

## The Green Lion's Preface

The Green Lion is pleased to offer another book in its Green Cat series of science classics for humanities studies. You can read about this series in the back of this volume on page 114.

We have long wanted to include a volume of Darwin's writings in this series. Our approach in the Green Cat books is to provide substantial passages from classic scientific texts that show the fullness and continuity of the author's argument. Too often these goals are sacrificed in anthologies. If real science is to be presented and experienced, it is not enough just to sample the flavor of an author in disconnected highlights—a continuous, coherent narrative is required.

The *Origin of Species*, Darwin's first book, does not present "evolution" as we know the theory today. It is the first comprehensive statement of a plausible process that would result in evolution. That process is "natural selection," which Darwin spells out in a beautifully shaped argument, with exquisite detail. The *Origin* is also of primary importance because it was so enormously influential. It continues to stand as the book you go to first—"the rest is commentary."

The substantial passages provided in this edition allow one to enjoy the precision and clarity of Darwin's writing and the patient thoroughness of his reasoning. Step by step, layer by layer, detail by detail, like the most intricate detective story, he constructs his case.

The Green Lion commissioned Nicholas Maistrellis to make the selections and provide introductions and annotations. Maistrellis knows the *Origin* deeply, has read it with students for decades, has a background in biology, and, most importantly, has studied and taught the book in the context of a broad liberal arts curriculum.

This Green Cat edition is based on the first edition of *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. Footnotes are the editor's. We have included a thorough index, a biography of Darwin, and a bibliography and suggestions for further reading. We thank Associate Editor Howard J. Fisher for shepherding this book through and preparing the index.

Recent years have seen renewed debate concerning natural selection, evolution, and other aspects of Darwin's thought. We hope this volume will

contribute to the conversation by revealing the real foundations of the argument and showing the thoroughness with which Darwin develops his case. Darwin's achievement is not the formulation of an idea; rather, it is the assembling of a wide variety of ordinary and unobjectionable facts into a powerful statement of what *must necessarily* follow from these facts. This is not just an idea, and it can't be fruitfully discussed as just an idea. In addition, it is both interesting and instructive to see that Darwin is far from doctrinaire in his presentation. He leaves the discussion as a continuing one. It continues today, and today's readers and students can be part of it.

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