

# AP Literature Pieces

## 2011-2012

### A Modest Proposal

by Madison Lowe

In this day and age, there are many issues that are hazardous to our well-being. One of the largest concerns in today's world is the price of fuel. This problem has a proportional and inverse relationship to the amount of oil that is left on the earth. Some say that there are approximately 30 to 50 years of fuel left. This time span is well within my lifetime, and its implications are not agreeable to me whatsoever.

Another very large, current issue is that of obesity and of Americans being overweight. According to the medical journal *The Lancet*, nearly seven out of ten people are either obese or overweight in the United States 1. This amounts to over 200 million overweight to obese people in our nation.

Human body fat is a very concentrated, fantastic source of energy. There are approximately 3,500 calories per pound of fat; it takes one hour of hard aerobic exercise to burn almost 1,500 calories, according to *livestrong.com* 2. Collectively, the United States is about 4.6 billion pounds overweight 3. This is a huge untapped energy resource. By multiplying the number of pounds overweight (4.6 billion) by two (the number of hours it takes to burn one pound of fat) we discover 9.2 billion hidden hours worth of fuel.

### Penelope

by Bennet Roper

Matched with an aged husband  
who hates your guts:  
now that is a waste!  
"Off again I see."  
"I'll not miss you," he says.  
That, I can live with.

I am no longer beautiful.  
Webbed cracks frame my eyes,  
my skin droops, my hair mousy, silver-flecked.

He thought I was a goddess once,  
worth all the *bullshit* he went through...

I smile because I know  
I was never beautiful.  
Just an empty space  
for his magnificence to be reflected.  
Just a gilt-framed mirror.

He deluded himself,  
got caught up in a life that seemed a map  
to walk across, still believing  
I was worth coming back for...  
Even those men who stayed home from battle  
only wanted me, so they could best him.

Men are dull.

I am nothing more than a shadow,  
yet I control their world.  
Twenty years on my own: not too shabby...

When he told me he was leaving --  
I knew  
Ulis' had finally realized I am  
imperfect: lame, old, tired...  
I shall let him run his own ship aground.  
And let lesser men's  
echoes tell our story.

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**No-Thing**

People who are obese tend to be 25 percent more likely to develop a mood disorder 4. One study found that 95% % of people who use dieting to lose weight put it back on within two or three years 5. It seems impossible to suggest that both fuel problems and overweight issues could be solved; however, I have a proposal.

I suggest that people who are overweight should be aggressively selected and lured to attend a "weight loss" facility. The aforementioned fatty bodies would be hooked up to liposuction monitors where their fat would be harvested for fuel. The large people could be required to eat and eat to become a living renewable resource. The fat would be then converted into something compatible to running machinery.

This plan is incredibly more cost-efficient than is the current energy economy. The average price of gas per gallon in the United States is \$3.70 and rising. Rotund people could be an instant solution to this issue. Additionally, this plan would create many jobs for people who may regularly face workforce discrimination. Not only would the overweight benefit, the government would also create jobs for people to administer liposuction. If approximately 200 million people required liposuction each year, there would be approximately 25 million potential technical job openings.

Once oil sources have become completely emptied, people will need a new solution. Oil and gas will already be being sold at

by Gerrit Egnew

is nothing to fear,  
for nothing cannot be real.  
Nothing  
goes bump in the night,  
grazes on toes,  
hides in the shadows,  
coils under the bed,  
splendidly vanquished.

One day reality comes striding through the door,  
myriad splinters like snowflakes in evening air,  
brews a cup of tea, to complement  
biscuits and apples. Partake, I try,  
but am excluded; I cannot engage,  
reality in his fearsome feast.

I go, then,  
hunting for nothing.  
Nothing can shroud my shame.  
Nothing to enshrine my memory,  
as a vanquisher.

I cough, a bit damp. Driven by devotion  
to my apparently (that is the trick)  
nobly-just cause. Reality, he laughs.  
Giggles in my ear. Bundles me up  
and takes me home.

Forbidden the fruits of nothing, nothing is  
something to fear.

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## A Modest Proposal

by Bennet Roper

Graced with the presence of tourists almost year-round, McCall, Donnelly, and New Meadows would seem to thrive in an economic downturn. Visitors bring in their thundering and fuel-imbibing machinery, as well as their intimate knowledge of the beauty and sustainability of this beautiful area. Yet even though so many fabulous, intelligent, wealthy people frequent the area, it does not have the cache' and prosperity of even its closest neighbors, like Sun Valley, Idaho. Few careers are available to locals; many residents, who cherish the deep, intrinsic value of this area, are forced to work at least two jobs, just to remain. Also, deep divisions exist between the hiker-skier and fisher-hunter peoples who live here full time.

