



*Midsummer Moon –
A Journey
In
Mutual
Enhancement*

This Document Includes:

Five Reasons that now is the Time
For *Midsummer Moon*

*Midsummer Moon –
The Poem*

Contextual Comments –
Why Produce *Midsummer Moon*

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Midsummer Moon – A Journey in Mutual Enhancement

A Timely Production

The first decade of the 21st Century helped clarify some of the special characteristics and challenges facing Planet Earth:

- **Global Interconnectedness Calls For Inclusive Stories**
 - People who are globally interconnected through the email and social media *require* stories that give significance to everyone's ancestral heritage and contemporary struggles,
- **Earthrise Witnesses Need an Integrated Framework**
 - Individuals that have seen the Earthrise over the surface of the moon and viewed deep-space photos from the Hubble telescope *require* conceptual frameworks that integrate all their perceptions,
- **Individual's Actions Must Nurture Planet Earth**
 - Members of a species whose actions impact the Planet's very well-being *require* operational contexts which foster nurturing actions for all the other species with which they share the Planet,
- **Diverse Cultures Require Unique Affirmations**
 - Societies whose members have widely diverse cultural backgrounds and capacities *require* images that affirm everyone's unique contribution to shaping the course of the as-yet-unknown future and
- **Comprehensive Visions Turn Challenges to Opportunities**
 - Inhabitants of Planet Earth in the 21st Century who face unprecedented challenges and unforeseen opportunities *require* a comprehensive vision that inspires everyone to actively engage in nurturing the Planet.

These five challenges can be met by combining the cultural understandings of Nelson Stover, President of Emerging Ecology, with the talents of skilled performers utilizing the forms of contemporary dance and individuals and groups ready to sing new songs that motivate responsible action.



Having studied the writings of Greensboro native and cultural historian, Thomas Berry, Nelson Stover composed the poem *Midsummer Moon* in 2007. On November 8th, 2015, Environmental Stewardship Greensboro (ESG) is convening a gathering focusing on Thomas' input to the global climate debate.

Thus, Emerging Ecology's production of *Midsummer Moon* in the form of a contemporary dance has become a timely venture as a way to convey the importance of a new story adequate for contemporary issues. For further information about *Midsummer Moon*, contact F. Nelson Stover (StoverN@Bellsouth.net).

Midsummer Moon

The moment arrived that energy could no longer contain matter, nor time subsume space
And Is-ness burst free from the bonds of Nothingness as the Universe became manifest.
Echoes of the searing heat remained for epochs in the vastness of cosmic background noise.
After 14 billion years, countless stars, planets and species carry on the cosmic dance.
Great clouds of elemental gasses congealed then ignited to light the skies with stellar flares.
When the flaming giants collapsed, all the life-essential elements were formed.
The wispy arms of the Milky Way galaxy had witnessed countless of these supernovae and
From the element rich debris burst forth a Sun with planets, comets and moons.
A silvery moon soon sailed around the Blue Marble, observing as it circled
That green plants and multicolored flowers emerged, slowly, from the rolling seas
And the Universe embodied Autopoiesis, Communion and Differentiation.

In the verdant boundary between the African savannah and the jungle, a bold experiment began.
Walking upright on their hind legs, forest creatures ventured out under the daylight sun.
This new posture allowed vocal chords to produce primal speech and freed arms to carry food.
Women could birth babies with larger heads through their expanded pelvic bones.
As the exploratory urge mounted, the walkers ventured out of Africa to cover Planet Earth.
They harnessed fire for cooking, domesticated animals and physically adapted to locales.
Along lake shores, rivers and sea coasts groups of families settled into the rhythms particular places.
They created languages, epic myths and social forms appropriate to their environments.
Trade flourished among the settlements as groups perfected ways to enhance existing crops.
Mining minerals allowed concentrated buildings and useful tools for growing societies.
While the silvery moon watched the flourishing of a species.

While most people concentrated on their daily tasks essential for growth and survival,
Some heard the Voice of the Unsynonymous and taught truths from the Depths.
Born of a wealthy noble, Siddhartha first saw death and suffering with an immensely opened heart.
Enlightened under a boa tree, the Buddha returned to guide others on an 8-fold path.
As strife and suffering mounted in kingdoms along the Yellow River, wise Confucius looked around
To see profound harmony, the Yin and Yang, whose balance led to peace within and without.
Jesus, the carpenter's son, studied his God's scriptures and heard the call in his heart,
He beckoned each person to serve God, and in his dying transformed death.
Midsummer Moon watched holy men and women transforming interior vision into social form
As increasingly complex societies were held together by rituals and holy days,
And the Universe's drive for communion became self-conscious.

Generally, societies grew and cared for their inhabitants and the environment that surrounded them;
When social pain abounded, some heard the Voice in the Thunder, and led transformation.
American democracy entered its 2nd century with only ½ of its citizens eligible to vote;
Susan B. Anthony led boycotts and lobbying efforts until the Constitution was amended.
Three centuries of British colonial rule left a nation without control of its own destiny,
Mahatma Gandhi turned interior resolve into political action until a new flag flew in the land.
Nelson Mandela's objections to South African apartheid laws landed him in prison;
But his vision for a better way persisted until he became President under new rules.
Midsummer moon shone over times of calm and times of disruption
Affirming both dynamics of organization and collapse in the on-going dance of creativity,
For the Universe knows radical differentiation.

... and for eons Midsummer Moon slid across a starlit sky.

