



This is How We Will Survive and Hold Together

A Found Poem: Parable of the Sower by Octavia Butler

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I can take a lot of pain without falling apart
I get a lot of grief that doesn't belong to me.
The officials permitted their town to be taken over, bought out, privatized
Statelines and borders are closed
Leaders who don't know what they're doing
They're still anchored in the past
Waiting for the good old days to come back
A little more hypocrisy to keep the peace.

Sea level keeps rising with the warming climate
Tornados smashing hell out of Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee
Three hundred people dead so far.
A blizzard freezing the northern midwest.
New York and New Jersey, a measles epidemic.
California, the rain stopped -

Dust dry reservoir.
Too big, too poor, too black, too Hispanic to be of interest to anyone
We're a rope, breaking, a single strand at a time.

There is no end to what a living world will demand of you.
Most of our households couldn't afford another big bill
Most of the dead are street poor who have nowhere to go
Who don't hear warnings until it's too late for their feet to take them to safety
That reality scares me to death.

There's so much to do before it can even begin
All people did was take back things they had given
Change does scare most people
But there's nowhere to go. Not if you don't have money.
We can't live this way!

A community's first responsibility is to protect its children
Now use your imagination
Cool, pale light glows from it
Darkness brightening.
Hang on to your notes
I want to hear some of your poetry
We need you to help us survive here
Your teachers are all around you
I'm not going to let you get hurt.

We can get ready
Get ready to make a life
In spite of the scarcity and the violence
Rebuilding, fortifying, doing whatever we can
Find the rest of what we need within ourselves, in one another.
The essentials are to educate and benefit community
Win back their trust
Kindness eases change
Best to begin by teaching
The weak can overcome the strong if the weak persist.
Imagine that.
Live! We are Earthseed.

In the bright, clear, early morning sunlight
Like looking through a vast, open window
There's a huge, half ruined garden
Where they don't hide the stars
Where we buried our dead and we planted
California native and naturalized plants.
Oak trees
Take root.
The life that perceives itself changing will save you.
We've got work to do building a future that makes sense.

It will work
For we are Earthseed
Anyone can be.