

**The Earth Speaks and We Listen, Finally**  
*A Personal Response to the Global Pandemic and a Plea to Humanity*

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The Earth has The Talking Stick now.  
Grabbed it back in an epic, feverish fury  
And she is not speaking softly, or gently,  
Or in a whisper.  
No ~  
She is screaming at the top of her lungs.  
And we have no choice but to listen,  
If we want to live,  
If we want to consciously choose life.

We had it all, or so we thought.  
Convenience, access  
To anything we wanted,  
From everywhere,  
Whenever we wanted it.  
Overnight, even.  
Until overnight,  
We almost lost it all.  
Convenience, access  
To all that we wanted,  
From anywhere.  
And now we must ask the question ~

Did we really have it all?

We did, once.  
[#Past](#) Tense.  
Once, there was  
The cleanest air,  
The purest water,  
The richest soil

Teeming with all the nutrients we need  
To live and to grow  
The cleanest,  
The purest,  
The richest  
Of bodies  
In which hearts and souls  
Could thrive.

Everyone had their space...  
The beautiful creatures with  
Fur and scales and spikes and tails,  
Stripes and dots and coats of spots,  
Horns and paws and beaks and claws...  
Each had their nook in which to live  
Their creature lives,  
Simply because  
They are.

At least, that's the way it once was,  
Until this species of skin and hair ~  
Magnificent skin in all shades,  
And glorious hair in all colors and textures ~  
Caved into fear  
Of the power  
And omnipotence  
And the mystery  
Of it all,  
And silenced a sense  
Of wonder  
And awe  
And humility,  
And replaced it with  
Fear  
And control  
And dominance  
Over all that was.

Where sustenance once nourished and nurtured  
Our unique and limitless  
Creative human potential,

Arrogance and greed have taken hold.  
Aside from the workings of the food chain,  
What other species do you know of  
That intentionally destroys  
That which sustains  
Its own life?

We move through places,  
At times venturing far  
From where we are planted.  
What do we do with this wanderlust  
Rooted deep in the psyche and soul of our species,  
If moving about the cabin of Spaceship Earth  
Is destroying that which sustains it,  
And us?  
What does it mean to be human, then?  
Are we meant to wander  
Far from where we are born,  
Or are we meant to grow  
Where we are planted?

We will argue this.  
It's what we do.  
But no matter how loud we get,  
We must talk amongst ourselves  
With words,  
Always,  
And not with weapons.  
Please not with weapons,  
Anymore.

When we can't hear each other  
Over the cacophony of desperate cries  
Of trying,  
Of vying,  
To have our say  
And be heard,  
We must learn how to listen  
To each other.

Our Earth-home

Has been talking, too,  
In her own language  
That we don't seem to speak  
Or understand.  
Over time  
Her sky changed from a deep, beautiful blue  
To a sullen, dismal gray.  
Her clear water has turned colors  
It is not supposed to be.  
Her soil has grown dry and lifeless  
From all the poison  
We fed it,  
Unable to grow all the living things that help us  
To live.

But we didn't hear.  
So, she spoke louder.  
In fact, she raged  
Out of desperation  
As she grew ill from it all.  
She shrieked in pain as fever flared and ravaged  
Her overheated body,  
Scorching it  
And leaving everything in its path  
Ablaze and stunned.  
She cried torrents of tears  
That rained down on us  
Like never before.  
And as she purged,  
She breathed heavily,  
Her wind wailing in our ears  
As waves of grief  
Crashed down on upon us  
While we clamored to take shelter  
From her stormy tantrum.

Who could blame her?  
She has been abused,  
Neglected,  
And violated.  
And it has caught up with her.

And so, we stopped  
But for a moment,  
Gathered ourselves and  
Our precious belongings,  
And then went on ~ shaken,  
But unchanged.  
And the Earth went on too,  
*Though changed.*  
And unheard.  
Still.

Until now,  
Because it has caught up with us, too,  
Because we haven't heard  
What she has spoken before.  
And she has finally won  
Our attention.  
The Earth will always have  
The last word.  
We have fractured the integrity of a  
Beautifully balanced,  
Delicately designed  
Mosaic of habitat.  
We have breached the boundaries  
Which protect and enable life  
Everywhere,  
And this has stopped us in our human tracks,  
Everywhere,  
Like nothing in our collective memory  
Has before.

Will we remember to keep listening  
To the voice of the Earth?

Will we learn to finally listen  
To the voices of each other?

And will we especially listen  
To our own voices  
Silently and loudly crying out

In fear,  
In awe,  
In wonder,  
In humility,  
In hope  
For a chance  
To live,  
As we were meant to live?

Will we finally live  
In harmony with the Earth that sustains us  
And all the creatures  
Who we share it with,  
Simply because  
We are?

Will we finally live  
In harmony with each other,  
Because we need each other  
And because we sustain each other?

Will we finally live  
In harmony with ourselves  
In all our imperfect humanness,  
Fearful and vulnerable,  
Yes,  
But resilient, strong, and courageous  
For sure,  
Creative and capable,  
Caring and kind,  
Inhabiting  
Pure  
Clean  
Bodies,  
Rich with  
Loving hearts and souls?