**ONCE UPON A TIME THERE BE . . . A TALE OF THE *DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY***

**I**

**Once upon a time there be . . .**

There be a *Doctrine of Discovery*,

*Dum Diversas*, *Romanus Pontifex,* and *Inter Caetera,* three decrees,

Papal bulls of the 15th century (lead bulla sealing

with the heads of Peter and Paul, two saints they be),

Promised Land conquest, Christendom, and Crusading legacy

charging European royalty

to commission explorers to sail the seas

to New (empty, *nulla terra,* they presumed) promised Worlds to gallantly

“discover”, conquer and claim territory, and demand fealty

of “unchristian” civilizations who already for millennia lived there free,

free upon the mountains, plains and valleys,

free on rainbow deserts and among woodland trees,

free, in eon-carved canyons, cliff side caves and *kivas* deep,

free along shores of rivers, lakes, and seas,

free to net salmon and hunt deer,

free to pick berries and to plant seeds,

free to grow *The Three Sisters—*squash, corn, and beans,

free to sew buffalo-skinned robes and wampum beads

free to live in long houses, hogans, pueblos, and tee pees,

to weave patterned rugs and kiln molded pottery,

to create fringed medicine bags and turquoise and silver jewelry

to raise totem poles and follow eagle’s wing,

free to chisel *kachinas* from cottonwood rootings,

free to roam, to follow seasons’ bidding,

sun’s warmth, stars’ behest, and moon’s tiding,

free to exist, to quest, to reverence *Turtle Island’s* fecundity,

free to self-determine in tribes, nations, clans, bands, and confederacies,

free to self-govern with councils and chiefs,

free to honor Great Spirit’s Mystery,

through Life Ways, shaman, and sacred ceremony,

free to sing, to dance to flute’s lilt and drum’s beat,

free to celebrate, to give thanks for All Being,

*In Beauty walking, walking in Beauty…*

**Once upon a continuing time there be…**

There be friendship between

the giving Ancients, with hoped-for reciprocity,

and voracious new “Chosen” Settlers as they set up colonies

and sought to make “sub-human” infidels convertees.

But broken trust turned to frictioning,

and friendship medals and trading

turned to greed, and greed turned to taking

land (the land of the free,

home of the brave), and conflict and violent sprees,

with the French, Spanish, English and the Colonies,

and taking more land and trees,

gold, and slavery—no agency,

which turned to resisting

and Red Cloud Warring and paper treaties,

and treaties became broken treaties,

broken promises and nightmare dreams,

extinction of buffalo and beaver, destroyed ecology,

no sensibility, cruel genocide of humanity,

*Sand Creek* and *Wounded Knee,*

assimilating and disappearing

through boarding school trauma and decree,

forbidding native tongues, songs, dress, culture, and spirituality,

imposing state and church calumnity, calamity, complicity,

to civilize and Christianize the killing, dead, and dying,

dysfunctional theology and gone-wild evangelizing

in the name of the One saying l*ove thy neighbor and enemy*,

*and bring relief to the suffering*,

starving, imprisoning,

disease, and *Dakota 38* mass hanging,

reservations, shrinking, confining,

and *Trailings of Tears* from sea to shining sea,

Settlers, transcontinental trains and gold rushers colonizing,

pushing First Nations north, south, west, east,

divine *Manifest Destiny’s* stolen land complete…

a silenced people, a truncated history

celebrated by fictionalizing Columbus Day feat

and Indian and Pilgrim Thanksgiving Feast,

the indoctrination and incarnation of the *Doctrine of Discovery*.

