



Canadian
Ocean
Literacy
Coalition

La coalition
canadienne de
la connaissance
de l'océan

UNDERSTANDING OCEAN LITERACY IN CANADA
EXPLORING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OCEAN THROUGH ART
ST. LAWRENCE REGION
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EDITOR: LISA (DIZ) GLITHERO



NANCY BRETON

Born in Montreal, on the shores of the St-Lawrence, committed artist and teacher, Nancy Breton lives in the Laurentians (Quebec). She earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Teaching (2016) from the University of Quebec in Montreal where she built an intercultural dialogue (Laurentides-Nunavik) through the arts. Art has to come out of the school, she says, and this is why she is doing several art projects in the community. Nancy has a growing personal artistic practice and her works can be found in private collections in Europe and Quebec, Nunavik and Yukon.



ARTIST STATEMENT

«We are the Ocean »

Acrylic on wood, Triptych

(24" X 48", 48" X 48", 24" X 48")

I paint from my experience with the ocean and from shared reflections. In my studio, I seek to translate the ocean, this nature force that ignores our disasters, its perpetual renewal, that washes, ravages, and soothes at the same time. Through colours I try to translate the emotion that guides me. The sea loves the sky. A link to its vastness which extends to the North where my heart remains, as well as to the variations of light. I am immersed in a state of "poeticity" where reality is extraordinary, without daily control. Where is the sea going? Where are we going in these uncertain times? Back to priorities and nature. What will we understand?

The ocean is complex and I want to attest to this fact, by using dynamic and symbolic elements. The role of the ocean in our culture has been important for centuries and I have read that people experience the sea in contradictory ways: powerful but serene, beautiful but dangerous. A relationship with what we prefer to call «the sea», more familiar, single and multiple. Humanity remains, a little boat, fragile, sails on the water, despite everything. A dream that keeps watch, the sea with a generous heart that makes us want to dive in and tumble. And the breeze that brings, to the envious earth, its salty breath, its soothing and energetic side.

My approach continues with an awareness of what is happening in Quebec, of what has been reported to me, a sea of received words that break like the waves. A fragile balance that I seek through composition. I am interested in relationships: between humans and the environment, between the conscious and the unconscious: an ecosystem in itself. These teachings can only bring us wisdom and adaptation. Nature reacts in symbiosis with humans and all the elements: air, earth, water. We are the ocean.



You nourished us, but we exploited your richness. You amazed us with the beauty of your fauna and corals, but we polluted you with our plastics and petroleum. However, you don't let us down. The sound of your waves soothes me. The changing colour of all shades of blue and green delights me. You shine with a thousand diamonds under the rays of the sun. You give us so much!

JOHANNE CHARBONNEAU TH  BERGE, 63
MONTREAL, QC

I would talk to the ocean about our secrets. About our common way of looking calm on the surface by hiding real life inside. I would ask her how she copes with her storms when she allows herself to express herself.

KAR  NE DUBREUIL, 43
STE-AGATHE-DES-MONTS

The ocean is a symbol of solace and peace... the horizon line represents infinity, the shoreline longing... for some it calls them to adventure, for others it holds dread and fear of the unknown... you can both lose and find yourself in its vastness... it is life and death... it holds us in its siren song and soothes us with a lullaby... we carry the same elements that make life possible within us...we are the Ocean!

KAREN SAVAGE, 70
ST-ADOLPHE-D'HOWARD

OCEAN You give me all kinds of inedible waste that becomes my food. Have you ever thought that everything you throw into the environment has the potential to end up in my ecosystem and ultimately in my grocery basket. I don't have the capacity to make a judicious selection of everything that ends up on my plate, so I end up swallowing everything and poisoning myself. If you took the time to put your garbage in an appropriate container, we could both win. Your environment would be more pleasant and mine more favorable to my lifestyle. Thank you for thinking of all this

NORMAN MACPHEE, 70
ST-SAUVEUR-DES-MONTS

Strength, immensity, origin of life, generosity in its nurturing role.

