



**MOS**  
duurzame  
scholen  
straffe  
scholen

**Terra is ill**





Terra, the Earth, is ill.

“Sniff, sniff, achoo! Ouch! What is itching and stinging on my poor body?”

Terra turns to Laura, the Sun. Terra and Laura are close friends.

“Laura, I’ve got a problem. I’m not feeling well. It seems like I’m having the flu but it’s not quite the same. What’s the matter with me?”

Laura, who is much older than Terra, is very smart. She’s worried about her friend.

“Well, that’s a difficult one. Can you tell me what exactly you are feeling?”









“Not so very long ago, I was happy. I used to love the beautiful flowers, the butterflies, the birds and all the other animals that live on me. Yes, I might say that I was having a good time.

But then, the human race came to live on me. No problem, because I’ve got plenty of room.

But it seems like I’ve not felt well since that very moment. All over my skin, it’s itching. It’s like a fever, but that’s not what it is. Here I’m cold, there I have it too warm. In one place my skin seems to be on fire. In another place sweat pours like rain off me.”

#### POSSIBLE KEY QUESTIONS

- Who has already been very ill? How did you feel then?
- Did the doctor come along?
- What could be wrong with Terra?







“Sun-run-octopod, that is very odd,” Laura answers is looking doubtfully. She loves Terra and wants her to have a good time.  
“Tell me, when did this all start?”

“It must have been about two hundred years ago, I think. From one day to the next, black smoke suddenly appeared on my belly. My blanket, which ensures that not too many of your sunbeams linger on my body, started coughing. It looked a bit like a volcanic eruption, but it was not quite the same,” Terra sighs. She’s really downcast.

#### POSSIBLE KEY QUESTIONS

- What is (the origin of) the black smoke Terra is talking about?
- How about her blanket? What could it be?
- Why does Terra need a blanket?
- Terra’s blanket, can you imagine what it looks like?  
(You can connect a craft activity with this.)







“Sun-run-octopod, that is more than odd,” Laura repeats. “This requires further investigation.” And she produces a stethoscope and a whopper of a magnifying glass.

Very concentrated, Laura starts listening on her friend’s belly with the stethoscope. She looks like a doctor! “And, what do you hear?” Terra asks. “Especially a lot of rumbling and thumping,” Laura mutters. “Countless ants seem to be tickling your body. You know your body best. Any idea what that could be?”

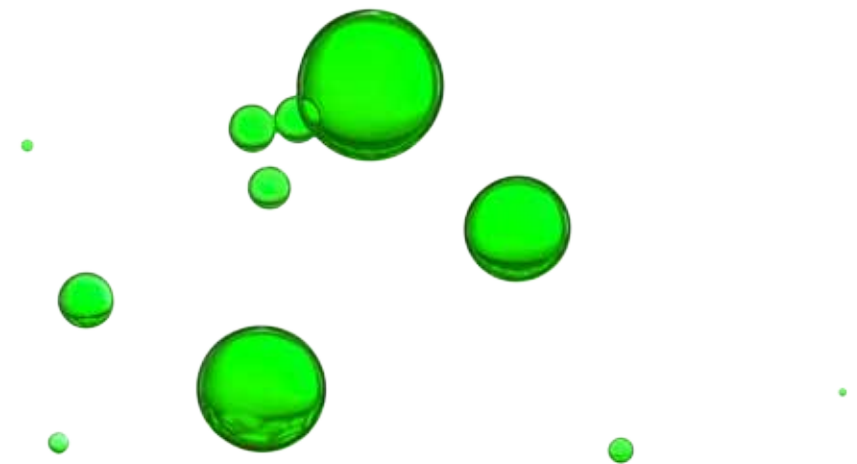
#### POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Try to nab a stethoscope somewhere. Let the children listen to each other’s heart. (What do you hear?) Let them also listen to some trees with the stethoscope. (What do you hear?) This is an opportunity to philosophize with them. (Do trees live? Do they have a heart? Can they speak to each other? Do they feel pain?)
- Let the children investigate the world around them with a magnifying glass. Let them closely look at each other and at different kinds of objects. Don’t forget to include flowers, ants, ladybugs... A new world will open up for them!





