

Spring 2015

On Divestment

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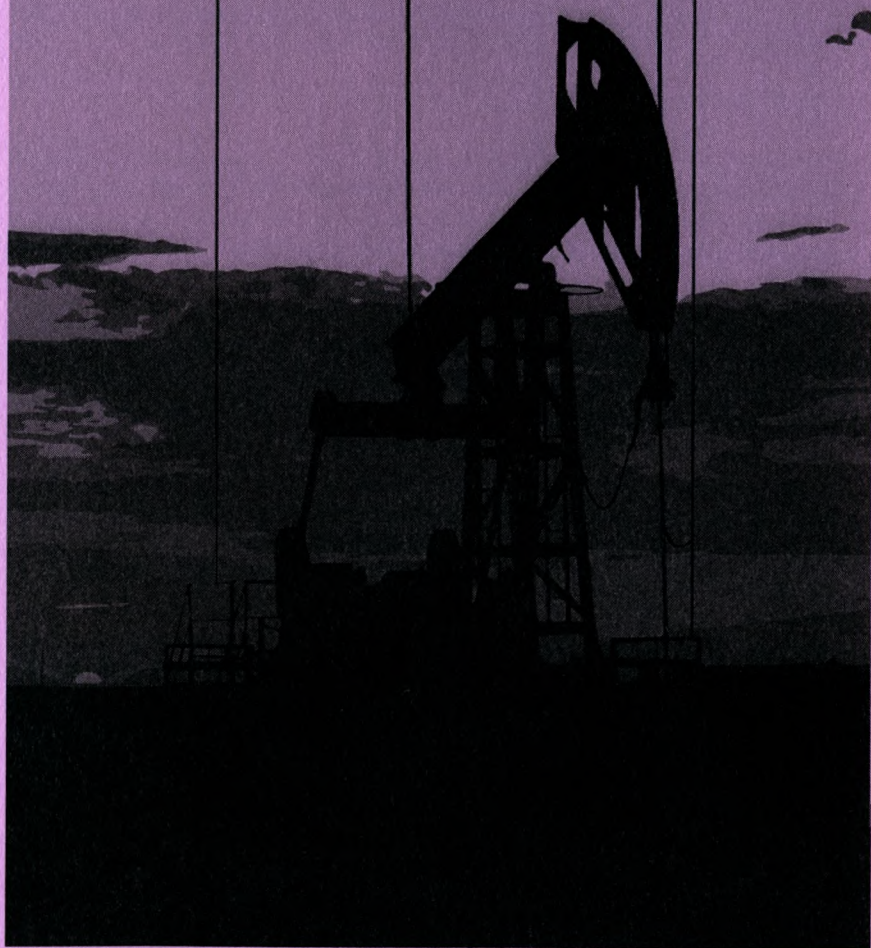
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*on
divestment*



foreword

This zine is a project conceived, written, and designed by the members of the Spring 2015 Literature and Environment course (ENGL 374) at the University of Puget Sound.

Informed by our study of works of ecocriticism such as Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Harvard UP, 2011), which explores the role that imaginative writing can play in illuminating ecological issues, our class seized the opportunity of a collaborative final project to see how students' own writing—whether creative, critical, or some combination of the two—might engage with a topical environmental concern.

The selection of a final project was arrived at through a democratic process. Working in groups of five individuals, students presented proposals for a final project, arguing both for the primacy of the environmental concern they selected and the efficacy of the writing task they were asking the class to undertake.

All the proposals were excellent, but the class had to settle on a single undertaking; the project that students ultimately selected was the fossil fuel divestment movement, currently a topic of debate on many university campuses, including the University of Puget Sound. Largely led by students, this ongoing environmental movement encourages colleges and universities to divest their endowment holdings from companies whose primary business is fossil fuel.

Since we knew from recent reportage in *The Trail* that UPS's own ECO Club is advocating for fossil fuel divestment, we invited ECO Club representatives to speak to the class. From their visit, we learned about the broad contours of the divestment movement. Observing that the majority of scientists understand anthropogenic climate change to be the result of burning fossil fuels, the divestment movement argues that colleges and universities should exert pressure on these companies by withdrawing their investments from them. Several universities have already made commitments to divest some component of their endowment, among them Stanford University, Pitzer College, and the University of Glasgow, and campaigns to do so are underway at other institutions of higher learning, as well as many cities and municipalities.

In formalizing the class proposal into an assignment, the terms were intentionally crafted to remain open-ended and non-prescriptive. Students were invited simply "to create a work of literature or literary analysis that engages with the issue of university fossil fuel divestment." (Students could also opt out of the zine and write a more conventional final essay). Here are some excerpts from an email that I sent to the class elaborating on this non-traditional assignment.

There's a quotation by W.B. Yeats that strikes me as relevant here:
"Out of the quarrel with others we make rhetoric; out of the quarrel

with ourselves we make poetry.” What I understand Yeats to mean is that honest creative writing explores its subject, rather than argues a pre-established position. (For his word “poetry” in that quotation, you could equally substitute “drama,” or “fiction,” “creative nonfiction,” etc.) Our goal is to write literature, not propaganda . . . While the work you create should shed light on some aspect of the divestment issue, it needn’t do so directly. In fact, it’s possible to shed light on the issue without even mentioning the word “divestment.”

