

The Hole Tree

A Tale of Natural Inclusion

Once, within a place somewhere in the middle of everywhere, lived a Mole.

The Mole was lonely and longed to find some other Mole with whom he could belong.

But, for a long, long while, no other mole came into view through the Mole's short sight.

So the Mole looked inside of himself, again and again, until one day he heard a voice.

This is what the voice said:

I AM the hole
That **lives** in a mole
That **induces** the mole
To **dig** the hole
That **moves** the mole
Through the **earth**
That **forms** a **hill**
That **becomes** a **mountain**
That **reaches** to **sky**
That **pools** in **stars**
And **brings** the **rain**
That the **mountain** **collects**
Into **streams** and **rivers**
That **moisten** the **earth**
That **grows** the **grass**
That **freshens** the **air**
That **condenses** to **rain**
That **carries** the **water**
That **brings** the mole
To **Life**

Hearing these words, the Mole was delighted. He understood that *'everything lives somewhere inside somewhere else inside everywhere'*. What a pity so few of us seem to understand that, he thought – we'd care so much more for ourselves and our companions if we did. He learned the words by heart, and whenever he started to feel lonely, he sang them gently to himself. And so he has never again felt lonely, from that day to this.



Meanwhile, not far away, an acorn found itself in the beak of a Jay, carried away into the blue sky that matched the window-stripes in the bird's wings, then plunged back and drilled into the pinky-brown earth that matched the bird's belly and back. The bird flew away from where it had planted the acorn, meaning to return to its hiding place when food ran short. But for once a hole in its amazing memory allowed the acorn to stay put and begin to turn itself inside out into a tree. The bird never returned, but one day one of its great, great, great grandchildren settled on one of the tree's branches carrying an acorn in its beak.

Not much stirred at first within the quiet darkness protected by the acorn's hard outer shell. But all around, the silence of the surrounding ground was broken by the sounds of rustlings and surging as the life of the soil and the flow of water and air kept coming and going in an endless rhythm and searching dance. An earthworm oozed around the cavity of its gut, taking soil in at one end and spilling it out at the other, mixing it all up into a fine stream of fragments that eased the way for roots to take up its content of the minerals they needed to keep growing. Tiny tubes, much narrower than a mole's whiskers and filled with the juice called cytoplasm that circulates in the cells of all life's forms, probed and branched amongst the soil's tunnels and runnels. Some of these tubes, the hyphae of fungi, laced themselves up into networks, called mycelia, which here and there gathered into knots that pushed up above the soil's surface, to form mushrooms and toadstools and elf cups. But some of these knots stayed out of sight, as truffles, until uncovered by a hungry squirrel, or dog or pig. Even finer tubes, belonging to what some call 'ray fungi' also stayed under cover, but filled the air with the earthy scent that fills our nostrils, especially after a shower of rain. Their close cousins, the bacteria multiplied by dividing in vast numbers, swimming and gliding in grime and slime. Larger creatures, but still not much larger than a full stop on this page, chomped and sucked their way through these crowds, in the form of protozoa and slime moulds. And yet larger creatures, mites and springtails and all sorts of insect grubs, chomped and sucked their way through them.

What a din all this life and trickling made around the sleeping heart of the acorn! If it had used its imagination, the acorn might have heard a message at the heart of this noise that may not be obvious to everyone, but is true all the same:

Every body is a cavity at heart

Every figure reconfigures both in science and in art

Every face is interfacing from no bottom to no top

Every faith is interfaith that cannot tell us where to stop

Every lining opens inwards as it brings its inside out

Every curtain closes outwards to conceal its inner doubt

Every story ends in opening from some future into past

Every glory is the story of finding first in last

Every aching is the making of another role for play

Every taking is the slaking of another's thirst to stay

Every tiding's no confiding with-out the trust to tell

Every siding is no hiding from the fear of utter Hell

Every flowing is the ebbing of another's world within

Every glowing is the lighting of the darkness in the spin

Every heartbeat is the murmur in the core of inner space

Every drumbeat is the echo of the dance within each place

Every silence is the gathering of the storm that is to come

When Love comes to Life

