

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

## **A Modern Eden**

(Original)

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Go outside. Further than the front door of your home; further than the shop on the corner whose doors shelter he who has no other home, he who nobody knows. Walk beyond the eardrum-shattering construction work, the honks of a thousand cars and the ceaseless shine from artificial bulbs. Walk till air feels light and clean and city sounds are far away. Walk to trees and grass and dirt where stillness makes a welcome change.

Lie down. Feel the ground beneath your bones; feel Earth's energy flow as its heart syncs up with the beat of your own and notice, you're not really alone. Let your aching legs rest against the earth and feel the grass move to remove the hurt by wrapping them in a gentle hug. From this ground grows the food that sustains you, the rain from the sky keeps your thirst quenched and the air that fills your lungs is the same that granted your first breath. Nature's gifts are the reason you were able to live, to learn and to transform into the strong, young woman you are today.

Today, everyone knows what your society is still learning: Earth is not ours to own. For too long, we took advantage of the natural riches bestowed upon us. The demand, the looting and the labour left mother nature frail. Weak and withered from our greed, our primary caretaker grew unable to protect her children from drought, flooding and disaster. As the death toll rose, exploitative systems fell and from the rubble of revolution, we finally learnt to adapt our ways. Our planet is regaining its strength but yours is still in crisis. It's up to you to learn how to look after it now in its time of need.

The key is community. We work together to provide enough to meet the needs of every member of our community. Each household eats what they grow, topped up with additional foods from the local market. We aim to eat with the seasons and have learnt how to preserve summer foods to last through the winter. Our fish comes from the nearest sea and any meat we eat comes from the animals we see roaming our fields, once it has lived a full and happy life. Dependency on supermarkets and corporations has made you vulnerable, gain back the power by learning how to work with the land.

Our wardrobes are still full, still colourful but we have learnt to appreciate our clothes. We mend, alter and repurpose our fabrics rather than throw them away. New items are made with recycled materials, ethically grown materials and non-toxic dyes. Talented tailors are paid fairly for their work unlike the sweatshops that are currently used to provide all of your clothes. The people will come to realise that if you don't like an unfair system, you need not partake in it.

Online working opportunities and reduced working hours means few people need to travel to work. Those that do are often able to live within walking distance – I'm sure you would mistake our rush hour traffic for a lazy Sunday afternoon. With no need to live on top of each other, our cities have dispersed and appropriate housing is available for all.

Abandon current societal expectations of success. Instead, focus on the amount of good you put into the world. The planet never needed you to become a CEO, a popstar or a banker. Your acts of compassion are what got us here as well as commitment to protection of all for life. This new focus meant resources were channelled into communities leading to a huge drop in crime rates. My job is to keep the vulnerable vested into society, offering help and care to those who need it most. The homeless man you strolled past on the way to your local store is now a teacher, he got there thanks to your help.

Each person has the ability to change the world. Commit every day to maintaining respect for each living thing and work to protect our natural home. The most important thing is to love. That's all.