Consider, for example, the first novel we read this semester, Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*. That novel engages with a host of environmental topics, among them global climate change, genetic engineering, population growth, the treatment of animals, and environmental justice. It doesn’t tell the reader what to do or think about any of these issues; rather, it explores them imaginatively, but it does so in a way that I believe encourages readers to be more reflective about each of those issues than they were before starting the novel. It sheds light on these issues.

[K]eep in mind that this assignment does not expect that you will take a particular position. It does not assume that you will create a work of literature or literary criticism that is “for” fossil fuel divestment. (I’m not even sure that a work of art can ever be “for” or “against” a particular action. Is *Oryx and Crake* for or against the human manipulation of the environment? Who knows?—it’s a work of imaginative writing that tells a story. Readers can engage their own sense of values based upon the encounter with the imaginative work).

I hope that this advice is helpful and that you feel authorized to write freely. I created the opportunity for the assignment because I believe that your voice—both individually and collectively—does matter and I wanted to facilitate a way for it to be heard, in however modest a fashion. What that voice says is entirely up to you.

Those twenty voices from the class combine to form the collective voice you encounter here in the zine *On Divestment*. Considerations of timeliness and sustainability encouraged us to keep the size of this zine compact; it is in a sense an advertisement for a more substantial body of writing, which can be found online. Each of the pieces of writing presented here is a part of a larger work, which can be accessed by the public on the Collins Library Website “Sound Ideas”: <http://soundideas.pugetsound.edu>. I hope that you’ll visit the ENGL 374/“On Divestment” resource of Sound Ideas and explore these remarkable poems, short stories, essays, and plays in their entirety.

Best wishes,

Prof. William Kupinse
Department of English
May 5, 2015

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on being

A HOPEFUL PESSIMIST; OR, WHY I PRIVILEGE THE SMALL

I believe the earth is probably doomed. Or, more accurately, I believe the earth, as a habitable environment for humans, is probably doomed. I believe there are steps that society can take to prevent large-scale environmental disaster, but I also don't believe such steps will be taken. Or, more accurately, I don't believe such steps will be taken in time to make a significant difference. Common questions include: "How?" and "Why?" and even "What?" As in, "How do you wake up every morning if you think the world is going to end?" Or, "Why do you go to school and read books and prepare homework and job search if the future is so uncertain?" Also, "What is the point of your reusable canvas grocery bag if the world is doomed?" My answer is that I am hopefully pessimistic; I know that bad things are going to happen, but I still wake up every morning. How? Well, I set my alarm the night before and I didn't die when I was asleep. I know that bad things are going to happen, but I still go to school, and I still want a job. Why? Well, I put four years into a psychology degree, cultivated an interest in childhood PTSD, and know that a few hours of genuine interaction can intervene in a lifetime of trauma. I know that bad things are going to happen, but I still use my canvas grocery bag. What is the point? Well, even if it doesn't really help, it also can't really hurt. Despite all of this uncertainty, and for some cosmic reason, I woke up this morning. And I will continue to wake up every morning (until I don't); and I will walk to school every morning (even when my backpack is too heavy); and I still love Tacoma (especially when it rains); and listening to my favorite song always makes me smile; and I still believe in the importance of trying to lessen one's environmental impact. So, maybe I'm not a pessimist at all. Maybe I am a cautious optimist, or a realistic optimist, or just a really tired optimist, because while I believe that we are probably doomed, I also know that we're alive today, and that means something, and we should do something with that.

dog days

I was sitting on the grass
When my tingling arm surprised me,
like the glaze
I had not noticed until I sat on the yellowing
Blades, which I had not noticed until I sank
And was beaten down on by the sun,
A golden day
And my veins, each neuron shouted its message:
WAKE UP!
At my suspended circulation,
Which had been cut off like the stems of the weeds
That had been beneath me. My nervous system shouted like the
Stars obscured behind the sun,
Burning the cold
Their molten fusion manufactured thousands of years
Ago, their remnants painted on my retina now,
Interpreted in a second by this hunk of neurons in my head,
Nothing by the clock of a star,
Or to this ant, hurried about its business of finding food,
It's we who think we make the calls,
That we alone have choice amidst the choreography of space-time,
But we'll trade gold for the sun,
And watch as
It is outshone by millions of churning engines
Spewing carbon dioxide,
Still, it will go about its business,
Everything will hurry on,
And then, maybe then, we'll finally divest,
When it makes no difference anymore –
After listening to the cries for years that “it will make no difference,”
We'll finally have proof,
Like my numbed arm,
That we have sat too long in the sun,
That we have reclined too long anesthetized,
And our world has sounded its alarm,
But the clocks are nothing by the clock of a star,
And the ants will hurry on.

billy rathje

"this land":

DIVESTMENT AND INDIGENOUS LANDS IN THE TACOMA AREA

This land is not your land.
 This land is not my land,
 From California to the New York island;
 From the redwood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
 This land was taken for you and Me

I grew up with names grown
 in the shades cast by corn,
 squash, beans, and green chile:
 Names like Acoma, Diné, Isleta, and Zuni.
 But other names evaporated
 after getting soaked in the sweat of Spanish horses
 and dried from the glare of conquistador steel:
 Santo Domingo, Santa Ana, San Felipe.

