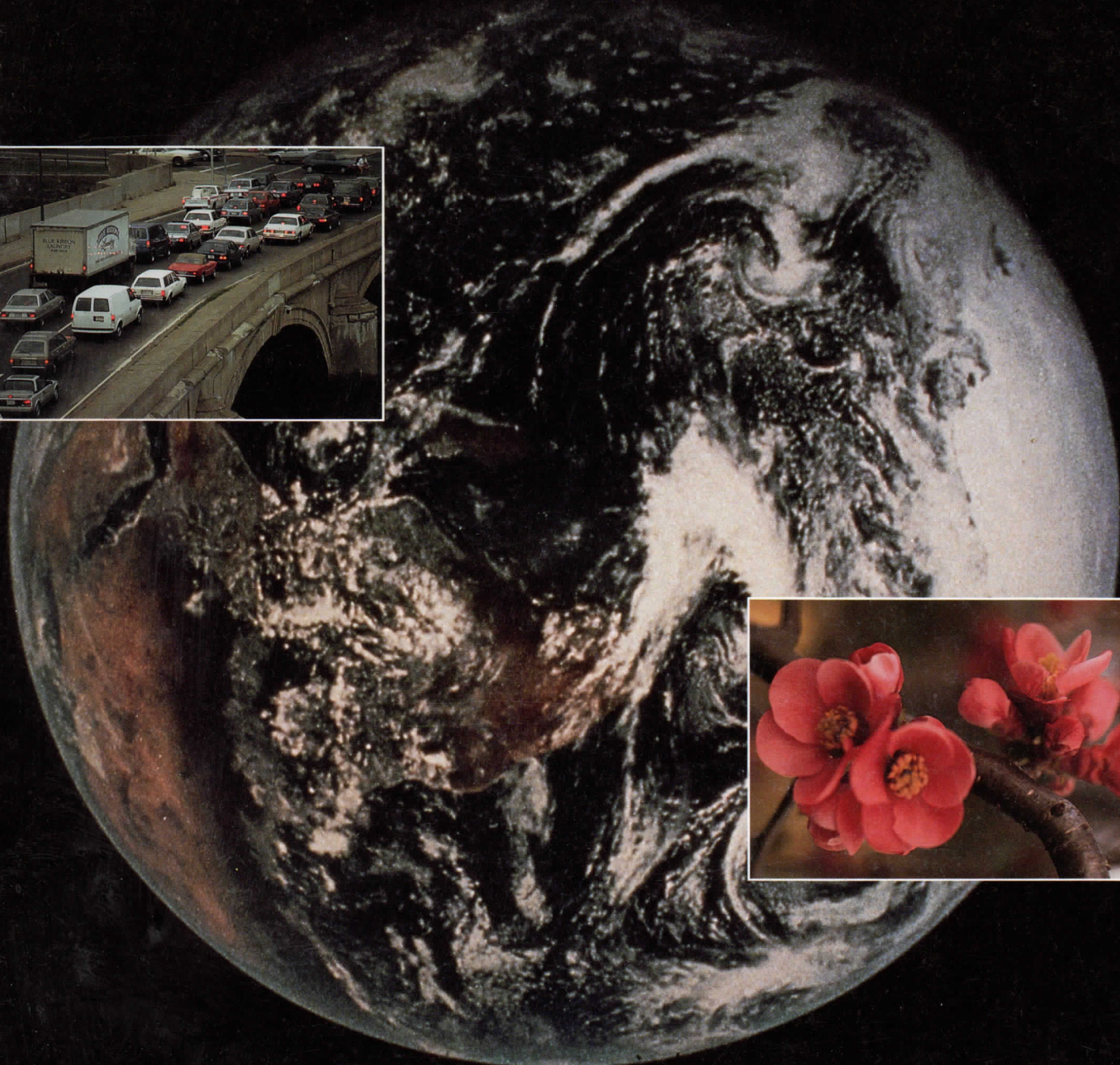


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Windstar journal



FIVE DOLLARS

SPRING 1990

A PROMISE TO EARTH

welcome to the windstar journal

Earth Day 1990 marked the twentieth anniversary of the first Earth Day. We have entered what is being called the "decade of the environment." The world is listening—paying attention to the earth's vital signs.

The first Earth Day was important and compelling. It was a time to raise people's consciousness. People became aware that there was a problem—and the problem was the quality of the environment. In 1990, we are already aware. We are moving from awareness to responsible action.

This issue of the Windstar Journal is dedicated to responsible action. Our theme is "a promise to earth." We believe that the impetus to responsible action within individuals is personal and ecological in itself. Responsible action does come from awareness—but awareness combined with knowledge, attitudes of caring and belief that it is possible to make a difference, and experiences that foster self confidence and develop skills. Out of this combination of interrelated parts comes a form of commitment—commitment to try, and to keep trying, even in the face of challenging odds.

