The Circle of Life

BY ELLE-HAN’SA

The Creator made the Earth round
She made the Grass and the Trees
the Birds, Fish and Animals
to follow the purpose of Her Creation.
and She made the four races of Mankind
black, white, yellow, brown
and placed them in the East, North, West and South
She made the Sun, the Moon and the Stars
and asked them to form circles
so that we should understand
the Wisdom and Meaning of Life.
Because Life as the Creator meant it
is a circle: from the Creator
to the Creator, the Circle of Life.

The Earth is small and very sensitive
All Creation has to share
the same sources of living,
this is as true as night follows day.
The same Air
that refreshes the peoples of the arctic North
and gives relief to the drought-stricken
peoples of the Samé
is also filled with the war-cries of the East
and surrounds the polluted cities of the West.
How long will it last?

Freedom means to be in your right element,
to be linked to the purpose of Creation,
to be a part of History, its past, present and future.
the bird is free only in the air.
the fish only in the water.
Have you ever known of birds
that wanted to live under water
or a fish that wanted to build its nest in the trees?

I have. I know of men
who themselves wanted to be Masters of History
who made their Gods silent and ideas
and cut the Earth into square pieces.
Will we survive under these masters?
"If we don’t survive as a people
following the instruction and purpose of the Creation
then we must ask: What
is the purpose of survival?"

If you can’t fence the air in square pieces
how can you sell the Earth?
But now the Earth, the Water and even the Air
suffers because Man has placed himself
in the centre instead of his God.

Time has come when Man will discover
the darkness around him
that power, intelligence, wealth and glory
is not enough to save his soul.
Then maybe they will listen
to the Wisdom and Understanding of those People
whom they regarded as small and worthless,
the Indigenous Peoples of the Earth.
They will ask for our help
and we must give it:
Unless the Creator is the Centre of the Circle
unless we make Her the ruler of our lives
There will be no equality, no brotherhood
or freedom
among the children of the creation.
Only when we are a part of this Chain
of caring and sharing
will there be peace on Earth.
The only freedom we ever got
is to choose between Yes and No.

The Circle of Life
is to become a part of Eternity.
The Great Spirit links us together,
It made us different
not to control each other
but to contribute,
not to sell or take
not even to give,
but to share.
the Voice of the Creator
we can hear only when we listen,
just like the Wind
that refreshes suffering Mankind
We can’t see it, yet it is there.
We don’t know from where it comes
or where it goes....

This poem was written by Elle-Han’sa, a Samé,
for the First Inuit Circumpolar Conference, Point
Barrow, Alaska, 1977. It was presented by Makka
Kleist of Tukak Teatre at the opening ceremonies of
the 1980 Indigenous Theatre Celebration, and first
appeared in Hummelen, Remmelt, ed., We don’t
have a machine which serves me coffee.... (ANDPUA
Books for Indigenous Peoples Theatre Association,
27 Carlton Street, Suite 208, Toronto, Ontario M5N