

DEEP POCKETS

(a ghosting of Eliot's "Burnt Norton")

Legacy sites are oil and gas fields that at one time were operated and produced by a major oil company (commonly referred to as the 'deep pockets').

Oil companies also commonly refer to their properties and resources as "legacy assets".

I.

Climate skeptics pay climate alarmists to be
Climate realists, and climate realism
Is perhaps present in climate alarmism.
If all politics is eternally realist,
All politics is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a petrochemical antagonism
Only in a world of oil speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always money.
Pitfalls echo in the mineshaft
Down the passage which we drilled
Towards the rocks we never should have opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo,
Thus, in your ground water.

But to what purpose

Disturbing the gas deep in the earth
I do not know.

Other echoes

Inhabit the oilfield. Shall we follow?
Quick, said the investor, drill them drill them,
Round the corner. Through the first stratus,
Into the plutonic world, shall we follow
The deception of the investor? Out of our first world.
There they were, undignified, transparent,
Moving without pressure, over the dead locals,
In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air,
And the investor called, in response to
The unheard music hidden in the earth,
And the unseen drill-bit drilled, for the legacy
Had the look of oil that is looked at.
There they were, a government-sponsored legal fiction, offered and offering,
So we drilled, and they, in a formal process,
Emptied the landscape
and looked down into the drained pool.
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,

And the pool was filled with gas out of shale formations,
And the gas rose, quietly quietly,
The shale gas glittered out of heart of light,
And investors were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a truck passed, and the pool was emptied.
Go, said the investor, for the trucks were full of barrels,
Hidden excitedly, containing money.
Go, go, go, said the investor: the earth
Cannot bear very much reality.
Climate skeptics pay climate alarmists
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always money.

II.

Gas and toxins in the flood
Clot the embedded machinery
The trilling fire in the mud
Singes its deliberate scars
Appeasing greedy oil czars.
The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
Disfigured in the drift of cars
Ascend the fracking Christmas Tree
We move above the Christmas Tree
We hear of petro-spill relief
And see the rotten ocean floor
Below, the bore-head and the bore
Pursue their fossils far from shore
And justified by foreign wars.

At the still point of the changing world. Neither liquid nor solid;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the shale is,
But neither arrest nor protest movement. And do not call it price fixing.
Where past and future are pooled. Neither protest movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the planet, the still planet,
There would be no finance, and there is only the finance.
I can only say, *there* we have invested; but I cannot say why.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in climate.

The inner freedom from common sense,
The release from conscience and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compression, yet surrounded
By the grace of nonsense, guar gum and biocide still and moving,
Sublimity without elimination,
Without concentration, both a new world
And the old made deficient, undermined
In the completion of profit ecstasy,
The resolution of its profit horror.

Yet the disenchantment of past and future
Woven in the weakness of the changing rock structures,
Protects mankind from sustainability,
Which flesh cannot achieve.

Climate skeptics and climate alarmists

Allow but a little consciousness.
To have a conscience is not to be in the climate
But only in the climate can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment of the guar gum and biocide
Be remembered; eliminating past and future.
Only through climate climate is conquered.

III.

Here is a place of disaffection
Climate before and climate after
In a dim light; neither prosperity
Investing stone with colorless substance
Turning shale gas into transient profit
With slow drill rotation causing permanence
Nor darkness to purify the soul
Emptying the ground to deprivation
Cleansing affection from the landscape.
Nether plenitude made vacancy. Only a flicker
Over the stained, climate-ridden faces
Fracked from fracking by fracking
Filled with fancy bonuses and empty of value
Tumid apathy with no conscience
Men and bits of machinery, whirled by the cold drill
That blows before and after climate,
Winds in and out of unwholesome holes
Climate before and climate after,
Eructation of unhealthy holes
Into the faded air, the tar pit
Drilled on the land that sweeps the gloomy hills of North Dakota,
Balcombe and Rexton, Halifax and Wyoming,
Fort McMurray, the Gulf of Mexico and New Zealand. Not here
Not here the darkness, in this twittering world.

Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of petrochemical cynicism,
World not world, but that which is poor in world,
Plutonic darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property,
Desiccation of the world of aquifers
Evacuation of the world of tap water,
Inoperancy of the world of crops;
This is one way, and the other

Is bought out, not in protest movement
But abstention from protest movement; while the world moves
In apathy, on its metallated ways
Of climate past and climate future.

IV.

Climate and swell have buried the day,
The black cloud carries the sun away.
Will the sunflower turn to dust, will the garden hybrid
Finish this sentence; bend us to
touch, sing?
Chill
Proppants be hurled
Down on us? After the seagull's wing
Has soaked it all up, and is silent, the polymers
are still here at the still point of the changing world.

V.

Polyacrylamide moves, borate salts move
Throughout the climate; and that which is only living
Will only die. Acids, after sandwater, reach
Into the strata. Only by this form of profit-mongering
Can biocides and sandwater reach
The shale gas, as the confining pressure
Gives way to the principal stress.
Not the stress of the tensile strength, while it lasts,
Not that only, but the co-extension of liquid and gas expansion,
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end of drilling.
And all is over now. Rocks strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with precision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay shale. Shrieking drills
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always assail them. The biocide in the desertification process
Is most attached to voices of temptation,
The Green Party opposition critic in her funeral dance,
The loud bellow of the insatiable Prime Minister.

The detail of the landscape is changed,
Like a figure fallen down the stairs.
Profit itself is justification,
Not in itself profitable;
Love is itself useless,
Only the cause of endless suffering,

Timeless, and impossible
Except in the aspect of climate
Caught in the form of lamentation
Between un-being and being.
Sudden in a shaft of trapped sunlight
Even while the dust moves
There rises the hidden laughter
Of politicians in the driver's seat
Quick now, drill, now, always—
Ridiculous the sad waste climate
Stretching before and after.