You will find a variety of approaches to commitment in this issue of the Journal, including the fact that the Journal itself is printed on recycled paper. In every case, the goal is responsible action for a healthy world. That is our promise to earth.

The Windstar Foundation itself has taken the past few months to re-examine its own commitment to the health of the planet. We have visited our past and our present. We have asked for and received guidance from some of the clearest thinkers, dreamers, and doers on the planet. All of this has been part of a process to create a "blueprint" for Windstar's future. Many of you have assisted us by actively participating in the process. We thank you for your contributions, co-thinking, support, and encouragement.

You will find a preliminary report of the results of that process included in this issue. One early

result of the blueprint process is our announcement of an exciting partnership between the National Wildlife Federation and the Windstar Foundation—a partnership for the decade of the environment and beyond that is designed to combine vision with effectiveness in service for a sustainable future.

You will see changes in the Windstar Foundation in the next few months—and much will remain the same. One change will be reflected in the Windstar Foundation Board of Directors. Having helped to guide Windstar through this blueprint process, this is the last issue of the Windstar Journal in which Steve Conger, Dan McCormick, Marty Leaf, Bob Samples, and Hal Thau will be listed as members of the Board of Directors. On behalf of all those who believe in Windstar's vision, we thank these inspired and dedicated leaders for their commitments and many accomplishments on Windstar's behalf.

This is also the last issue of the Windstar Journal that we personally will edit and design. During the two years that we have had the privilege of taking responsibility for the Journal, we have been graced and nourished by the generosity of many. It is impossible to thank and honor all who have assisted us. We would, however, like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the generous support, personal encouragements, integrity, and vision contributed by Beth and Charles Miller and the Sol y Sombra Foundation. We extend to them our heartfelt thanks.

Throughout the continuing process of developing our blueprint for Windstar's future, we will welcome hearing from each of you and working with you. Thank you for what you are already doing—and what you will do—for a healthy world and a sustainable future.

Cheryl Charles and Bob Samples, Editors.

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Songs of forever

Bob Samples

Walt Whitman reached into the soul of America. He lifted its spirit from within the seas, mountains, forests, and prairies and lofted it to the very face of God. When it was returned to Earth we, as a people, were woven into the fabric of his dream. Whitman wrote, "I hear America singing." Were Whitman alive today, I am sure that he would expand his vision to embrace the entire span of the planet, rather than stopping at the boundaries of a single nation.

It is the poet who breathes life into the planetary dream. It is the poet who charts the course of the dream while others haggle over details. The dream is the voice of the Earth. Those who hear its voice will guide the Earth's destiny. We must sing its songs in the fabric of each living day. Having a dream is not enough—the dream must be sung.

Like it or not, mediocrity and the pedestrian characterize life's chores. Carrying out the garbage, biting off split ends, and sorting out facts in checkbooks fall into those gray wastelands of boredom that spread like crabgrass in our consciousness. Even Thomas Jefferson must have experienced tedium in his life. Imagine him tending the daily maintenance of Monticello—caring for the gardens and cleaning out the stables. Picture Einstein morbidly shuffling useless equations as he worked for endless hours to prepare his theory of relativity. In recent times, Astronaut Edgar Mitchell has told us of being so busily engaged in reflexive servitude to technical routines that he almost missed the holiness of the vision of Earth hanging in space.

It is not these gray experiences in the lives of Jefferson, Einstein, or Mitchell that draw us into their being. It is those moments in which maintenance was transformed into transcendence by the singing poet in their souls. When Jefferson wrote, "We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable; that all men are created equal and independent . . ." he loosed the poet's song. When Einstein said, "The most beautiful and profound emotion we can experience is the presence of the mystical . . . it is the dower of all true science," we were given freedom to slip the bonds of measurement. Ed Mitchell stepped boldly past routine and asked us all to know the triumph and terror of seeing the Earth whole.

The poet urges us to feel the eternal insecurity of that moment when all that has been tentative in our lives coalesces into the illusion of certainty. We sense, we feel, and we snatch the promise of security from the vast workings of time and space. We let the being we are form fully for that moment. A mote, a shard, a fragment of meaning, and then it is gone. Gone, unless there is the memory of the poet. The poet within us provides our kinship with destiny and the mindscapes of the future.

Suppose I suggest that it was Homer and not Odysseus (Ulysses) who gave us the lasting gifts of grace, decency, and morality that were chronicled in the *Iliad* and *the Odyssey*. Clearly Odysseus was the hero—he pointed the way, slew the adversaries, and drove himself bravely and headlong into danger after danger. Did he do this in the name of the future? Not at all. These were adventures in history—the personal history of Odysseus. Adventure after adventure was encountered—not as a personal journey into the future, but as an affirmation of the past. It was Homer the poet who saw the future and wove the hero's new experiences into the fabric of history to come. Odysseus the adventurer could not have stood aside from the passion and sensed possibility nor could he have heard the singing. The poet is the keeper of the songs. The poet sees the possibilities beyond the fury of passion—and looks full into the eyes of spirit.

