

SPROUT CREEK FARM *celebrates* *in the hudson*



Sprout Creek Farm is a working farm and educational center tucked amidst the pastoral landscape of Dutchess County, New York.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

river valley

Along with a typically busy schedule of events and activities, Sprout Creek Farm celebrated a milestone anniversary this year. Founded in 1982, it was originally located on the campus of the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich, Connecticut, but moved to its present location in 1990 – making this its 25th anniversary in the Hudson River Valley.

Encompassing 200 acres in Dutchess County, New York, Sprout Creek Farm is really three distinct yet dynamically intertwined entities. It is a working farm, raising cows, sheep, goats, turkeys, chickens and pigs. It is a market, selling its own award-winning cheeses and farm-produced meat. And it is an educational center, offering day, weekend, and summer programs that help adults and young people connect with the land, the seasons and the plants and animals that co-exist in harmonious rhythm on the farm.

Margo Morris, RSCJ, has been an integral part of Sprout Creek Farm from its very beginning. The poem that follows is her tribute to the place she has nurtured and loved these past twenty-five years.



Photos by Georgie Blaeser, RSCJ

More than 2,500 school children visit Sprout Creek every year. Margo Morris, RSCJ, has been a part of the farm since its foundation at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich.

ODE TO THE FARM

The Sprout Creek, so earnest in its single-minded spring-fed flowing,
its bed of limestone and clay rests high above a nameless underground river,
an artery whose pure and fluid pulse, cold and constant,
feeds this land and all its shining creatures:

Crawfish crawl the creek bottom, raking silt and stones under which to burrow,
their Crustacean armor, a questionable defense, it seems.
They peer out of the temporary murk of their labor,
wary and watchful and timid.

Even the groundhog, thief of tender shoots, successful without stealth,
is bold in its standing challenge;
entitlement to all that is most recently sprouted encrypted in its very genes
and the aptitude of its buck-toothed methodology.

Multilingual, covert and cunning, coyotes case the joint by day, catch by moonlight,
and howl their songs of hunger in the bright snowfields of night,
waiting, hoping to consume the first hapless rabbit fresh out of a warm warren.
Opportunists and survivors, with canine intellect and capacity sharp and deep,
the creatures of wood and field, the creatures of home and hearth,
listen – each cell at attention – to the long lone howl
that initiates the polyphony of utterances from ridge to ridge.

Splice in my cow with her rivers of milk;
pour it along the steep banks of misunderstanding;
spill it into all of the wars of refusal.
Eye-tend her kindly, disturbing mothering, her nudging, urging, conference of strength.
(For she is unable to do otherwise.)

Opalescent chimera-like glimpse of fish in transit, the brilliant contrasts of the creek bed,
northern in subtlety (almost stingy about color).
Black green plants against a white limestone bed wave watery hellos,
calling gently to children who see everything that is small,
everything that is moving at all,
that beckons us, tempts us, draws us into the progress,
the motion, the gurgling syntax of river,
into the simple commotion of The Sprout Creek.

—Margo Morris, RSCJ



Photos by Georgie Blaeser, RSCJ

We live in and around these realities and the familiar but no less mystery-laden realities of the barns and sheds, gardens and coops – shelter and sustenance, we are all for the other. Madeleine Sophie once said, “The love of Jesus Christ discovered a way of being with us that no one would have dared think of: he becomes our food and he empties himself...so as to raise us up to God.” We who live here earnestly invite you, our readers, to enjoy and absorb the gratuitous wellspring of human awareness buried in earth and beckoning the divine. ✚

Visit sproutcreekfarm.org for more information.

OUR MISSION *The purposes of the farm are:*

- to provide educational experiences for children and adults that will foster appreciation for, and understanding of, our place within the natural world, and thus encourage responsibility for the future of our environment
- to offer programs that will reconnect people to the rich agricultural heritage of the United States
- to offer an experience of community as a model of peaceful living
- to offer programs in spiritual development, using the agricultural resources of the farm as both setting and starting point of such programs