GINETTE FONTAINE, 65
MORIN-HEIGHTS



[untitled]

Your place in the world of everything living is as important as oxygen.

Those who call your waters home are in great jeopardy, with a very possible soon-to-be extinction.

Indeed, scientists have been telling us that your waters will be empty of most life form in only 50, now less than that, years.

The nets that are what we here on Earth call football-fields long and wide are the new form of material you are consuming,

along with all the other human-made materials we call 'garbage' here on land.

As I'm sure you do.

Whatever can i do to change things?

Along shores whose sands and soil and grass empty into your salt waters, I try, picking up this 'garbage',

but one of our dearly departed singers,

Pete Seeger's metaphor for activism and hope, concerning a teaspoon becoming a flood (apt for your 'ears', I suppose) meets my own ears,

I nevertheless wonder...when it comes to you.

I know you exist outside those who call your waters home, as the planet exists outside all its life forms,

but we Earthlings, all, are of your dreams and life and soul as much as we are of the land;

indeed it could be argued that the land is of your body as well as the sky (clouds, air).

In you, we all meet.

I wish I knew how we can protect those who breathe your oxygen

and for all, I'm terribly sorry.

WRITER & TEACHER, 52
MONTREAL, QC

To the sea

Mother of life, of all life

I mourn your children, so beautiful with their bright colors and their unusual shapes

From the smallest phytoplankton with their transparent light Carbon scavenger and oxygen sower.

To the biggest whales with their excessive songs

Giant birds from the depths

It's not the men and women who destroy you

But the slave-makers

Those who can never get enough of the pain of others

Like your creatures in the past, far, far from today

Learned to breathe in the open air and stood up

Soon

We will return to you

LOUISE MORAND
L'ASSOMPTION

The ocean is a playground, I like to play in the water.

ARTHUR PAPINEAU, 10
VAL-DAVID

If I could talk with the ocean, I would say that it has brought me many of the greatest moments of happiness in my life. Such as when I went windsurfing and the ocean waltzed with the wind in a dance that was both impressive and bewitching. These experiences have been the closest to a spiritual experience for me. These were moments of wholeness when I felt connected with something divine, bigger than me, than all of us humans. And for that I thank the ocean very much.

DANIEL BRETON, 57
SAINT-IGNACE-DE-LOYOLA

The ocean represents hope for many people in exile fleeing from countries at war and dictatorships. My people would have been among the boat people who took the ocean route to emigrate all over the planet.

ÈVE-MARY THAI THI LAC, 51
SAINT-IGNACE-DE-LOYOLA

Loneliness in the face of infinity. A certain meditation, being alone in front of you.

