

We are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For...

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...

It helps tremendously that these words have been spoken before and thanks to Charles Dickens, written at the beginning of *A Tale of Two Cities*. Perhaps they have been spoken, written, thought, an endless number of times throughout human history. It is the worst of times because it feels as though the very Earth is being stolen from us, by us: the land and air poisoned, the water polluted, the animals disappeared, humans degraded and misguided. War is everywhere.

⋮ Alice Walker

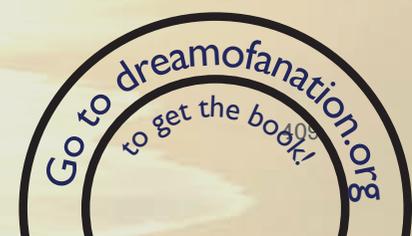
It is the best of times because there are passionate people and institutions committed to making the world better. Actively working to create more equality, to preserve, to educate, and to heal. It is the best of times because we have entered a period, if we can bring ourselves to pay attention, of great clarity as to cause and effect. A blessing when we consider how much suffering human beings have endured, in previous millennia, without a clue to its cause. Because we can now see into every crevice of the globe and because we are free to explore previously unexplored crevices in our own hearts and minds, it is inevitable that everything we have needed to comprehend in order to survive, everything we have needed to understand in the most basic of ways, will be illuminated now. We have only to open our eyes, and awaken to our predicament.

We see that we are, alas, a huge part of our problem. However, we live in a time of global enlightenment. This alone should make us shout for joy.

It is as if ancient graves, hidden deep in the shadows of the psyche and the earth, are breaking open of their own accord. Unwilling to be silent any longer. Incapable of silence. No leader or people of any country will be safe from these upheavals that lead to exposure, no matter how much the news is managed or how long people's grievances have been kept quiet. We will know at least a bit of the truth about what is going on, and that will set us free. It is an awesome era in which to live.

It was the poet June Jordan who wrote "We are the ones we have been waiting for." Sweet Honey in the Rock turned those words into a song. Hearing this song, I have witnessed thousands of people rise to their feet in joyful recognition and affirmation. We are the ones we've been waiting for because we are able to see what is happening with a much greater awareness than our parents or grandparents, our ancestors, could see. This does not mean we believe, having seen the greater truth of how all oppression is connected, how pervasive and unrelenting, that we can "fix" things. But some of us are not content to have a gap in opportunity and income that drives a wedge between rich and poor. Not willing to ignore starving and brutalized children. Not willing to let women be stoned or mutilated without protest. Not willing to stand quietly by as farmers are destroyed by people who have never farmed, and plants are engineered to self-destruct. Not willing to disappear. We have wanted all our lives to know that Earth, who has somehow obtained human beings as her custodians, was also capable of creating humans who could minister to her needs, and the needs of her creation. We are the ones.

The happiness that guides this understanding is like an inner light, a compass we might steer by as we set out across the lengthening darkness. It comes from the simple belief and understanding that what one is feeling and doing is right. That it is right to protect rather than terrorize others; right to feed people rather than withhold food and medicine; right to want the freedom and joyful existence of all humankind. Right to want this freedom and joy for all creatures that exist already or that might come into existence. Existence, we are now learning is not finished! It is a happiness that comes from honoring the peace or the possibility of peace that lives within one's own heart. A deep knowing that we are the Earth—our separation from Earth is perhaps our greatest illusion—and that we stand, with gratitude and love, by our planetary Self.



It is to our dreams that we must turn for guidance; it is to the art inside us that hungers to be born. It is to the literature of writers who love humanity. It is to the wisdom teachings that have come down to us from those who would ease our suffering. We are an ancient, ancient people who need to be more connected to the source of our greatest strength: an accurate knowledge of who we are. This nature that is nonviolent, this nature that is creative and kind and yearns to see joy unfold in the hearts of many, this nature that is celebratory and people and animal loving, this nature, is indeed our birthright, literally.

To bless means to help.

HELPEd are those who find something in Creation to admire each and every hour. Their days will overflow with beauty and the darkest dungeon will offer gifts.

