

Prayers for the Earth



Earth Song

It's an earth song,—
And I've been waiting long for an earth song.
It's a spring song,—
And I've been waiting long for a spring song.
 Strong as the shoots of a new plant
 Strong as the bursting of new buds
 Strong as the coming of the first child from its mother's
 womb.
It's an earth song,
A body song,
A spring song,
I have been waiting long for this spring song.

~ Langston Hughes

Small Prayer

Thank you for the apples like berries
that color the trees and the sky.
I want to leap and talk
and then sleep in the air
where your fruits ripen and dance.
Mother of earth, this is my prayer!
Oh yes — at night
when we turn from father light
please cover my cloud bed
with your phosphorescence.
Thank you for your apples.

~ Scott Chaskey

The Garden is Rich

The garden is rich with diversity
With plants of a hundred families
In the space between the trees
With all the colours and fragrances.
Basil, mint and lavender,
Great Mystery keep my remembrance pure,
Raspberry, Apple, Rose,
Great Mystery fill my heart with love,
Dill, anise, tansy,
Holy winds blow in me.
Rhododendron, zinnia,
May my prayer be beautiful
May my remembrance O Great Mystery
Be as incense to thee
In the sacred grove of eternity
As I smell and remember
The ancient forests of earth.

~ Chinook Psalter

Lord, the air smells good today,
straight from the mysteries
within
the garden
of God.
The trees in their prayer,
the birds in praise,
the first blue violets,
Kneeling.

~ Rumi

Basanta Panchami

translated from the Bengali by Lilian M. Whitehouse

To-day, after a year, on the sacred fifth day, Nature has flung away her worn raiment, and with new jewels, see, with fresh buds and new shoots she has begemmed herself and smiles. The birds wing their way, singing with joy; ah, how lovely! The black bee hums as if with sound of "Ulu! ulu!" he wished good fortune to Nature. The south breeze seems to say as it flits from house to house, "To-day Bīnāpāni comes here to Bengal." Arrayed in guise that would enrapture even sages, maid Nature has come to worship thy feet, O propitious one! See, O India, at this time all pay no heed to fear of plague, famine, earthquake; all put away pain and grief and gloom; to-day all are drunk with pleasure. For a year Nature was waiting in hope for this day to come. Many folk in many a fashion now summon thee, O white-armed one; I also have a mind to worship. Thy two feet are red lotuses; but, say, with what gift shall we worship thee, O mother Bināpāni? Ever sorrowful, ever ill-starred are we women of Bengal, all of us. Yet if thou have mercy, this utterly dependent one will worship thee with the gift of a single tear of devotion shed on thy lotus feet. Graciously accept that, and in mercy, O white-armed one, grant this blessing on my head on this propitious, sacred day, that this life may be spent in thy worship, Mother.

~ Pankajini Basu

In Tall Grass

Bees and a honeycomb in the dried head of a horse in a
pasture corner—a skull in the tall grass and a buzz
and a buzz of the yellow honey-hunters.

And I ask no better a winding sheet
(over the earth and under the sun.)

Let the bees go honey-hunting with yellow blur of wings in the
dome of my head, in the rumbling, singing arch of my
skull.

Let there be wings and yellow dust and the drone of dreams
of honey—who loses and remembers?—who keeps
and forgets?

In a blue sheen of moon over the bones and under the
hanging honeycomb the bees come home and the
bees sleep.

~ Carl Sandburg

In the Yellowstone

Little pin-prick geysers, spitting and sputtering;

Little foaming geysers, that spatter and cough;

Bubbling geysers, that gurgle out of the calyx of morning glory
pools;

Laughing geysers, that dance in the sun, and spread their
robes like lace over the rocks;

Raging geysers, that rush out of hell with a great noise, and
blurt out vast dragon-gulps of steam, and, finishing, sink
back wearily into darkness;

Glad geysers, nymphs of the sun, that rise, slim and nude, out
of the hot dark earth, and stand poised in beauty a moment,
veiling their brows and breasts in mist;

Winged geysers, spirits of fire, that rise tall and straight like a
sequoia, and plume the sky with foam:

O wild choral fountains, forever singing and seething, forever
boiling in deep places and leaping forth for bright moments
into the air,

How do you like it up here? Why must you go back to the
spirits of darkness? What do you tell them down there about
your little glorious life in the sun?

