



SEASON OF CREATION



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**Lusan: a poetic memory of Scottish Creation Wisdom
by Lorn MacIntyre, St Andrews Churches Eco Network**

Lusan

Grandfather was physician to the animal kingdom, though he had no training in veterinary medicine, except for the knowledge he had gained from an old tinker woman, who took him on the moor to guide him on which plants to pick for specific conditions for God's creatures brought to him sick. Certain of these *lusan* he was instructed to pick under a full moon, otherwise their healing properties for certain conditions would be lost. She told him: 'Speak these Gaelic words when using the medicine.' What could he give her in grateful recompense, she who already had the best of the world's gifts?

His shed on the croft was his pharmacy. There at a bench made from driftwood he ground *lusan* with mortar and pestle, or else boiled them in an old kettle on the pot-bellied stove, draining off the juices and bottling them. Some concoctions could also be taken safely for human ailments. A bitter cupful and my flaming acne was gone. He is said to have soothed the broken heart of a jilted youth from Brolas by giving him an elixir from plants plucked under a new moon, and as he drank it he was to toast the lost woman. She returned to him on the late train.

One evening when the moon was ascending Cruachan A *belle dame* like a figure from the Rhymer's Ercildoune walked an Arab stallion by the halter along the lane. 'Is your grandfather in?' she asked. I ran for him. 'I heard you were gifted with horses. He's lame.' He lifted the left back fetlock, then fetched a tin of a black substance he had brewed from *lusan*. He painted it on, speaking to the horse in Gaelic as if it were a spell, part of the ancient treatment. 'He's fine to ride now, madam,' he assured her. She tossed him a sovereign, then cantered the lane, disappearing into the hoop of the full moon.

Lorn Macintyre



The new Calvary:

After a night of extreme and destructive wind: thoughts on the purpose of prayer and faith in a time of human-induced climate crisis

The storm which Christ subdued at Galilee
was not supercharged with gasoline,
as if the lightning will ignite the sea
on this worst night in living memory
in which the tree of life's being crucified.
Was it for this that the Saviour died,
plastic a cataract in the dolphin's eye?
The rowan is writhing at my gate,
its cloak stripped, limbs being snapped.
This tree was sent to be our guardian,
provide shelter for the exhausted pilgrim,
red berries for the disorientated waxwing.
God planted the seed of the rowan;
ours also. But we have let Him down,
turning the key, polluting His creation.
The horned shell's the trumpet of doom.
Tonight my rowan's becoming the cross.
I hear the Lord's agony in the boom
of thunder like ordnance out at sea.
Use prayer to prevent a new Calvary.

Lorn Macintyre