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*Kyle Peterson -- Political Editor*

*Mike Young -- Fiction and Poetry Editor*

## Editors' Notes

-- Kyle

For those curious about our name, noö is Greek for mind. Like any part of our body, we must exercise and challenge our mind. But for that to happen, we must expose ourselves to ideas which inspire us to examine our realities. To simply adhere to the status quo is to atrophy, and as the saying goes, a mind is a terrible thing to waste.

We intend this publication to operate as a forum for public discussion and present ideas and writings from those who wish to accept our challenge and wish to contribute. As editors, we advocate nor conform to a single viewpoint. Just as man cannot live on bread alone, we must diversify our diet of thought if we hope to grow. Why limit ourselves to the coarse meal of ignorance when we can feast on the plenitude of the human experience?

-- Mike

There's this highway in Siskiyou County between Weed and Yreka, where the wind gets trapped and swirls so hard it would blow, say, a clownmobile, straight into a ditch. Kyle and I were driving south on this highway in an old yellow truck and Kyle was as frustrated as a clown sailing into a ditch.

See, he'd been living in Siskiyou County for some time, and he had met some fascinating folks whose talk had jolted his cables and even rearranged some of his plugs. And he wished there were a forum where people could share those ideas with a broader audience. I asked if maybe he could roll up the window because it was freezing. *Freezing*. But I thought he had a good idea. And I thought about writers and poets I had met in Siskiyou County; the area is bristling with them; they accost you from behind trees. So, I said, why not combine your forum for critical thinking with a forum for Siskiyou County's excellent poets and fiction writers? And why not include authors from all over the world, hoisting Siskiyou County into the global literary scene? Or at least teaching people how to pronounce the name and stop giggling at a town called Weed.

Many napkins and shots of espresso later, you are reading the blossom of our efforts. From Mt. Shasta to the Netherlands, we have gathered rich, compelling work. Our featured poems vary in style and form, but each linger with a distinctive taste. We also highlight short short fiction this issue. These stories show how compact fiction can punch out powerful single images and resonate beyond its brevity.

I am proud of how far our idea has come, from a tentative musing to an inky beast. This is our stab at an exhibition of literary and socially critical voices both local and international. And if you take it and fold it into a small rolling cart, we are confident that it will stand up against any wind.

-- Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following for their contributions and support: John Young, Jim Gilmore, Eve Thompson, Ahmed Ismail, B. C. and K. N., Shirley Copperman at Marrakech, Stage Door Coffehouse & Cabaret, Mt. Shasta Book Nook, and Gail Jenners.

# Monologues

on Current Social Issues

--gathered from the general public

## Introduction

For our first edition of this feature, we took a very small digital tape recorder and stayed as far away as we could from the experts. We never aimed to glean any elite wisdom from the participants in our monologue project; instead we hoped to project a reflection of the general public's feelings and opinions on particular topics. This issue, we're addressing alternative energy and the gas price situation. We hope this feature will serve as a gauge of what the oft-battered "average" American understands and feels about current social and political issues. By providing a forum for these voices, we hope to encourage people to study their own understanding and throw their voices into the fray.

-- Jay

'I'm gonna have to sell my body in order to drive around. But look at the upside: if you were to sell everything else by the gallon, say for water, 128 bucks a gallon. So, we're getting off pretty easy. And I think we need to exercise more too. We're driving way too much and nobody carools. So it's our fault.'

--Rachel

'I think they're high because the oil companies have become monopolies. There is oil, but people want to make a lot of money and they're going to do that, so they can set the prices like they want. And we're gonna buy gas.'

--Dustin

'With the price of gas, no solution we're coming up with right now is even working and nothing that we can do with the oil is going to change it so we may as well come up with alternative ways to run our vehicle. I can't believe the Model T got twenty-five miles to the gallon.'

**(ed. note: The Model T historically got more than 30 miles per gallon.**

**Current tests among hobbyists have shown that on today's modern roads, a Model T can get anywhere from 10 to 31 mpg)**

--Steve

'I think the current situation with gas prices is on greed. Very few people are really benefiting from it, but I think it's going to result, in the long term, of us finding that we're eventually going to be forced to get alternative sources of fuel. Maybe using the same type of engines, but just a different source of fuel, such as the biodiesel. I think gas prices will keep going up. As a country, we love to travel, so I don't think our use is going to go down, but I think we're going to have to find a more efficient means. The simple fact is we are going to keep driving, no matter what the cost of fuel is. But if you look at other countries, their gas is almost double or three times the price of ours, so our country could just be catching up with the world.'

Find us with our tape recorder or send monologues to [editors@noojournal.com](mailto:editors@noojournal.com)



# Above and Beyond Oil

## The Future of Alternative Energy



As the 21st century begins, we are witnessing the greatest coalescing of technology and natural resources in human history. We now have the technology and the resources to harness the Earth's elemental forces that will not only give us energy independence, but sustainability as well. The variety of clean, efficient energies is staggering: **solar, wind, biomass, geothermal and hydroelectric power, biodiesel, ethanol, methanol, hydrogen.** And these are just some of them.

Currently, the United States accounts for only **5% of the world's population but consumes 25% of the energy produced.** The U.S. also boasts 25% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. In a world where energy demands will increase by 60% in the next twenty years, the 6% of energy generated in the U.S. by renewable sources is unacceptable. It is imperative that we increase our use of sustainable energies as we, and the rest of the world, increase our energy demand.

However unlikely it is that we will be 100% sustainable in the next twenty years, we must take steps in that direction while we have the choice. All of the renewable resources mentioned above should have a place in our sustainable world, however, there are several of these resources that have enough potential to essentially eliminate the need for any energy generated from a non-renewable source. It is on these resources that we shall now focus.

### Solar Power

The sun is perhaps the most basic source of energy we have. Everyday its rays feed the entire world, from people to the giant redwoods to the tiny plankton that live on the oceans' surface, eating up carbon dioxide. Except for creatures that live in the darkest depths of the oceans, any living thing that walks, talks, runs, scurries, floats, flies or breathes depends on the sun. Why haven't we taken more advantage of it?

