This, the year 2012 when the Mayan calendar ends on the day before the December solstice. As I understand that, the end of an epoch, a very long time, maybe the time for our solar system to get once around its galaxy. The people of India had that kind of long view, I believe. Their epoch was 250,000 years—or was it 275,000 years? They too know we are in the last stage of that very long cycle.

The end of something, and presumably the beginning of another something.

I imagine that a majority of all humans by now must sense the end of something. Our planet has become a dangerous place, and almost all of us know all too well that we are the ones who have radically changed this planet. We, humankind, have amassed enormous powers that we have willfully applied to destroy at least half of all rainforests, have poisoned the air, the ground, and the water of this planet with our ferocious chemicals. It is we who have destroyed animal and plant habitats on every continent and so have caused the extinction of thousands, perhaps millions, of species of Life—a great danger for the planetary ecology: reducing biodiversity threatens the planetary ecology with collapse.

It is easy to see the end.

Much more difficult to see a new beginning.

If this year’s end of an epoch were happening in a relatively normal period, the beginning would be something to look forward to, like Spring. An end to the cold and dormant state of winter, the vital juices of Life pushing up new everything.

But this is not a normal period; it is a period of extreme extremes. Humankind—and no science has ever questioned that we are one species—is more divided in every possible dimension than ever. However we can think of differences we have widened them. Life expectancy, health, size, skin color, morality, religion, nationality, ethnicity, wealth, power, etc. etc.

There are more humans than this planet can support, and at the same time a small minority of humans use five times what the
planet provides, so that a majority of humans lives on the down side of the cliff. And it is the minority—actually a very small minority of that minority—that is continuing to poison the air, water and soil of this planet.

We have come to call our rulers the one percent, but 1% of 7,000,000,000 is 70 million: I doubt there are that many corporate owners in the world. The minority of the minority who are destroying the planet is much smaller. How many people does it take to drive one bulldozer, maintain that bulldozer, bring the fuel for that bulldozer that can destroy 10, 100 acres of virgin forest in a day. How many people does it take to overthrow a government, to negotiate a deal for “exploration and exploitation?” It takes one man and a few soldiers to aim and launch a nuclear missile halfway around the world, killing a million people, making a million square kilometers uninhabitable for the next 50,000 years.
We have allowed Exxon Mobile and Monsanto, and a few other corporations, to be wielders of magnitudes more power than they, or we, can responsibly handle.

Many of us know this but it is too late to change, and so, an unthinkable thought. So we tell ourselves “there is going to be a worldwide change of consciousness.” Presumably a change that makes it unthinkable to use the immense power we have appropriated.

Is that possible?.

Is it likely? No.

The only future I can see beyond the end of an epoch is a collapse of the eco-system, warming of the planet (which will continue for decades even when we stop poisoning the atmosphere). And/or nuclear winter. Certainly a hotter and very changed planet. The greatest change perhaps is a sharply declining biodiversity which cannot but destroy a planetary ecology. Perhaps pockets of a few humans surviving here and there in a mass extinction of species.

And after that mass extinction, as happened after the five previous mass extinctions, rapidly increasing evolution of new species. Including perhaps a new kind of human. Not tomorrow, not next year, not a hundred years from now. Many generations into an unknowable future.

I know you don’t like that story; I have no other.

Maybe I have no business writing this down.

Miracles do happen.

My life has been full of miracles. true miracles. But compared to saving a planet they were minor, personal miracles. I cannot conceive of an entire species changing its mind in one fell swoop. It is unimaginable for predators to suddenly become omnivores: a change of biology, not mind.

I am now 90 years old; I was born early in the previous century. 02,02,’22 in a town called Paramaribo, capital of a country called Suriname. A modestly small country, with a small population: less than half a million people. But that population may well be a snapshot of the world population. I'm certain it has every skin color, every mixture. every religion, every stage of “advancement.”
I did not grow up there, but halfway around the globe, about the same two or three degrees above the equator: then a small town on the large island of Sumatra, now Indonesia.