**II**

**And, shortly thereafter upon a time there be . . .**

There be even more conquistadores by land and sea,

sent by the *Doctrine of Discovery*

to southern civilizations of *Quetzel, Pachamama,* and *Chakana* cosmology,

to lands of desert coasts, tropical forests, and oh so high mountain peaks,

to *Nazca Line* plains and glacier-fed streams

to llamas, pumas, and condors soaring,

to mathematic, scientific, and engineering ingenuity,

to architectural, artistic, and agricultural originality,

to pyramids, sun dials, crop terracing and irrigating,

to mounds and mortarless tightly-fitting boulder walling,

to *tambo* to *tambo* marathon relay-running *chasquis*

with *quipus* and *pitutus*, proclaiming and explaining,

to *charangos, quenas*, and *chicha* dancing,

welcomed by the ancients so curiously,

they greeted them with boats, horses, and swords a gleaming,

to conquer foretold cities of gold and jaden masquery,

to supplant the cross for pagan heresy,

they looted, plundered, and killed so freely,

ancient *Aztecs, Mayans*, and *Incans* marauded so mercilessly,

covered in blood as gold and the enslaved were cargoed back across the seas,

to the European home whose legacy here is continuing

through mining’s polluting and resource depleting,

exploiting poor indigenous land and communities—

caught between rebels’ and rulers’ fighting,

another incarnation of the *Doctrine of Discovery.*

**III**

**And once again upon a time there be . . .**

There be sailing to this new vicinity,

from African Kingdoms to the east

adventurers also charged by the *Doctrine of Discovery*,

guiding boatloads of sardine-packed human chattelry,

together bound, rocking and rolling

to each wave-upon-bow beat,

crashing amidst screams and dreams

and grievous laments of futility,

green and golden ancestor land a distant memory—

lush forests, jungles, savannah and fauna aplenty,

now dumped on New World shores unceremoniously,

chained to cages but separated from home and families,

Indian-vacated lands, now plantations, enslaving,

traumatizing generationally,

to quench the thirst of cotton and tobaccy,

sugar, rice, and coffee monopolies,

and lead and gold mining companies,

condemned to worse than poverty,

as white land owners pretended chivalry,

while denigrating, segregating, and lynching,

and contriving racial identity superiority

to maintain white racial purity,

defending to death in Civil War’s incivility,

and *holding these* *self-evident truths*—yes siree,

*for all, justice, life, happiness and liberty*,

codified in *We the People* constitutionality,

*Junteenth Emancipation Day*, free!—but not really,

and hundreds of years later, deferred dreams,

still entrenched in injustice duplicity,

flag-wrapped, head-hooded, cross-burning temerity,

fear and hatred-garbed brutal apartheid and white supremacy,

or separate and equal, prejudice, and white privilege—more politely,

power drenched in the blood of black chronology,

*Jim Crow* travesty, convict leasing,

share cropping, indentured servanting, no equal opportunity,

cartooned in minstrel and caricatured artistry,

victims of inhuman medical and scientific experimenting,

migrating from south to north, west and east

to escape and seek longed-for safety,

only finding unemployment and unwelcoming crowded cities,

and predatory lending and legal red-lining,

extending to ghetto dwellings and mass incarcerating,

targets of governmental and vigilante harassing, stalking, and killing,

sacrificial lambs to false gods offering,

dangerously navigating *black while walking, driving and living,*

having *The Conversation* with young ones to increase their surviving,

gaping divides between the poor and the wealthy,

(no GI Bill benefits or inherited family property),

between the book-educated and the life-educated, the sick and the healthy,

prevented by law from realizing innate potentiality,

reconciliatory guilt masking as reparationality,

black and white trauma intertwining,

yet two diverging tragic historical trajectories,

the *Doctrine of Discovery* once more incarnating,

stolen labor, stolen lives, *fait accomplit*!

Yet somehow there be,

there still struggling and proudly be

endurance and strength and spirit spontaneity,

passionate vitality, courage and creativity,

civil rights sit-ins and non-violent resisting—

protesting, boycotting, desegregating,

demonstrating, marching, freedom-riding,

preaching, praying, lobbying, and writing,

pushing the extremities

of suffocating, unjust boundaries,

not stopped by heckling or horse stomping,

bullets flying, fire hosing, and baton beating,

and torn apart by snarling canine’s vicious teeth,

arrested, shackled, jailed, bombed—too much killing,

Dred Scott, Harriett Tubman, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King,

proclaiming inconvenient, unsettling

Truth to evil power and status quo investing,

“*We Shall Overcome”* decisionally, intentionally, futurically.