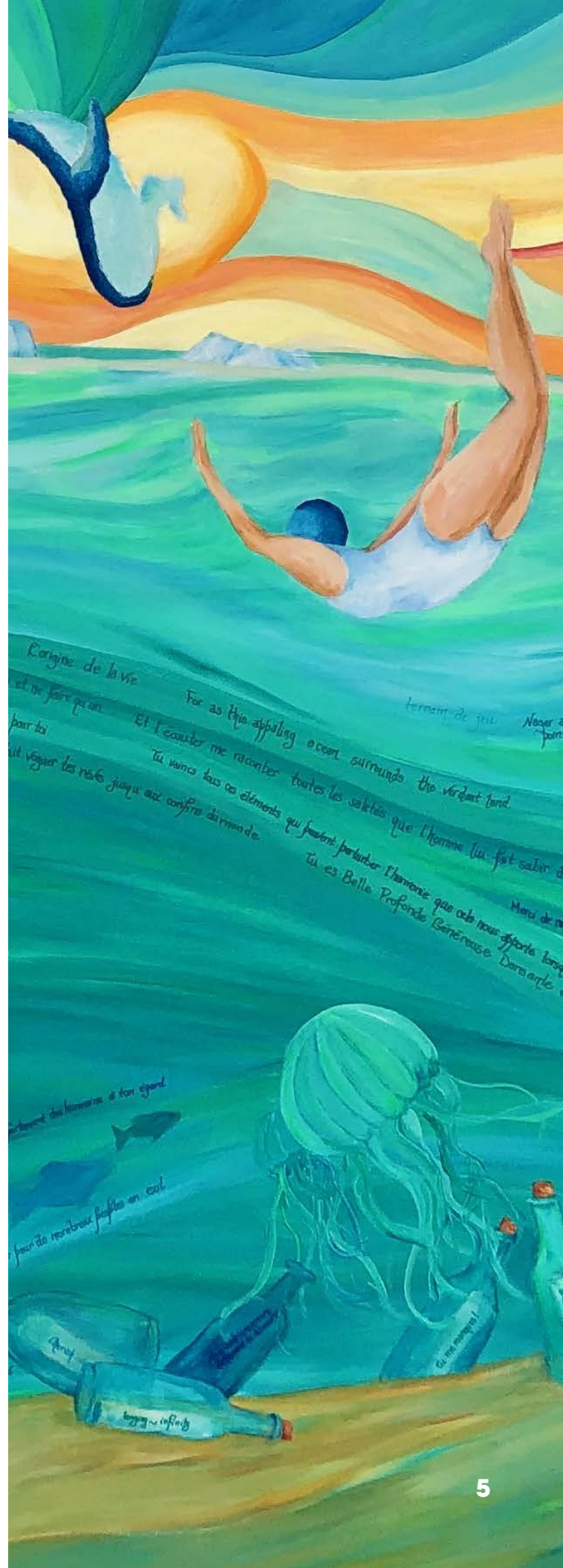
AMÉLIE BERNARD, 33
MONTREAL

My mother was a lover of the sea.
She convinced my father to buy this house by the sea in 1956, a house that my brothers, my sister and I inherited.

In September 2013, at 99 years old, she was looking at the sea through the wide open door because she could no longer go to the beach with her walker. She suspected that it was probably her last stay because her travels were more and more dangerous, this house not being adapted to her needs. Leaning on her walker, she stayed like that for ten minutes and said, breathing pure happiness:
"How beautiful the sea is! Nothing is more beautiful than the sea. I hope that my great-great-grandchildren can come and know it too. How beautiful it is!"

It's one of the most beautiful memories I have of my mother and the sea.
So I'd like to say thank you.

DANIELLE JASMIN, 71
MONTREAL



I would like to be infinite, rich in life, free. I would also like to add the "work in process" of the work Oceano as a dialogue to represent exchange, movement, changes as the presence of life. Nothing is static. (see collage)

PETRU VOICHESCU, 68
MORIN-HEIGHTS

Basically, we love each other.

PAUL CARRIÈRE, 61
BELOEIL

To the Reef
Where will your coral treasures bloom Their algae
awash
With catch and netting now?
Will you bathe your ringed atolls From float to
flood astray
Under ripples of forlorn tide? How
Will aqua maroon marine?
Where will your skeletal polyps drift? Their spirals
entwined
In sand and beach glass? When?
Will you hush in vast currents Of surge or quell
Silent Along waves of profound time? Why
Will we be lost at sea?

MARILYN FARMER, 68
MONTREAL

The ocean has always been my friend. As a child, I spent my summers by the Atlantic in France. The ocean has brought me many joys and fears and has given me exhilarating moments. Whether diving, sailing or surfing, the ocean has always been a master. On the other hand, I always preferred to call it the sea (la mer). More feminine. Softer.

When I emigrated to Quebec to a place where the horizon consists of hardwoods and conifers, I missed the sea. A lot. Often.

Ocean, I love you :)

NATHALIE CAUWET, 47
VAL-DAVID

In front of you, I look at you in wonder.
You are immense, majestic.
I close my eyes.
I breathe, I smell your salty smell.
I lean, I touch you.
I like this cool water flowing between my fingers.
I feel soothed in your presence.
I lean even more.
I hear you whispering to me:
Take care of me.
I cry and suffocate.