Both my parents were Dutch, my mother Mennonite but nonbeliever, my father Jew and non-believer. Both had high IQ's (whatever that means), both certainly “good people.” It was not until many years into my adulthood that I realized my mother had been terrified that I would grow up too “native.” My growing up years were in a peculiar kind of colony. I never saw a soldier there. Schools were taught in the local language the first few years, and
then in Dutch, but learning three other langages as well, beginning in primary school: Dutch and English from second grade, French and German in following years. There were few whites, almost all of us native. Mother should not have worried, it was always too late. I could not avoid growing up “native.” From as far back as I can remember I thought of myself as brown, resented my white skin.

Much later I learned from a woman sitting next to me on a plane, that one can have a soul of another color than the skin. She looked Chinese, boarded the plane in Singapore, I assumed she was Chinese — but she spoke upper middle class British English. She told me she had grown up in England (at that time we did not call it UK), she had a Chinese (yellow) skin but a white soul. Then I knew I had an ancient native (brown) soul in a white skin.

Bodies are a strange thing. Sometimes I feel my body as a strange something housing my self. Not true of course. I know all too well that body-mind is one. But, as I have written in other writings, I imagine that “mind” is not in my head, but somewhere around the planet, and that what I think of as “my” mind is just an address in that planetary mind, a phone number. Some Europeans have thought that thought as well; I came to this idea on my own, then discovered it is not original.

What is mine is only an ego, that damned “I.”

That “I” belongs to all that is native, to humankind in its original version. That is who I am. The first time I met a few aborigines (the people I write about) I knew that was where I belonged. And, magically, they knew that as well. From the first we recognized each other as siblings. I’ve found other siblings in South Korea, in a few far off places in the United States, once in Scotland, another once in New Caledonia—Caledonia is another name for Scotland, although the people there are black, and in Scotland very white. I have found siblings in Indonesia, on Bali, Java, among Bataks in Sumatra; among Malays everywhere. Once found two siblings in Thailand. I found them on many a tiny island in the Pacific. Here in Hawai‘i, of course. This is now my home. My first was in the jungle, a jungle long ago uprooted to grow more profitable crops, destroying the soil with a devil’s mix of chemicals.

Perhaps a lonely existence to be so old among distant descendants. At times I don’t know why I am here now, at the end time. If I believed in a God who manages every last sparrow I would believe it is He who wants me here, now; not giving me instructions. If I believed in being an old soul; for an old soul I should have had more
knowledge of why now.

At my age of course I think and have thought about death. I've been with many dying people and know what it feels like. I'm not certain that "I" has any form or awareness after the death of this body. If there is not, there will be no I to know that. And if there is, whatever that awareness is will know what can only be an enormously richer reality.
Looking back I clearly see my path that circled the globe this way and that, got lost and then found again, attached and detached from forms and systems, languages and cultures, religions and beliefs. Now I see there were signs along the path that I ignored at first. I was taught to be a cog in the inhuman machine we have made of ourselves. I learned from the horrors I got myself in.

When I finally let the path guide me my life changed radically. Perhaps no pre-conceived plan, no Google-Earth map, but from here it looks to have touched all the important points it was meant to touch. I learned and learned again until I was convinced that I know who I am. An elder of tribes long extinct, a teller of tales; a healer and a seer; a hound sniffing the trail of reality buried under all the artificial garbage of a world so detached from what is real that it makes us dizzy and probably insane. We scream and yell our imaginations at each other, confusing, misleading, blinding.

Real is my third rail, the power that drives me, the knowledge of being one with. One with all beings, all Life. The oneness of the chaos that is nature, the ultimate reality of this time.

My voice is but one of many voices echoing back to the beginning. Perhaps it is among the last voices you will hear from the Big Titanic. A whisper blown away on the storm.

robert wolff, the end of may 2012