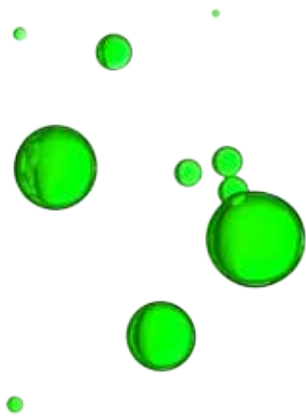




“It must be the human race,” Terra replies. “The humans have been quite active lately.”

“Have they, really? And what exactly have they been doing?” Laura asks.

Terra says: “Mwah, since they discovered coal and oil under my skin, they’ve been building factories to manufacture anything and everything. I must say, those people itch like hell!”









“Sun-run-octopod, that is really odd,” Laura cries out. “I want to know everything about it.” Then she takes her magnifying glass in order to closely examine all those scratchy activities.

“But what is that?! Those humans are hammering and building, dragging and carrying. It seems like they won’t relax for a second.

” Suddenly, she startles very fiercely. A plane narrowly skims past her nose. “I see cars and planes, I see people chopping down forests and burning them. I see masses of cows, farting and burping.

All this creates dirty clouds, some invisible, others in almost every colour of the rainbow. That cannot be good.”

#### POSSIBLE KEY QUESTIONS

- What is coal? What is oil? Where do they come from?
- What is the reason for the emergence of such dirty clouds, do you think?
- Do you know another word for these dirty clouds? ➤(exhaust) gases
- Why are those gases not good for Terra?







Laura goes on with her investigation and is following the clouds that are rising upwards.

“Hey, it seems like those many dirty clouds are sticking to your little blanket. Your blanket is growing and growing and is getting fatter.

No wonder your skin is on fire! My surplus sunbeams are stuck and can't get away. You're warming up!”

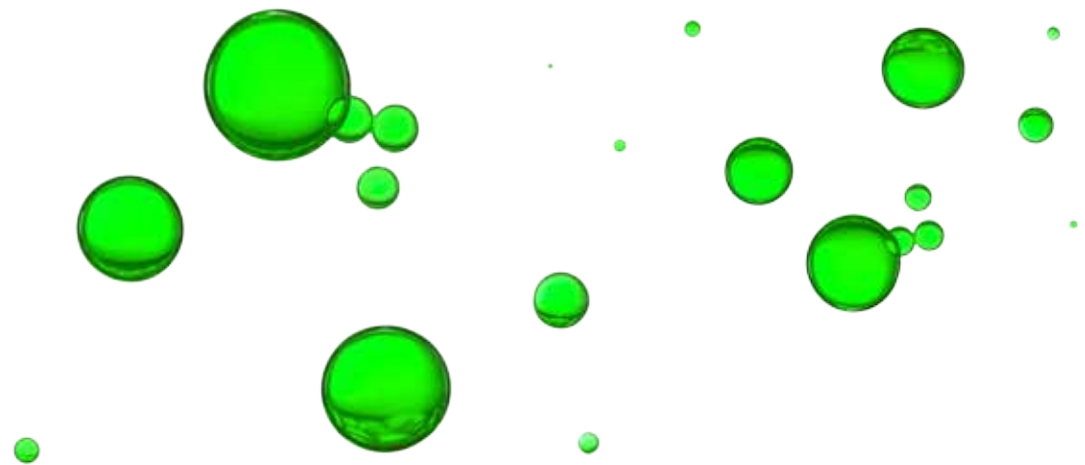
#### POSSIBLE KEY QUESTIONS

- What will happen to you when your mom or dad puts a blanket that is too thick on your bed? (it's too warm, you're sweating and sleeping badly.)









