

Rest now Mother Earth / e Papatuanuku

New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, shared a poem.
Enjoy her thoughts and be sure to read the comments she made at the end.

Rest now, e Papatūānuku (Mother Earth)

Breathe easy and settle

Right here where you are

We'll not move upon you

For awhile

We'll stop, we'll cease

We'll slow down and stay home

Draw each other close and be kind

Kinder than we've ever been.

I wish we could say

We were doing it for you

As much as ourselves

But hei aha

We're doing it anyway

It's right. It's time.

Time to return

Time to remember

Time to listen and forgive

Time to withhold judgment

Time to cry

Time to think

About others

Remove our shoes

Press hands to soil

Sift grains between fingers

Gentle palms

Time to plant

Time to feel

Time to notice

To whom we belong

For now it's just you

And the wind

And the forests and the oceans

And the sky full of rain

Finally, it's raining!

Ka turuturu te wai kamo o Rangi ki runga i a koe

(Maori phrase meaning - "tears from the eyes of Ranginui drip down on you")

Ranginui is our sky father,

It is common to refer to rain as

The tears of Rangi for his beloved,

From whom he was separated at the beginning of time

In order that there could be light in the world).

Embrace it

This sacrifice of solitude we have carved out for you

He iti noaiho - a small offering which is a treasure

People always said it wasn't possible

To ground flights and stay home

And stop our habits of consumption

But it was

It always was.

We were just afraid of how much it was going to hurt

- and it IS hurting and it will hurt and continue to hurt

But not as much as you have been hurt.

So be still now

Wrap your hills around our absence

Loosen the concrete belt

Cinched tight at your waist

- Rest.

- Breathe.

- Recover.

- Heal

And we will do the same.

..... By Jacinda Ardern

Prime Minister of New Zealand

Edited to add:

Thank you for the amazing response to this poem! I never expected it to travel so far and wide. Many people have asked who the author is so I wanted to clarify that I wrote this poem on the train home after the announcement of total lockdown was made here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. I felt like I could hear Papatūānuku - Mother Earth -exhaling in relief as we all began our journeys home. In truth, one month of lockdown is not enough. Even six months would not be enough! We need a total and sustained change of habit, globally and within our own communities. I hope so much we take our time to reflect on the fact that if we can do it to save ourselves for a month, we ought to be able to make similar habit changes for Mother Earth for the long term. The most telling thing for me was how empty our veggie plant aisles were after lockdown was announced - in a crisis, we will turn back to our mother earth to provide (and of course she will!).

Lots of people have asked for translations...

Papatūānuku - Mother Earth (the addition of the "e" in front signals the words are addressed or

spoken directly to her.)

Ka turuturu te wai kamo o Rangi ki rung a koe - means something like, “tears from the eyes of Ranginui drip down on you”

(Ranginui is our sky father, it is common to refer to rain as the tears of Rangi for his beloved, from whom he was separated at the beginning of time in order that there could be light in the world).

Not long after the announcement we were moving to level 3, it poured with rain in Porirua after many months of hot and dry weather. I could feel my garden rejoicing.

Hei aha - This can be translated in many ways, but I meant it like the English “ oh well, whatever ”

He iti noaiho - “something small” Because our sacrifice feels enormous but in reality I think it is not sufficient to truly see Papatūānuku / Mother Earth recover.

However, in Māori, we often talk about the significance of small actions or gestures. We say “ahakoa he iti, he pounamu.” Although it is small, it is a treasure.

Thank you so much for the support.

..... By Jacinda Ardern Prime Minister of New Zealand