Spirit is the mindscape that lies beyond the passion of the moment. Spirit, the vision of the poet, is larger than the vision of the warrior—and so it was beyond Odysseus. His violence, battles, adultery, and murders established his status as hero. As hard as Homer tried, he could not turn Odysseus into what he was not.

What is missing in the thousand faces of the hero—from Odysseus to John Wayne and Batman—is a sense of the future. The hero operates in the present—a present defined by and in service to the past.

In contrast, the poet sees the future—and casts us headlong into it.

The hero lives from passion. The poet sings of spirit. Passion is a short-term phenomenon—while spirit is forever. We need both in our lives—but passion alone is no longer enough.

Passion and a hero's courage help us to face the challenges of the present. We are going through a time of confusing transition. The hero's methods are needed to address some of the problems of our times. Yet, many of the problems that we need most urgently to solve were created by heroes in the first place.

The hero's passion is the stuff of myth. It embraces a way of thinking and acting that is devoted to the immediate. The hero is now. The poet's devotion to spirit carries us toward a future vision that allows us to look back upon the present. That vision shows us that there is a forever.

A new world is emerging in which we are more attendant to the consequences of forever. We are giving up the graverobber mentality which has had us dig into history for the solutions to today's problems. We are beginning to realize that if all of our solutions could be found in the history of our past, we would not be plagued by so many problems today. While yes, we can learn much from history—there is so much new today that we must invent solutions to new problems. We need the poet to help guide our way, while the hero stands the present bravely.

Passion is being honored for its own worth. It, like history, lends richness to life—but it offers little promise for the future of life. In today's world, the frenzy of passion is being enriched by the poet's voice of grace and beauty.

As we move less reflexively toward passion, we are beginning to enjoy a new awareness. This awareness has us looking beyond the moment and into the realms of possibility. For example, when the Exxon Valdez spilled its horror into Prince William Sound, there were heroes who stepped up to save the problems of the present. They took action, seeking responsibility and restitution. The poets began to form the consciousness of how never to let this happen again. Heroes will deal with dollars and documents for decades to come—while the poets will follow their hearts into the future and create a world where such spills are prevented forever.

The poet does possess powerful skills, and a form of courage as well. Poets can find elusive truths in both the commonplace and the obscure. Even so, such skills and courage are available to each of us. Whereas we may each have felt that the poet's vision was a heavensent gift, we are now tasting the possibility that each of us can adventure into the realms of spirit and forever.

Buckminster Fuller was a poet. He embraced possibility in ways that bewildered most of his peers—and yet children from the ages of eight to fourteen demonstrated again and again in conversations and seminars with Bucky that they understood him perfectly. In somewhat the same way, the poor and dying understand Mother Theresa.

The prison that encapsulates our soul and our possibilities may well be the 70 year lifespan that most of us are destined to experience. We see our mortality hanging before us and find our reflex to live for the moment to be as seductive as were the day-to-day passions of Odysseus. Perhaps this nurtures for some the tendency to settle for the short term vision of passion.

Passion *can* drive us toward mediocrity. We can lock ourselves into a myopic perspective that forces us to reflexively engage the solutions of the past and miss the possibilities that stretch toward the horizon before us. Some heroes cut down thousand year old rainforests for three years of borderline agriculture. Heroes who cut the forests are close kin to those who slew bison. Genocide and war are methodologies for one set of heroes to resolve problems with another set of heroes. They see life as an unending sequence of adversarial encounters and they can get locked within the problems and history that spawned them. We have heroes and what we *also* need are the poets who listen attentively to the planet's songs, hearing solutions and singing of the possibilities that live beyond the problems.

How can we awaken to the songs of the Earth and the poets who sing them when we see ourselves victims who need heroes? Awakening we are. It is strangely as though the Earth has begun to sing in ways that we each have the possibilities to understand. There dawns an era of information, concern, shared commitment and interpenetrating possibilities. We seem as a species to be ready to call out a new ethic to ourselves and the planet. Passion persists, but a passion that gestates to include an honoring of spirit. The courage of the short term is embracing the destiny of the future. The moment is now, and is preparing for forever.

As surely as heroes are the keepers of the passion, poets are the keepers of the spirit. They see love, life, and death with clear eyes. They caress the hidden sides of possibility, urging us to both cherish and transcend our passions. Poets create a harmony between the limits and lessons of history and the songs sung by Earth. Poets show us that there are no small things and they invite us to be citizens of forever.

The Windstar Foundation is fortunate to have been born of the vision of two poets who created in the high mountains of Colorado a home for others in kind. The songs of these founding poets have come to nourish the souls of others—in languages of gardening, ecology, engineering, science, arts, living, solitude, spirituality, and the simple yet eternal process we call personhood. Windstar is the vision of poets—and its soul will never rest until the entire Earth is sanctuary to forever.