

I LAND

Once upon a No Time, People dwelled in The Realm where they all knew that even though they looked different from each other, they were actually all The Life that sometimes looked like Tree and sometimes like Water and sometimes like Raven and sometimes like Caterpillar and sometimes like Rock and sometimes like Bear and sometimes like Human.

In The Realm, People felt The Life breathing, laughing, playing, singing and dancing in them, and they delighted in how things were always coming into being and then disappearing again, like a magical kaleidoscope. The Realm contained all moments and all beings that ever happened or ever could happen, so nothing was ever lost, and everything vibrated with beauty, joy and gratitude, inside a boundless, laughing Love.

Now People didn't call The Realm "The Realm," because it was everything anyone had ever known and there wasn't anything that wasn't The Realm, so you can see how it never occurred to them to give it a name.

But one day, many, many Realm dwellers somehow fell into a strange sleep that transported them into a strange, seemingly endless dream.

It wasn't the sort of nighttime dream you have when you're tucked in your bed all cozy and warm and visit all manner of magical places and meet all sorts of interesting people without your head ever leaving your pillow. In the strange sleep the people didn't need to be in bed at all to dream their dream. They dreamed their dream while they were doing all sorts of things,

like walking the dog, or sorting the mail, or shoveling the snow, or brushing their teeth, or buying the groceries. That's why it was such a strange sleep, because although the people looked for all the world like they were awake, in fact they weren't.

In their dream, the people saw themselves in a strange way: each person was an I—separate and all alone—made by an I-in-the-Sky who was separate and far, far away. This made the people feel terribly lonely.

The place they dreamed was called I Land, and, having forgotten The Realm where nothing is ever lost, the people now thought that when they died they would disappear into a deep dark nothingness. This terrified them completely.

Now because they felt so afraid and alone, all the dreamers of I Land spent their days trying to convince themselves that they were more special than all the other I's in I Land. But no matter what they tried, on most days they could not shake the conviction that all the other I's in I Land were much, much better than they were. This left them feeling littler than little.

All this made I Land a very lonely and fearful place, though nobody ever really talked much about feeling lonesome or scared, because everyone could see that all of I Land's really special, important I's never felt that way.