



Indian Chief Seattle writes to the President of the United States on Sept. 12, 1855.

"Dear Mr. President,

"So the Great White Chief in Washington sends word he wishes to buy our land.

"How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. We do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the waters. How then can you buy them from us, dear sir?

"Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

"The air is precious to the Redman, for all things share the same breath — the beasts...the trees...the man. The White Man does not seem to notice the air that he breathes. But, perhaps because I am savage, I do not understand. But one thing we do know, which one day the White Man may discover...our God is the same God.

"When the last Redman has vanished from the earth and the memory is only a shadow of a cloud across the prairie, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people. For they love this earth as the newborn loves his mother's heartbeat.

"If we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. And with all your strength, treat the beasts of this land as your brothers. For if all the beasts are gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. The earth is precious to Him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt upon his creator."

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