I live now with names
 Steeped in fog and whale's blood:
 Makah, Duwamish, Puyallup, Nisqually.
 Of names that did not lie easily in
 Mouths that could not
 Chew unfamiliar syllables;
 Mouths that spit out rounded vowels
 So they were "easier to say."

In the City of Destiny,
 As we ascend to the heights,
 We walk across perfect squares of water-washed stone
 Across native lands on permanent loan
 Forgetting that, for these spaces, them we do not own.
 Neither does the school that holds a deed
 Written on pulp and ink which shows its greed.

Pen in hand, we ask to make it right.
 A request to divest and as we all write,
 Putting another voice on the table to join the fight
 For a chance to give back what was never ours to take,
 We try to preserve the earth in which we all got a stake.

elaine stamp

LOST *gods*

*We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.*
- T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

you descend with
small inhales and long exhales into
the edges of space, built
on the shells of itself and holding
beginnings, ends,
evolution in the vestigial hind legs of a whale

that is cracked cracked shattered by
noise
*the seismic guns are towed by ships
and shoot compacted air
to the bottom
of the ocean
(abyssal zone)
(blast zone)
(sacrifice zone)*

the oil rig doesn't feel
the splash of a fluke
(event?)
a whale's tail
(a whale of a tale?)
climate change

*the best thing about the Earth is
if you poke holes in it
oil and gas comes out*
says a congressman, standing on a soapbox
built of mined calcium carbonate, beating
the podium with a silver platter

you ascend with
long inhales and sharp exhales into
the burnt concrete air,
pressing down with the weight of
millions of last breaths
the wind through the leaves of a tree as it crunches to the ground,
the fountain of a whale breach (birth)

leah shamlian

for tomorrow

You should not see one woman with an eagle feather in front of 300 riot police who are protecting a fracking company.
- Winona LaDuke, Race and Pedagogy National Conference,
University of Puget Sound. September 26, 2014.

In spring and summer, the cool scent of salt and seaweed from the ocean drafted between the structured architecture and stirred up feral eddies of wind that dodged through the brick ledges and lifted leaves of green grass and the branches from the huge sequoia on the front lawn. It once stood tall and stable with roots buried deep beneath the entire grounds of the university. The winter months promised colder gusts from the bay and daily rainfall, sending mist from every direction and gently folding over the baby ferns that clustered along the walking paths.

Then an odd atmospheric brightness slunk over the region without suggesting a hope for coolness or shadow. Some light possessed specter had settled over the campus and tidy neighborhoods surrounding the area to as far as could be charted on earth. The enigmatic heat from this brightness rushed out like futile breath from burning lips and dried the watery lawns; cracking open the chapped soil to expose the underbelly of compressed earth and its brown innards open and strung with sinewy grassroots. Nothing moved.

The inoculant heat changed the wind to shuffle harshly between buildings, clanging on the walls and rattling doors like a phantom looking for water or energy or something to power its exhausted attempt to live. But nothing was left. This wind trailed a scent that was familiar but somehow unquestionably different. Instead of the fresh currents of clean salt-dredged air, a different scent clung to the nostrils hairs of every remaining and living thing. It smelled singed and acidic like a lemon burnt with an electric probe or like the scent of melted skin and quickly evaporated tears on a chemical heating plate by the tragic mistake of some first-year lab student.

Now an odd quiet hovers across this area that once impregnated its individuals with ideas that sparked joy and academic inspiration. While abandoned objects of past existence stayed—a blackened softball left on the gutted lawn and a ripped hammock hung from the giant tree like an empty grocery sack.

olivia g. cadwell

the STATION

The sun dips low on the horizon, dyed bloody red by obscure particulate. Its rays reflect off saltwater, cast in countless hues, brightest orange to murkiest brown, like fluid glass. Bits and pieces of actual glass meander through the drifting surf. Here a clump of seaweed, there some plastic rings from a long-drained six pack of cool, refreshing, whatever. Over there an action figure wrestles an old grocery bag, between empty bottles of hair product, sunscreen, and a rectangular green object that might have once been part of something convenient. An eight-foot jellyfish drifts past half a car tire, colliding obviously with a pink flip-flop, child sized with faded floral designs.

Amidst the garbage and half-submerged rooftops, a lonely shadow is the sole object which moves in any purposeful direction. A husk of a man dips wrapped and gloved hand into the ruddy murk, paddling, almost frantically, away to the east. His vessel is ragged, to match its captain, a ramshackle craft made from odd bits of driftwood, buoyant petroleum product, and an old dinghy's hull. Even in this pre-dusk hour the sun's heat penetrates the shawl covering his bent back. He sweats through the bandages and shabby rags clinging to his body, hoarding the precious coolant he can't afford to perspire. His hooded cowl keeps the skin of his face cooler than his palms and fingertips covered in tingling saltwater. He knows he needs to wash those hands, but with what he cannot guess. For now all that matters is finding a bit of dry land raised just enough above the ever-encroaching sea. Somewhere safe to sleep. The last midnight flood cost him his paddle along with the rest of his meager supplies, including an invaluable stash of cured bush-meat. With meat in mind desperate hunger pangs wrack his stomach and aching shoulders, sudden collapse at the helm is all too imminent when he raises his eyes and sees it.