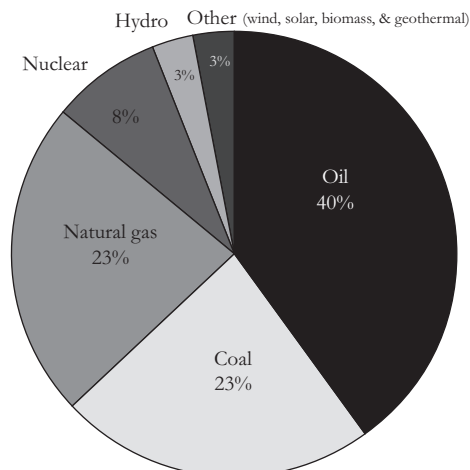
First of all, production costs of photovoltaic (PV) cells have made them less competitive than traditional utilities, which decreases demand. For example, the crystalline silicone used in most PV cells must be refined using various chemical procedures that sometimes involve costly materials. However, new thin film PV cells are being developed that can use semiconductors other than silicone and are only a few microns thick (1 micron = .001mm). The new materials are less expensive than the silicone and because of the thinness of the new PV cell, less is needed to make them.

Another reason for the limited demand is the reluctance of the building sector to incorporate PV technology into new and existing structures. This is due in part to limitations placed on design; PV modules used by buildings are often large and not always aesthetically pleasing and may detract from the overall appearance. The disappointment here is the amazing amount of electricity discarded because of how it may look.

According to a report prepared by the International Energy Agency's Photovoltaic Power Systems Programme, the United States has over 13,000 km sq. of potential rooftop and facade areas that could generate as much as 60% of the entire U.S. energy supply. Over 9,000 km sq. of that total area is residential. There are now PV roof tiles and shingles that perform exactly like asphalt shingles except they have the added feature of supplying the home with free electricity. Now that's attractive.

As this technology improves, demand will increase and drive down prices: manufacturers will be able to buy materials in bulk and investors will be attracted by potential investment returns. While there are still some bugs to work out with the PV industry, the potential of solar energy is as stunning as the summer sun.

U.S. Fuel Consumption by Type



2003 U.S. Energy Use= 98.1 Quadrillion Btu (25% of total world energy consumption)  
Source: 2005 EIA U.S. Country Analysis

### Wind Energy

The wind is a resource we have not even begun to tap. As of 2004, electricity generated from the wind was only about 16.7 billion kilowatt hours (kWh), less than 1% of the U.S. total. According to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) however, **the wind could potentially supply the entire U.S. electricity needs three times over,** producing more than 10,777 billion kWh a year. **North Dakota alone could provide 40% of the nation's electricity.**

Perhaps the most significant aspect of wind energy is how green it is. Wind turbines produce no pollution of any kind and do not require a fuel that has to be dug up, drilled, or imported. Building wind farms would bring jobs to rural areas and farmers. Ranchers could earn money by leasing a part of their land. The AWEA states that 20% of the U.S. energy needs could be supplied by installing turbines on less than 1% of its land area. Of this 1%, only 5% would be needed for the turbines and the other 95% could be used for ranching or farming.

Another attractive feature is the low cost of electricity. Currently there are several utility companies that offer customers wind-generated electricity at a cost between 2 and 2.5 cents /kWh which means that **an average household could buy 25% of their power for only 4 to 5 dollars a month.** So we have clear incentive to tap the power of the wind.

**THE TOP TWENTY STATES FOR WIND ENERGY POTENTIAL**  
(as measured by annual energy potential in the billions of kWhs, factoring in environmental and use exclusions for wind class of 3 and higher)

1	North Dakota	1,210	11	Colorado	481
2	Texas	1,190	12	New Mexico	435
3	Kansas	1,070	13	Idaho	73
4	South Dakota	1,060	14	Michigan	65
5	Montana	1,020	15	New York	62
6	Nebraska	868	16	Illinois	61
7	Wyoming	747	17	California	59
8	Oklahoma	725	18	Wisconsin	58
9	Minnesota	657	19	Maine	56
10	Iowa	551	20	Missouri	52

Source: *An Assessment of the Available Windy Land Area and Wind Energy Potential in the Contiguous United States*, Pacific Northwest Library, 1991

For more information see AWEA's web page at [www.awea.org](http://www.awea.org)

# The Green Revolution

-- Kyle Peterson

How does the title strike you? What do these words mean to you? Well, I'll tell you what they means to me. When I say green, I mean natural, and when I say revolution.. I mean positively changing the way we interact with our natural world. How does that sound now? Are you going to keep reading? I hope so.

In this age, one of the greatest challenges we face is how to supply our rapidly growing needs while improving the quality of life on Earth. As the population of the world grows and continues to industrialize, an increasing amount of natural resources will be required to maintain the existing world. As long as we depend on nonrenewable sources of energy we will be directly affected by foreign struggles for limited resources. It is time to develop clean, efficient and renewable energy sources here at home. Ours is a vast land of potential and we have the means to develop a revolutionary way of life. First, though, we must stop thinking in linear terms and start thinking about cycles.

The Earth is the finest example of a cycle we have: a self sustaining, perpetual cycle. We would do well to develop a system that mirrors such excellence, one that observes the principle of sustainability, which states that a resource must not be used faster than it is replenished. In a speech given to Darden School of Business, William McDonough outlined several principles he has developed on his quest for sustainability.

**First, waste equals food.** If we eliminate the concept of waste, everything becomes a product that can be consumed. If waste then becomes food, we are really talking about nutrients and nutrients work within a metabolism. There are two types of waste, or food, that we generate, natural and unnatural, so there must be two metabolisms, one natural and the other industrial. Products created through a natural process are called products of consumption because they can be "consumed" by the soil. A product of service is one that cannot be added to the soil and must be recycled back through the industrial metabolism. The unmarketable product is one which McDonough argues should not be made since it cannot be processed by either metabolism. McDonough cites the chromium used in shoes as an example.

