

# Spring is Here, and the fever it brings.

As that first tentative spurt of greening quickly gives way to the full blast firehose of new, fresh, living cells, the annual sculpting begins.

The taking and giving manipulation that makes a pleasing and plentiful landscape. coaxing the transformation of elements that will eventually express themselves as nourishing fuel, and as food for the soul, the flowering, towering, twined, vining glory of timely chaos and beauty that nature and time gifts us with, a gift that keeps giving.

After three decades of nurturing one tiny place on this vast ball of rock we live on, I am still entranced by the smallest things, the chance meeting of a unique insect, the way a tendril grips a branch, the slow unfurling of fragrant blossoms. the buzzing, chirping, humming, thrum that is a sunny Spring day.

Grooming the "overgrowth" always reveals new starts of a desirable plants that have found their niche on their own, in their own time. That time is passing faster and faster it seems. I often wonder, what will happen to my palette of plantings, when I am no longer here to do all that cutting, thinning, transplanting, and grooming?

One day, all on its own, the seasonal climax will weed out the insincere, the water hungry, those specimens resentful of shade, the tender, delicate, and exotic will succumb to the robust and wild, vines will ramble and the strong will spread to become feral, on their way towards truly wild.

**Given the prevailing disaster that humanity imposes, nothing keeps false hope alive better -than growing plants.**

The way the world is going to hell around us, perhaps nothing is more important than simply appreciating what makes survival possible.

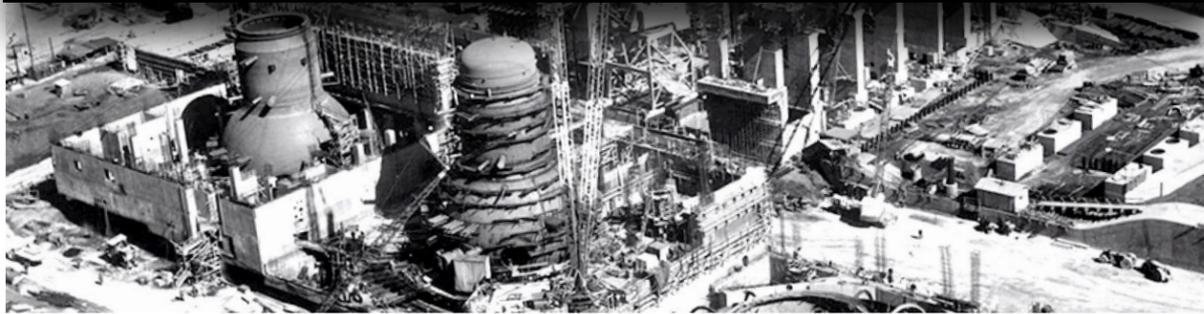


**Digging in, and staying put.**

The planet is alive and changing, molten lava flows down streets, and through houses as I write this. Years ago I walked on fresh lava flows, on the young and growing Big Island, on the edge of **Pele's** fire meeting the sea, lava covered black sand. I peered into crevices with live, bright lava flowing inches away, shifting from foot to foot, lest my rubber soles melt. I have also dug the soil up-slope- 4,000 feet, in the rain forest, up-wind of the summit of the current venting, where the dark rich soil is very young, and only inches deep- no more than a foot or so till you hit the sharp edge of the volcanic crust, and flesh cutting, crystalline "**Pele's hair**" the fragile soil slowly growing, year by year with the aggregating biomass it supports.

On my mountaintop- a rubble of sandstone, shale, and clay, forests grow, and by my actions I make a patch of thin and eroded crust deeper, darker, and richer, faster- for the mountain, for me, **for life.**

## Chernobyl Anniversary Begs Comparisons to Fukushima



The radiation dispersed into the environment by the three reactor meltdowns at Fukushima-Daiichi in Japan has exceeded that of the April 26, 1986 Chernobyl catastrophe, so we may stop calling it the "second worst" nuclear power disaster in history. Total atmospheric releases from Fukushima are estimated to be between 5.6 and 8.1 times that of Chernobyl, according to the 2013 World Nuclear Industry Status Report. Professor Komei Hosokawa, who wrote the report's Fukushima section, told London's Channel 4 News then, "Almost every day new things happen, and there is no sign that they will control the situation in the next few months or years."

Tokyo Electric Power Co. has estimated that about 900 peta-becquerels have spewed from Fukushima, and the updated 2016 TORCH Report estimates that Chernobyl dispersed 110 peta-becquerels. (A Becquerel is one atomic disintegration per second. The "peta-becquerel" is a quadrillion, or a thousand trillion Becquerels.)