DOMINIQUE CARREAU, 62
REPENTIGNY





Ocean, you are life, strength, calm, excess, immensity, meditation and revitalization, conducive to daydreams, movement, light, reflection and reflection ... endlessly.

CÉLINE CORBEIL, 51
STE-ADÈLE

It is so good and sweet to float on your waves
With your salty air, unparalleled you comfort me
When your rushing waves wander
I only think of diving, even in strong waters
Like a call to my soul of the most noctivagues
O how many times, far beyond you carry me
Especially when my body feels completely mad,
To be rocked by you, invariably you invigorate me.

HÉLÈNE LEBOUTHILLIER, 54
ST-FAUSTIN

Icebergs, fishing, our food.

JUSIPI KULULA, 55
QUAQTAQ, NUNAVIK

The first thing I do when I arrive in a country bordered by the ocean is to make contact with her, and she says to me: Well, long time no see! When I left it was the same thing. I return to say thank you and she replies: I will still be there when you return ...

STEPHAN DESPINS, 53
QUEBEC

Dear ocean, you inspire hope, life, beauty and respect.

JOHN HIRON, 38
MONTREAL

The ocean is the film The big blue - being passionate about the emptiness below, the dolphins that inhabit it, the abyssal depth, love, everything is described to perfection. Chatting with the ocean would be like meeting old friends where everyone has their place. Dive in and be one. And listening to it tell me about all the filth that man has subjected it to for so many years, a wave on my shoulder, whispering in the hollow of my ear the sounds of its inhabitants. Magic and bewitching ...

NATHALIE NADEAU, 48
STE-ANNE-DES-LACS

For me, you are a necessity. You inspire zen, calm and immensity.

MÉLANIE FAURE, 42
VAL-DAVID

Beautiful ocean, do you like it when there are big storms?
Do the sirens exist? What do whales say to each other
underwater?

TOSCANE MARCOTTE, 8
VAL-DAVID

Please share your incredible secrets with me... hidden
treasures, extinct species, with Man over time, resilience,
your power to move us ... to subjugate us ... and to establish
a kind of fear-respect all at once!

NADYNE THIBAUT, 52
BROSSARD

**You beautiful ocean... You rock the
world... Are we nice to you?... Let
me take you in my arms.**

GABRIEL DUFRESNE, 12
VAL DAVID

Swimming on the edge of an immense world, on the border
between our mainland and the unfathomable chasms, like
a point on the surface, which has on one side what it has
already traveled and will have to resume on the return other,
infinity ...

PATRICE FÉRARÈS, 62
VAL-DAVID

To you my companions, whom I have seen coming and going
for decades on my shore or on my waters, I look forward
to seeing you return and rediscover your childhood joys.
Pass on to your future generations and those around you
the pleasure of getting close to me, without plundering my
wealth or contaminating me ...

CYRIL TANNIÈRE, 47
STE-LUCIE-DES-LAURENTIDES

You are a sign of power, strength and calm. You
overcome all these elements which can disturb the
harmony that it brings us when we are rocked, surfed,
on your back! We appreciate your immensity, your
sweetness despite certain tumults and you bring us a
lot of serenity! Thank you for allowing us to be free,
zen and in balance.

ANNICK DESLONGCHAMPS, 45
VAL-DAVID

**Thank you for all the resources you give us
to feed the planet. We will be more careful
to increase our efforts to clean up your
waters, to make sure everything is going
well. We miss the wonderful moments
spent near you.**

JOCELYNE BLAIS, 70
ST-BRUNO DE MONTARVILLE

When I see you, I hear my late husband sing "Let's go,
the sea is beautiful", a song of our ancestors, and you
comfort me.

JACQUELINE NAULT, 83
MONTREAL

If I could chat with the ocean, I would tell her that we
should take good care of her. I would tell her that her
presence alone is reassuring. That the soft murmur
of her waves is the most beautiful of melodies. That
the love granted to her is unconditional. Whether her
waters are cold or even glacial, one always bathes
there with happiness. For these reasons I hope that
we treat the oceans with respect by not throwing
waste there. We must keep its water clear, clean, and
limpid.