By adopting this principle, resources are maximized because the end product can be incorporated back into the system without being refined. Most importantly, this will eliminate pollution and reduce the need for primary resources, allowing nature time to replenish.

**Second, use the current natural income.** Nature does not go into debt. In his speech, McDonough points out that most businesses would suffer by relying only on capital reserves. The same is true for nature. Since the natural world is our ultimate source of income, and it does not make sense to abuse resources necessary for the future.

**Third, respect diversity.** There are no two places on this earth exactly alike in geography, resources, population, or otherwise. This means that not everyone can reach sustainability in the same way. By allowing people to be innovative in their approach our diversity is maximized to its full potential, which equals respect.

Acheiving sustainability will not be an easy task and a venture of this size will require an unprecendeted amount of cooperation that must develop on a federal level. A national policy for the wise use of our resources needs to be developed, an actual written document that obliges us to set and achieve long term goals aimed at reducing the size of our ecological footprint. In his book titled *Green Plans: Greenprint for Sustainability*, former California Secretary of Resources Huey D. Johnson outlines the strategy of a **Green Plan**, which he defines as a "funded policy plan for action with a majority of the parties committed to the goals and finding ways to achieve them."

According to Johnson, these goals would best be met by creating broad policies that allowed the various business, industry, government, and public sectors to be innovative in their approach.

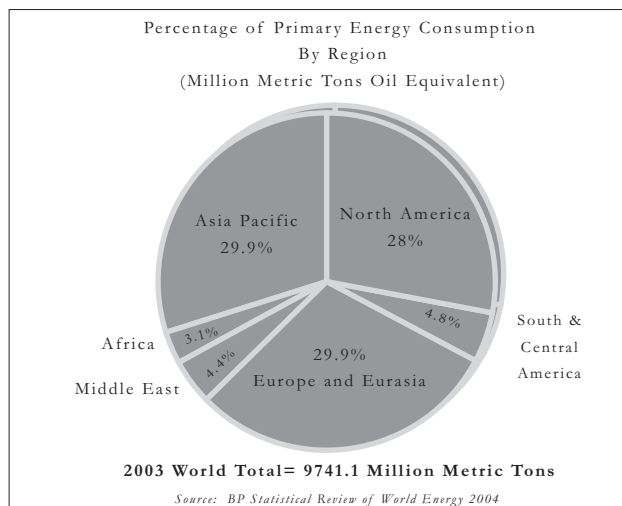
We would reach the end goal so long as the government clearly establishes and enforces the policy, making it unnecessary for multiple agencies to micromanage, an expensive, frustrating, and often counter-productive approach.

In his book, Johnson argues that the environmental policies of the past have been largely uncoordinated and reactionary efforts to fix a single aspect of a larger problem. Since all the parts of the earth are interconnected and interrelated, much like those of the human body, if one aspect is left behind or underfunded, the rest suffer as a result.

Therefore, our policies regarding its use must be comprehensive, involving all the players and pieces. This requires a great deal of committment. Only the government can enforce regulations and properly fund such a venture. Johnson states a national plan would have the power of mass behind it, creating a national drive to reach these goals.

The reason we must begin now is because of the dramatic increases in world population and energy consumption in the near future. As the developing world increases its industrialization it will rival the industrialized world in its primary energy use. In 2001, the industrialized world used 211 quadrillion Btu while the developing world used only 139 quadrillion Btu. However, by 2025, the developing world will have almost caught up with the industrialized world's energy consumption, as illustrated in the table below. This dramatic increase in demand will greatly raise prices, especially of oil.

In 2003, the United States used **20 million barrels a day** (bbl/d) of oil, **56% of that was imported**, which added **\$132.4 billion dollars to the trade deficit**. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates that by 2025 the total U.S. crude oil consumption will have risen to nearly 30 million bbl/d, and will cost about 200 billion dollars, with imports totaling 70%. The increase in oil imports is largely due to declining domestic production, which peaked in 1970 at 9.6 million bbl/d and will reach a fifty year low of 4.6 million bbl/d by 2025. At that time, the EIA states because of the increased demand in developing countries and instability in Iraq, **by 2025 oil prices are projected reach \$51 a barrel in nominal dollars**. This has prompted the search for domestic oil supplies like the reserves located in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to lessen our dependence on imports.



This is not the answer. Instead, we must supplement our energy needs from renewable sources. This applies not only to our oil use, but to our energy needs across the board.

In a speech on June 28, 1963, John F. Kennedy declared, "The supreme reality of our time is ... the vulnerability of our planet." It seems we have not realized the significance of those words in this country as we continue to consume more of the world's resources than any other nation and produce much of the pollution. In the words of my father, we're cruising for a brusing.

We can clearly see the effects of both our consumption and pollution, yet in today's society, environmental concerns are often overwhelmed by economic issues and convenience takes precedence over responsibility. As a world, we are living well beyond the Earth's ecological capacity, a practice which cannot be continued without serious repercussions. As the leading industrial nation, we must do our part to reduce the impact we have on the world.

In 2002, the World Wildlife Fund released its Living Planet Report, which stated the **Living Planet Index (LPI)**, which is derived from animal population trends over the last 30 years, dropped by 35% between 1970 and 2000. The LPI is the average of three types of population indices based on ecosystems: the forest species index, down 15%, the marine species index, down 35%, and the freshwater species index, down 55%. The report says that this dramatic loss in biodiversity is comparable to the events of mass extinction that have occurred several times before during the Earth's history, which should be a cause of great alarm considering how much we enjoy our existence.

The report also cites a cause-effect link between the LPI and the EF, or **Ecological Footprint**, which measures the total land and water resources needed to sustain one human being. Only about ¼ of the Earth's surface, or 11.4 billion hectares, is productive land and sea space; if divided equally between the world's six billion people, that means everyone is left with 1.9 hectares (1 hectare = 2.471 acres).

