

EARTH CRIES by BEN OKRI

Words for the day.
Denial. Justice. Right
to protest. And earth cries.
O when will we wake up?
Gulf Stream dying.
Day's end approaching.
Climate migrants. Oil spills.
Global boiling. Carbon
Emissions. Net zero.
Fossil fuel nightmare.
Wandering rage of the world,
Trying to find a home.

Who will give this crisis
Hanging over us a voice
That can open the hearts
And minds of people?
Disasters coming. No amount
Of hiding can hide it.
The young crave truth.
Only truth will save us.

Have to wake up before the light comes.
Shadows are rushing towards us.
Earth is shaking. Insects are perishing.
Flowers are mourning. When will truth
Come? When will we have the courage
To give this hour in history its true name?
How many of us must perish before
The governments make this climate crisis
A priority? We are the not so slow
Suicide of the world. We are the not so
Fast saviours of the world. O what would I give
To have one person wake up to the truth
Of our world for every micro-second that they
Poison the air, the sea and the forests.

If we rise up as one in peace and truth
And beauty will they listen? Must
We scream to be heard? Must the earth
Bleed to be nurtured? Has the world
Not bled enough? How do we get
The ears of the world to listen
Without fear? And to listen with
Courage? We need a new language
That howls and caresses at the same time,
A new language that frightens and

Gives hope simultaneously, that
Tells the truth and transcends the truth
In the same breath. For the human being
is a frail vessel that cannot take the light
and yet cannot face the darkness.
Must we become a new species?
Must the human being be remade anew
To face the tough truths of the times?

There's no time for this renewal.
We have to become new right now.
For the time will not wait for us in all the
Evils and poisons we have spewed
Into the belly and soul of nature.
Time will not wait for us to grow
Up and see what can be done
When we have had a long think about it.
Because of what we human beings
Have done we have to accelerate our
Own transformation now,
In the teeth of the crisis we
Have inflicted upon ourselves.

No gods will get us out of this.
We are the gods that must do it.
We are the gods that must step up
To the biggest crisis in the history
Of human consciousness as we know it.
We are the gods that must turn this
Story around. I'm not sure the bees
Or the trees or the fishes or the air
Or the future generations care
Very much how we do it. All they will
Care about is that somehow, with
Intelligence, with passion, with sacrifice,
With our voices, our votes, our gifts,
Our age, our love, our wounds
With our disabilities, our courage,
Our certainties, our doubts, our fears,
Our loneliness, our solidarity, our style
Or lack of style, our clumsiness,
Our youth, our age, our deaths, and our births,
That we get it done, that we reverse the climate
Disaster waiting in the wings of this sixth act
Of the human comedy or tragedy.
All they will care about is that
We make a now, a past, a dream,
A hope, a life, a future possible again
For the species of this magical Earth.
That is what we are called to do.
That's our destiny in these times.