

The bell-shaped curve

A one-time gift,
which bore a shift so sweeping, so swift
That in a moment we were lifted
from the dark to blazing light
From boundedness to flight,
From fragility to this, our unimpeded might.

Black Magic is the art of casting spells
From the burgeoning swells of oil wells,
Of making real from what may seem
A mere pipe-dream
With rapidity and ease
Our most wild and frenzied fantasies
unprecedented luxuries
and endless possibilities,
whatever they may be.

Our energy
is vast and our desires burn
without cessation
for unrestrained realisation
as we turn with raging fire
plant life's fossilized remains
pumped from our mother's deeply buried secret veins
from so many million years ago
to so many million things we think we need to make us grow.

and how we all innately know
this energy so cheap to be a rite of birth
which justifies the pillage and the plunder of our earth
it matters not what we kill
or the oil that we spill,
we must do what we will,
and *drill, baby, drill*;

This free-flowing glut of oil that pervades
the fabric of everything we've made,
that powers the weapons of every blood-filled crusade,
of everything we ever trade
every cheap light shade,
windscreen wiper blade,
bottle of synthetic lemonade...
and all done so boldly; we were so unafraid,
and so longing for this great parade,
yet underplayed the masquerade
on which all this is made;

For there's something that they didn't tell you in school,

While they were upholding all their silly rules –
but it's something that every one of us must know
as our oil-based inferno continues to grow;
that in a day coming soon we will reach a peak
in the oil that we can extract for cheap

...and the shape of this growth and decline
is defined
by the shape of a curve like the shape of a bell
that brought us sweet heaven and brings perfect hell
as we scramble for more
of what we had before
but alas this great store
of cheap oil galore
was this:

a one-time, once only gift.

So now that we're getting a little unnerved
by the steep downwards slope of this bell-shaped curve,
with our world in such turmoil
with our mother despoiled -
only now do we see in what we're embroiled...

For you see,
I can live without CCTV,
“come dine with me”,
slush-puppies
and jet-skis,
fast food,
pills to change my mood,
waterproof socks,
face full of botox,
fashion parades,
polystyrene trays,
industrial meat
and detention centres,
cluster bombs
and TV presenters,
high-speed trains
and fighter planes...

but it's oil that running through my god-damn veins -

For could it really be
that one in three
of us is here due
to oil spewed
across the land to grow our food?
are you that one? or you?
or is it me?
For we do not use energy

only for frivolity,
absurdity and folly,
but for every amenity,
every school facility
every hospital and medicine,
every scientific breakthrough won –

and though we may try
to defy
not just our energy greed
but also our need,
this fact makes all our efforts foiled:
that for 500 hours of hard human toil
we need but one of oil.

So such is our affliction
of two kinds of addiction
both emotional
and physical...
And here's the paradox of our predicament:
Of the screaming need for energy descent -
When the only way of being that any of us know
is to carve up the world to make the money grow,

And I fear it's clear
that right now we're
not going for revolution
or a change of institutions...
So let's talk about 'solutions,'
- for we need energy security
for our ever growing economy
and our oil is stuck too far down a hole
to get it out...so how about coal?

First we blast the mountainside
we cast aside all that had resided there;
we poison the air
and the soil and the streams
for easier access to the coal seams
and then when the job's done
we build a mall on the mess for more shopping fun
and then look at what we've won
from this hell-bent torment
inflicted without consent -
nothing but eight per cent
of a piece of coal's energy content
can we utilise

so coal...maybe not so wise;
let's talk tar sands instead
and from outer space we'll look at its spread
across the surface of the land

and decide if this was such a clever plan
with the filth that it commands
and the First Nation people that are banned
from living the oil-free life they had lived
on that land for so long – and what do the tar sands give?
A meagre amount of energy produced to help *us* live
and a load more carbon emitted than crude oil...

...So now that *that* idea's been spoiled –

Let's frack
- though no-one's quite got the knack
of how you crack
the very plates
of the earth without creating
earth quakes
as the ground spouts out
toxic shit that leaks into our water supplies –
you know, in my eyes,
I don't think you ought to
drink the kind of water
where you can set your tap on fire
but will that stop our desire?

So what about biofuels?
But let's ask ourselves what kind of fools
cut down vast expanses of rainforest trees
to grow them and then say the fuel's carbon free?

And we ask, but isn't it doable
to just switch to renewables?
But with our energy demands
we'd need to cover all the land
in wind-turbines
and then find
that we need the sunshine
that's falling on a foreign desert's sand,
which would lead us to expand
onto someone else's land...

So how about nuclear -
Brazen world of toxic fear;
how about shale oil,
another way to despoil;
how about deep sea drills
while the Gulf of Mexico still
suffers the chills
of what's been killed...

do you get my drift?
That this, our one time gift
is gone

and we can't prolong
the facing of this truth –
of the need to radically reduce
our energy use;
not just you and not just me
but in the whole structure of our society

Because there are no easy answers
But I think we have to take our chances
Even if we feel
That our lives aren't really real.
I am alive - and though I suffer the affliction
of an imposed oil addiction
I have the drive
to dream big dreams
and even scheme
to create a life that means
that we are free
of this dependency.
And we can't throw life itself away
so why not decide we're here to stay
and keep on fighting for a way
for us all to have control?
Because how can we keep living if our world isn't whole?
And I feel it from the bottom of my heart and my soul
That if we want it bad enough, we'll make a new world unfold.