~ Harriet Monroe

Characteristics of Life

A fifth of animals without backbones could be at risk of extinction, say scientists. — BBC Nature News

Ask me if I speak for the snail and I will tell you
I speak for the snail.

 speak of underneathedness
and the welcome of mosses,
 of life that springs up,
little lives that pull back and wait for a moment.

I speak for the damselfly, water skeet, mollusk,
the caterpillar, the beetle, the spider, the ant.

 I speak
from the time before spinelessness was frowned upon.

Ask me if I speak for the moon jelly. I will tell you
 one thing today and another tomorrow
 and I will be as consistent as anything alive
on this earth.

 I move as the currents move, with the breezes.
What part of your nature drives you? You, in your cubicle
ought to understand me. I filter and filter and filter all day.

Ask me if I speak for the nautilus and I will be silent
as the nautilus shell on a shelf. I can be beautiful
and useless if that's all you know to ask of me.

Ask me what I know of longing and I will speak of distances
 between meadows of night-blooming flowers.

 I will speak
the impossible hope of the firefly

You with the candle
burning and only one chair at your table must understand
such wordless desire.

To say it is mindless is missing the point.

~ Camille T. Dungy

Dragonfly, in your wings
The light reflecting all Earth's glory,
The spark of all beginning, the dance of life,
The network linking all existence, storied web.
You speak of the good air that lifts, that wraps our globe in
breath
That carries song and scent and hum on every breeze.
The force of rushing stream, the still pool's depths,
The source extending veins through earth, and you, and me.
Your eyes tell of the multitude of every life that was,
The passage of millennia, ancestral gifts;
The magic of our dreams that match your skill in flight;
The joy of rage uprising with ferocity of life;
The power of grief, the lessons learned of pain;
The burden of the many years gone by and all that are to
come;
The gift of rest: when stilled
That light may catch our wings
And reflect again
The glory and the dance.

~ Isabel Jones

In Praise of Trees

I speak a prayer for the trees,
for the skin of the trees,
the leaves of the trees,
the roots of the trees,
the earth under the trees,
and the water that nourishes the trees.
I thank our Creator and speak a prayer for the birds of the
trees
and the canopy of the trees in which the birds shelter.
I thank the one presence, the great giver of all that is.
I thank the holy one, always and forever, for trees.

~ Rev. Lulu Logan

August

No wind, no bird. The river flames like brass.
On either side, smitten as with a spell
Of silence, brood the fields. In the deep grass,
Edging the dusty roads, lie as they fell
Handfuls of shriveled leaves from tree and bush.
But 'long the orchard fence and at the gate,
Thrusting their saffron torches through the hush,
Wild lilies blaze, and bees hum soon and late.
Rust-colored the tall straggling briar, not one
Rose left. The spider sets its loom up there
Close to the roots, and spins out in the sun
A silken web from twig to twig. The air
Is full of hot rank scents. Upon the hill
Drifts the noon's single cloud, white, glaring, still.

~ Lizette Woodworth Reese

Canticle of the Creatures

All praise be yours, My Lord
through all that you have made.

And first my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day...
How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars;
In the heavens you have made them, bright and precious and
fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air...

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you brighten up the night...

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us...and produces various fruits
With colored flowers and herbs...

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
And serve him with great humility.

~ Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi

Invocation

Let me be buried in the rain
In a deep, dripping wood,
Under the warm wet breast of Earth
Where once a gnarled tree stood.
And paint a picture on my tomb
With dirt and a piece of bough
Of a girl and a boy beneath a round, ripe moon
Eating of love with an eager spoon
And vowing an eager vow.
And do not keep my plot mowed smooth
And clean as a spinster's bed,
But let the weed, the flower, the tree,
Riotous, rampant, wild and free,
Grow high above my head.

~ Helene Johnson

My Heart Leaps Up

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

~ William Wordsworth

There Will Come Soft Rains

(War Time)

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum trees in tremulous white,

Robins will wear their feathery fire
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

~ Sara Teasdale

I am the one whose praise echoes on high.
I adorn all the Earth.
I am the breeze that nurtures all things green.
I encourage blossoms to flourish with ripening fruits.
I am led by the spirit to feed the purest streams.
I am the rain coming from the dew
that causes the grasses to laugh with the joy of life.
I am the yearning for good.