In order to promote the future well-being and longevity of the Payette Lake region, I propose an elegant, practical, and cost-efficient multi-tiered plan. The capturing and "incarceration" of heavy machinery hobbyists would allow motorboats, snowmobiles, ATVs, jet skis, trucks and all accompanying equipment including

outrageous prices before reserves are emptied, so pricing for the new fuel could do one of two things. First, prices for the new fat-fuel could stay high. That way, if America had any sort of debt, the profits could be used to pay down the deficit. Alternatively, the fat-fuel could be priced lower, thus relieving the pockets of all citizens who are in need of fuel.

As a result of my plan, the government could gain a cheaper fuel alternative that they could sell for a higher percent profit than crude oil. In addition, 70 percent of oil consumers would be taken out of the consumption cycle due to their new residence at a permanent "weight loss" facility. After this large population has died, due to old age, the American population will be fewer, and its actual appearance will be altered. The new population would compose a majority of healthy, fit people with appropriate weights.

A concern with this plan could be that once all the chubby population disappears, Americans will be in the same position they face now. That is not at all the case. By then, science would have had enough time to research and produce an effective, cheap, and clean new fuel source.

Besides its obvious low cost, there are endless examples of advantages this plan would bring. Because obese people are depressed due to their weight, "weight loss" facilities would aid in the relief of American depression. Because everyone surrounding an obese person would be of similar size, they would no longer feel the need to

stereos and RV campers to be confiscated, then resold to newly-arriving tourists. The profits of this new marketable product could be expended in mass advertising campaigns, focusing on the motor-recreational potential of the area. All "incarcerated" persons would promote and maintain the town and surrounding areas through labor and industrial pursuits. This plan would leave locals free to enjoy the area and to maintain the small, but job-creating private army required to "keep the peace." All of these measures would specifically be to preserve the pristine snow and lush land of the McCall area.

The potential monetary advantage of this plan is extremely promising. The following chart lays out the potential income that could be derived from one family, depending on the season:

Item: (regardless of manufacturer)	Number of Items Per Family	Resale Price:
2008-2012 Pickup Trucks	1	\$33,305
2012 Model Motorboats	1	\$44,777
2008-2012 ATVs	2	\$6,222
2008-2012 Snowmobiles	2	\$11,864
2008-2012 Jet Skis	2	\$12,975
Stereo Systems	1	\$135
Blake Shelton "best of" albums	1	\$10.42

**TOTAL: (potentially per family)**

**\$140,359.84\***

\*Dependent on season

Taking this information and applying the numbers to a sample of twenty units (family and pickup combination) "incarcerated," the McCall area could make anywhere from \$2,208,196 per weekend in summer to \$1,143,776 per weekend in winter. Assuming that there are forty weekends available during the year in which a minimum of twenty units would be available, this hypothetical income could be made by applying half the total number of units to each season. The equation: twenty multiplied by the funds from summer weekends added to twenty multiplied by the funds from the winter weekends would give McCall and the surrounding area over \$67 million dollars each year. This money could be spread out to locals to help them thrive and to sustain their lifestyles. The 5,167 people living in McCall, Donnelly and New Meadows would each receive \$11,612 yearly. Seven million of the original total would be used in a massive advertising campaign to promote more tourism. The remaining \$39,440 would be used for the upkeep and benefit of the "incarcerated" persons.

There are obvious concerns related to this plan, even if one cannot argue with the numbers. First, there must be a clear definition of what a "unit" is. Each unit will be specifically any person who is visiting from anywhere outside of a fifty-mile radius of Valley and Adams county. This includes part-time homeowners. As for extended family visiting a local family, the resident family is given the discretion whether or not to submit their relatives for incarceration (a potentially attractive alternative for sons and daughters-in-law, who might agree with the plan unconditionally as a cure for more than economic problems). Secondly, and equally troubling, is the issue of legality: potentially, the plan could be considered "kidnapping." Not to worry: The McCall area Police are fully on board; they are excited about gaining experience in guiding investigations. In the words of one officer: "Bring it on! This area could use

be self-conscious. This plan would also spawn the return to a more realistic, natural-selection type of world. As Darwin suggested, only the strong survive; this system merely speeds up a process that has been stunted in human beings by technological crutches. It has always been the fat animal who was the first to be picked off, either because its slowness allowed it to be taken by a predator, or because it was the tasty prey sought out. In the long run, Americans would only have thinner people. Their offspring would be a generally slimmer breed. This would create a better population, saving billions of dollars in health care costs and ridding the United States of excess adipose tissue.