SYLVIE BLAIS, 63
LA PRAIRIE



THE SEA IN CONTAINMENT

You were there in front of me. We looked at each other.
In Portugal, on one of your long beaches.
We shared the same happiness.
You soothed me and energized me at the same time.
How good it was to get together!

Then, in a small cove, during a picnic,
You snuck up to me.
You stopped, worried, confused,
As if to ask me, "What's going on?"
Have humans abandoned me?
I could neither answer you nor reassure you.
One fine morning, at dawn, on your starry veil,
I saw fishermen, faithful to their appointment,
Slide towards you, bend over, as if to deliver a message to you:
"Rest!" "Watch over your inhabitants!"
"Live this freedom, the space of forty!"

I was looking at you again! But what had you changed so much?
You weren't the same on the shores of this seaside resort.
That's when I saw you, as it was, in the rough!
Released, all nature deployed, stripped, true, alone,
Without artifice, without your invaders.
I saw you in all your splendour. It was wonderful !

One day, what a surprise! In a small bay,
I saw "outlaws", They were mounted on your back.
On a board, pulled by a rainbow sail.
They probably came to bring you some comfort:
"Do not worry!" "We will take care of you!"
"It will be fine!"

Then one day, losing myself in small streets,
I came to the end of the world, it was a milestone.
From the top of the cliff, I kept my distance.
What a shock to see you! You had lost your composure.
You were unleashed, furious, you were storming.
You smashed violently against the rocks.
I heard your distress "The water needs help!"
I felt so helpless in the face of of such suffering!

Then came the time of farewells.
Before a sunset, you had returned to calm.
It was then that I made you a promise.
Know that all our meetings will not be in vain.
You transformed me; I saw your true nature.
So I will speak to humans about your moods.
Together, we will take care of you.
I even heard them say:
Change, Kindness, Respect.

Keep hope! Humans are waking up. They love you.
The good days will return and your fight will stop.
Take advantage of this pandemic to get a makeover,
Restore your strength. Purify yourself! Live your ocean life in freedom.
We won't abandon you, we need each other.
You will always remain in our hearts, dear friend!

CLAUDETTE L'ECUYER, 73
STE-MARTHE -SUR-LE-LAC

To you our native Atlantic Ocean,

At these times when our humanity is undermined by this invisible but oh so devastating Covid, we want to tell you how beautiful you are, how much the sound and sight of your waves which so calmed us now seems very far away in our memories.
We cannot however forget all the beautiful moments spent by your side on the shore, accompanied by our dear families and friends, ... all these memories, each more wonderful than the other, which soothe us today and are like a comforting balm.

We could also tell you how much we understand that the current calm must be a blessing for you, as well as for all the aquatic fauna that you shelter in your vastness and for the quality of your water, which finally has a respite from all the pollutants and waste thrown away.

We sincerely hope that this period brings humans back to more respect and benevolence towards you so that future generations can continue to enjoy your benefits...

CHRISTELLE CASTRO, 49
STE-LUCIE-DES-LAURENTIDES



The sea I come to chat with you Infinite sea. You are magnificent, beautiful, deep, generous, dancing and sometimes furious and I love you! However, this is not what I want to talk to you about today: I feel you groaning at the behaviour of humans towards you: You are generous but the overfishing that we practise causes shorebirds to die of hunger ... That your dress is soiled with the oil drained from the boats, that we have created a sea of deadly plastics ... That the din we make prevents your inhabitants from communicating with each other and that the mother even loses contact with her infant ... looking a little further down: you are magnificent corals losing their colours and dying because we overheat the planet earth ... We strew your floor your with garbage which becomes deadly traps ... Having almost eliminated your fauna, we we are preparing to harvest your flora in an industrial way ... Where will we stop this hand-base at home and allow you to recover? This is the question I ask myself ...

