



The astonishing thing about the Earth...  
is that it is alive.... Aloft, floating free  
beneath the moist, gleaming membrane  
of bright blue sky, is the rising Earth, the  
only exuberant thing in this part of the  
cosmos.... It has the organized,  
self-contained look of a live creature,  
full of information, marvelously skilled  
in handling the Sun.

—Lewis Thomas  
*The Lives of a Cell*