

The Greatest Show on Earth

Movement 1

Archaean horizon

The first sunrise

On a pristine gaea

Opus perfectum

Somewhere there, us sleeping

After sleeping through a hundred million centuries

We have finally opened our eyes on a sumptuous planet, sparkling with color, bountiful with life

Within decades we must close our eyes again

Isn't it a noble and enlightened way of spending our brief time in the sun

To work at understanding the universe and how we have come to wake up in it?

Movement 2

The cosmic law of gravity

Pulled the newborns around a fire

A careless cold infinity in every vast direction

Lonely farer in the Goldilocks zone

She has a tale to tell

From the stellar nursery into a carbon feast

Enter LUCA

The tapestry of chemistry

There's a writing in the garden

Leading us to the mother of all

We are one

We are a universe

Forebears of what will be

Scions of the Devonian sea

Aeons pass

Writing the tale of us all

A day-to-day new opening

For the greatest show on Earth

Ion channels welcoming the outside world

To the stuff of stars

Bedding the tree of a biological holy

Enter life

The tapestry of chemistry

There's a writing in the garden

Leading us to the mother of all

We are one

We are a universe

Forebears of what will be

Scions of the Devonian sea

Aeons pass

Writing the tale of us all

A day-to-day new opening

For the greatest show on Earth

We are here to care for the garden

The wonder of birth

Of every form most beautiful

Every form most beautiful

We are one

We are a universe

Forebears of what will be

Scions of the Devonian sea

Aeons pass writing the tale of us all

A day-to-day new opening

For the greatest show on Earth

Movement 3

After a billion years The show is still here

Not a single one of your fathers died young

The handy travelers out of Africa

Little Lucy of the Afar

Gave birth to fantasy

To idolatry

To self-destructive weaponry

Enter the God of gaps

Deep within the past

Atavistic dread of the hunted

Enter Ionia, the cradle of thought

The architecture of understanding

The human lust to feel so exceptional

To rule the Earth

Hunger for shiny rocks

For giant mushroom clouds

The will to do just as you'd be done by

Enter history, the grand finale

Enter ratkind

Man, he took his time in the sun

Had a dream to understand

A single grain of sand

He gave birth to poetry

But one day will cease to be

Greet the last light of the library

Man, he took his time in the sun

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Man, he took his time in the sun

Had a dream to understand

A single grain of sand

He gave birth to poetry

But one day will cease to be

Greet the last light of the library

We were here!

We were here!

We were here!

We were here!

Movement 4

We are going to die, and that makes us the lucky ones

Most people are never going to die because they are never going to be born

The potential people who could have been here in my place

But who will in fact never see the light of day outnumber the sand grains of Sahara

Certainly those unborn ghosts include greater poets than Keats, scientists greater than Newton

We know this because the set of possible people allowed by our DNA

So massively exceeds the set of actual people

In the teeth of those stupefying odds it is you and I, in our ordinariness, that are here

We privileged few, who won the lottery of birth against all odds

How dare we whine at our inevitable return to that prior state

From which the vast majority have never stirred?

There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers

Having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one

And that whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity

From so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been

And are being, evolved

