

Waiting

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Sometimes, humans turn to the stars for comfort.
They claim their blood was once gold-dust,
and can't help but call themselves brilliant, beautiful,
for being related to something that shines that brightly.

They don't seem to see that I've been a raindrop and a river.
That in my many years, I've carved canyons out of mountains,
while carrying the weight of their world on my white capped shoulders.

They don't seem to see that I was young once-
young and beautiful. That billions of years ago, before I was theirs,
I was rain draining into the Earth's carved cavities.
That I patched and soothed, making a hollow something whole again,
and breathing life into something broken.

And, while they were busy looking for links in the constellations,
they lost track of the fact that I'm not young anymore.
That years of collecting the debris that seemed
to come hand in hand with their existence,
filled my deepest trenches and made my silken, sandy beaches,
into something unrecognizable.

While I was busy storing their secrets-
folding silence into my Salish waves,
they stole my Steller sea lions, my killer whales, my salmon.
Replacing them with plastic bags and balloons-

choking my children and leaving me with the pieces.

They don't seem to see that as they take from me,
they're taking from themselves too. That someday,
their children might not know how salt spray feels against skin,
or the bite of sand against bare feet,
or the way my waves dance in sky-blue sunlight.

Maybe someday, once I've overheated and acidified,
once I no longer have room for the remnants of their disposable lives-
they'll realize. They'll hear me pleading and lift their voices to reply.

Maybe someday, humans will stop searching for solutions in the stars
and turn their attention back to their own backyards-
and then they'll want to recognize me.

I wonder if I'll still be waiting.