

A History of Invention

Once upon a time
people understood
that we are part of the world
not living on the earth
but living parts of the planet

Even today, you can find
people who still believe this
mostly those who inherited
indigenous wisdom down the ages
or deeply intelligent scientists

So what went wrong?

Runaway climate change
Habitual institutional racism
Spaces not suitable for everyone
Collapse of ecological systems

How on earth did we get in this predicament?

A long time ago...

When farming was just beginning
and we each made beautiful things
one of us looked at a field, just sown
or a bangle or cup in our hand
and made a category error, a mistake
"I own this. I am separate."

(fast forward...)

When Europeans arrived in the Americas
they destroyed people and nature,
an elder told me of skinned buffalo
covering the plains
his ancestors couldn't understand
why would you kill an animal
and leave most of it behind?

(sooner or later...)

We cleared the forests for cotton plantations
just like today in the Amazon
farmed by the indentured
and poverty stricken
a job is better than no job
you can see how we
got roped into the system

But, of course, paying nothing
is cheaper than paying a pittance
so let's steal people
re-invent slavery
just like the ancient Greeks
who we respect greatly

(maybe keep only their better ideas?)

And where did those profits go next?
right into the industrial revolution
some of us knew that
these fuels would not last
but others were having such a blast
that we set aside
the conditions we created
for nature, the marginalised and oppressed

So you won't be surprised if I tell you
that divide and rule
is embedded in all of our practices...
there were 18 deaths¹ in or following police custody
in England in 2020/21, and one in Wales
and that at least 227 environmental activists
were killed worldwide in 2020²

I hope you won't think I am crazy
when it is clearly too late to save most of this
if I suggest that we engage
love, courage and curiosity
to reconcile, restore and regenerate
to rediscover our connection
with all our friends and relations
and build a crumbling
belatedly beautiful
future
together
starting today.

¹ From the IOPC's [Deaths during or following police conduct: 2020/21](#). Please see page 2 for definitions.

² From the [Global Witness Last Line of Defence 2020 report](#), published September 2021.

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