

## the end of a year, the beginning of...?

\It is a privilege to have lived through some very different times—in war and peace—and lived in several different lands. Adapting to and knowing many kinds of people was a challenge and a great education. I know some very different realities, spoke different languages, known people with very different kinds of education and ideas. All that gives me a peculiar view on life with a focus on us, humans.

At the end of my life I admit that I am disappointed, to put it very, *very* mildly, that we, in this country, haven't done much to reduce emissions and changed to greener energy. In fact this country is becoming the opposite of an example; we are the block. Four and a half percent of all humankind still spewing one fourth of all emissions—and last year we polluted more than ever. What changed is the system, now in the pocket of Big Money; most politicians bought..

I closely follow what is happening on and to the planet. I try to sense the mood of the people in those parts of the world where I understand the language and have an idea of their culture. Amazingly different from what I see, hear, read about this country. The economy may be global but the other 95.5% of humans think very differently than most Americans. This country is hard to know. I have not lived in many States and cities of this huge country but what polls tell me is that what we believe or prefer seems so varied that I think we must be today's Tower of Babel.

After wide wanderings I now live alone in a wilderness of my encouraging, close to trees, plants, animals; all wild. Talking with cats lying on my outside chairs. greeting the white Christmas flowers fluffy snow white just above eye level. Yes, our poinsettia is a tree covered with little white flowers, not the red of your Christmas flower( the red in the picture is ixora).



I have come to feel that my true self does not fit the American ideal. I am a thinker, intelligent but not intellectual. I have never liked money, when I have it I give it away. I don't like cities, cannot manage enormous stores with miles of aisles stuffed with stuff. I read, and reread, many books

(paperback). Avoiding clever writing about politics or corruption, as I avoid a million songs, movies, and books about “love.” Oh, I believe in love, but to me it means something else than *falling in* love. Love is not something you fall INTO, but something that goes OUT. I am immensely lucky to have known unconditional love in my childhood. Not at all the same as romantic love. Unconditional love is not a modern concept, and yet it would probably be our salvation. We need to be saved? Yes, saved of who we have become. How did we get so cruel, so murderous, hateful, hunting people of our own species, our own nation, fearing them to be potentially dangerous. I’ve heard people say we have lost our morality. I think we lost our sense of reality as a part of the All. We had to be trained to kill, brainwashed to become heartless, maybe even enjoy torture and murder. Humans made inhuman.

In my efforts to try and understand what we have become, there is always the memory of the humans as we once were who I got to know. The difference between us and them, who are as we all were, is so clear. From content little people richly alive in the now, no expectations — to a mass of frantic, stressed, people rushing where they are led without knowing, or wanting to know, where inevitably it will all end.

How and why did we change our thinking about what is real? How is it possible that we can ignore the consequences of what we have been and are doing to the biosphere, the planet? We changed. Why?

I care for the planetary ecology where all life happens and I care for humans. The two cares obviously closely related. I see what humans have become in what we are doing to the planet. Willful destruction of our only home. We imagine the Industrial Revolution to be progress. Looking back it could well be considered a thoughtless manufacturing \ of ever more machine power to make things and dig up energy sources, all the while destroying the biosphere, the planetary ecology.

We may have big brains but not the sense to consider consequences. We are meddling in global systems way beyond our understanding. While the consequences have been obvious for at least thirty years half or more of all Americans still “do not believe” that we have anything to do with climate change. This year it has become sort of, maybe, occasionally, allowable to acknowledge that perhaps the weather is changing but a majority insists we have nothing to do with it. *Just a normal swing, it will swing back again, you’ll see.* We who used to be proud of science now deny it. We have slid way down...

In our not too far past we made a big step when thinking ourselves apart from all other life; thinking ourselves so special that we can run, even own, this planet.

It may take a bigger step from thinking we own the planet to accepting that we are no better, not even worse than a million fellow species, and know again that the planet is what we must rely on for **survival**. Control nature? We should control ourselves first. And somehow our dangerously enlarged egos deny that we can do anything wrong.

It is not hard to imagine that the deniers will wake up only when reality kills them — as it is already thousands of people each year..

In non-western parts of the world people have always been intimately aware of an environment they relied on for sheer survival. How can we deny that Mother Earth is our mother, almost literally: we are all the same atoms as all life on earth.

I have learned in my own life that accepting What Is makes for a much easier adjustment to the inevitable. Ignoring today’s reality will make adapting to tomorrow’s further changed world more difficult.

These are some of my thoughts toward the end of a year that will go down in history as the year when all over the world the groundswell broke out. The media, and Big Money that owns them, sees only politics, scandals, wars and other disasters. They largely ignore the groundswell that is about real issues, about who we are, forced to live by inhuman, unnatural rules. It’s an

awakening to what a horrendous mess we have made with our mindless greed for money that is power. Despite all the noise politics is *not* the most important issue, *survival* is.

I feel sufficiently an outsider to make generalizations. Maybe the time is near when we, collectively, will wake up to the critical crisis we are in. The shock will literally kill people, and there may well be a great mayhem that kills others. But some, many, will wake up, shake their head, and get to work undoing what we did wrong. We will stop moving mountains to get more coal, dig for oil, cracking for unnatural gas. We will stop driving two ton monster cars with one person going three blocks. Equally important, at that moment we will look at our supposed enemies: ordinary people, our own species. Reaching out our hands, putting away our guns. After all, the “others” are our siblings, sisters and brothers.

In my book *Rain of Ashes* we wake up a bit late. Not too late, but close. It would be better to wake up now.

We don't need wars — no war has ever made a peace. We don't need all the driving and flying around we do. We don't need most of the plastic we throw away. We can do with an awful lot less of everything. TV must tell thee

œ truth, and that goes for advertising as well as politics. We can do without our paranoia and suspicion of anybody who looks or sounds different.

Peace cannot come from a few men who make decisions for all mankind; peace comes from cleaning up the mess we've made and start clean.

You say: *but we are busy trying to survive an economic disaster, don't add another problem!* What if the meltdown of the economy is just the first chapter of the meltdown of the ecology. Neither can wait, but the 1% (actually 0.01%) sees to it that neither will be even talked about, let alone tackled.

Maybe the 99% will be the tsunami wave that brings a whole new system to replace the one that got us in the economy, ecology messes.

Next year?

robert wolff, 14 december 2011

PS, worth reading

<<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/shock-as-retreat-of-arctic-sea-ice-releases-deadly-greenhouse-gas-6276134.html>>