However, throughout history, the world's land and resources have never been divided equally, and today is no different. In 1999, the EF of the average consumer in Africa and Asia was below 1.4 hectares per person; the average Western European's EF was 5.0 hectares, and the average North American's ecological footprint was 9.6 hectares per person. That's not all.

Nation	Human Footprint (global hectares per person) (1999)
United Arab Emirates	10.13
USA	9.79
Canada	8.84
Norway	7.92
Austria	4.73
UK	5.35
Brazil	2.38
<b>World Average</b>	<b>2.28</b>
<b>(World Biocapacity)</b>	<b>1.90</b>
China	1.54
India	0.77
Bangladesh	0.53
Brundi	0.48

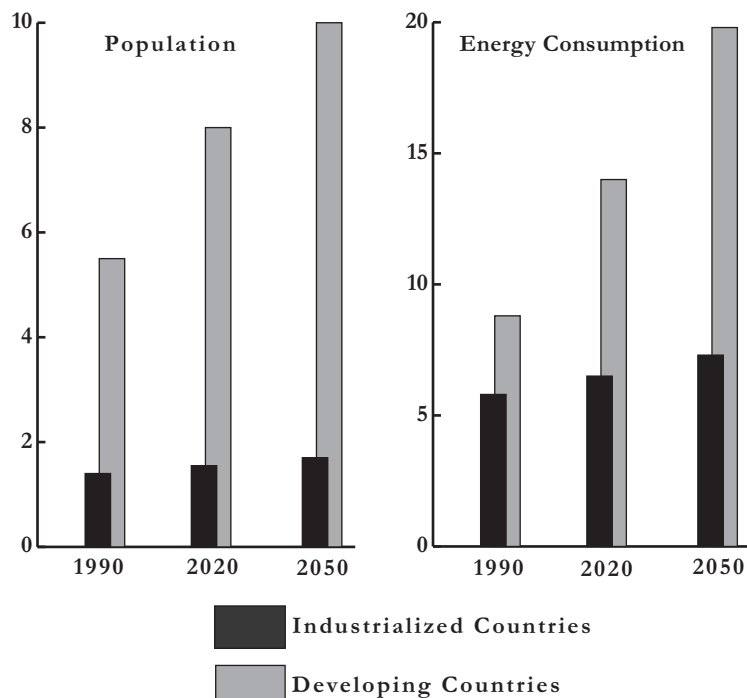
*Source: World Wildlife Fund's Living Planet Report 2002  
www.panda.org/downloads/general/LPR\_2002.pdf*

In 1999, the EF of the average world consumer was 2.3 hectares per person, which means that we are 20% above the earth's biological capacity and this is only expected to rise as the world's population increases. In 2040, there will be nearly 9 billion people on this planet and by 2050, we will increase our ecological footprint between 180% to 220% of the Earth's biological capacity. In this light, it becomes very clear that we cannot maintain current consumption rates without causing serious ecological disasters.

The answer is to reach an equilibrium with with our environment by achieving **sustainability**, a prinicple which requires resources not to be depleted faster than they are replenished. In a letter to James Madison, Thomas Jefferson wrote that the earth belongs to the living: "the dead have neither power nor rights over it." Jefferson believed that no man has the right to require more of the land's resources than can be restored during his lifetime. If he could, the earth would cease to belong to the living and instead be owned by the dead.

So, if the Earth does indeed belong to the living, then as a nation and as a world, we must decide how much of our children's inheritance we are willing to spend.

**Projected Growth in World Population and Energy Consumption**



*Source: World Energy Council*

# The ANWR: A Drop in the Barrel

--Kyle Peterson

In 1937, Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself." Almost seventy years later, we are still toying with this notion as we wait for Congress to approve this year's budget, which will permit oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This is one of the final places on Earth that has not been disturbed by our touch. Why not let this land alone so that it may continue its peaceful slumber? The oil in the ANWR will not greatly reduce the amounts of U.S. imports nor will it curb our growing oil consumption rate, and no "low impact" methods can save this vital refuge from certain and irreparable harm. Also, the increased oil production will not create a significant number of jobs, something the American people sorely need. It is only by using our oil more efficiently and developing alternative sources of fuel, like ethanol, that we can begin to lessen our dependence. On March 16, 2005 the U.S. Senate approved a measure to include opening the ANWR in this year's budget. As responsible citizens, we must take a united stand and encourage Congress and President Bush to stop oil drilling in the ANWR. Let's look at some of the facts.

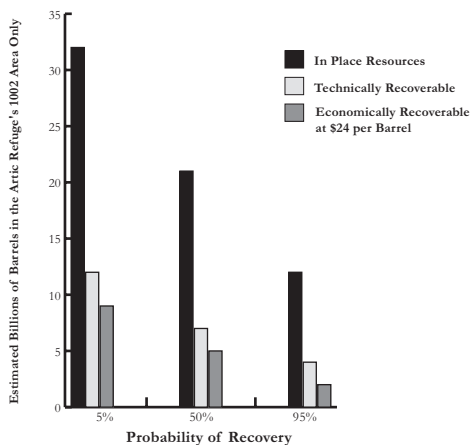
In 2004, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) released its "Analysis of Oil and Gas Production in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge." Citing a 1998 report completed by the U.S. Geological Survey, the EIA estimated between 5.7 and 16.0 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil exist in the 1002 Area, a region of the ANWR's coastal plains and foot hill tundra. According to the EIA, **it would take 7 to 12 years from the time Congress approved the drilling until the wells began producing oil.** Assuming production begins in 2013, the fields in the ANWR wouldn't reach their peak production until 2024, pumping 876,000 barrels a day (bbl/d) of oil. While not an insignificant amount, when one compares it to the projected U.S. consumption rate of 28.3 million bbl/d in 2025, the oil from the ANWR isn't much more than a drop in the barrel.



ANWR is also being promoted is because without it, Alaskan production will drop to just over 500,000 bbl/d, down from 902,000 bbl/d in 2004, showing a steady decline since the state's peak output of just over 2 million bbl/d in 1988. This decrease raises concern about the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline System (TAPS), which will not be economically feasible to operate if North Slope production falls below 400,000 bbl/d.

