

**Title:**

*Author:*

# Occupy Climate Change (OCC!)

*Creative story  
entry*



FORMAS



## Po Valley of herons

*By Cecilia Pasini*

The Great Plain was a land of cement and ash. The soil was once parcelled out into fields where rooted bipeds cultivated their food- They called themselves “humans”.

Water was constrained and flowed in canals. The bipeds decided when to release it and for how long. The plain, however, was interrupted by the smoke and concrete towers of the factory, where the bipeds entered and exited. They were like ants when seen from above.

Time, I have heard, was counted in hours, days, weeks and years and flowed like a line. Humans lived without thinking about the only thing that matters concerning time: death. They lived considering themselves, their artefacts, the cages they lived in, as endless.

They also thought that resources from mother Earth the Gentle were eternal.

Water was used to put out fires, to cool a world on fire.

The river Po was closely controlled, because humans were concerned about its power. Water was able to ruin the brick buildings they used to live in.

Humans used to venerate another kind of liquid: it was called oil, and they considered it as the “black gold”, because, apparently, gold was something precious, for them, and this oil was precious. And it was as dark as the night is.

Once, I met a seagull, they told a story that was passed on by their ancestors: this black gold travelled millions kilometres for the need of humans. It passed the oceans closed in huge floating junks to reach ports where it entered pipelines and, hidden, continued travelling underground.

It was impossible, indeed, to follow its journey from our perspective.

We could just inhale a part of it that was not liquid anymore. A pigeon told me that the black gold entered some strange buildings made of cement, then exited and travelled again towards places where it served to feed the humans’ means of transport.

You know, they were so slow when they moved, and they found all these means imitating the faster animals. It’s so lovely-dovey if you reflect about it carefully: humans were unsatisfied and always wanted to overcome their limits. They, poor unskilled animals, felt disappointed.

They condemned themselves, they approached their end.

And it happened. Earth was suffering, everyone was. The whole multitude of living beings felt thirsty, flushed, hungry. Moribund. Mother Earth said: Enough.

Enough.

Earth asked her siblings to help her. It was time to free ourselves from humans.

Free.

Release.

Rid.

Relieve.

Too much suffering, too much pain.

And then it happened. Suddenly water exited every row it was constrained in. She took everything and everybody, she destroyed, ruined, crashed, demolished, wrecked.

I can't lie: it was force, power, and violence. Something you can't –and shouldn't- expect from the Gentle Earth and the floating Water. But they could no more stand and see the suffering and pain. Enough, it was enough.

But then.

What remained was peace.

And silence.

And everything started all over again.

But humans weren't there anymore.

At that time, water was everywhere, and she was able to introduce her two souls to each other: saltwater met freshwater, they barely knew each other from the estuary of the rivers and the rain, especially the torrential ones. Now they met and covered the planet. And our plain. Everything appeared...What did they call it... Sure: swamp. Or wetland. It was wet, indeed. For most of us it was heaven: trees, shrubs, bushes, grew wildly. Insects found their place and proliferated. And for us...I cannot describe the joy, the feeling of deep fulfilment.

Finally, it was home.

Earth became, again, home to everyone.

Of course, these are just tales of things I have never seen and I am not definitely sure they really happened. It can also be that humans never existed and parents tell us this story to make us respect Mother Earth and Sister Water.

These are legends whose origins are lost in the mists of time, and today it seems hard to imagine a land in squares, water obeying a master, the plain interrupted by concrete towers catching fire.

Nowadays water, water is the only Queen. It could not be otherwise in a world where everything flows. Water is everywhere: it produces and reproduces life. I think that humans, if just they could have understood anything at all, would have called it “the transparent gold”. But what is gold? We don’t sell or buy anything, the preciousness of metals has seen its twilight together with those humans.

Seen from above, the territory, that is land and water, does not seem to have a past, not least because past and present have no meaning for those who inhabit it. The only time that exists is that of the seasons: it is a circle, reborn each spring to slumber in autumn. Death’s power is recognised, anyone understands it and no one fears it. It’s nature: things begin, things end.

Nobody is interested in speed anymore: moving fast is a way to approach death. We do respect death, but we are not impatient to meet it.

*My* time is not even cyclical, it is geographical. Such is the time for herons: we fly to change the season. I fly and I can travel and see the world as it is, from above.

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