Like a lighthouse beacon it rises from darkening waters. The sun's farewell beams capture its fluorescent colors almost as if the power were still on. A yellow-and-red fist raised in defiance to an indifferent sky, where careless stormclouds are gathering to the north and west. Rain-smell hangs heavy in the air. Animal fear breathes strength into aching limbs. The man on the raft rapidly dunks palm after burning, itching palm into the sea and filth, straining to reach the roof where the logo structure somehow still stands. The sunken Shell station offers him a dwindling hope against the coming weather.

parker brisebois

america's backyard

A ONE-ACT PLAY

Scene Two. *At the shore of Lake Managua. The water laps insistently at the shore—each small slap of gray-brown water seems to be reaching a little further over the cracked, blackened land. There are no plants. A mountain in the distance forms a perfectly symmetrical peak on the horizon; its base is obscured by clouds that blend into the faintly red mist rising from the lake. A metallic smell, like the taste of blood, saturates the air, as if lightning had recently struck. Enter MAN IN SUIT, lounging in the gray-brown lake, posed as if in a hot tub. Enter DEAD SANDINISTA GUERRILLA.*

MAN IN SUIT. After the accident, teams immediately set to work to stop the leak at the source, plan relief wells and develop a suite of options to stop or contain and recover the flow. We also employed multiple techniques to expedite the containment of the leak, including fitting caps on the well, using containment systems that pipe oil to vessels on the surface, and sealing the well through the static kill procedure.

MAN IN SUIT drains the last of a can of Coca Cola and tosses the can behind him into the lake.

MAN IN SUIT. Yes, we're in the final stages of doing the pressure testing, going through all the final lockdown procedures, and we expect to start ramping up collection starting tomorrow.

DEAD SANDINISTA GUERRILLA brings MAN IN SUIT a glass of water on a silver tray. MAN IN SUIT takes a sip and hands back the tray.

MAN IN SUIT. We've been 24/7 since the beginning and that will continue until the end. And so they—all the crews and everything are set up on rotating shifts so that we can continue operations 24 hours a day.

DEAD SANDINISTA GUERRILLA brings MAN IN SUIT a glass on a silver tray. The glass is filled with mercury. MAN IN SUIT takes a sip and hands back the tray, then dives gracefully into the water.

on the BUYING AND SELLING
OF THE ALBERTA OIL SANDS

Sand is sand unless a child on the beach
has mixed it with just the right amount of water.
Then it's a castle complete with: a seawater filled moat,
a driftwood flag precariously perched on the highest parapet,
and knights running around, protecting the family inside
from the imagined dragon lurking behind a child's eyes.

Sand is sand unless the conditions are just right
while ancient gods spew lightning like a flower girl
shedding pale pink petals down the aisle;
Then it's petrified lightning branching beneath surface sand
that outlasts the gods, invisible until revealed by erosion.

Sand is sand until it's labeled "oil."
Then it's a stack of money, waiting to be reamed
like trees in a forest eyed by the paper mill down the street.
Only "oil" because "tar" doesn't look as good
written in black inked lawyer language stuffed inside
a manila stock holder folder.
Because "tar" is too dirty a word to grace the gray
and beige boardrooms filled with navy suits and platinum tie clips.

Sand is a toy played with by beach goer hands and gods' whims
until it's a way to ease the lobbyist's way and grease the pockets
of execs who take elevators to the top floors of concrete monoliths
pushing through the sky and
CEOs who smile every time another grain of sand falls to
the bottom of the hourglass, waiting until they can flip it
over and hit "refresh."
Except, they don't know they glued the hourglass to the desk
long before the sand started falling.

Venice OF THE north

The city worked in unison like a well-tuned music box: the network of dikes, dams, and floodgates managing sea level rises. The swift circulation of cyclists appearing as a mere ant farm from the air. The fluid transportation system of trams that seemed to be synchronized with Greenwich Mean Time. The canals were murky, cavernous webs that sucked in history and ceased to spit it back out. They were the same waters where witch trials occurred—If the person sank they were innocent, floated they were deemed a witch. Floated and they were destined to sink. Boats learned to bob on the waters like perfectly balanced spinning tops. Inertia, momentum, force, all culminating into a singular moment of a boat tour of the city in its glory on a calm August afternoon. Champagne flutes clink—it was 2015 and the city of Amsterdam was in full swing, like a carnival whose tent never collapses. There is talk of the infrastructure needing to be re-examined. “Sea levels will rise regardless” became the country’s mantra, creating an overcast of a soft murmur, traveling from the cobblestone streets of the city out to the pancake flat pastures. Life carried on.

