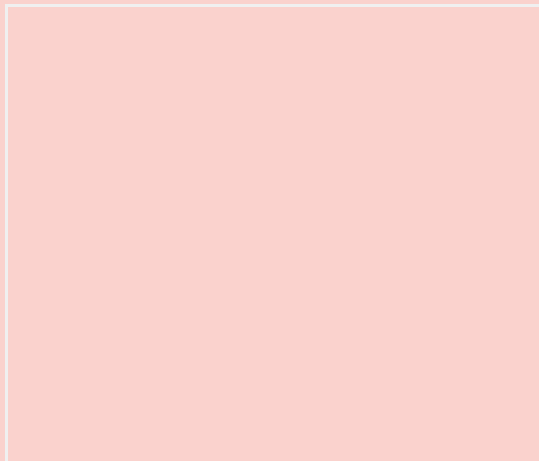
Well, I have noticed that some of **those trees actually grow in my neighborhood**. I suspect Dr. Seuss snuck in and made some sketches when we weren't looking. It's just a theory. Here are a few:

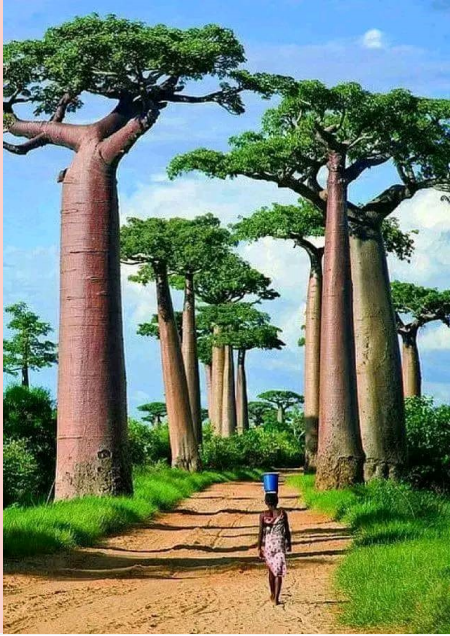


I find myself chuckling at times when I drive down the street and see **these guys performing their** comedy routines for the locals.

In the larger world, there's the amazing Baobab (**bow-bob**) trees that grow in Africa, Madagascar, and Australia. I've seen some of these with my own eyes, and they would be considered an *oddy* of nature were they not **so darn funny-looking!**

But a word of caution: If you dare insinuate that these trees are **inhabited by Keebler Elves**, you'll be roundly attacked on social media by a posse of Baobab zealots who roam the web looking for tree offenses. I've given you fair warning.





Asia and Latin America also have their own tree clowns. **Check out the Cannonball Tree.**

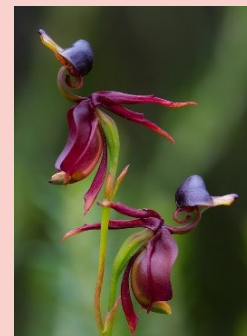
It grows in the jungles of Central and South America with some species native to Sri Lanka and India.

As its name suggests, a torrent of cannon balls seems to roll down its trunk at certain times of the year.

They're actually **huge nuts with weird moss-like petals** but they give the impression of a cascade of cannon balls about to drop on your head!

The Plant World

On a smaller scale, the plant world is endlessly fascinating and pretty hilarious too. Let's take the orchids. Some of them are **exquisitely beautiful, fragrant, and dainty**, but others are just... well, comical – particularly, the monkey face, the duck, and the dove.



Among the **28,000 species of orchids**, you can find orchids that smell like chocolate, shoe orchids, bee and fly orchids, little dancing ballerina orchids, and too many other funny ones to list here.

I ask you: Was God having an off day when He created these guys or was it part of His deliberate plan to keep us laughing? And can you **imagine the sense of humor** it took to create a plant that is actually a carnivore?

The dreaded and beautiful **Venus Fly Trap** lures unsuspecting insects into its "mouth" and then closes its jaws on them and eats them – **it's a plant!**

Incidentally, the "trap" part grows 8 to 12 inches beyond the rest of the plant so it **doesn't devour** those insects that come to pollinate its flowers below.



As I said, the Designer of this plant is pretty funny, and **also amazingly intelligent**.

Speaking of pollination, God must have been in a rare mood when He created the so-called “carrion plant” (also in southern Africa) which apparently gives off **the scent of rotting flesh** to attract insects who keep it pollinated.

It’s a huge blossom (close to a foot in diameter) that looks like a fuzzy star, a weird funnel, **or a clown hat – and stinks**. It is also known as the “Zulu giant” and the “toad plant”, adding more weight to its humorous aspect.

Okay, maybe acting like a dead animal carcass is more disgusting than humorous, but you have to admit that it’s a **pretty clever trick** of nature and of nature’s Creator.



See other Sacred Windows articles about animals

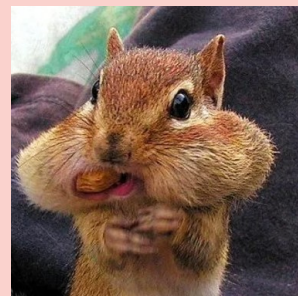
[3 Talking Animals in the Bible](#)

[Vast Array of Biblical Animals](#)

The Animal Kingdom

The animal world also has so many examples of hilarious creatures that I can only list a few that need no explanation whatsoever.