Obviously I am open to other solutions if an efficient, effective, and easy solution as this comes to mind. However, any opposition to this plan must have a solution and not just find my alternative morally difficult. I doubt that a solution as simple and effective as this one will arise that could possibly solve both problems of excess weight and inadequate fuel supply.

I am in no way trying to profit by this plan. I have had three family members who were extremely overweight, who have each had gastric bypass surgery. They are no longer qualified to be sent out for liposuction. I myself have never had the opportunity of being overweight, so liposuction is not an option for me, either. I only suggest this economically-advantageous plan as an idea that will eventually benefit all involved.

all the extra funds as well as giving the force a chance to maintain a good reputation." The locals who do own motorboats, snowmobiles, etc., will be allowed to continue to use their toys, to create the appropriate atmosphere in the eyes of potential units. Finally, there is the dilemma of keeping the friends and families of those "incarcerated" from being concerned. That can easily be dealt with, as letters would be sent, along with bus or airline tickets that proclaim a "fantastic real estate deal" and a complete free relocation package to take advantage of the offer. They will, of course, be encouraged to come visit, as soon as possible, multiplying exponentially the number of potential units.

Those who object to the "incarceration" aspect of this proposal should rest assured: all units will remain just that, a unit. Unlike many similar forced-labor techniques in history, "families" will remain together in a communal atmosphere. In fact this plan will accomplish what these units were attempting to do in the beginning: become more cohesive as a unit. The whole plan is quite humane.

The advantages of my economic development plan are clear. "Incarcerated" people will not only get to stay together and live in a pristine mountain community, but this plan will also help the rest of America. Different people, potentially more environmentally-friendly ones, will fill the jobs the units have vacated. On a global level, this proposal also has merit. An average family of four, multiplied by twenty (number of units per weekend), and then multiplied by forty (number of weeks the plan is implemented) equals 3,200 persons a year. There will be an inevitable surplus in labor, which may be shipped to China and to other countries dependent on cheap labor. This labor force would be free, as well as adding an additional sum of money for local residents. A win-win for the entire world. The illegal and immoral implications of this plan are simply negligible. Americans have one true religion that is America itself – a few thousand people do not really matter in the pursuit of betterment for a few more. This is the American way.

If this local and global solution does not satisfy your discerning tastes, first do the numbers, then propose your own, improved, method of gaining so much money with so little harm. Critics have claimed that this proposal is a form of slavery. NO. Not at all. Slavery, especially in America's past, was much more cruel. Families will stay together, children will grow up and not leave home, and parents will remain together. So, from a moral and monetary perspective, my modest proposal has a viable future – unless a better one can be presented.

Though I present an ideal solution, I would like to clarify that I personally do not have anything to gain from this plan. Although I am a local, I do not own any of these types of equipment, and I intend to leave the town for college in 2013.

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## Joyous Fulfillment

by Madi Lowe

Standing above,  
looking bothered at bouncing, bubbling, boiling rapids.  
I trudge toward dangerously-enticing water.

Feeling giddiness,  
I gain confidence as the river reels me in.

## Endnotes

- 1 -- Bourke, Joanna. "Shaping Cities for Health." The Lancet.com. Elsevier Inc., 17 Mar. 2012. Web. 04 June 2012.
  - 2 -- "Reports & Findings" livestrong.org. Lance Armstrong Foundation. Web. 04 June 2012. .
  - 3 -- Adams, Cecil. "Washington Paper." Washington City Paper. Washington City Paper, 27 Apr. 2012. Web. 04 June 2012. .
  - 4 -- Simon, Harvey. "Seasonal Affective Disorder." Health News. The New York Times Company, 08 Feb. 2012. Web. 04 June 2012. .
  - 5 -- Milk, Leslie. "Losing Weight: Take It Off, Keep It Off." Washingtonian. Washington Magazine. 01 Mar 2006. Web. 04 June 2012
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Taking a breath,  
never thinking about a chance of death,

hearing its mighty roar,  
seeing its powerful waves,  
embracing its elements,  
I work river successfully through each rapid.  
Nothing  
could be better.

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## Blue

by Mary Parker

*"The wheel weaves..."*

Perhaps  
she wanted it to happen,  
embracing the end  
of her life-long  
toil  
though she had  
much  
left  
to  
do.

*"...as the wheel wills."*

Surrounded by twittering machines,  
not jays,  
oxygen from a tube,  
not a breeze,  
and IV's flowing,  
not that brook by her old farm house.  
didn't seem the way she intended to leave.  
Yet  
despite the purplish tint  
that had developed in her skin,  
she approached the end  
with her  
trademark poise.  
Lackluster eyes closed peacefully.  
She tumbled  
through the twisted  
archway  
into darkness  
and was gone.

