

## Oi Polloi

# "The Earth Is Our Mother"

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How can you buy or sell the sky? The warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of the earth is scared to my people - every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in our memory and experience. The sap which courses through the trees carries our memories - we are part of the earth and it is part of us. We know that the white man does not understand our ways - one portion of the land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother but his enemy and when he has conquered it he moves on. He leaves his father's graves behind and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth birthright are forgotten. He treats his mother the earth and his father the sky as things to be bought, plundered or sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert. I do not know. Our ways are different from your ways. The sight of your cities pains my eyes. There is no quiet place in the white man's cities - no place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring or the rustle of an insects wings. The clatter only seems to insult the ears - and what is there to life in one cannot hear the lonely cry of the Lapwing or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? What is man without other animals? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man - all things are connected. Teach your children what we have taught our children: That the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life - he is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself.

The secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of many men.  
Where is the thicket? Gone.  
Where is the eagle? Gone.

The end of living - and the beginning of survival...

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