

## 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 scrabble 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.