Laughing hyenas; **monkeys in general, chimpanzees in particular**; the platypus; the elephant; the giraffe; the ostrich; spitting camels and llamas; sloths; hippos; penguins; zebras; meerkats, and a whole host of others you may see in any given zoo or Pixar movie. (Have you ever seen baby pandas?)



And do I need to mention the **shenanigans of dogs and cats**? If you’re a pet owner, you already know what I mean. If not, just search YouTube for “funny animal videos” and it will be *case closed*.

Oh, and don’t forget the phenomenally versatile and funny squirrels (289 species of them). Their celebrity members are the Pteromyini, otherwise known as **flying squirrels** (50 species). Alas, I don’t have time to go into those *acrobatic prodigies* of the animal world, but maybe I’ll do a future newsletter just on those amazing creatures!

Water and Air

When I was a kid, I recall feeding four-inch sardines to the dolphins at



Sea World who came right up to the edge of the pool to **snatch their treats from our hands**. Their performances included front flips, backflips, backwards surfing, dashing the length of the pool and then shooting 20 feet into the air to the loud “oohs” and “ahhs” of everyone watching.

Then they would then turn over on their sides to **wave goodbye** to the crowds with their flippers.

Dolphins are simply **nature’s showmen**, first rate humorists. They are mammals but live entirely in water; they race against boats, play with people, shake their heads, laugh like banshees, and smile like there’s no tomorrow. What paradoxical creatures!

The water world also treats us to the humorous looks of the hammerhead and saw-toothed sharks, seahorses, bumbling floating balloons called **manatees, blowfish, manta rays**, and those bizarre, luminescent deep sea creatures.

Speaking of which, have you ever seen **the carpet fish**? Of course you haven’t. It sits hidden on the bottom of the Pacific Ocean *like a carpet* during the day and ambushes its prey at night.

An added twist: it’s **not what we would call a fish at all**. It’s actually a species of shark with a funny name:



The Tassleled Wobbegong.

Okay, I didn’t say these guys were nice, just funny – and a little weird, like all those deep sea types.

Birds

Let’s wrap up this subject like we started – with birds, possibly the **greatest of all comedians** in the animal kingdom.

The imitative birds are beyond funny – the mina bird is quirky, the cheeping parakeet is adorable, and the **various species of parrots** and cockatoos can be downright hysterical when they want to be.



If you’ve never seen a video of the celebrated **African Grey Parrot named Einstein**, I highly recommend that you check out his [YouTube page](#) that has over 950 videos of him talking (and 112,000 subscribers!).

He’s **one of the most extraordinary talking creatures** I’ve ever seen, with a working vocabulary of hundreds of words and expressions. And he absolutely revels in his celebrity status.

His owners report that when he was a year and a half old, Einstein’s **first human words** were “Gobble, Gobble, Gobble” – on Thanksgiving Day, of course. Since then he hasn’t stopped talking.

Among many other prima donnas of the avian world you’ll find **the amazing lyre bird** who can imitate literally any sound he hears, and the **Australian kookaburra** who is, absolutely, my favorite funny bird. I did a short *Vignette* on the amazing kookaburra which is [one minute of pure fun!](#)

Humor Prepares Us

The long and short of it is that, without humor, life would probably swirl down into a miserable vortex of depression. God wants us **out of that depressive mindset** and getting ourselves geared up for the joys of heaven.

Like any good parent, God the Father wants His children to **live life to the fullest**, and humor makes that possible, at least within the limits of this world.

Many things in the world subtly prepare us for the life of joy to come. Just look around and you'll see that **God has programmed joy into the world** in a thousand and one ways.

A Final Funny Villain

Now, an article on humor wouldn't be worth its salt if it didn't leave you laughing at the end, would it? So, here's a **24-second video** of a parrot who, appropriately, *laughs hysterically*. [Click image at left or button below.]

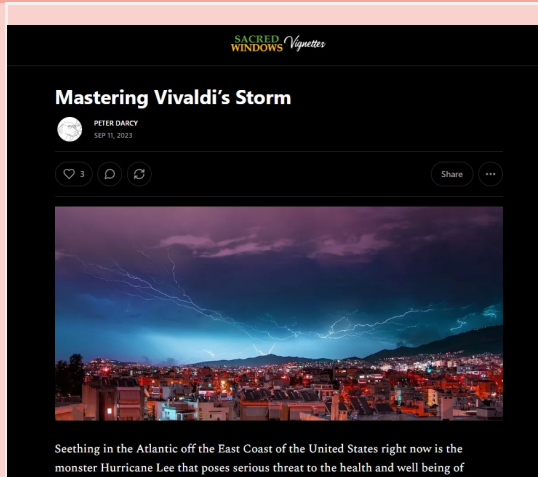


He has a hilarious villain-type evil-sounding laugh, which, when coming from such a tiny, colorful creature, **is just a riot**.

In fact, if you're not rolling on the floor laughing by the end of this clip...**I may have to report you** to the Keebler Elves brigade.

[See Video of the Funny Laughing Parrot](#)

Feature



Mastering Vivaldi's Storm

In the event you didn't get to see last week's Sacred Windows *Vignette*, I think you'll love this short piece about the musical classic called *The Four Seasons*, by **Antonio Vivaldi** (1678-1741).

The *Vignette* ends with a 2.5 minute rendition of the **"Storm,"** a movement in the "Summer" Season. Don't get blown away! It's a real eye-opener.

May God bless you and your families!

Peter Darcy

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