

A Celebration of Nature

April 21, 2013 * The Redwoods, Mill Valley, CA

Invitation: Every day is literally Earth Day for earth-dwelling species. This gathering circle will reflect on our Home in Nature and honor the wonder of the secular world.

"My country is the world, and my religion is to do good." -Thomas Paine

Welcome

Reflection One. . .Poet William Blake exulted: "To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower, Hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour."

Silence

Reflection Two. . .The great Naturalist John Burroughs wrote:
"If we do not go to church so much as did our [parents], we go to the woods much more, and are much more inclined to make a temple of them than they were."

Silence

Song (Part 1): "Earth Country" (Lyrics: Chris Highland; Tune: Sounds of Silence)

Hello Nature our old friend, We've come to learn from you again. . .
Because the image of the Earth our Home, a micro-cosmos we can see
and know;
Is an image. . . to see and hear and feel, so very real;
One nation of all species.

And in the bright and clearing light, we see no need for fear or flight;
We wander out into the flowering field, we hear the birds and in the dirt we kneel;
Now our minds are lit. . . with a thought so briefly caught, a lesson taught;
We know we can't be separate.

Reflection Three. . .Astronomers tell us: the earth rotates at 1000 miles per hour, speeds through space at 67,000 miles per hour, and travels 584 million miles in annual orbit around the sun. The Milky Way galaxy travels at 1 million miles per hour and would take 100,000 years to cross. . .at the speed of light! There are billions of galaxies and the Universe is tens of billions of light-years across.

Silence

Reflection Four. . .Early American Feminist, Frances Wright, said:
"The true Bible is the book of nature, the wisest teacher is the one who most plainly expounds it, the best priest our own conscience, and the most orthodox church a hall of science."

Silence

Song (Part 2)

We saw people bow and pray, in a super-natural way;
We could smile and accept their choice, but we answered with a different voice;
We sang out. . . with the wolf and the hawk and whale, a wilder tale;
A song of earth, our country.

Many tell us we must choose, one land, religion, or we'll lose;
Yet our reason speaks another way, a wiser choice and a lighter day;
We look up. . . to the trees and the moon and sun, a roof that's one;
Countless stars we're made of.

Reflection Five. . . We, the gathered species here today, reflect on the secular earth. . .

Silence

Reflection Six. . . Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius mused:

“Pass then through this little space of time conformably to nature, and end your journey in content, just as an olive falls off when it is ripe, blessing nature who produced it, and thanking the tree on which it grew.”

Silence

Song (Part 3)

There is one community, between the mountains and the sea;
Lakes and rivers, forests, glacier snows; the air around us,
in our breath it flows;
A world of beauty. . . spinning on through the great expanse, atoms' dance;
Evolution, our common story.

Reflection Seven. . . Biologist Janine Benyus reflects:

"We come not to learn *about* nature. . . but to learn *from* nature, so that we might fit in, at last and for good, on the Earth from which we sprang."

Silence

Closing: To Wander & to Wonder. . .

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