GISÈLE BERGERON, 92
LAVAL

The ocean and the man

The ocean :

"Each of my drops of water is a call to life
Between the hollow and the crest of my blue waves
You have sailed to horizons full of promise
I made your dreams sail to the far reaches of the world"

The man :

"O Mother of the very first living forgiveness
Sorry to have defiled the purity of your waters
Soiling your tides with oil and plastic
And emptied the nourishing entrails of your kingdom"

The ocean :

"O reckless man! It was time
That you remember the source of your life
It's never too late to do well
But almost..."

RAÔUL DUGUAY, 81
SAINT-ARMAND-LES-VENTS

What a temperament you have sir. However, I have always thought of the ocean as feminine (despite Larousse saying it's masculine in French)! We can, however, always say the sea (la mer)...

In fact, we should say "gentlemen" since there are more than one ocean.

But by the way, I don't quite understand how you are doing so well these days ... Despite this pollution that the inhabitants of the planet inflict on you, you still find a way to feed your people, be it with algae, fish or crustaceans ... In addition, you seem to concentrate this pollution in very specific places ... This is probably one of the reasons why people tend to ignore how badly handled you are in many regions. Despite everything, you continue to offer these completely paradisaical places, some that are busy with people, while others still remain wild and unknown. No one remains indifferent to your charms, be it for the fullness that you inspire, this immensity that both amazes and frightens us, these depths that you can hardly imagine with your abyssal pools teeming with life, life as nearly as old as the earth itself, a mystery in itself. But how long will you be able to maintain this state, this radiance, this beauty and keep this cadence and this capacity? You revolt on occasion and it even seems this happens more often than in the past! Are you frustrated by the fate that Earth's inhabitants make you suffer? It is true that you have been taken for granted. But understand that faced with such an immensity, why worry about your fate since it is much bigger and stronger than us as individuals. But ... with 7.5 billion people, I understand that it gets a

little complicated ... Honestly, one could even say it's an invasion or an "unequal combat" in the face of this global carelessness.

But – yes, there is a but – there is a kind of hope that surprises us, enthralls us, leaves us a little incredulous but excites us at the same time: our young people. These same young people who grow, who admire, who are passionate, who are still old enough to be amazed and who believe they can influence, change our behaviour in order to protect the environment for them and for those who come! These same young people speak... they blog, they text, they sing, they shout and use all means to give their voices an echo that resonates around the world. They speak loudly and what is more, they are taking concrete steps to improve the situation. These gestures have repercussions and are part of a new way of life to protect the planet.

So, Mr. Ocean, what do you say to these words of hope? "Tonnerre de Brest, I would say that finally it gives me a little hope and I feel bloated ... Ok, I will not make too many waves, I promise. With my immensity, I have many reservations, but to maintain the current pace, there will come a time when I will not know or can no longer thwart all these assaults. So to know today that so many young people are interested in me and my health touches me and allows me to hope to keep my ability to feed my people and to benefit all of humanity. Shout out loudly and above all, do not stop. I promise to stay calm, this kind of calm that allows

MARCEL NAULT, 71
VAUDREUIL-DORION

Beautiful ocean, rock me with the flow of your secrets ...

AGATHE BÉNARD, 46
VAL-DAVID

If I could have a discussion, I would ask her if she is aware of the amount of plastic that is currently dumped into her annually and what this amount will be in 2025 if the trend continues.

Currently: 8.8 million tonnes and in 2025, 170 million tonnes.

She would ask me who is primarily responsible and I would tell her that it is China (28%), Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. They alone represent half of this volume. She would ask me how she could avoid this looming death and I would tell her: in the same way as managing the pandemic.

Budget for funds from the richest countries to support work to collect waste and incinerate or use some other method to dispose of it. We are capable of giving \$2,000 per person to do nothing at the moment. Second: use the media as we are doing presently. They keep us informed every hour on the evolution of the Coronavirus in the world. Well, we could do the same for the daily waste thrown into the sea by each country. And if we can know how many people are infected on a top secret American submarine, we could be informed about boats that throw plastic into the sea (because they still represent 20% of the problem).