It was the fourth day of the strike and the farming community of Weesp was growing impatient. Now the year is 2090 and the land that once was unleavened is now built upwards, sky-wards, in the form of a series of complex and durable sticks and stilts creating homes for its inhabitants. These cabins are like fire lookouts. Marina Linden’s family had designed the system called the Deltaworks back in the 1990s—they believed it would work. In the sea of ferocious strikers for the Ocean Expansion Protection Unit Marina raised her hand.

dear reader

A ten-year study was recently completed by the Tacoma Marine Wildlife Institute, aided by the leading marine biologists at the University of Puget Sound, in which the mental activities of over twenty Chinook salmon were monitored for between four and seven weeks in their natural habitat along the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River. The outcomes of this research have been groundbreaking, notable among them being what researchers claim to be the first glimpses into the minds of our fresh and saltwater-abiding friends, the Chinook salmon. Below, you will find textual renderings of what our expert researchers claim is an accurate representation of their thoughts and their lives:

Subject 24c (a.k.a. Father Larry): Light water time to move, can't smell danger good. go moving food? not food debris, stop looking go. moving, going down, going down, current good rest. food? not food. food? not food. moving, object dodge, whoops, current? yes good. danger? none good. others, yes good moving, going down. moving, going down. food? not food debris, stop looking go. moving... moving... moving, dodge, current good moving. others? good. danger? no danger... moving. blocked others? there's the way, going, through jump, whoops, jump, whoops, jump, falling water good no danger, others, current, moving...

Currently, Father Larry is a young salmon, and he is just beginning one of the longest salmon runs in the world, starting near Whitehorse, Yukon and ending in the mouth of the Bearing Sea, Alaska. Having lived for over a year in his birthplace, eating and growing in preparation for the long voyage ahead, Larry is neither hopeful nor afraid, but is determined to reach the open sea and the next part of his life, surrounded by other salmon including his first mate, subject 3a (a.k.a. Mother Darlene). There will not be as many salmon this year, however, just as the previous year saw less than the year before that, due to the steady increase in water temperature and acidity. Darlene and Larry's offspring, as we shall see, will face these trials even more directly.

THE *borg* OF TRUSTEES

The chairman speaks.

“Ladies and gentlemen, it gladdens me to see you all here today. Our divine master will be most pleased. Let us commence the Spring 2015 meeting of the university’s Board of Trustees. We have a number of issues on our itinerary: construction updates, landscaping plans, and a student movement to divest from fossil fuel companies.” All the board members smirk and snicker in perfect synchrony, as if they have choreographed it. “But first,” the chairman continues, “something of far graver import. The initiation of our newest member of the board, Louis Perkins, investment banker and one of our university’s most esteemed alumni!”

Louis blushes upon receiving the applause of such distinguished company. Unable to think of anything suitable to say, he simply says, “Thank you.”

“No, thank you, Louis, for all your generous donations and the love you share for our university, our home. All that now remains, of course, is for you to pledge your obedience, to accept your status as a thrall.”

Louis does not know what a thrall is, but he worries he’ll look dumb if he asks for clarification. “I do!” he exclaims.

Another round of synchronized chuckling. “Oh not to us, Louis! We are your equals. We are all thralls to a higher power, our master.” Louis witnesses a number of the trustees exchange smirks that strike him as oddly nefarious, and they all shift their gaze to the briefcase at the head of the table. To Louis’ dismay, the briefcase appears to unlatch itself. By some invisible force it is ripped violently open. He sees all eyes around the table turn an inky black, each face as blank as a corpse’s.

An amorphous figure emerges from the briefcase, a ball of thick black smoke nearly the size of a smart car, from which protrude dozens of slimy, black tentacles. Louis feels too mentally paralyzed to wonder how its mass could have fit in the tiny briefcase.

“BEHOLD!” cries the possessed chairman. “THE ENDOWMENT!”

“HAIL THE ENDOWMENT!” the trustees declare in a single voice. For a moment there is silence, but it is soon interrupted by a raspy voice,

a whisper that nevertheless manages to fill the entire room.

“Louis,” the voice exhales. “I am the university’s endowment, its beating heart. Vow to be my slave!”

“HAIL THE ENDOWMENT!” the trustees shout once again.

Louis struggles to find words. “I... I don’t understand! I’m just here to help the university. What are you?!”

A tentacle begins to slither its way down the table, leaving a black, tar-like substance in its wake. The Endowment continues, ignoring Louis’ question. “Only I can save this university. Only I can... sustain... it. It is a machine, and I, its only fuel. It is not your duty to question. You have but one duty... FEED ME!”

“HAIL THE ENDOWMENT!”

The tentacle comes to a stop in front of Louis. Its tip opens up, and a black and spiny monstrosity that resembles a centipede, about a foot long, jets out onto the table. It rears up at him, and despite the creature’s lack of eyes, Louis can feel its stare. It flickers its serrated mandibles together hungrily. Louis tries to jump out of his seat, but feels both arms grasped by two smaller tentacles that have travelled beneath the table. There is no escaping The Endowment.

“DO YOU VOW TO SERVE ME?”

“NO!” Louis screams.

The other trustees, sapped of any human countenance by their tar-black eyeballs, open their mouths in unison. Identical creatures poke their heads out. Each creature emits a high-pitched screech, and Louis finds the combined effect almost deafening.

“I... Just let me leave!” he cries.

“It is too late for that Louis. Ingest the creature! Surrender yourself to my will! It the only way to save the university!”

