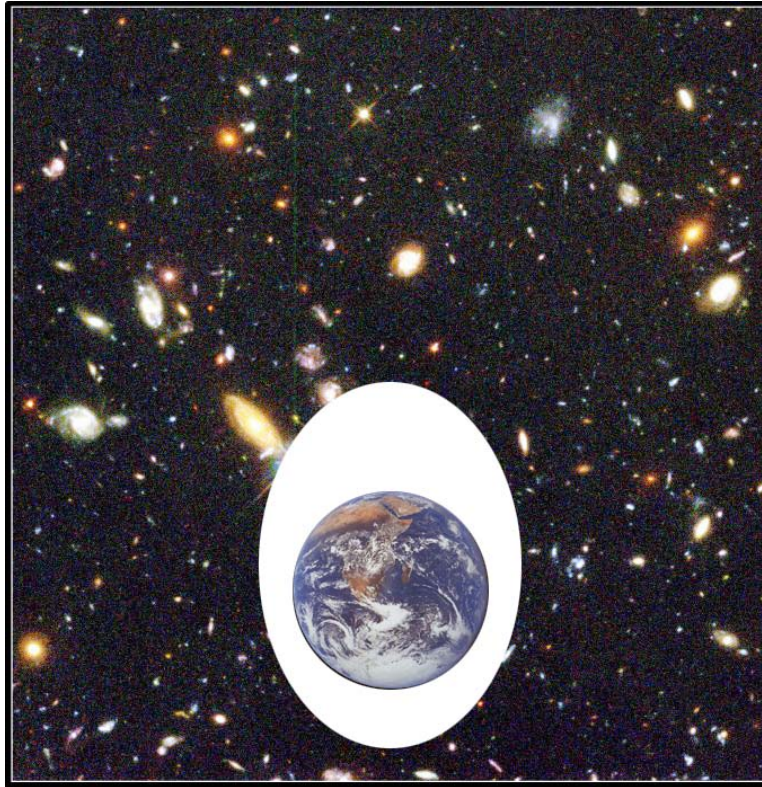


# The Egg and the Earth



One day, a chicken laid an egg. The egg contained a tiny embryo. The embryo was alive, but miniscule and helpless. The egg also contained a yolk. The yolk contained energy and nutrients and nourished the embryo. As the embryo consumed the yolk, it became larger and stronger. Just as the yolk was almost exhausted, the embryo became a chick. The chick broke free from the egg, breathed the air and began the rest of its life.

One day, the Earth appeared. Billions of years were required for gas and dust clouds to condense to form the Earth and hundreds of millions of years were required for life to develop and to accumulate rich organic reserves of coal and petroleum, but no one knew it. Then one day, people learned to speak—not just the gossipy chirping of birds or the clever dance language of the bees or

the mournful ballads of the whales, but honest-of-goodness, intelligent, abstract speech. The embryo of civilization was formed and the Earth became an egg.

After several brief millennia, civilization became industrialized and began using fossil fuels. The embryo of Earth began to consume its yolk, and civilization grew large and strong.

Civilization of Earth has not finished consuming its yolk, but when its yolk becomes exhausted it will be gone forever. Then, civilization must be ready to hatch, to break free from the limitations of the egg of the Earth, to breathe the air of the cosmos and to begin the rest of its life.