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## Finally! A Solution!

by Gerrit Egnew

It is stunning to me that the most pressing issue of my generation is being ignored so thoroughly by those who can stop it. This issue is the disparity between the amount of money going into the Social Security fund and the amount being paid out. When Social Security was created, there were sixteen people working for every person on the dole. Now, there are only two. Social Security will run out of money by 2036, at which point its surplus will run dry. The reason for this is the aging of the Baby Boomers; as they get older, the system struggles to provide for them.

Our country also faces a problem of production. Countries like China and Indonesia constantly out-compete the United States for manufacturing jobs in clothing, technology, and other labor-intensive industries. China is the fastest-growing economy on the planet, while our own stagnates. What can we do about this?

The solution is the problem: the aging Baby Boomers. American citizens over the age of sixty-five are the perfect solution to the production problem. I'm told that geriatrics are extremely effective at simple jobs. Recently, increasing numbers of elderly are taking to new professions to help cover their lack of benefits. Like Chinese laborers, our geriatrics would be better off to work in American sweatshops making America money. An added bonus of this plan would be to set us apart from the child-labor issues in Asia. American sweatshops can be taxed at eighty-five percent or more to fund Social Security; as we take business from China, we supplement our own economy and eliminate the strain on Social Security.

Putting the elderly to work has the added social benefits of new community and comforting togetherness. This system would prevent decrepit workers from going without supervision, would ameliorate loneliness among the geriatrics, and could serve as an early warning system in case of injury and disease. Instead of forcing senior citizens to wallow in misery, alone in a nursing home, putting them to work will give them a purpose.

But if older people are working, what do we do with Social Security? An eminent sociologist has recently completed a study that reveals young people between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five to be the most likely to actually enjoy life, while geriatrics enjoy their daily activities the least. Why make happy people work to subsidize unhappy people? It seems a not-too-large stretch for Social Security checks to be given to young high-school graduates to finance activities that promote happiness, such as binge-drinking and abortions. This, according to my source, is all young people do anyway, so we might as well not force them to work. The rising costs of college make it hardly an option at all; as these citizens age, college-educated people would be wasted in sweatshops. We can't in good conscience let the wealthy, college-educated elite do manual labor, so it makes sense to minimize their numbers.

In this most recent presidential campaign, economics has been shoved to the side. All the talk is about unimportant ideology, such as whether women and gays should have rights. It's numbers that are really important; we need an economy that works, that makes money, and that makes a few people very happy. Depression among college students is on the rise, up nearly ten percent in ten years, so clearly college is depressing. As mentioned, citizens in this age group should be recklessly enjoying themselves! The costs of this time to "find" themselves are easily offset for at least twenty years by the Social Security Trust Fund, and indefinitely if we utilize sweatshop labor to make Apple products. One may propose that allowing young

people to drink freely and even possibly fornicate before marriage might compromise the Moral Fabric of the United States. This, however, is mere fearmongering. Much like how one weeds a garden -- pulling out useless plants so others may grow -- this "undermined" morality will allow for a new, stronger morality to grow, phoenix-like, from the bacchanal.

Some may say, "Why make money on old people when we could cut, say, defense spending?" To that I must contend that there are billions of scary terrorists in scary countries wearing scary face-masks and carrying Kalashnikovs hunting down Americans and crushing red, white, and blue thumbs with their scary teeth. These terrorists are going to crash a hijacked plane into every single one of you, individually, using plastic knives and pens and guns to hold the plane hostage. Covert tests of TSA security have revealed a failure to detect these harmful weapons at rates approaching seventy percent. If TSA, the front line of terrorist prevention, can't stop bombs getting through their magic machines, then the only solution is to hunt down every single terrorist and put a bullet through the head of him, his mother, his wife, and his firstborn child. And tell me we can do that by decreasing defense spending.

At any rate, my plan solves more problems without creating any logistical, moral, or financial issues. Anyone in opposition to senior sweatshops ought to first consider the problems our country faces. It is not enough to merely say that my ideas are wrong; that is a sign of an inferior moral compass and intellectual capacity. Rather, respondents are obliged to propose, however unlikely this may be, better solutions to the expense of college, to the lack of people attending college, to the Social Security funds disparity, and to the economic situation of our country.

I, of course, have little stake in this system. I am about to graduate from high school, but this system is so radically different from the current system that it will not be implemented for many years. In fact, by supporting this plan, I may condemn myself to a retirement spent in a sweatshop. Since I intend to fill the next three decades with hedonism, debauchery, and little else, I feel this is a worthwhile tradeoff. It is my civic duty, as it is the civic duty of every American patriot.