The ANWR oil supply could raise Alaskan production to 2.1 million bbl/d (a record high) and would increase the life of TAPS. This increased supply would then lower the world oil price between 30 and 50 cents a barrel and save the U.S. 8 billion dollars by reducing imported oil 4%. Sounds good, right? It would be, too, if we weren't **importing 70% of our oil by 2025 and spending \$200 billion dollars** on it. Furthermore, the EIA acknowledged the ability of OPEC to raise prices again by decreasing their own production. Thus, any gains from drilling in the Refuge would be diluted by the heavier weight of our imported oil.

Also, according to the Senate Committee on Energy Resources, ANWR would only create an estimated 87,000 jobs; not nearly as many as the more than 700,000 jobs a significant shift to renewable energy production would create.



Data from 1) USGS Briefing Materials, April 2000, and 2) "Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 1002 Area, Petroleum Assessment, 1998", USGS Fact Sheet FS-040-98, May 1998.

**Ethanol:** A feasible future alternative to petroleum, ethanol can be made from any plant containing a significant amount of sugar or that can be converted into sugar. Ethanol can be mixed with gasoline into a blend containing as much as 95% ethanol. This mixed fuel **produces much less carbon monoxide than gasoline, reduces fuel deposits in engines, increases octane, and eliminates the need for harmful lead substitutes like benzene, toluene, and xylene.**

Supporters of drilling in the ANWR believe that by using new "low impact" methods like working during the winter, using ice roads, 3-D seismic imaging and directional drilling, the reserves can be tapped without greatly hurting the ecosystem. However, most of these methods do more harm than good. According to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report, the 2-D seismic surveys conducted during the winter of 1984-85 required a grid of roads four miles apart; 3-D seismic imaging requires a grid of roads no more than a half-mile apart to accurately map oil reserves. This intensive network of roads increases the footprint of operations dramatically; many of the 1984 survey roads have still not fully recovered.

Roads of ice made from the local water supply would lessen the impact of traffic on the tundra, except that there are limited water resources; the ANWR's coastal plain only receives an average of 5 inches of precipitation a year, so there is not enough water to make the necessary grids. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report stated that during the winter, there are only about 9 million gallons of liquid water available in the entire ANWR region and building and maintaining ice roads would require between 8 and 15 million gallons every five months. The project would be able to maintain only 10 miles of roads, leaving the rest of the roads as gravel, which does even less than ice roads to mitigate the effects of the heavy machinery traffic on the tundra.



/ Impact lines from 2D seismic exploration in 1984-85  
 ||| Typical line spacing for 3D seismic exploration, overlaid on part of the coastal plain for comparison

Not only is there not enough water for the ice roads, according to Linda Vance of the Wilderness Society, the amount necessary for oil production is not taken into account. In her testimony before the House of Representatives Resource Committee, Vance pointed out that Prudhoe Bay, North America's largest oil field, which is less than 100 miles to the west of the ANWR, uses nearly 27 billion gallons of water annually. While the ANWR would not require as much as Prudhoe Bay, the amount would still be significant and place a great strain on the wildlife and vegetation by usurping much needed water. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service confirm this in their report which lists a number of "biological consequences" oil operations would have. They include:

- Blocking, deflecting or disturbing wildlife
- Increased predation by arctic fox, gulls and ravens on nesting birds due to introduction of garbage as a consistent food source-
- Alteration of natural drainage patterns, causing changes in vegetation
- Deposition of alkaline dust on tundra along roads, altering vegetation over a much larger area than the actual width of the road
- Local pollutant haze and acid rain from nitrogen oxides, methane and particulate matter emissions
- Contamination of soil and water from fuel and oil spills

Finally, what makes the ANWR so unique is its small size relative to other areas of the North Slope's coastal tundra and the amount of biodiversity located there; its ecosystem is a microcosm of the entire tundra system. The Brooks Mountains compress the refuge's coastal plain and foothill tundra to a width of no more than 40 miles between the mountains and the sea. To put this size into perspective, the mountains to the west of the ANWR rise up as much as 200 miles away from the ocean. This means that animals displaced by drilling operations would have a very limited area to seek refuge. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the oil reserves are not located in

one area but instead are distributed throughout the region, which means that the footprint of operations will extend over a larger area than supporters assert.

While the 1002 Area is only about 10% of the entire refuge, it contains most of its coastal plains and arctic foothill ecological zones, which are 4% of Alaska's total. The amount of diversity in such a small space illustrates how essential the 1002 Area is to the refuge. It provides a vital habitat for the Porcupine-Caribou, which migrate to the plains to raise their calves during the short summer months. It also houses polar bears that build their dens in river banks and out on the sea ice during the winter. Musk oxen live there year round, as does an abundance of aquatic life, and over 135 species of birds, including thousands of snow geese that rest there before their long migration south. None of these creatures can defend themselves against our encroachment and if we violate this area, we do ourselves and our children a great injustice by not preserving an original masterpiece of nature. It is our duty as good stewards to care for our natural world: after all, we have no other home.

Opening the refuge would devastate this pristine pocket of our home. Furthermore, the oil from the ANWR would not solve the current shortage nor significantly improve the economy. Developing alternative fuels like ethanol, methanol, hydrogen, and solar power will eliminate the need for disturbing such a true natural sanctuary. It is essential that we address our energy needs and consumption habits by developing these alternative sources in order to improve our natural world. The best way to reduce our footprint is to leave none at all. So, call, write or email your congressional representatives and tell your friends; help send the message to Washington: we as good stewards and citizens of the world say no to drilling in the ANWR.

You to



**NOÖ**

--a dialogue

What are your views on the impending energy crisis in America?  
 Is there an impending energy crisis?  
 Is there a need for alternative energy sources?  
 If so, which work and which are hollow promises?

