



## A Requiem to Mother Earth\*

**Padma Shri O N V Kurup**

Mother Earth  
still alive,  
in the imminence of your death,  
may your soul rest in peace!  
This song I inscribe in my heart today  
is a requiem to you (and to me)!

When tomorrow you lie benumbed  
in the shadow of the enveloping  
dark poison-flower of death,  
none will be left here,  
me either,  
to mourn, to wet your dead lips  
with our tears!  
Therefore, I inscribe this to you:  
here is a wish, Mother Earth,  
not yet dead,  
in the imminence of your death,  
may your soul rest in peace!

You bore countless children  
who cannot live in amity!  
you saw them, with your own eyes,  
eating one another.  
you stood helpless,  
Shedding unseen silent tears!  
then, as they danced merrily,  
eating you up slice by slice,  
unprotesting, all-suffering,  
you stood!



Parting your soft, green mantle,  
you breast-fed them-  
as they swelled, they developed  
a strange thirst (their last!)—  
a thirst for the blood  
of your sacred heart!

O Mother, favourite bride of the sun,  
you lost your sun-given bridal dress.  
They tore it to shreds.  
They clawed at your bare body  
They sucked the gushing blood!  
The rhythm of death  
resounds everywhere,  
as they swirl in their  
frenzied dance!

The story of the Greek young man  
who unwittingly married his mother is old.  
they, the children of Mother Earth  
who strip her naked,  
are writing a new version  
of the old story.  
what they strip they sell  
in the market for a drink.  
The villain's claw, the axe,  
plays on and on!

The eyes of the blazing sun  
shoot rays of fiery fury!  
June clouds hunt for drinking water!  
December nights hunt for cold!  
April dawns hunt for a tiny flower!  
sylvan rivers hunt for swirling currents  
the rhythm of creation is shattered.

The wheels of the chariot of life  
are stuck on their course.  
all I have, Mother mine,  
are your sweet , memories!



Mother!  
you came as the first awakening  
with your herb and honey  
on my tongue.  
you drip the last drop of water  
as my flame goes off.  
I have always  
marveled at your magic  
of catching an infant sun  
in a dew-drop!  
My fancy has grazed  
in the shades of your trees!  
like prophets of yore  
winds trod upon your seas!

Mother!  
I see you in myriad forms:  
how you deck the trees with verdant hues  
how you scare me with the screeching of the owl  
how you comfort me with the cuckoo's song  
how you dip the dusks in gold  
how you carry the eventide  
and disappear into the woods  
how you return with the dawn  
on your shoulders  
how you wake me up  
and feed me the nectar of poetry.

How you carry me ever so gently  
like the lotus leaf does a drop of water.  
I know all this, O Mother!  
What remains immortal in me  
are your memories!

As an outcast with bowed, shaven head  
you trudge along the solar highway  
carrying the bundle of your shame,  
weighed down with the sin  
of having borne children  
who turned mother-ravishers,  
with your mind consumed,  
Doesn't cruel death



Creep in through your veins...?

Mother Earth, still alive!  
This is your requiem!  
This song I inscribe in my heart today  
is a requiem to you (and to me)!  
I won't be here to wet your dead lips,  
to mourn your death.  
Therefore,  
I inscribe just this much here:  
O Mother Earth,  
in the imminence of your death,  
May your soul rest in peace!  
in eternal peace!

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\* Recited by Padma Shree ONV Kurup in the inaugural function

