

# **The Warning**

**By Liam UiCearbhaill**

In days of yore, in depths of time  
When all the world was wholly mine  
The beasts and birds, the rolling grass  
The vales and streams, the mountain pass  
The sky above, the sea below  
The arctic ice where blizzards blow  
Then, with joy in all that was  
I clear conceived a wondrous cause

To know a creature who could see  
All the things that came from me  
The sunset's glow, and waterfalls  
A stormy night and lightning balls  
Who'd wonder at the evening star  
And question what those night-lights are  
Who'd gasp with joy at canyons grand  
And seek the peace of seashore sand

I molded him from primate clay  
And shaped her spirit for the day  
When, moved by beauty seen without  
Her soul within would move to shout  
And he, from urgings deep inside  
Sung music that his soul had cried

I gave them minds to grasp a thought  
And hands to make the things they sought

For forty-thousand years or more  
On tundra steppe and forest floor  
They lived as part of what I'd made  
In cave and hut, with chipped stone blade  
Their lives were hard, but still were good  
I gave them joy, I gave them food  
I gave them beauty in the land  
They gave me thanks with both their hands

They hunted for the bison strong  
And gathered grain from grasses long  
They saw my moon hung in the sky  
And watched the eagle circling high  
They learned the way of beast and bug  
Of mastodon and trout and slug  
They learned which plants would heal their woes  
The willows bark, the hips of rose

In gratitude they slew their prey  
And thankful for the food that day  
Expressed their thanks in art and dance  
Reflecting, there, the elk herd's prance  
Or left the earth a pretty gift

Atop some seaward facing cliff  
They knew that all the things they ate  
Were gifts to them from heaven's gates

Then once, ten thousand years ago  
A bag of seed was somehow sowed  
Upon a patch of broken dirt  
As hunters did with farming flirt  
And someone caught a baby cow  
Then raised it to adult somehow  
And ever after changed the face  
Of how did live the human race

No longer did you hunt and seek  
To gain the food that you would eat  
But rather did you farm and herd  
Taming tree and beast and bird  
You owned the things that once were mine  
Both hillock high and vale sublime  
You chained the streams and rivers too  
Built dam, canal, and lock and slough

You carved the land for highways long  
Bored tunnels deep through mountains strong  
You filled my sky with stench and smoke  
And made my children all to choke

You slaughtered bison for their hides  
And filled my streams with pesticides  
You spilled my oil upon my sea  
And killed my whales, so huge and free

To fill your pockets with my gold  
You tore down mountains, tall and bold  
And scarred my earth to dig my coal  
With piles of slag and gaping holes  
You claimed that all you saw was thine  
To kill and maim, to dig and mine  
You set yourselves apart from me  
And o'er my world claimed sovereignty

How patiently I've watched you grow  
Who once did hunt and then did sow  
I spoke to you by prophets bold  
Who for your wayward ways did scold  
You built up temples, large and grand  
And slaughtered for me beast and man  
And by these things you sickened me  
But, still, I left you growing free

So then, you found creative ways  
To send each other to the grave  
With sword and spear, with bomb and gun

With gas and germ you had your fun  
You filled my skies with birds of war  
And filled my ears with canons roar  
With chemicals you killed my trees  
So snipers you could better see

My patience now draws to an end  
No longer can I call you friend  
You threaten all that I have made  
The tidal pool, the forest glade  
And with that worst monstrosity  
You threaten all that you can see  
For on that fateful Summer day  
When Hiroshima went away

You told me that I could not trust  
The human race and that I must  
Protect my world from what you are  
A cancer and a source of war  
The end is near, do not delude  
Yourselves or cop and attitude  
But if you seek to still survive  
Then turn to me to live your lives

You share the rock on which you stand  
You do not own the sea or land  
The air about you is not thine

Nor rivers as they seaward wind  
You do not own the grass and trees  
The birds and beasts belong to me  
The mountains high, the valleys low  
Are mine to tend the things they grow

My anger grows with every puff  
Of factory smoke or toxic stuff  
Dumped in rivers dammed and stopped  
With trash and slag and muck and glop  
With every tree that's sacrificed  
To print an ad for PC mice  
Or jungle burned for farming land  
Or dolphin killed for tuna canned

The end is near, be not deceived  
Despite what some of you believe  
I can defend what is my own  
Your self-defense is overblown  
Catastrophes will come from me  
Your scientists will never see  
And when the human terror ends  
I will begin my world to mend.