Maybe there are other, equally potent issues you would like us to explore. Let us know your feelings by writing Kyle Peterson, our political content editor, at [kyle@noojournal.com](mailto:kyle@noojournal.com) and by visiting us at [www.noojournal.com](http://www.noojournal.com). While there, you can comment on our articles and send us suggestions for future topics. Send potential articles to Kyle either attached or included in the body of the email. We will print your comments and survey results in this dialogue page, instead of filling it with explanations of what we will print and stylized talking heads. Though we will probably keep the heads.



# POISONING

originally appeared in SoMa Literary Review ([www.somalit.com](http://www.somalit.com))

-- Braxton Younts

**G**ilbert squirmed in his seat before flinging his napkin onto the table. "Mom, I'm not having any grandchildren for you," Gilbert forcibly stated, "In sustainable development class at Berkeley, they say our planet is over populated." Momentarily distracted by the commotion, two middle-aged women stared quizzically.

"One professor postulates we should all be sterilized to prevent us from destroying the environment."

Gilbert pushed her buttons again, her face as red as her glass of merlot.

"Oh, that's ridiculous, Gilbert. You'd never — "

"I've been thinking about it."

"Most doctors wouldn't do a vasectomy on a young man." Checkmate.

"Bet I can find one if I look hard enough."



**B**ack on campus, Gilbert decided to rid himself of loathsome seed. Unable to convince anyone to perform the vasectomy, Gilbert and a group of friends got a wise idea and took a road trip to Tijuana to have the simple surgery.

Afterward his testicles swelled to the size of honeydew melons. The student infirmary nursed him back to health with a heavy dose of antibiotics and bed rest.



**U**ndaunted and walking comfortably once more, Gilbert attended a environmental rally headed by the student government.

"Do you drive?" queried a ratty haired girl with bells on her toes and rings on her fingers.

"Yes, but not often. Bay area traffic is unbelievable."

"Vehicle exhaust is one of the leading greenhouse gases causing global warming, and will eventually cause the demise of our planet! The internal combustion engine must be outlawed."

Gilbert was befuddled by her statement and her kaleidoscope eyes. These people had such direction and so much to say. It was exhilarating.

"I have a petition. Want to sign it?" she asked.

"Right on!"



The next day Gilbert sold his car to the junkyard for scrap metal. He donated the \$500 to a local charity fighting to save our national heritage, the trees.

**"W**hat else emits quantities of caustic carbon dioxide?" queried professors. Humans, of course. The pressure was high. Finals had everyone tense. In class rooms, students and teachers were unraveling the world's problems. Outside, Orcas inexplicably beached themselves.

After exams, Mom called. "Ready to come home, Gilbert!" she cried from the cell phone as she arrived outside his dorm. With his name on the Dean's List, Gilbert finished his freshman year at Berkeley.

In the car on the way home: "I'm sure they've been teaching you well, son."

"Why do we have it so well? There are homeless people starving while I eat sushi and drink bottled water. Why?" Gilbert showed off the rhetoric being taught.

"Well, no one forces you to eat sushi, dear."



**G**ilbert's summer holiday was lonely and primarily spent inside the comfortable air-conditioned home his mother owned in Los Angeles. She worked and he enjoyed guilty activities like sleeping past noon, sipping margaritas pool-side, and self-absorbed pondering.

Gilbert remembered reading in a pamphlet: superior to animals, peaceful plants convert CO<sup>2</sup> into oxygen. With eyes closed, he ruminated on the phrase. Gilbert thought of mothers and grandmothers locked into conventional roles. He pictured his father, a general building contractor, whose very profession fueled the destruction of precious timber. His grandfather died of lung cancer brought on by carcinogens billowing from factory smokestacks and cigarettes. He was irritated by the Detroit gas guzzlers and auto racing, industries built around massive consumption of gasoline. So many people, all brainwashed by a deceptive government and its megacorporation darlings. Then Gilbert shifted his thoughts to posterity and the children who would grow up on a barren, post-environmental holocaust Earth.

Distraught, but cocksure, Gilbert stepped to the garage, cranked the internal combustion engine, sank into the sumptuous leather seats, and waited for death by Cadillac. This was the only solution.



# Domestic

-- Joseph Young

"**Y**our lip," she said. "It's bleeding."

I nodded. "You bit me."

"I did?"

"Yep. When I put my finger in."

"Wow." She pushed the tangled hair out of her eyes. "Did I do it out of pain?"

"No."

"Pleasure?"

"That's what's left."

"Wow," she said again.

I got up and went to the bathroom, pressed some toilet paper to the wound. When I came back, she was on her elbows, rear in the air.

"What's this?" I said.

"To say I'm sorry?" Her voice was muffled in a pillow.

"You didn't do it on purpose."

She didn't answer, and the room fell quiet, the furnace blowing. The ice in the windows shone.

**I** woke up and went downstairs. She was drinking tea in the kitchen.

"How's my big boy?" she said.

I kissed her forehead, the bright smell of peaches in her hair. "Okay."

"Yeah? It was just okay?"

I shrugged. "My lip was throbbing."

"Oh. As opposed to what counts."

I shrugged again.

She went to the sink and poured out the dregs of her cup. When she turned around, she was crying.

"Jesus," I said. "What?"

"Nothing."

"Come on."

She held out her arm and showed me the finger-sized bruises blooming under her skin.

"I did that?"

She nodded, still crying.

I put my arms around her; she was shivering. "In pleasure?" I said. "Or pain?"

She wouldn't answer.

"Come on. Which?" I clamped her to me. The ice in the windows shone

# Thicket

-- Dave Clapper

**Through the window, I see the police.** Lots of them, trampling down the blackberry brambles. Something reeks. I started to smell it a couple of days ago, but I convinced myself I was imagining things. It was in the 70's, then. Now, the thermometer is pushing ninety degrees and there's no mistaking the smell of decay.

Jack has been gone for eleven days this time. He's never been gone longer than three. I never called the police, though. Every night, on returning from my shift at Wal-Mart, I expected, or perhaps only hoped, to hear his stereo blaring.

The thorny vines are much too thick for the uniformed men to wade through. They've started hacking away at the mass with electric hedge trimmers. In response to the whine of the motors, the two German Shepherds strain harder at their leashes.