Midsummer Moon felt an extra warm blast, and knew a gentle touch when the Eagle landed.
The Universe crossed a threshold when one species crossed from planet to moon.
Having tapped millenniums worth of fossilized sunlight to fuel its species-specific economy
Some social visionaries warned of global warming and sought simpler lifestyles.
Though oceans surrounded every land, human population centers taxed potable water supplies.
Peace makers sought creative solutions to festering disputes over the precious liquid.
Mother Earth loved all her children but never had a single species so taxed her finite resources,
Voices from every land began to call for new policies and protections.
When consumption and rampant extraction diminished opportunities for the non-human species,
Cries for patterns of sustainable environmental practices fell on receptive ears
And Hope for every species spread across the land.

Social forms forged by isolated tribes and growing nations
Proved inadequate for highly literate societies in a global village.
Educational patterns that focused only on rote memorization and frequent repetition
Gave way to integrated thinking and exploration as internet connectivity opened new vistas.
Global economic calculations had long discounted all environmental effects
But carbon exchanges and renewable energy sources led to new valuations.
Religious leaders reexamined their ancient sources and heeded modern wisdom
In order to reinstate the natural world as a source of Beauty, Awe and Wonder.
Finally, political leadership reflected the diversity of their constituency
And adopted participatory decision-making patterns at all social levels.
And Planet Earth became self-conscious.

In the foot-print on its dusty surface, Midsummer Moon
Felt both the extreme pride and the internal emptiness of the human species.
Centuries of frantic actions to produce more stuff led only to homes full of clutter
Though compassionate ones were advocating simplified living and meaningful activities.
Scientific rationalism split from religious wisdom left both adrift and shallow
Though conscious ones saw the oneness of the Universe, saw that Matter and Spirit are one.
Ancient religious traditions, adrift from originating lifestyles remained in society as hollow practices
Though contemplative ones gave global forms to historic rituals.
Instead of precipitating ongoing strife over whose religious rites were legitimate,
Contemporary saints and sages were inventing inclusive profound practices
In the light of the Midsummer Moon.

Sixty-five million journeys around the sun earlier, Midsummer Moon saw
Ferns and dinosaurs being replaced by flowers and mammals as the Cenozoic Era began.
Although some backward-looking leaders advocated using exclusively technological fixes,
Ever larger numbers of people decided to live in the Ecozoic Era.
The all-pervasive processes of the Universe flourished on the consciousness-rich Planet
As each species found its unique role on the global stage.
New social forms and cultural patterns enabled inclusion of diverse perspectives
As communication channels bridged chasms of distance in the global village.
The Universe took complexity to a new level on Planet Earth and
Midsummer Moon joined in the Cosmic Dance;
And All knew "It was Good".

Why *Midsummer Moon*

The narrative poem *Midsummer Moon* was written as an outline for a stage performance telling the history of the Universe in the context of the transformations underway in the 21st Century. During the holiday season of 2006, an original musical by Preston Lane was presented in Greensboro by Triad Stage. The play, *Beautiful Star*, told the biblical narrative of the creation of the world in seven days and the history of the Hebrew people as a prelude to the recounting of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. While *Beautiful Star* drew sell-out crowds to a masterful production of a well-written play, some people thought that the story, itself, was not completely adequate for the 21st Century. In 2007, Nelson Stover wrote two poems, *Beautiful Star* and *Midsummer Moon*. Both are written in the same 8-stanza format tell parallel stories yet emphasize quite different themes. The two poems together are in a downloadable format entitled *Epic Tales* at <http://www.EmergingEcology.org/Documents/EpicTales.pdf>.

The basic purpose of the biblical revelation seems to have been to alter the primordial sense of continuity throughout the Universe. "Within the biblical context, the continuity of divine presence with the natural world was altered by establishing the divine as a transcendent personality creating a world entirely distinct from itself. In addition, the continuity of the divine with the human was altered by the establishment of a covenant relationship based on a juridic model. The continuity between the human community and the natural world was altered by identifying the human as a spiritual being in contrast to all other beings. Only the human really belonged to the sacred community of the redeemed. The previous sense of a multi-species community was diminished."

Thomas Berry – *Evening Thoughts*

For several decades, Greensboro native Thomas Berry wrote and spoke of the need for a profoundly new way of conceptualizing the human relationship with the Universe in which they live. *Midsummer Moon* draws on Thomas' writings to tell the story of a Universe constantly in the process of creating itself anew. The Universe is understood as a place in which every particle and creature participates in the on-going process of mutual evolution. While *Midsummer Moon* focuses on the human element in the Universe's drama, the action takes place within this larger framework.

Such a new story, a fresh way of understanding how the human species got to where it is in the 21st Century and thus how it can move forward into the coming centuries, provides an important foundation for addressing the complex and intricate social, environmental and spiritual problems facing each individual and society as a whole in the coming decades. The previous ways of understanding life and the human role in the on-going drama of existence resonate deeply with people who have heard them told over and over since they were children. However, these same understandings are fostering irresponsible actions in the 21st Century and, in fact, are leading to degradation of the life systems of the Planet. Since, as Thomas Berry has observed, these stories suggest a separation of the human from the natural world and describe a static world into which current inhabitants must learn how to behave correctly, people operating from these perspectives are unable to join in the rampant creativity of the present moment and fail to see the deep-seated interrelations among all aspects of the Universe. New self-understandings are required if human society is to be able to continue to inhabit Planet Earth. These stories will tell of the primordial interrelationship of all species and of the perpetual vitality of the life systems at all levels. *Midsummer Moon* contributes to this expanded worldview.

F. Nelson Stover