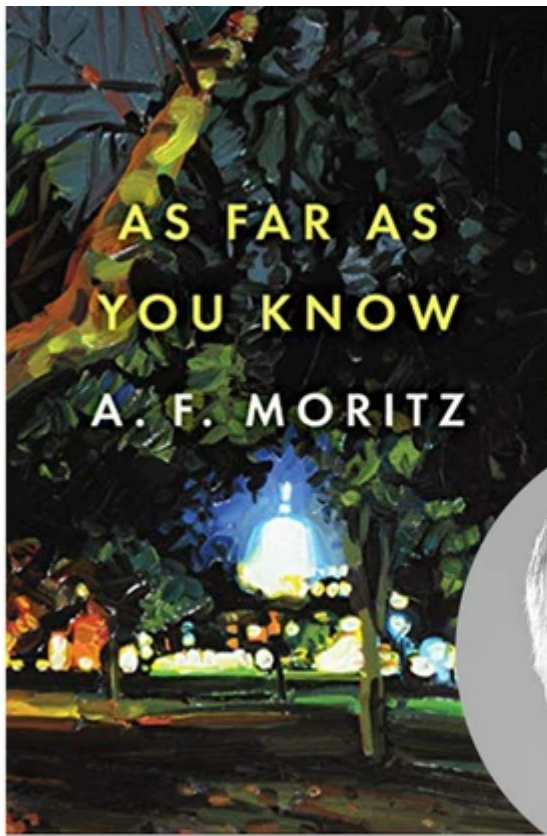


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APRIL 17, 2020

## **A Poem from As Far As You Know by Toronto's Poet Laureate A.F. Moritz**



## Names of Birds

Awake at dawn, recalling my father, crying,  
unable to go to sleep again, and soon  
the first bird sings. Despair: when the first bird sings  
and the first light comes and you haven't slept.  
I curse myself: the many-noted melody  
is its signature but I can't read its name.

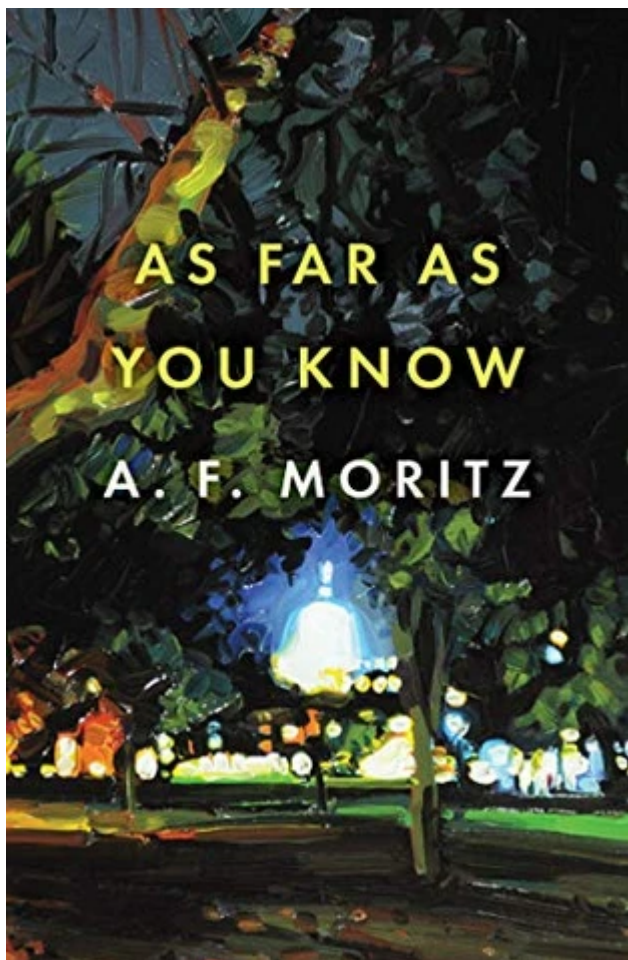
every tree, bush, and grass they played in,  
every seed, bug, and worm they ate. Their friend.

I've lived to an age far past what he received  
and I know nothing. Father, where are you  
so I can ask you and have you give me the names?

I always thought I'd take the time, later,  
to learn them from you. A scientist, he used to say  
names are only for people. Now I see

birds have names and he knew them. Not just  
the nomenclature of kinds — the name of each one,  
a strange sort of word that exists only an instant  
when the bird answers a man who whistles to it  
and then goes silent, hoping to hear him again.

*11 May 2015*



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