HELPEd are those who receive only to give; always in their house will be the circular energy of generosity; and in their hearts a beginning of a new age on Earth: when no keys will be needed to unlock the heart and no locks will be needed on the doors

HELPEd are those whose every act is a prayer for peace; on them depends the future of the world

HELPEd are those who find the courage to do at least one small thing each day to help the existence of another—plant, animal, river or human being.

The world is as beautiful as it ever was. It is changing, but then it always has been. This is a good time to change, and remain beautiful, with it.

We are the ones we have been waiting for.

This passage is drawn in large part from the book We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For. Alice Walker is a poet, author and activist. In 1982 Walker published The Color Purple, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award. Walker has written many other novels, short stories and poems. Her writings have been translated into more than two dozen languages, and her books have sold more than 15 million copies. During the summer of 2011, Walker was part of Gaza Freedom Flotilla which attempted to deliver supplies to Gaza in response to Israel's siege of the Gaza strip.

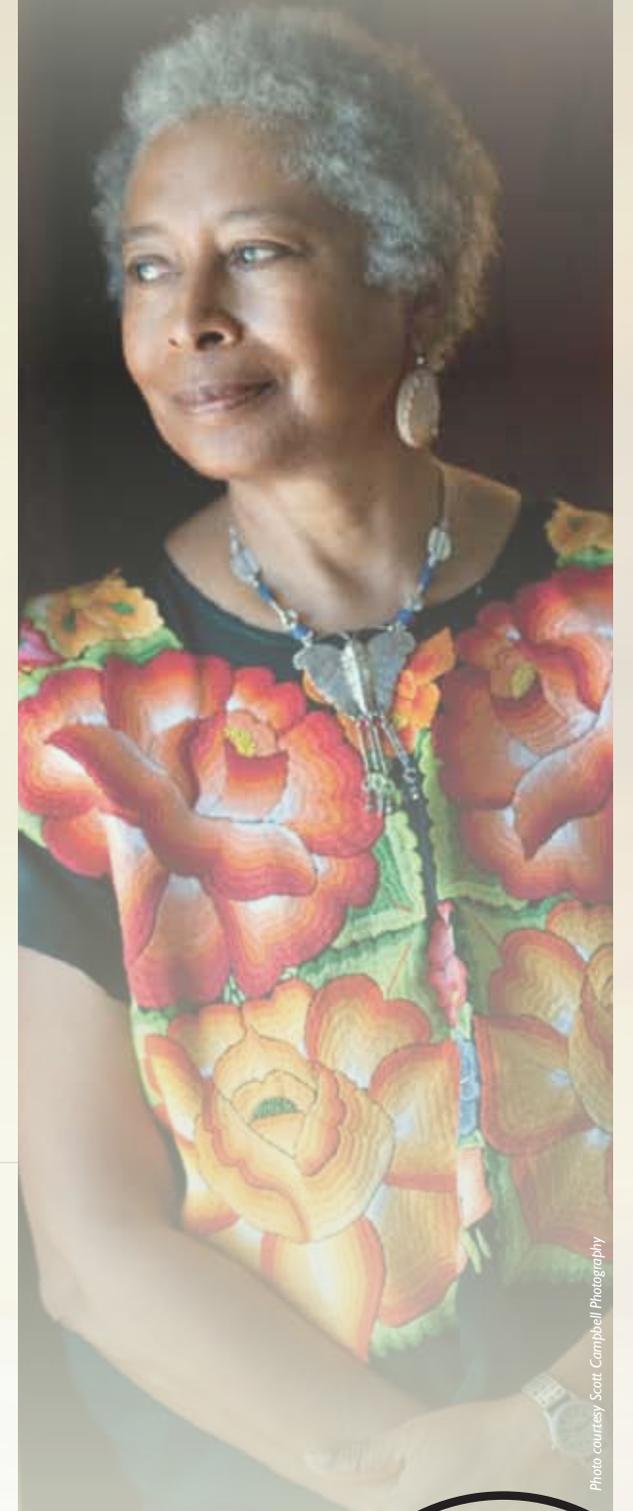


Photo courtesy Scott Campbell Photography