**IV**

**Now, upon a time there be . . .**

There be a continuing legacy of the *Doctrine of Discovery*,

stolen land, stolen labor, the foundation of our nation’s prosperity,

stolen promise, stolen hope, stolen dignity and security,

five hundred-year-old inherited edicts still defining,

presumptuous exceptionalism opining,

a *City Upon a Hill*, out-of-context scripturing

catalyzing nationalistic visioning,

systemic racism, religious bigotry,

xenophobia, gender oppressing, myopic redacting of history,

spawning military crusades and religious legitimizing,

winners spinning and controlling the arcing story,

domination system, corruption, and exploitation thriving,

empire’s policies and Supreme Court precedent legalities,

governmental eminent domaining

and corporation hegemonic land-grabbing,

locally, nationally, and globally, an exploding frenzy—

drilling, fracking, mountain top-removing,

fossil fueling, extraction industry pathology,

polluting, fertilizing, pesticiding, desecrating

sacred places and depleting

air, water, and soil once pristine

—*Standing Rock*, front-line troops, water protecting,

war and peace economies freebasing

and high on destroying and contaminating

under the guise of self-interests defending,

and consumers, like locusts swarming,

wanting, buying, devouring,

accumulating and storaging,

wasting more than needing,

constantly rat-racing and tred-milling,

run amuck social media, TV,

and movie fantasy commercializing,

and my, my, mine—me, me,

me-first hyper-individualism selfies

and Facebook immortality,

and First and Second Amendment Security,

nation-states still conquering

in the shadow of nuclear technology—

a house of cards, no accountability and no sustainability

leave systems of *Earth and all that is in it* collapsing

under the weight of arrogance and greed,

economic, political, cultural restructuring

—the whole ecology topsy-turvy,

society cross-purposed in paralyzed bi-polarity,

resurging nooses and flags of the Confederacy,

swastikas, nazi saluting, and *Don’t Tread on Me*,

domestic abuse, women and children disappearing,

epidemic alcohol, drugs, opioids addicting,

mass murders and suicides alarming,

violence, terrorism and warring, planet warming,

climate changing, pandemics raging,

affecting the poor disproportionately,

exacerbating racial disparity,

fires blazing, glaciers retreating,

oceans rising, storms intensifying,

doubters decrying, denying and defying

scientific facts and prophets’ warnings,

populations over propagating,

swarming, frantically escaping, migrating, immigrating,

the sixth great extinctioning—

mammals, trees and bumble bees grieving,

and what or who will be next—humanity?

*Stop the World, I want to get off!*—lamenting grievously—

the present incarnation of the *Doctrine of Discovery*.

Yet always there a remnant or diaspora be,

Light through dark shadow breaking,

leaven rising, salt preserving,

virgin seeds quickening, awakening, hardened ground quaking,

New Life persisting, insisting, enlisting

Those Who Be Caring.

**V**

**Possible now/future upon a time there be . . .**

There be a new era choice: business as usual, *Anthropocene*

or *Ecozoic* New World, sans the Doctrine of Discovery,

excised from legal memory,

a new Way to BE Earth Community—

a new Way of human knowing, doing, and being,

Mother Earth-restoring policies and economies,

consciousness, care, compassion, courage, and creativity

increasing, in sync with the beat of Life’s ever emerging,

wondrous individuality, diversity, communion, and complexity,

honoring all our relatives: animal, vegetable, mineral equitably,

partnering equally, sensibly, and unambiguously

to take responsibility for Earth’s posterity,

seventh generation integrity,

living simply (reducing, reusing, recycling, rethinking),

cooperatively and peacefully,

with clean air, water, and soil, and oceans free

of oil slicks and plastic debris,

new healing practices and learning

what is essential and necessary,

promoting well-being and health care accessibility,

creating sustainable, resilient, and vital local communities,

receiving not deceiving, using not abusing Earth’s generosity,

*mana* for all but not more than needing,

inviting and encouraging participatory

visioning and planning democracy,

for the *Common Good, for all, justice, life, happiness, and liberty,*

rebuilding trust, healing wounds through truth, apology,

denouncing wrongs, reparationing, and reconciling,

discovering, developing, deploying,

honoring, and celebrating the gift and ability

of each human, cultural, and earth entity,

a new renaissance of guilds, sodalities, and artistry,

bridging chasms of mistrust caused by fear and enmity,

grass-roots movements—steadfast and serving,

risking and heroing in anonymity,

continuing to learn and explore within limits and possibilities,

in silence and stillness, knowing

Creation’s intimacy and stardust’s infinity,

Cosmos connectivity and energy: Awe-filled Mystery,

Earthrise Home, our common origin and destiny,

the Universe from which we are birthed, our common story,

this is our Home, this is my Home, my Home is in me,

waiting, transforming, reborning, new every morning dawning,

twenty-first century Phoenix sunrising,

Red, Black, Yellow, Brown, Tan, and White uniting,

despite challenges and obstacles, and setback’s inciting,

hearts, minds, strength, and souls joining, dancing and singing,

sharing Earth’s bountiful grace, mercy, and hospitality

in Hope beyond hoping,

Joy and Thanksgiving unceasing,

and Love unconditioning.

**Once upon a time there be . . .**

There be such a Reality . . .

Dare humanity really Know, Do, and Be,

and touch, hear, smell, feel, taste and see,

risking boldly, in humility—trusting not fearing

that Life is Good, You are/I am Accepted,

the Past is Absolved, and the Future is Always Opening—

Life’s, *Shalom’s* beckoning Jubilee—

*in Beauty walking, walking in Beauty? . . .*

ejhs

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