THE
bottom OF THE *barrel*

Tortured screams of bearings long overworn rang out in the bitter afternoon sun. Pistons shudder and hiccup as drive shafts are stressed and overloaded with backed up energy. Deep down within the earth, machinery is decayed. The great steel beast which bore an era from its obsidian maw coughs and wheezes with gritty effort. Esita stares at the dying mass with a cold, expectant detachment and she removes her old yellow helmet streaked with black tears. She drops it, watching it fall and tumble on the sand pocked with flecks tarry spittle. She turns to look around her.

Foremen, engineers, countless others rush to and from offices, across the sticky sand pathways, down to the maintenance facility in search of salvation. They shout to each other, calling out orders and requests. Quick-thinking men speed their tankers in to secure those precious last few drops before it's all over.

Someone mutters something about the end of the world as he desperately tries to seat the last oil hose onto its fitting when a chance electric connection is made. A single spark—tiny by daily standards—ignites the stream of fumes and in a brief moment, the end arrives. Those located around the trailer vanish immediately in a furious golden embrace, but are soon followed by more and more as the flame reaches out in eager extension.

Esita closes her eyes and accepts the warmth approaching her with a peculiar sense of vindication. She feels it fitting, that the creatures who burned the Earth receive some sort of payment in kind. Heat prickles her arms as the fire grows close and ignites the slick oil residue on her skin. She cries out, but the wave of energy washes over her and after a brief instant of agony, Esita is gone.

The hungry demon eats every scrap of fuel it can find—oil, wood, and men alike—until it dissipates into nothing—choked of oxygen by its incredible pace. Smoke billows and wafts upward, carried aloft by the inward rush of air that fills the vacuum remaining. The tower of soot and climbs high up to the heavens, casting a long shadow on the lands beneath.

Blackened, rusting metal scarred with countless welds and patches spins slower with each passing revolution until finally the effort proves too much. Man's last derrick sighs to a halt and finally rests.

falling

I glimpsed an officer trudging behind me and on instinct broke into a run. Stupid move, but most of the patrol-men in my old neighborhood are on a permanent power trip and I just wanted to get away. I wasn't really thinking.

Before I could process the sound behind me or my blood pumping faster I felt the weight and sweat of a body on my back. My cheek scraped against concrete first and then my chest hit, hard. Knocking the wind forcefully out of me. I felt my rib break. My vision looked like streams of color flecks in darkness for a moment. But I pulled in a breath and twisted over, wincing, to glare into the officer's eyes with the reckless anger that surged up in me out of my fear and pain. He didn't seem to notice. He had frozen and was looking shiftily around. Got up, spat, and walked off.

Confused at the inexplicable event, I looked around with tear-blurred vision and found what he must have noticed—one of those white hooded security cameras high on the cement wall behind me. I guess he didn't want to take any risks. I tried to push myself up but lowered shakily down at the mind-blurring pain. I was alone and it was getting dark, probably would have been luckier if he'd stuck around, shoved me in the patrol car, taken me in for questioning. "Fuck," I rasped and closed my eyes.

My mind drifted. I remembered once as a kid walking till couldn't anymore and lying down on a bed of leaves. Putting my cheek against the gentle hands of grass and being sure that the trees were talking to each other in their slow, sad rustling whispers. I remember I slept there all night. My mom was furious when I finally came home. Angry that I'd wandered off, but now I know she was just scared. At the time I couldn't understand that. At the time I felt like 'this is right where I'm supposed to be, the safest place.'

Looking back, it's impossible not to see that place withering under that little kid as he slept. Memories of how things used to be seem so dreamlike. How grass felt soft and looked silvery blue in the night; the feeling of being safe, anywhere; the sense of having a home. Everything is different now.

PAT'S
travels

Featured here is an excerpt of a children's book entitled Pat's Travels. This book seeks to convey the impact of humanity's treatment of the Earth in an accessible and appealing way. I was inspired by Shel Silverstein's The Giving Tree, which seeks to spread the message of love and acceptance, but is also coded with important messages about the environment itself. I sought to broaden the issue and emphasize the relationship between man and the earth as a whole, rather than between just a boy and a tree. The book includes illustrations and a glossary to help kids understand more complicated ideas concerning pollution climate change.

After millions of years of Earth living in harmony with her creatures, a very peculiar creature came to life, the human. There was a young human boy named Pat. He had many brothers and sisters just like the Earth. He loved to play in Earth's forests and rivers, making friends with all the other creatures.

Pat liked to travel across the Earth, visiting her lush forests and deep caverns, but walking to all of those places took him a long time and made him very tired. One day, he invented a wheel to move him from place to place, making his creation better and better until finally he made a car. He could now drive anywhere he wanted and explore all of the Earth.

Pat drove anywhere and everywhere he could. He visited Niagara Falls, the Nile, and even Mt. Everest. One day he noticed a black smoke coming out of his car. It smelt gross and made him cough a lot. The smoke was exhaust that came from the gasoline that Pat burned to make the car go. Pat learned to not breathe the exhaust anymore and kept on travelling around the world.

