

## A litany of disappearance

*[For 10 readers—or as many as are available. Readers could be clustered in a group at front of sanctuary. They could have on some minimal costuming related to being living creatures—but not necessary.]*

- 1) “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.”
- 2) At least on paper.
- 3) So who is the psalmist trying to kid?!
- 4) They don’t treat us like we belong to the Lord!
- 5) Or like we are part of God’s good creation! But aren’t we?!
- 6) Be careful—it’s a trick question. Of course there’s only one right answer—but it may be the wrong answer, as far as *you* are concerned.
- 7) Let us introduce ourselves. We are the “all creatures of our God and King” you like to sing about.
- 8) You remember, the ones God created and called “good”—even before you showed up?
- 9) We fly, we swim, we burrow—in your flower bed.
- 10) We sing and dance, we trumpet and howl, we bounce sonar off little fishies...and then eat them.
- 2) Just like you, we are proud parents, we’d risk our lives for our young, and a few of us stay with our mate for our whole lives—just like some of you...
- 9) We are the ones who pollinate your plants, make your honey, dispose of your road kill...hey, don’t knock it till you’ve tried it...
- 3) We entertain you at your bird feeder, populate the rainforest, prowl the arctic...
- 8) ...and show up on your dinner plate if we don’t watch out!
- 4) We are the living creatures of planet Earth—created by God just as you were—but we’ve got a problem.
- 7) Our numbers are declining...
- 5) That’s putting it gently. Actually, we’re disappearing.
- 6) Entire species of sea creatures, from the great whales to the once-great schools of cod and tuna—they’re on the brink of disappearing.
- 1) Land animals aren’t faring any better. Polar bears may be gone by the end of the century as the ice disappears from under their feet. Wolves and bison, elephants and rhinos are just a shadow of their former selves.
- 10) And look! Up in the air! It’s a bird...! Or maybe not—birds are endangered too. Over a thousand species could disappear by the end of the century. Even the toucan on the cereal box—it’s endangered in its native habitat.
- 5) What’s the problem?
- 6) What do you think?

4) In the rainforest, they're turning pristine forest into pastureland. Can you guess what the most populous large mammal in the Amazon is these days? The cow—57 million of them!

7) In the Arctic, they've turned up the heat so much that the glaciers and the ice pack are melting.

3) They've let so much of their chemicals and fertilizers run into streams and rivers that the coastal bays have less than 1 percent of the shellfish once living there.

8) Some of them use so much paper that they've turned millions of acres of diverse forest into tree plantations—only one kind of tree for miles and miles—boooooiiiiiiiiinnnggggg! And that's nothing like home—so we have to go somewhere else or...well, sometimes that's the end.

2) They've also managed to damage a quarter of the coral reefs, drain half the wetlands, and overfish the whole ocean!

9) All this will eventually affect them—but for now, it's affecting us.

1) In fact, in the past 30 years, there are 40 percent fewer of us living on earth.

*[40 percent of the group sits down or steps aside; those remaining continue the reading]*

10) But there's not much we can do about it.

9) Fortunately—or unfortunately, you be the judge—God put one particular species in charge of the earth to use it and protect it.

8) There's just one little problem—seems there's a slight conflict of interest, since this same species is the one causing all the problems.

7) We were wondering...

6) Since you speak their language...

5) And maybe understand better than us why they're doing this...

8) We were wondering if you might have a word with them? Just to let them know what's at stake here?

6) For instance, what if the polar bears are gone by the end of the century.

9) Or the rainforest is gone in 50 years. Or the fish in the sea, or the birds in the sky, or the coral reefs or the tigers or the elephants.

7) Sure, it may mean problems for them—affecting their food, their health, their enjoyment of nature...

10) ...but they have another problem—how will they explain this to future generations—that they let this happen, these creatures disappearing forever—after God asked them to take care of things...?

*Litany of Disappearance*

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