

AMAZONIA

by

Mario Petrucci

The United Nations declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity.
It is a celebration of life on earth and of the value of the Biosphere for our lives.

Headwaters / Glaciers / The World Web

[Gaia]

My centre is everywhere
Everything – huge and hung together

Reality. We sense it in us
as a single course – each of us the head
of our one river. But a river
sources all water.

*We saw her. Walking
barefoot on the brink. Green leaves
for plumage, her wombs of water. Those
many legs. So close, we glimpsed the webs
between her woody fingers. Higher –
till our boots rang on ice. Close
enough to smell her. Each aroma:
loam and root. And that stink
enticing – of glacier
meeting fire.*

[Gaia]

beneath fragmentation
– the whole the centre
everywhere from pole

to pole my molecular
hard-won everything :
huge and held and

hung together

Cloudforest

Tug at any one thing.
The rest will move.

[Gaia]

*It all happens here –
between cloud and air
between water and vapour
between a plant and its root
between sunbeam and green
Here – between my forest
and the steam it makes
of rain the world
is that web strung
Between*

They trust to the wind. These mild
men of vapour. Women of the future.
Each raindrop a child of dust.

[Gaia]

*There is a world in trees
furled within the rings
There lives the dearest freshness
deep down things*

Tug
at any one thing
in nature and the rest
will move

Waterstreams

[Gaia] I will show you fear in a handful of dust

Fish. A living force for water. Chief source of nourishment for billions. Estuary, reef, open sea. River, stream and lake. Approximately 3000 species of fish teem in the Amazon Basin – five times the number in the entirety of Europe.

[Gaia] I will show you fear in a handful of dust
Tug at any ocean any nation The merest touch

Rainforest

[Gaia] My centre everywhere

Homo sapiens. A single species, sitting squarely on the benefits of Biodiversity. The short-sighted: hungry for energy, hungry for trees. By 2100, the Amazon could shrink to one-third its original size. A key portion of the planet's powerhouse – burning. *Sapiens sapiens.* That green lens of forest, shrunk and failing.

*Gaia – meet Modern Culture. This climber
sawing to the trunk the high branch
on which it sits.*

*And Metropolis. The tourist who
sets fire to the Mona Lisa
to fry a few chips.*

The world may carry between 10 and 30 million species. Plants, animals, bacteria. So far, a mere 1.5 to 2 million have been named and recorded. The Amazon alone may be shared by 4 to 5 million kinds of organism. In Manú, you can find 200 varieties of tree in a single hectare.

*

Globally, something like a dozen hectares of forest are lost every minute – over six million annually. Twice the size of Belgium. Each year, between 18 and 50 thousand species may sink into history. Each hour, approximately four extinctions – between 100 and 1000 times the natural rate. The fate of as many as a million species may hinge on habitat loss and climate change.

[Gaia] Humanity Hatched from its pond one minute before dark Flying into deep history – the history of rocks the history that runs with roots Mayfly dancing in the dusk of a May Day

The forest is a green canary. The Amazon: a canary in our coal mine. Or is that the problem: seeing the entire world as mine? What about: trees – the green-moneyed banks of the young? Doesn't that tie up mahogany and pine with money? Try: each forest is a lung. Lungs on the inside. Lungs on the outside. Why not be honest? Forest is forest.

[Gaia] Tug at any one moment any human And the rest will move

Insects

[Gaia]

Power

*that lever
that fat wedge
dislodging earth*

*but insects
are glue – those
dodging molecules*

*that bind
my bulk against
friction burning failure*

*in valley
& pasture
the new unit*

*the fresh currency
on view isn't
nouveaux*

*riches sat
in kindly niches
[tin rubber glass]*

*but my swaying
dance in twin
antennae –*

*those true partners
unswayed by
science*

*picking up
your stoked-up
order your crackly*

blackly-rhythmed smoke

Beetles. Here, thousands can come off one tree. Easily, between one moon and the next – a bushel of beetles.

*

One tree. A hulking ship with its crew of ants. An ark for the earnest ant. Underneath: that ghost-ship of root. Sixty ant species, setting sail. A slew of green sails, heading west. The rain, champagne on its hull. A single tree launching through forest as many ant species as in the entire British Isles.

[Gaia]

*Last night worm and ant
disappeared Trees stiffened
Soils perspired Grain by grain
who would aerate and turn?
From root to rain canopy
to shoot the unhuman
mourned
Last night humanity
died Tree and Soil
sighed Moved
on*

Canopies / Flight

*We are walking
Carbon The human the gibbon
Carbon The oxeye and termite
Carbon Each bird and butterfly
Carbon in flight*

[Gaia]

*There is a kind of cuckoo
in my nest A species
of dust that flies
blind Intent
on true west
it flaps towards
night – magnificent
absurd Dust in flight
from itself: Icarus Bird*

The Manú Biosphere Reserve may carry as many avian species as the whole of North America. Tropical forests: seven per cent of the land surface serving an immense biological variety. Worldwide, roughly two-thirds of Biodiversity – crammed into that equatorial band.

[Gaia] I am one vast bird in flight around the sun You are ticks in my plumage – you are flight feathers Indigenous races embrace me with emotion and experience You are high and strict on science But I am not bent on reward or punishment There are only consequences If you pluck all my feathers we cannot fly together

Boats

[Gaia]

*You come to me with questions
Your pupils dilate with questions
Amber eyes swarm my nights Eyes
of alligator blink my water Blue eyes
over-warm with sun Look deep –
see the bank of my almighty
river Wait by my many
-eyed water How it
winks there is
an answer*

[Gaia] Each of you a paper boat upon my water Some carry candles – some not You cast words in hope but I am water I am indifferent – I nurture I buoy you – I drown View yourself with the selfsame curiosity a writer brings to words or a child to a tree Bring me that openness a tree has to water or water to a tree You are clown and sailor on gentlest river on most difficult seas

A Future?

[Gaia] I will show you the future in handfuls of dust

Industrial Society. Scientific Ingenuity. Better Management. Greater Efficiency.

Save the Whale. Pray to God. The hand of Luck.

Research specific strands of Being Stuck. Be faithful to one Assumption –
Progress means mounting ever-mounting Production.

*

This century – a moment In a moment
the forests half gone

2050 will need not one
but three planets to feed our consumption

[Gaia]

*Quick quick – quick-quick quick
Your tango comes to an end
Slow slow – slow-slow slow
Grow supple elastic
Bend*

We boom what is wrong
but are seized by our systems
Stumped in our forests of systems

Environment: the meta-organism –
not a robotic system So long
as forest is removed for

Economics Ecology
slumps Humanity must become
Ecology Or be shrunk with the system

[Gaia]

*And one man made a speech About the slaughtering of green
And while he was speaking a woman dug a pit in me placed within it
a green branch Laid it gently as though it were her daughter
And gave it water*

Each human Limited in space in time So we see ourselves And so we make our prison
Each with ambitions desires Affection for just a few persons a particular car Those prison
bars What if our edges could dissolve? Each of us infinite Endless

[Gaia]

Your future is jungled
with choice The nature of that
jungle is up to you Failing to choose
can bungle futures too And the future looks
back Humanity has always looked over
its shoulder Slacker or boss – each
has everything

to lose
You can toss your grand
children to chance or
my blossoming
Choose

Nation to nation human to Human dust
to Dust What are we trying to prove?

Touch the nation any Human Tug
At any moment Our future will move