

Thursday, April 7 – A Day to Reflect – Johnny Wise

No whales today. Rather disappointing for us after so much success. As a result, today was largely uneventful. One thing that did become clear was the amount of support we have from the Sea Shepherd group. We have a few arrows that broke either on this trip or during the previous trip – most of the broken arrows have just lost the knock. After one of my whale watches, I returned to the pilot house to find Sean and Mike discussing ideas for how to replace the broken knocks. We were unsuccessful finding a sports store with some while in port at Santa Rosalia – hence the creative and excited discussion between these two crew members. Sean had a brilliant idea: he would use putty to create an inverse mold from one of the good arrows, wait for the putty to harden, then fill it with a liquid epoxy resin and insert the butt of an arrow missing the knock. We'll see how it works!

As today was uneventful, this seems like a good time to share something else of mine with you all. As most of you know, or can assume, I am extremely fond of the ocean – it has been a good friend and a mentor to me all of my life. What most of you don't know is that I visited Maine for New Year's this past winter – the first time I've been back since my parents moved to Kentucky. As I arrived in the heart of a blizzard on the midnight bus from Boston, it was as if I could hear the ocean calling to me. I was listening to the track Ocean by John Butler (a personal favorite), and was hearing/envisioning a story of the relationship between the ocean and growth of mankind. I had heard it years before while listening to this track, but never shared it with anyone. The next day, while waiting in a bar on the waterfront in Portland, I took the time to write the story in the form of three free-verse poems. I'm not much of a poet, but I've shared them with a few people on the boat here and they've had some good reception thus far. So, attached with today's log are those three poems. If you have 10 minutes to spare, I also highly recommend giving the song a listen – my favorite version is his 2012 studio solo recording (it's very easy to find). I hope you all also enjoy these.





Wrathful Ocean

Hark! Thou puny human
Who art thee who thinks
Ye may enter and traverse my body?

For I am your Creator
And if I so wish – your Destroyer.
I am Ocean,
And my will dictates your microscopic existence
Behold me with awe and wonder
At the vastness of my breadth
And the omnipotence of my touch.

Worship me as a god
For you know
How fickle my mood can be
You know the wealth and dearth
Which my mood can provide or deny.

Before your birth, I existed
Before your mammalian ancestors, I existed
I am that from whence you came
I bore that slime from whence you
And all earthly life sprung forth.
Without me you are nothing
Without me you could not exist
After you're dead and bones crushed to sand I will remain.

I scoff at your puny size,
Your fragile bones,
Your meek and selfish wisdom, and
Your feeble vessels of splinters
With which you enter my expanse
See how easily I toss them about?
See how easily I break them on the shore?
You cannot appease me, for I am far too grand.

Mere mortals cannot sway my mood
I will do with you what I wish.

Yet do not solely fear me,
I can be a loving god -
You are, after all, borne of my body.
Even if your terrestrial appendages
Distract you such that you can no longer
Remember.

See all the beauty and life which I bear?
See the wealth I provide!
More riches than all of your kings,
More beauty than all your artists could create,
More wisdom than all your philosophers,
More life than any of you could imagine.
For these are what I offer,
These are who I am:
Wealth, Beauty, Wisdom, Life.

Bitter Ocean

My look how you have grown puny human!
You have towers that breach the clouds,
Tunnels that traverse mountains,
Ships that reach the stars,
You have spanned my entire breadth
And filled the globe with your own image
And your selfish greed.

Have you forgotten your mother so quickly?
Forgotten your brethren -
All the creatures with which you share my blue haven?
Shame on you!
You take more than what you need

And squabble about who may share in the wealth.
I provide more than enough for all,
Look at how foolish you are,
Only paying attention to each other.
With your pitiful politics and cultural norms
Why must you be so homogenous?

It matters not -
For I can still destroy you if I wish.
I could still crush your ships,
Flood your cities and hide my riches.
I need not waste my energy
On such an ungrateful lot.
Human, you have lost touch with Us -
So, I shall send you a reminder
Of who is really in control,
Of who it is you depend on
And from whence you came.

Do you see
Your accursed technology failing,
Your squabbles are illegitimate,
I am your lifeline,
Even to those hidden,
In landlocked estates
And atop snow-capped peaks
None can escape my wrath!

It delights me to see your vast numbers
Drowning in grief, keeled over in sorrow
In the wake of a small demonstration
Of the devastating power
I hold over your inconsequential lives.

Are you truly so misguided
In your own egoism

That you forget your place
In the natural order of Everything?
Do you really think you are made to rule?!

Indignant Ocean

Oh dear human,
Children of my bosom,
I have borne you of my own essence
And you have forgotten all I have provided.

Your commerce and industry have poisoned my blood,
Poisoned the very creatures I bore
As your brethren – beautiful creatures too.
Poisoned the food I have provided you -
Once there was plenty for all...

Do you not see it?
You have carved out your own demise
and brought all my other children down with you.

You have poisoned sister sky and brother earth,
They can neither help you
Now the sun bores down, melting my ice caps
That once filled you with awe and fear
My temperature rises higher than any fever you have known,
And I can no longer control the tides – merely sway them.
We are weakened by your careless selfishness
Soon, Our spirits will no longer be with you -
Soon, you will be alone, in your own ruin.

You created this impending wasteland
With Your technology and Your greed.
Perhaps you can use these
For your own salvation

If only you might see
What's on your doorstep
Rather than focus on your machines
And fickle, weak hearts.

For We can no longer Protect you.

What will your legacy be?

That is now yours to decide.

Johnny