We are not the 99%

We are the 19%

Driving my daughter to school early one morning, I was thinking about suffering. Real suffering. I was thinking about a story I recently heard about mothers in Somalia who embark upon a two-week trek to reach food and water. Along the way, a child becomes too weak to walk any further. The mother is forced to make a decision between 1 child and her remaining six. Does she stay with the 1 child, a decision that will ultimately result in the death of all her children? Or does she leave that one child behind, to die alone, sparing the lives of the other six? This story is stuck in my head. It doesn't go away. Sometimes, I'll just be watching my kids eat breakfast

and get overwhelmed with gratitude for being born into a life so abundant with food, water, and shelter. I'm grateful that I am not one of those mothers, yet pained by the fact that I feel absolutely helpless and powerless to change their circumstances.

How is it that we can extract oil from the other side the world, transport it across an ocean to refineries that turn it into a substance that can power millions of vehicles, yet we cannot get these starving children food and water? Why can't we get transportation for these mothers and their children who are walking for two weeks and dying along the way? How is it that we can land on the moon and travel through space, but not get food and water to a country here on our very own planet?

How can we look at ourselves in the mirror and still want more, knowing that there are people in this world whose basic needs are not being met? As a mother, how can I want more, knowing that another mother has to leave her child behind to

die to save her other children?

We are occupying Wall Street by the thousands. We are occupying Wall Street because our way of life has become threatened. We have lost our jobs. We have lost our homes. Our cars have been repossessed. We can’t afford to shop at Hollister; we have to settle for Target instead. We scrape the bottom of our purses looking for change to purchase our $2.45 cup of coffee from Starbucks; no more venti caramel macchiatos. We are not the 99%. We are the 19%. The majority, 80%, live in varying degrees of starvation, malnourishment, and extreme poverty, while 1% keep the 19% drunk on material wealth and gorged on stuff, stuff, and more stuff. The 80% are out of sight and out of mind. Industrialized agriculture has stolen their food and killed their soil. Manufacturers in search of cheap labor have polluted their air and water. Corrupt governments have raped their land of natural resources. ALL OF THIS is done so you and I can have more stuff. WE, the consumers, are the problem. WE, the consumers, have ALL THE POWER. If tomorrow, everyone in support of occupy Wall Street spent NO MONEY, and demanded that somebody, somewhere get those mothers and their babies in Somalia some food and water before we will spend another penny, we would see change happen fast. Yes, we might have to get a little uncomfortable. We might even have to get a little hungry for a few days, but WE would know our power and we would never forget it, nor would the corporations or the 1% whose very existence relies on the certainty that tomorrow you and I will wake up and at some point throughout the day, we will spend money.