Chernobyl's reactor No. 4 in Ukraine suffered several explosions, blew apart and burned for 40 days, sending clouds of radioactive materials high into the atmosphere, and spreading fallout across the whole of the Northern Hemisphere — depositing cesium-137 in Minnesota's milk.

The likelihood of similar or worse reactor disasters was estimated by James Asselstine of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), who testified to

Congress in 1986: "We can expect to see a core meltdown accident within the next 20 years, and it ... could result in off-site releases of radiation ... as large as or larger than the releases ... at Chernobyl. Fukushima-Daiichi came 25 years later.

Contamination of soil, vegetation and water is so widespread in Japan that evacuating all the at-risk populations could collapse the economy, much as Chernobyl did to the former Soviet Union.

For this reason, the Japanese government standard for decontaminating soil there is far less stringent than the standard used in Ukraine after Chernobyl,. The Korea Atomic Energy Research (KAER) Institute outside of Seoul reported in July 2014 that Fukushima-Daiichi's three reactor meltdowns may have emitted two to four times as much cesium-137 as the reactor catastrophe at Chernobyl.

In Chernobyl, 30 years after its explosions and fire, A huge metal cover was moved into place over the wreckage of the reactor and its crumbling, hastily erected cement tomb. The giant new cover is 350 feet high, and engineers say it should last 100 years — far short of the 250,000-year radiation hazard underneath.

The first cover was going to work for a century too, but by 1996 was riddled with cracks and in danger of collapsing.

— John LaForge  
nukewatchinfo.org

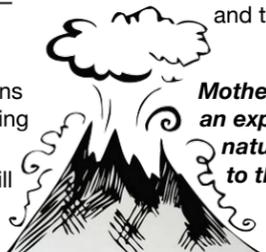
### Tired Mountain Syndrome Leaves the War

North Korea's latest nuclear test, conducted in September 2017 at Punggye-ri, was at least 17 times more powerful than the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945. The explosion registered as a magnitude-6.3 earthquake, and before-and-after satellite shots showed visible movement at Mount Mantap — a 7,200-foot-high mountain under which deeply buried tunnels house most of the tests.

When a nuclear explosion goes off inside a mountain, it breaks the surrounding rock. But as more explosions go off around the same — but not exact — spot, the rocks that are farther away also begin to crumble under repeated stress.

The accumulated effect of these explosions that weaken rocks and create that fracturing is called '**Tired Mountain Syndrome.**'

North Korea recently announced that it will cease all nuclear testing and will shut down its main testing facility at Mount



Mantap. Although some believe the decision came because of easing tensions between the country and the world, others think Mount Mantap may have a bad case of '**Tired Mountain Syndrome.**'

If nuclear test sites are shut down, it's usually a direct consequence of the syndrome. Mountains with this condition become much more permeable, meaning that more pathways open up for gas and liquid to travel through the rock. This means there's a greater chance for radioactive gas — with the most concerning being xenon — to escape the rock and seep out to the surface. The process by which gas could be pulled up and through the rock is called barometric pumping.

**Mother nature has already fractured the rock, When an explosion goes off, damage can connect with natural fractures, and you can get a pathway up to the surface, and gases will seep out.**

livescience.com

**But everything else is happening faster too; The good the bad, and the ugly that define progress, none of which is truly sustainable.**

Last year the Mauna Loa Observatory recorded its first-ever carbon dioxide reading in excess of 410 parts per million. Carbon dioxide hasn't reached that height in millions of years. It's a new atmosphere that humanity will have to contend with, one that's trapping more heat and causing the climate to change at a quickening rate.

In what's become a spring tradition like Passover and Easter, carbon dioxide has set a record high each year since measurements began.

**Clearly, disaster awaits us, but despondence or despair is not a sustainable option either.**

A Japanese study revealed that **Shinrin-yoku** (walking in forests in order to promote health) is beneficial for the reduction of chronic stress- and exposure to the bacteria in soil, specifically, appears to be good for mental health, and is being investigated as a treatment for depression.

My Advice? **Everyone, Dig in, stay put- wake-up and smell the flowers, while you still can.**

~ Joshua Golden

### NOT MUCH LEFT

Things disappear  
I'm on my knees again  
cleaning hair & dust  
from the rug garden  
fraying I learn  
the knotted pattern  
four arched heart  
wild geese flown  
The sand I built upon  
blows through the weft

-Kathy Epling

**"Remember- Time is an avid player who wins without cheating every time! That's the law."**

~Baudelaire,



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