

Planet Earth

By [P.K. \(Patricia Kathleen\) Page](#)

Canadian poet P.K. Page's poem, *Planet Earth*, has been selected to be part of a United Nations program to foster dialogue among nations, involving readings in countries around the world and possibly from Alpha, the new international space station. The poem was published in Ms. Page's collection, **The Hidden Room, Collected Poems** (in two volumes), 1997 by The Porcupine's Quill Inc., 68 Main St., Erin, Ontario, N0B 1T0 Canada. Tel: 519-833-9158; Email: <pql@sentex.net>. *Planet Earth* was inspired by four lines of a longer poem by Pablo Neruda, a Chilean writer. The poem expresses her feelings and pain for what humanity is doing to the Earth.

*It has to be spread out, the skin of this planet,
has to be ironed, the sea in its whiteness;
and the hands keep on moving,
smoothing the holy surfaces.*

----- *In Praise of Ironing* by Pablo Neruda

It has to be loved the way a laundress loves her linens,
the way she moves her hands caressing the fine muslins
knowing their warp and woof,
like a lover coaxing, or a mother praising.
It has to be loved as if it were embroidered
with flowers and birds and two joined hearts upon it.
It has to be stretched and stroked.
It has to be celebrated.
O this great beloved world and all the creatures in it.
It has to be spread out, the skin of this planet.

The trees must be washed, and the grasses and mosses.
They have to be polished as if made of green brass.
The rivers and little streams with their hidden cresses
and pale-coloured pebbles
and their fool's gold
must be washed and starched or shined into brightness,
the sheets of lake water
smoothed with the hand
and the foam of the oceans pressed into neatness.
It has to be ironed, the sea in its whiteness.

and pleated and goffered, the flower-blue sea
the protean, wine-dark, grey, green, sea
with its metres of satin and bolts of brocade.
And sky - such an O! overhead - night and day
must be burnished and rubbed
by hands that are loving
so the blue blazons forth
and the stars keep on shining
within and above
and the hands keep on moving.

It has to be made bright, the skin of this planet
till it shines in the sun like gold leaf.
Archangels then will attend to its metals
and polish the rods of its rain.
Seraphim will stop singing hosannas
to shower it with blessings and blisses and praises
and, newly in love,
we must draw it and paint it
our pencils and brushes and loving caresses
smoothing the holy surfaces.

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