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In a dark time the eye begins to see
~Theodore Roethke

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GLORIA HUSTON

MAY DAY

A call for rebellion. A call for change. A call for help. May Day. The ancient celebration of Spring. The festival of rebirth.

May Day is celebrated all over the world in every culture and kitchen. For many it is Labor Day in honor of the anonymous billions who break their backs or wear out their nerves for their daily bread. It is the symbol of seeding the Earth in hope of a good harvest to ease the dreadful hunger that stalks the human race.

May Day is also a day of revolution, a charge against history that demands sweeping changes among the world's societies. This claim usually originates from compassion and the perception that there is no excuse for anyone to go hungry, be without shelter or denied adequate health and medical care. It is the demand for freedom and respect of all the world's people.

The world situation perpetually eludes optimists and idealists. The balance of wealth and distribution of resources is dismally inequitable, which intensifies the disparity between rich and poor. Millions are out of work, their lives ruined by poverty. Millions more die from famine and epidemics. Oppression and tyranny infect the world's governments. World leaders move pitilessly against their own peoples and their neighbors. Police and soldiers shoot into crowds. Nuclear obliteration remains probable.

The Millennium is an X-ray of our history which lies behind us like an immense junkyard that seems cluttered with artifacts of no use to us anymore. We try to escape history as if by accelerating past we are tefloned: but history brought us to where we are and made us who we are. A true calendar of the human experience would discard bipolar dogmata and account for at least a thousand millennia in a straight line from cave and claw.

We have built a global greenhouse and we dwell within. We have pummeled and plundered our home planet as if it offered an inexhaustible feast without charge or cleanup, but the consequences of our careless and excessive indulgence are converging approximate with our disregard and denial. Our probable proximity to extinction is not from any single cause or danger or combination of them but because we seem helpless to undo the damage or change direction. Our paradox is that our bountiful civilization is based on processes that threaten to obliterate it.

Yet optimism persists.

Perhaps because in even the worst of times our predecessors always raised a Maypole for themselves and their children to dance around. Perhaps in especially the worst times it is necessary to hope.

~Michael Paul McCusker (Uno de Mayo, 2001)