~ Hildegard of Bingen

Dear Earth

May you hear our prayer.

Through our greed, hate and ignorance
We have failed you.
You are depleted, poisoned and feverish.
Your living beings are suffering.
Your sickness is getting worse.

Despite our neglect and plunder
You still blossom
With starfish, tundras, apples, icicles,
Bison herds, rainforest, blackbird song,
Trees that speak to each other underground.

Dear Earth, may you support us
As we lean into you and into each other
And feel our grief, rage and despair.

May you help us
To hear and hold these feelings with compassion
So that all of our actions can be driven by love.

May you offer us sacred space
So we can allow our connection with you to grow
And so we can bless each other over and over.

May you gift us the wisdom
To trust in our uniqueness
And discern the small compassionate actions
Only we can perform.

May you give us the courage
To transform love into action
By sharing information, making changes to our daily lives,
Speaking truth to power,
And coming together to disrupt and heal our toxic systems.

May you show us
That you are vaster and more complex than we can imagine
And that as we bathe in mystery
We are transformed.

May you teach us to be tender
Towards you and all your living beings,
Including our own bodies, minds and hearts.

May you remind us to enjoy you
In all your glory
To taste your dark chocolate,
To pause at the sweet scent of jasmine,
To gaze at your oceans,
To kiss the damp grass with our bare feet.

May you ground us in faith
As we step forwards Into an uncertain future
With a quiet, fierce determination.

May you forgive us,
And may we forgive ourselves.

Dear Earth,
With endless gratitude
We dedicate the merit of this prayer to you.

~ Satya Robyn

A Prayer In Spring

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers to-day;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
All simply in the springing of the year.

Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,
Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
And make us happy in the happy bees,
The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.

And make us happy in the darting bird
That suddenly above the bees is heard,
The meteor that thrusts in with needle bill,
And off a blossom in mid air stands still.

For this is love and nothing else is love,
The which it is reserved for God above
To sanctify to what far ends He will,
But which it only needs that we fulfil.

~ Robert Frost

i thank You God for most this amazing day:for leaping greenly
spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for
everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes —

~ e.e. cummings

The Archive of Our Relation

I admit, the mourning is constant
the names, the words, the whispers
colors and textures that were lost,
persecuted, poisoned, disinherited,
extracted, cut down, shaved, kidnapped,
unclaimed, and forgotten. An endless war

I too report, my silence has not saved me
yet running water calls spirits
hidden in me carefully
waiting for me to quiet the mind
so they may wake me right on time
to witness the great expanse
a dance so tender
it gently wakes the sun

In gratitude the sun rises
offers its power
so that we may see
all that has been done
all that is yet to come

In humility and courage
I rise, offer my power
so that I may see
all that has been done
and you who has yet to become

a necessary violence
forgiveness a necessary blooming
resistance a necessary rooting

Tumal sinú
may the sun always shine on you
a prayer weaved by
the most precious parts of me
a breath
the most potent offering
to our becoming

I report, the water, the earth, the seeds
and the grace of a dancing sky
remain a pure reflection
the wealth of our inheritance
the heart of our connection
the archive of our relation
if we so choose to co-conspire
to re-member

Agua es vida, Water is life
we are the water and
remembering has offered us
our lives, love letters bloomed beautiful
in anticipation of you
travel guides to the
ancient futures that are due
living memory of
gestation and labor
humble testimonies
conspired in your favor

You see, more than hope
we hold a deep knowing
all creation moves in circle
all that was once dead is reborn
the breaking of the seed

rebuilding a defining act of courage
letting go a radical act of love

I too agree with trees
I do not shy away from the darkness
Nor do I fear the wind
I remember the water
and take root in the memory of you
the living archive of relation
a sweet and sacred confirmation
that we are still alive.

~ Edyka Chilomé

Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

~ Gerard Manley Hopkins

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping
 slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket
 sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

~ Willian Butler Yeats

...If you put your heart against the earth with me, in serving
every creature, our Beloved will enter you from our sacred
 realm
and we will be, we will be
so happy.

~ Rumi

“Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

~ Robert F. Kennedy

“Preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.”

~ Carl Sagan

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