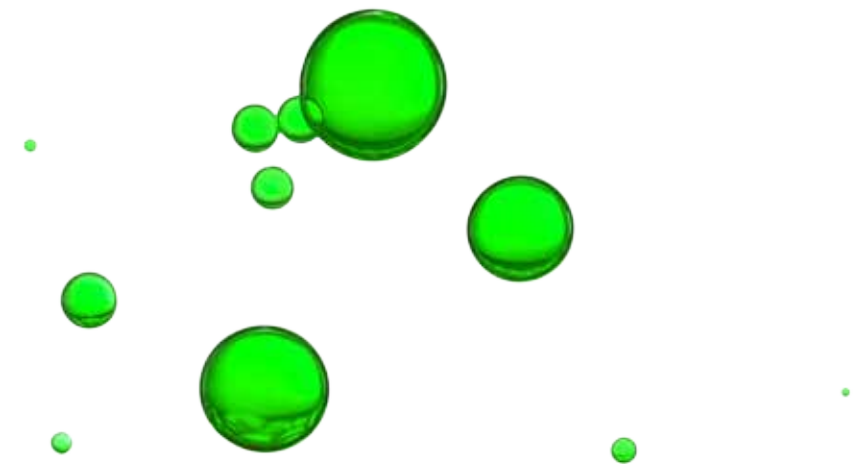
“Oh dear, oh dear! What shall I do now?” Terra is wailing. “I’ve known it all the time, that something was not right.”

“As I see it,” Laura thinks aloud, “You have been busy to defend yourself against this disease for some time.

You’ve made some places drier and in other places you’ve let it rain more.

And in still other places you’ve made sure that my sunbeams get through so that the ice is melting.

But whether this will turn out well...?”









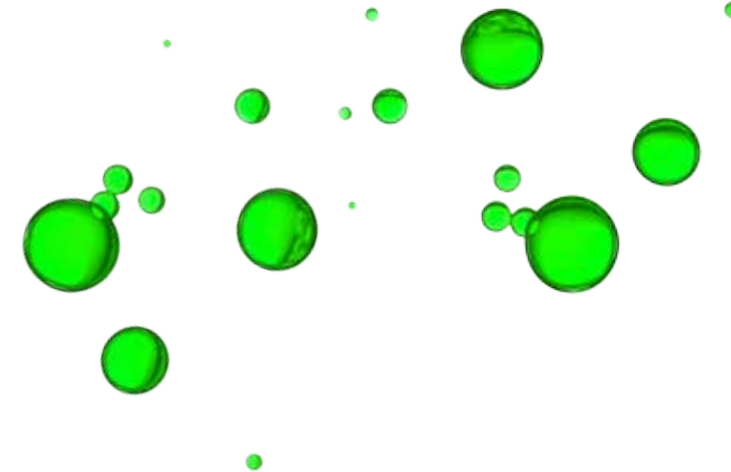


“But wait!” Laura exclaims, “do I see it right?” And with her magnifying glass she’s looking in detail again.

“Some people are no longer taking the car, but go on foot or by bike. And others eat less meat. Still others refuse all the waste they get in the shops.”

“And is that good?” Terra asks hesitantly.

“But of course,” Laura nods enthusiastically. “Less dirty clouds in the sky means that your blanket can recover and eventually you’ll be healthy again.” “Yippee,” Terra calls out passionately, “It already seems to make me feel better.”









“You’re far from OK”, Laura says. “You’re seriously ill and that will require a long recovery. But if the humans who are living on you emit less dirty clouds, you will be better again.”

“I can only hope that those people are smart enough and will take action quickly,” Terra answers, “for I myself cannot change it. They will have to do it themselves.”

“You know what,” Laura says, “I’ll talk to the children who are listening now. Hey there, kids, will you help Terra to be better again?” (the end)

#### POSSIBLE KEY QUESTIONS

- Apparently, it doesn’t look good for Terra (and for us)! What do you think? What is your opinion? Can we help Terra? And what is it exactly that we can do to help her (and ourselves)?

#### SUGGESTIONS

- We should not resign ourselves to fate. Use this story to think out fun activities together with the children: cycling activities, energy captains, less waste at home and at school, an organic vegetable garden...
- Terra, Laura and the blanket should regularly be put in the spotlight again
- Create a model of a sick Earth and a Sun that wants to help







# Terra is ill

**TARGET GROUP** (from kindergarten third year till primary school second grade)

## KEY PLAYERS

- The Earth, looking sad, being feverish, sweating...
- A worried Sun; she's concerned about her friend

**THE WRITER:** Herwig Kevelaerts

**THE ILLUSTRATOR:** Fatinha Ramos