

## INTRODUCTION

*The challenge for this era is whether mankind will answer the call to live in harmony with nature. This collection of articles is the culmination of over two years of writing. With the exception of the Stewards of the Earth article originally published in Many Hands magazine, all the others were first published in Wisdom magazine. Mary Arsenault, Wisdom's publisher extraordinaire, had the wisdom and foresight, when I proposed a column featuring a different Totem each month, to realize it was an idea whose time had come. From thirty years of doing healing work with both humans and animals, I understood how fascinating the purity and intercession of Totems are. The more we interact with Nature, the more She interacts with us. Since man's beginning, he has looked to animals for living examples of natural behavior - for survival, and for connection to the world of Spirit. The metaphysical principles symbolized by the Totem are embodied in the animal, bird, tree or stone. It carries the signature. The significance or "medicine" the Totems express by their behavior and function manifests as spiritual power of which they are the physical incarnation.*

*Whether we know it or not, we are in a grand partnership with Nature. It is as subtle and complex as the delicate yet tensile web of the spider. Just as nothing can touch the web without the spider knowing and feeling it, so also does every change in our ecology resonate throughout our entire environment. This relationship is not just physical. We have inextricably linked destinies on this dear planet. It is time to create a future of compassion for all living things, that we may all survive in joy. This is accomplished through loving action and respect for the needs of all.*

*How I treasure the Earth and her wilderness. It is my living prayer that this body of work will help you realize a close and personal relationship with Her. What a precious part each of us plays in the health of our world! Mama Earth herself, like all her children, is a living entity. We are all made of the same Life Force substance. Glimpse the power that gives us. Never underestimate the impact of the small gifts you offer our Mother daily. Our love supports Her, and encourages Her to care for us in greater measure. As children, we knew this intuitively.*

*Studying and working with Totems can help us renew our faith in the process of Healing and of Life. They can make our hearts young again, restoring the years that stress and struggle have taken from us. Calling on Totems puts us back in touch with the "forever perspective." It is my heart's desire that the reader of this book feels embraced by the love of Mother Earth and the community of critters, to which we all belong.*

*May blessings abound, all around,  
Cie Simurro\* Thunderbird Starwoman*