Lately, as with Coronavirus, very large fines related to quantity and recidivism.

I know my dear sea that you thank me in advance.
Christian, who loves you and who never tires of looking at you

CHRISTIAN CHAREST, 63
ST-PAUL-DE-L'ILE-AUX-NOIX

The sea, ...
You cradle us with the melody of your songs.
You dazzle us with your silver reflections.
You intoxicate us with your scent of freedom.
You tickle us with your waves.
You fill our taste buds with your fruit.
You are highlighting our darkest side by sharing with us the damage we are doing to you.
Your dark song then sends us a message of hope or despair according to humanity that we will choose for the future.
You are the reflection of our humanity.
Thank you for reminding us.

SUZIE NADEAU, 62
GATINEAU

We would still very much like to discover you, and I understand you do not reveal all your secrets to us when you see what we have done with those you have already shared with us ... !!

ALAIN TRUSSART, 62
TROIS-RIVIÈRES

Swimming on the edge of an immense world, on the border between our mainland and the unfathomable chasms, like a point on the surface, which has on one side what it has already traveled and will have to resume on the return other, infinity ...

OLIVIER ARCHAMBAULT, 44
VAL-DAVID

I chat with the ocean,
The whole ocean?
In any case the part that agrees to discuss with me,
The part within my reach,
The one in front of me,
In front of the earth,
The border,
The one who welcomes me to bathe,
The one who comes to beat the coast,
That of waves and postcards.

And what does it say?
He says the difference,
It's a limit, it's in his nature to talk about separation,
Separation of water and earth,
Wet and dry,
Different ways to eat
Same oxygen, same proteins.

And we can understand, between residents,
Here on a beach,
Or there on the rocks,
Or in a port
Or on the flats.

But the whole ocean,
Behind,
What is he saying?

It is further, deeper, more unfathomable,
More incomprehensible, more elusive,
More scary too.
As long as we talk on the edge
We can get along,
Look at yourself, admire yourself,
Swimming, dancing.
But deep down, deep down ...

VINCENT FRANÇOIS, 52
MONTREAL

I am confined
 Water flows on my hands several times a day
 My face washes as often as possible
 It goes through water, it goes through there.
 Far from streams, rivers and streams.
 Water flows alone, out of our wells or pipes
 Very quiet
 While we are confined
 Deprived of lakes and seashores, sand and shells
 We may pour torrents, this fall was inevitable
 Despite filters and plastics
 Never again sheltered
 Deadly droplets
 Who would have said.
 I miss you my sea
 Who now breathes and dances with the whales
 Will white belugas go up the river
 To taunt the townspeople?
 Will we understand something
 The day of deconfinement?
 Could I still sail on your waves?
 This distance makes me realize
 In my golden prison
 That you are essential to our life
 I drink to your health
 And to the joy of finding you again
 Sacred water, salt sea.

DANIEL CHAREST, 65
 MORIN-HEIGHTS

The ocean, essential
 Immensity, without horizon
 Gratitude, loyalty
 Towards the sea
 Me, the motherless, the non-mother
 Liners, plastics
 Fishing, fish
 Beaches, diving
 5 continents
 Containment
 Isolation, awareness, reflection
 Let's take care of the beauty
 Let's get rid of ugliness
 Sand castle
 Amazed children
 Relaxed parents
 Tanned skin
 Tides, spray, waves
 Storm, tsunami
 The ocean is there
 I draw my strength from it
 I drown my sufferings there
 My immensity
 Without horizons ...