Jack often disappears for a day or two. During the summer, it's not as obvious — the school doesn't call to report an unexcused absence. Last time, he turned up at his father's. It would have been nice for Scott to have called me when he first arrived, but he assumed I knew Jack was there.

The men are getting close to the center of the thicket. Several of them are holding their hands over their mouths, I'd assume to filter out the smell.

I pick up the phone and dial Scott's number. Holding the receiver, I walk out onto my deck to watch the men's progress. The phone rings six times, seven. No answer.

They have created a small clearing now. There's definitely something on the ground. Four of the men have donned gloves and masks. Each takes a hold of something. They trudge out of the vines, bearing their load.

The dogs are frantic, and I can barely hear one of the cops yell to another outside the clearing, "It's a deer!"

A deer. I exhale and slowly move to the kitchen, removing my red vest from a chair where I draped it last night. I'm late for my shift.



# Why Do Parents Kill the Children of Other Parents?

-- Daphne Buter

Once upon a time, we saw it on TV, children, about a few hundred or more, were killed by adults who believed they had a right to do so, because they just knew for sure their God agreed.

My little girl, who's eight, walked into the living room and saw the horror on TV.

She started shivering, and I held her.

"Why do parents kill the children of other parents?" she asked me.

I tried to explain why, so I didn't speak a word.

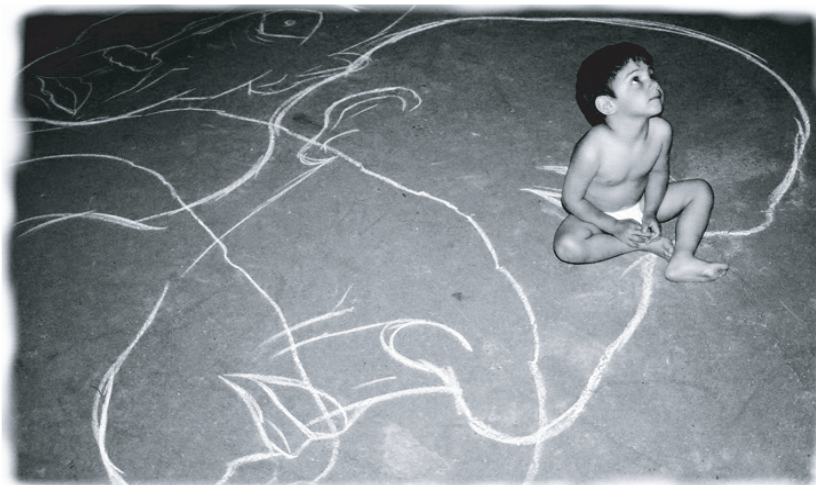
My little girl, who's bone skinny and who smells like salty flowers, went into the garden to make a bed of plants and insects. She took her music box and she lay down in our garden, framed by poppy flowers and bugs. She listened to the twinkling sounds that escaped from the box, while inside the box a tiny doll, a fragile lady ballet dancer in a pink dress, circled around on a pin.

My little girl said she had to look at the sky and she had to think about big people. That was why she lay there, to watch the depth of sky and to think about big people.

I watched her watching the depth of sky; I watched her thinking about parents who kill the children of other parents, her fresh eyes wide open, frozen in a frightened gaze.

After some time, she asked me to lie beside her, to watch the blue filled with hovering clouds and lingering birds. And we lay there, watching the clouds and the birds and the endless space behind them, where the heavens and Gods begin, and the world — with all the children who ever died in the name of the many Gods who created us or we them — was our arctic nadir.

While we lay there, I feared for a moment that this world, ruled by adults, was not a safe place for children at all.



-- 'Joey on the Eye' / © Daniel Chase Peach

# Twice in a Blue Moon



-- Ann Walters

In a year of double blues, plump circles  
of light sprinkled fingers of benevolence  
over lovers and strangers. Love happened  
in the iridescent flutterings of an eyelid,  
the velvet utterings of a pair of lips.

The same moon rolled, singular,  
across years of bliss and loss,  
presiding over heartache and broken hope  
in needles, pills, procedures; the bitter wonderment  
of unanswered expectation.

Tonight the moon again echoes double blue.  
I sit on the porch, observing it as I swing;  
forward, I can see its tumescent brightness,  
backward, there is only a refracted glow  
behind the roof's edge.

I compare my own rounded shape  
to the moon's curve, and breathe  
deep, blow out, breathe, blow.  
The pain is anticipated,  
even welcomed.

With it the moon shatters, dripping gold  
across the sky. A fragment falls  
into my lap and I feel you kick and squirm,  
reaching with curled fingers  
toward the future.

## Family Traditions

-- Eve Thompson

Midnight after shrinking from strangled shouts and tight screams  
I'd sneak from my bedroom, watch  
Father quietly close the garage door  
Mother snap on the kitchen light  
methodically fill the sink with soap  
take down all the pictures, wipe them  
scrub grease from the stove  
plunge burners in soapy water  
scour surfaces and fixtures  
stack, then polish each one  
put everything back in place.

The next morning some small wood carving ——  
hawk, wolf, horse waited for her on the kitchen table ——

a miniature doll for me.

# March

-- Jordaan Mason

Painting the side of  
the house a new  
colour every  
year.

hanging balloons from the  
front porch with  
a happy birthday sign  
in crayola marker  
on the door.

(waiting  
to blow  
the candles out)

(waiting  
for the clock on  
the wall)

the field the  
yard and the car she  
stole. I went down to maryland and  
walked the docks,  
stared out from a dead hotel  
at the ocean.

that was the first time  
I ever saw the  
atlantic.

after our visit, I  
climbed back into the car  
and crafted a cut-up  
collage with paper and  
glue. it's  
still on my wall,  
photo negatives in a  
drawer, a scrapbook  
with nothing in it.

I am trying to  
remember.

I am trying to  
remember the colour of the house  
last year.

this year, it's yellow.