Earth was getting sick from the exhaust, but Pat didn't realize it. The oil that Pat dug up from underground spilled into the ocean and the fish got sick. The exhaust got in the air too and made it hard for the plants and animals to breathe. It even made Earth's atmosphere start to disappear and she began to burn up in the heat of the sun.

right FOR THE RIVER,
left FOR THE FACTORY

Inside, a boy sits down to dinner with his mom. It's just the two of them; always the two of them. They eat in silence, the radio crackling the day's news: smog and air pollution levels at record highs. Yet another bill disbanded in the House. Chemical explosion at factory on the East Coast. All too faraway for the boy or his mother to care.

The boy pushes the brown sludge around on his plate. His plate is cracked, his fork is missing a prong. The table is scuffed with age and wobbles when the boy pushes on it with his elbow.

"Mom, what's this?" he asks, pointing to bumpy piece of sludge. Bumps like sand under the tip of his finger.

"It's broccoli," the mom says without looking up. "I had a little extra money left over from last week, so I bought some. It's a treat."

Broccoli? That can't be right. The boy remembers broccoli; he learned about food groups in school. The teacher had said you need equal amounts of "Fruits" and "Vegetables," and the class had looked at the teacher with surprise, having never heard those words before. But the boy also remembers what the broccoli is supposed to look like, the picture that had been projected on the board in front of him—

"Isn't broccoli supposed to be," the boy hesitates, "gruh, gree—"

"Green, yes," his mom says. "It used to be green."

Green. Huh. The boy remembers now—they had learned about colors, too, in school. The boy had thought it a joke at the time, the images too bright to be in anything but pictures. His eyes had burned, and he had quickly looked away.

The word sounds foreign in the boy's tongue, guttural and rough. He tries it again: Guh. Reen. Green. Grow. Grab. Grin. Green. His mother laughs along as he tries it.

her guardian
IS THE _____

My body weeps rivers and cries in streams.
With each smothering blast of heat,
my tears flood the roadways below.

Drip.

Drip.

Drop.

I'm left hopeless.

I can only—

wait, wait to see which piece of me will break off next.

The sun who was once so kind,
Ruthlessly thaws my ice surface.
Frigid water rushes down my spine,
Choking the life below.
My shoulders splinter and crack,
Chipping away at my weak frame.
The rocks and cliffs, follow,
Taking my skin with them
As they tumble and fall.

Once, I was beautiful,
Teeming with life.
A “paradise” they called me.
Now everything is lost.
What was once so green has faded,
Dulled to a harsh brown.
The animals—
Gone.

All that remains is a glaring silence
And the stench of carrion,
Wafting up towards me,
Carrying the scent of the hundreds of corpses
Whose cold bodies lay upon me,
Forming mountains of their own.

I used to be their shelter,
Now I am their cemetery.
Back then, I was a safe haven,
A spectre in the sky,
Revered by all.
People looked to me,
To the heights!
“Her guardian is the mountain,” they said.
Yet no one ever mentioned who was my guardian.

A CITY
COVERED IN *grass*

A stern face stared dauntingly behind a curtain of cigarette smoke. The forehead was wrinkled between two sharp lines that were the eyebrows. The dirt brown eyes stared straight ahead without a hint of movement. A limp hand-rolled fag sat at the edge of a slightly opened mouth. This was how Linda started the first 30 minutes of her workday.

Outside her office window adjacent from her oak wood desk, light from the sun started to creep in through the multi-framed window. The simple analog clock on the wall perpendicular to the window read 6:52. Linda pushed herself up from her leather chair and moved around from the back of her desk. She took look strides towards the large window. Her grey work suit hugged her body so tightly that her curvy frame turned into a relatively straight one. Her brown skin glowed in the infant sunlight.

Her eyes moved across the panoramic scene that was the city. Down below her high rise office building was an open square amongst a forest of tall green buildings. In that open space was grass and all around that open space was grass. Grass covered every inch of the ground and every inch of the buildings' exteriors. The city of Los Angeles was a concrete jungle dominated by grass-covered skyscrapers.

Linda was glad that the Genertech oil company had taken the initiation to help curve global climate change. She appreciated the efficiency of the grass that Genertech placed all over the city. Grass, as Linda understood, absorbed the most carbon dioxide per a square inch than any other plant. Biodiversity was a waste of energy. Being efficient was the only way to live life. That is what Linda always told herself.

AS THE *crow* FLIES

It is rare, in this country, to see roads reclaimed by wilderness. They get beaten down and built back up again. But when I was a child I went to an island, called Assateague, off the east coast of Maryland. I grew up in the suburbs of Washington, DC, and my parents decided to visit Assateague for its ponies; it is famous for having a stable population of feral horses, ever since the island was turned into a wildlife refuge in the 1960s. It had been developed prior to that, but a series of hurricanes destroyed what was built, and people came to value the island more for its beauty—and tourist money—than its livability. I didn't know this, exactly, when I went; I knew that it had wild horses, and when I got there I saw the crumbled shoals of road, with large cracks full of sand. It was littered with shells. My parents told me that seagulls would take mussels and drop them on the road to crack them open, so that they could eat the flesh inside. I barely remember seeing the ponies, but I took a piece of that chipped-off asphalt home with me. A road like this meant something different from any other one I'd seen.

BLAME THE

dinosaurs!