GENEVIÈVE TRUDEAU, 63
 QUÉBEC

If I could chat with the ocean, what would we say?
 Vast expanse of water this ocean
 Water source of life and inspiration
 Sky mirror
 Planetary reflection
 As far as the eye can see, the horizon reaches to
 where the sunsets converge.
 The transparent fluidity embodies the subtleties of an
 endless blue prism.
 The movement of the tides, the power of the waves,
 this force of water is agitated.
 Gravity, accident, accentuate the rhythm and
 cadence.
 Whirlwind, foam, veil, opacity, translucency, here and
 there capture momentum
 The sound of ripples, raging waves and eddies inhabit
 the space.
 The atmospheric conditions combine calm and storm.
 You the ocean,
 There are so many treasures and secrets in your
 depth.
 Your aquatic fauna and marine flora represent an
 invaluable wealth.
 The human footprint that weakens you is not without
 consequences.
 I owe you respect.
 By the way, with both feet in the water, the
 connection with your greatness is at its peak.
 Water, source of life and inspiration.

MARTINE DESROCHERS, 55
 VAL-DAVID

**If I could speak to The Ocean, I would say:
 thank you for giving us life and I am sorry
 for what I have done as a human race. I
 have flouted, neglected, used, abused,
 polluted, stocked, confused, brewed, etc.
 and you're still here, wanting to help me,
 support me and feed me. Thank you again
 to you who not only gave life but who
 brought it, endured despite the hectic pace.**

KRYSTINE LESSARD, 55
 SAINTÉ-ADÈLE

OCEAN

I live on the surface of the earth, along with billions of other humans and countless other species that breathe oxygen directly. I can dive in the water, whether it is sweet or salty, but it is not my element, and I cannot stay there very long. Just as aquatic animals, fish, cetaceans, starfish, crustaceans, can leave the water briefly but must return to it.

So we each have our "sphere", our world. Ours, that of the land, only accounts for about 30% of the planet's surface. We can agree this makes the fact of calling the entire planet "Earth" a little presumptuous ...In this surfacian world, my species, Homo Sapiens, is the one that has the most influence on its environment. We have built cities, roads, vehicles, musical instruments, means of communication, medicines for diseases, and we have even colonized space with our satellites. This whole development is impressive, and the source of many advances that have increased life expectancy as well as its quality (for us humans, in any case).

But more and more, this progress is causing panic by destroying the natural environment which is used as habitat for all the other animal and vegetable species of the surface and by the effect of greenhouse gases that all our progress generates and threatens the climatic balance which allows life on earth (including ours) to thrive. And our harmful influence also extends to the oceans by disturbing the ocean currents and by acidifying the water, which destroys, among other things, the coral reefs which are to the oceans what the tropical rain forests are to the emerged lands: the ecosystems for the more abundant of different species. What is needed is for an oceanic species to evolve to defend the aquatic world against us. And I believe that the species best placed to play this role, with amazing intelligence, capable of using tools, of solving complex problems and even of editing its RNA to adapt to new conditions, is the octopus. Besides, it seems that it is a species that is proliferating more and more (with jellyfish) despite all the pollution and acidification problems that undermine so many other species. A sign...

Since the dawn of time, every little baby octopus has been condemned to start from scratch. Because the mother who lays the eggs always dies before they hatch. She therefore does not have the opportunity to teach her little ones what she has learned during her lifetime. If we could change even that, to allow octopuses to bequeath from generation to generation the knowledge they have, it would not take time (on a biological scale, we agree) before they develop a "written" language (by the chromatophores of their skin), that they organize themselves in society, that they garden the coral as Homo Sapiens once could develop agriculture, that they "raise" fish by protecting them from human predation, that they domesticate the dolphin as formerly we domesticated the horse.

And there, the human on his little 30% of land would face a real competition for the domination of the planet. And maybe, finally, it would allow him to make better decisions.

A bit like it was said at the time of the Cold War that competition with the communist world had the effect of "policing" capitalism, a "Warm War" between the Surfaccians and the Oceanics could be what would do the most good to the entire planet.

So there you go, Ocean. I suggest you give the octopuses a little boost by delaying the death of the egg-laying mothers just a little. Because humans will never be able to self-regulate on their own. It would take them from a rival civilization.

It is a bottle in the sea, of course. But precisely, the octopuses are already able to open it ...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xfDYs_6rUk

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