## But What Happened to We the Astronauts?

--Bryan Coffelt

A swept floor and a sore throat,  
clean socks, dirty pockets  
all made in China or somewhere  
in the vicinity.

Except for my bedroom,  
I am clean. So we know  
that piety and rage  
are strange bedfellows  
and held together  
by Elmer's glue.

But what happened  
to we the astronauts?  
Now peglegged disasters  
praying for an ends to a means  
while we drive our pickups home from work  
kissing the windshield and eating  
pork rinds from Alabama, wondering  
how they fit all the taste into a soul.

How come they never  
sprinkle us with salt  
and pepper and iron filings.  
How come they never  
eat us with rice,  
eat us with bread.



Who ever said transformation was easy?  
 They lied.  
 This peeling out of skin  
 and warm womb gardens;  
 this expulsion  
 from something old,  
 flaking chrysalis.  
 This falling from grace  
 while foundations disintegrate.  
 This flying through air  
 in that between moment  
 before I grasp your hands.  
 This purgatorial limbo  
 between departures and arrivals.  
 What should I pack?  
 What do I leave behind?  
 I used to grope my way along the walls  
 at the ice skating rink on 48th Avenue  
 in San Francisco.  
 Until I ran out of wall and  
 was free-sailing and faltering around  
 the unsecured rink.  
 It's amazing how painful  
 frozen water can be.  
 And isn't beginning to walk like that  
 movement through air  
 hurtling forward  
 with an uncertain exhilaration  
 and its painful companion?  
 Who ever said transformation was easy?  
 They lied.

## They Lied

-- Gwyn O'Brien

## 20



-- Justin Longacre

The number twenty stood monolithic,  
 a giant squid which I had seen  
 on the wall of the zoo  
 orange and large  
 and twenty.

These I reckoned as the largest of things,  
 the squid and the twenty,  
 and for me they became the same,  
 so even now twenty-dollar-bills  
 have many arms  
 and squids say,  
 unintelligible to everyone else:  
 "20"

To my father  
 I asked: "is twenty the highest number?"  
 confident the 20-Squid would best any others,  
 who had no many-limbed orange avatars.

I was wrong.

"No."

"Well how many are after it?" (thinking, maybe, twenty more...)

"They go on forever."

Infinity stoned and stubbed me early,  
 and slew roundly a squid, who was twenty,  
 or else diminished him, an icon fallen dumb

and I assigned no animal to infinity.



-- Matt Vail

Perennial

i perceived you

to be consistent

but dying back

this season

i know now

that i was only a child

with dirty fingernails


 Contributor Notes

**Daphne Buter** is a Dutch writer, born and raised in Amsterdam. She has published two books with De Bezige Bij & Thomas Rap publishers. Her translated stories have appeared in Snow Monkey, Cadenza (UK), and Night Train. Her English stories have appeared in Edifice Wrecked, Inkstains, and SmokeLong Quarterly.

**Dave Clapper** lives in the Pacific Northwest. He is the father of two boys and the Founding Editor of SmokeLong Quarterly. His work has appeared in a number of publications, including NFG, InkPot, and 3am Magazine.

**Bryan Coffelt** is currently a student at College of the Siskiyous. If he does not win a Pulitzer by the time he is 22, he is moving to Mexico and that's final.

**Justin Longacre** lives in Toledo, Ohio with his wife and menagerie of castaway instruments. He hopes to write ramshackle hymns and sundry ballads. And teach high school.

**Jordaan Mason** lives in a small Canadian border town and enjoys hanging out in diners, pretending he is a drum, bike rides at dusk, campfires, and watching Harold & Maude. He also sings and writes songs, which can be heard at ohmaprecords.com. Please write him love letters: the\_falling\_rain@hotmail.com

**Gwyn O'Brien** has done journal writing for 25 years and poetry for 15 years. She crafts and facilitates creative writing workshops in and around Mt. Shasta. She has presented her poetry at open mics in San Francisco, Mt. Shasta and Yreka. She has poetry published in small publications, including the periodical, Writing For Our Lives. She has compiled a chapbook on the theme of mother and produced a tape of poetry and prose addressing the issues of battered women. Poetry is her first language.

**Eve Thompson's** writing success began at eight years old when she won a \$25 First Place Prize for her "Be Kind to Animal Week," a short (and mostly true) story about her dog, Franz, who shared walnuts with her when she was four. She has penned hundreds of short stories, over a dozen plays, two novels, and thousands of poems. She has been published in The Rattle, West Wind Review, Portfolio North, and Mudfish Poetry. Her first chapbook of poetry, *The Wind's Mistress*, won Honorable Mention in Silver Moon's national contest; she is presently working on her second chapbook, tentatively entitled *Haunted House*. During the day she teaches writing classes at College of the Siskiyous; by night, she writes poetry.

**Matt Vail** is from Gresham, Oregon and is currently attending Sarah Lawrence College in New York, where he is busily stalking the cast of the Golden Girls via the satellite photographs on the internet. In his off time, Matt enjoys translating Lorca, walking barefoot, and slapping piano keys.

**Ann Walters** is a physical anthropologist and writer who lives in the Pacific Northwest. Her work has appeared in SmokeLong Quarterly, Salome, and Gator Springs Gazette.

**Joseph Young** lives in Baltimore. His work has appeared in numerous journals, online and in print.

**Braxton Younts**: born in North Carolina, weaned on beer and oysters, Braxton lived in the heart of Appalachia. Years later he moved to Seattle. Please visit his website: braxtonyounts.50megs.com

## Submission Guidelines



### Please Send Us Your Best:

- **Short fiction** under 2500 words. We are looking for literary stories with honesty, daring language and evident craft. No specific genre stories, please. We are fans of experimental adventures, but prefer experimentation that still tells a good story. **Please send 1 story at a time.**
- **Poetry** both lyric and narrative. We enjoy poems that are fun to read out loud and tackle humans and their headaches head on. **Please send 1-3 poems.**
- **Monologues** under 200 words that deal with your personal reaction to current political and social issues. These should be as honest and flawed as our natural opinions tend to be.
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