Dear dinosaurs,

I hate your guts
Well, I guess it's not your guts
It's your fossils.
I hate your fossils
For all the harm they've caused

Just look at what you've done!
I mean, I get it,
A meteor wiped you out,
So you're feeling vindictive
But that doesn't mean you have to
Destroy the world with your bones!

Archaeologists dig up your fossils
Just to rip them apart,
And fight over who gets to keep the wishbone
To create a deathly stew
For humans to pour into the atmosphere

We can't get enough of your delectable fossils,
But why are your bones worth destroying the planet over?
I'm sorry, but I don't care about anyone's bones
Enough to kill billions of species, the human race,
And the world!

I don't mean to make you feel badly but,
Your fossils are responsible for
Increased ocean acidification
Rising sea levels
More destructive and powerful storms
Droughts (have you seen how California is doing? Not ideal!)
And extreme weather patterns

So, dinosaurs, please, stop letting people fight over your fossils
Or we will all end up like you:
EXTINCT!

Sincerely,
The humans who have really messed up and need someone else to blame

vanessa juteau

loggers

GO GREEN

Everyone knows that Loggers Go Green. We bring our own mugs when we go to Diversions, so is it really a big deal that we drove there? We take shorter showers, but don't talk about the 4,000-18,000 gallons of water it takes to produce one hamburger. We lecture people about eating almonds and give dirty looks to those drinking from disposable water bottles, but no one wants to talk about how eating meat contributes to global warming.

Sustainability means asking questions and refusing to turn away when the answer isn't what we want to hear. Sustainability means sacrifices and lifestyle changes. It is not just the responsibility of our University, it is deeply personal. In order to advocate for change we must practice what we preach.

Some things are visible: four lawn mowers running at one time, power-washing in the rain. But sustainability means calling out the things that we could choose to avoid. The coal burned to import the banana you had for lunch, the strawberries you want in the winter. Until we start to take responsibility for our personal sustainability and make a change to the campus climate as a whole, we cannot expect our University to make these decisions on our behalf.

rachel murphy

Contributors' notes

Taylor Applegate, an English major with minors in Spanish and Latin American Studies, served as the 2014-15 Editor-in-Chief of *The Puget Sound Trail*. She spends all her free time blues dancing.

Parker Brisebois is a junior originally from Montreal, Quebec but raised in San Diego, California. Parker plays football at UPS but also enjoys reading and writing science fiction as well as riding his longboard.

Olivia G. Cadwell is a senior student studying English literature and neuroscience. She enjoys reading and writing, literature and brain research, Thai food, and practicing yoga.

Matt Max deGruy is a travel-happy senior hailing from Santa Barbara, California who upon graduation plans to drive through all 48 contiguous states.

Matt Folensbee is a junior English major from Texas and a future University of Puget Sound trustee.

Naomi Hill is an English major from Portland, Oregon. She enjoys Kombucha, running in the rain, bad mouthing Southern California, and debating the proper ways of identifying the various forms of precipitation the Pacific Northwest has to offer.

Marissa Irish is a Classics and English major from Portland, Oregon who ironically refuses to accept *Don Quixote* as the first novel ever written.

Vanessa Juteau is a senior, a creative writing major, a vegetarian, and an aspiring comedy writer.

Rachel Murphy is a junior Psychology major and Environmental Policy and Decision Making minor from Los Angeles, California.

Clarisse Nakahama is a Creative Writing and Sociology/Anthropology major from Claremont, California. She enjoys driving over the speed

limit, cursing out Northwest drivers, and calling everyone around her a "Goddamn Hipster."

Alissa Nance is a junior from Southern Oregon, majoring in English with an emphasis in Writing, Rhetoric and Culture and minoring in Classics.

Lili Nimlo is an English Major from Santa Fe, New Mexico. She believes that putting off environmental protection is a failure in justice and a mistake that can't be reversed.

Adrian Rampy is a senior graduating in English Literature and Comparative Sociology, raised in the NorCal foothills along the Yuba River. Previously a Chinook salmon run, the Yuba River is now cut off by a dam, but still home to a waning trout population including Rainbow, Steel Head, Brown, Cutthroat, and Bull trout.

Billy Rathje is a senior English literature and computer science double major interested in how both fields imagine and transform environments.

Zalman Robles comes from a small town named Templeton, California. He runs the 400-meter hurdles for the University of Puget Sound's track and field team. Zalman's favorite novel is *East of Eden* and his favorite author is Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

Leah Shamlian is a senior, majoring in English and minoring in the Environmental Policy and Decision Making program (and disconsolate that she's too old for the brand new EPDM major). She's a pretty big fan of water and marine issues, T.S. Eliot, and the UPS crew team (ROOH!).

When not reading French and English literature for class, **Elaine Stamp** spends her time cooking, finding funk and soul tracks for her radio show, and stress knitting when appropriate.

Lauren Stuck is a senior Psychology and English double major. She likes reading Margaret Atwood, listening to Neko Case, and eating pizza.

Robin Temple is a senior English major whose future depends on the stories we tell and the magic we make.

Meg Van Brocklin is a senior majoring in English Literature. She enjoys college radio, French films, and eating sushi.



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