

Tipping Point

Chris Moody Schulz

Chris Schulz graduated from Cal Poly with a degree in Child Development and Family Studies in 1977, then worked with troubled youth. Chris has been involved with Hospice of SLO for 8 years as a Board Member and leads therapeutic writing workshops that feature her love for poetry.

The heat sensitive mammals in Yosemite
Are moving to higher, cooler ground
A steady march of pica and golden- mantled ground squirrels
Immigrants from heat battles, fighting to survive
And over 100,000 glaciers on earth have receded
Leaving glacier moraines and polar desserts in their place
Climate change and global warming
Have intensified wildfires, that threaten the ancient Joshua Tree
Trees that have adapted to the rigors of the desert
But can they survive the rigors of mankind?

The drumbeat of the Dow Jones Industrial Average
Bombards us everyday
Corporate ladders promote leaders that drive the Gross National Product
That spawned Enron and AIG and eventually the financial collapse
And now 1 in 3 Americans have slipped down the income ladder,
“Downward mobility” they call it,
As the middle class descends and the mammals climb

But will we survive as oxygen masks are dropped from the ceiling
On children in Bastrop County, Texas
Where over 125 wildfires recently raged in the regions relentless drought?
Playgrounds and parks whipped white by ashen wind
And the sweet harmonies of New Orleans
Are threatened by flooding again and **again**
The rents have doubled and many musicians have moved on
Causing some musicians to declare that “Jazz is Dead”

Will the Vatican stop preaching population growth
And begin to **protect** the children that **are** here?
Will governments, religions and individuals
Ever realize that the earth’s population has reached the tipping point?
Each day we use up more than the earth can possibly give
And what do we give back?

Disposal diapers, plastic bags and shark carcasses without their fins
As we skin the earth and peel her beauty to the core

The American born Brazilian nun, Dorothy Mae Stang,
Protector of the Amazon and the poor peasants who tended their plots
In the Amazon Basin, **without** deforestation
Known as the Amazon Angel,
Dorothy was brutally murdered in February of 2005
A dark plot written and directed by greedy Amazon rancher, Regivaldo Galva
Who for years has been out on **bail!!!**
Will he finally begin to serve the 30 year sentence he received?
Will the slogan that Dot bravely wore on her shirt,
“The death of the forest is the end of our life”
Be heard above the bulldozers and chain saws?
Did the Angel of the Amazon die in vain?

Oxygen masks are touted in advertisements for the Chinese
As their large cities report the highest air pollution in the world
Their economic engine roars
But their people are choking on greenhouse gases
Will the agreements at Stockholm be fulfilled?
Will the improvements in the environment
We have slowly begun to make in the States
Weaken in the upcoming election,
As politicians fold in fear
Of losing their almighty corporate donation?
Will right wing politicians ignore scientific **facts**
Like climate change and evolution?
Will large carbon producing corporations
That hire hundreds of anti-climate lobbyists
Continue to **paralyze** our political process as their **profits** soar?

The BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Transocean and Halliburton’s role
And the Exxon Valdez
The environmental contamination from petroleum drilling
By Chevron/ Texaco in Ecuador
That left birth defects in newborns and high cancer rates
A \$8.6 billion dollar ruling against Chevron
But endless appeals filed by an endless supply of blood money
Has rendered the verdict **unenforceable** outside of Ecuador
But Ecuador and Brazil are us,
As we remember the words spoken by Dorothy Stang
“The death of the forest is the death of us”

As I turn from these ugly dark truths
Other truths also exist
Truths, like the work of Ann Mc Mahon,
Who sadly passed away last year
She worked tirelessly to **save** the Santa Margarita Ranch.
Marj Mackey, Dug Chisholm and others
Formed the Atascadero Land Preservation Society,
ALPS recently purchased 103 acres of open space.
And the September ruling by Federal Judge Emmet Sullivan
That seeks to require the government to protect
More than 800 animal and plant species
Ranging from the northern wolverine,
To the Pacific walrus, and the Checkerspot butterfly

Today, as I belong to this moment of change
I also belong to Ecuador, Brazil and the Gulf of Mexico
I belong to the Checkerspot butterfly of the Pacific Northwest
The heat sensitive mammals of Yosemite Valley
The wolverine, the brown bear, the San Joaquin kit fox
And the Middle Fork of the Feather River,
That still runs down the canyon, wild and free

I am the brown pelican trying to **raise** my oil-covered wings to fly
I am the avocet, the merganser and the sand hill crane
We can only survive in marshes and fresh waterways.
I belong to the reddened roots of the Indian Rhubarb plant
That hug the banks of high sierra streams
I belong to the alpine glow, the ocean tides, the starry nights,
And the thunder heads that rule the skies
The plains where bison used to roam
The Rainforest of the Amazon
That Dorothy fought for and called her home

9/22/2011