

## THE NIGHT AFTER THE LONGEST DAY

**Maria Diaz**

It was just before the summer when the moors of Brittany were on fire  
It was one of these years where even the Far North was burning

It happened at the Solstice threshold  
on the day people would dance around the bonfires of joy in old times  
during the Sundance when the Lakota people gathered in dancing circles  
to share healing, on the other side of the Great Salt Lake  
with the Coyote Doctor friend among them, Lewis Mehl-Madrona

It was the year when the Lakota chief Arvol Looking Horse called all human beings  
to pray for the rescue of Unci Maka, Grandmother Earth

She had been hearing voices in her head for a few days  
loving voices, allied voices, the Coyote Doctor's among others  
who guided her and instructed her about the emergency happening

Mother Earth was being threatened with massive destruction by hostile, toxic forces  
whose goal was to pollute, to wreck, to ransack, to plunder, to rape what was the  
most sacred in this world  
to eradicate all living beings

Blitzkrieg<sub>1</sub> attacks had already happened  
and there were many casualties among the ranks of Allied forces

On this night of the 21st of June 2022  
the Coyote Doctor's voice said in her head:  
You have to keep drumming all night long  
to protect all the warriors and loved ones

her blood, heart and soul family, all members of the Allied forces

So on the threshold of Summer, dressed in red,  
she stood up and grabbed her drum, Diego  
and in spite of her fear of this newly-revealed war  
she shouted in the four directions of her apartment windows:  
RISE UP, PROTECTORS OF THE EARTH!  
In English she called out

she became a herald to assemble all vital forces  
who galloped in her vision, drawn in white lines on a black background  
men-centaurs, flying turtles, floods of healing waters,  
people of this world and others  
come to counter the hostiles,  
the dark ones with claws, the creepy crawlers and the poisonous ones

All her family, blood, heart and soul,  
sons and daughters of the stars,  
all took part in the fight,  
each one in their own way  
and for them she sang

She chanted, she shouted  
from her tower among the battle fields  
to give back strength and life to the bruised spirit of the Earth  
RISE UP, PROTECTORS OF THE EARTH!  
and the hordes of warriors flooded in  
from this and other worlds

She chanted, she shouted  
and her voice didn't falter  
all night long  
even when dark long arms with claws  
rose from the wooden floor  
to try and grab her  
even when terror made her heart skip beats

Her voice kept on fighting among the guardians of the Earth  
against those who tried to silence her

She kept on singing  
even when her drumstick flew into the air  
and the wool fell from it

She kept on making the heart of the drum beat  
who protected her and them  
a solitary voice in the night  
but connected to all the prayers

The night after the longest day was the longest night in her life  
a message in her head told her she had been willing  
to sacrifice her life  
in the service of Mother Earth  
maybe even before she came into this world

She played until the first light of dawn  
that marked the end of combat.  
The hostile ones recoiled into darkness.

She put the drum down, at last,  
and silence fell onto the battlefields.  
The hostile onslaughts had been pushed back for a while...

The first bird sang its first song at the window  
but Allies victims were littering the ground  
and among them brothers, sisters, even the Coyote Doctor had been hurt  
and couldn't speak to her anymore

She had to make canli pata<sub>2</sub> and healing drawings for the victims,  
repair the breaks in bodies and souls with paint of gold  
her house had become an infirmary  
and she was getting instructions in her head  
to keep watch over the wounded

She had to let them hear joyful music without interruption  
so she invited Bob Marley's spirit on her loudspeakers:  
'DON'T WORRY, ABOUT A THING,  
CAUSE EVERY LITTLE THING IS GONNA BE ALRIGHT  
ONE LOVE! ONE HEART!  
LET'S GET TOGETHER AND FEEL ALRIGHT!'  
Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush sang their heart out:  
'DON'T GIVE UP!'

She hadn't slept a wink all night  
but it was a new day on Earth  
and she was still alive  
in spite of those who had tried to silence her  
Outside her curtains on the street there was no trace of war

only a peaceful clear summer morning bathed in birdsongs  
the heat was already rising when she walked along the avenue  
under the linden trees  
who sent their warm honey scent in the air  
the trees talked to her on that day and she answered them joyfully

She was going to an EMDR healer who was waiting for her that morning  
she needed help, but what could she say?  
how could she describe that night of battle?  
words felt pale and inadequate, but she had to try  
how could she come back to this life  
after a night of intergalactic fights?  
how could she manage the following days and nights?

Voices in her head guided her  
but sometimes they contradicted each other,  
and worst of all, sometimes they hushed  
and the fear rushed back in her heart

She didn't know how to go back to ordinary life  
but she was alive in the sun and the scents  
of this new day on Earth  
her heart open, alive!

Saved by the power of song, drum and prayer.

1. Blitzkrieg: 'An overwhelming all-out attack with infantry, armor, and air forces, especially by surprise against an unprepared enemy.' The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition.
2. Canli pata: Lakota prayer ties made with colour cotton material and filled with tobacco to send prayers to the spirits.

Maria Diaz is a French writer-illustrator of children's books and a storyteller-singer with her duet, Kalmedaz. She met Lewis Mehl-Madrona and Barbara Mainguy in 2013 during their first workshop, *Storytelling and Healing* in Paris. She has been attending their annual *French Coyotes* workshop, ever since.