


Imagining Tomorrow: Alternate Energy Futures™

A Short Story Contest for Massachusetts High-school Students

Presented by NESEA  Northeast Sustainable Energy Association

About the Author — Katherine Beveir Kinkel, “Hielo y Mentiras” (Ice and Lies)



My name is Katherine Kinkel, and I am fifteen years old, having just completed my freshman year in high school. My life, regrettably, leaves little time for extramural activity; many of the hours not devoted to endless homework assignments are spent traveling between two cities, as my parents (who are divorced) live a good distance apart. However, I did find time this year to join the swim team at my school and the Academic Decathlon Team (which I did reluctantly by the persuasion of a friend, though it's proved to be a lot of fun!).

I love music and have been playing guitar for a few years now; my dad and brother also play, and it has become a big part of our lives. I am really interested in cinematography and filmmaking, and I hope to pursue film sometime in the future. I have been very involved in creative writing since I was really little, and I do so in my free time whenever I have the chance. I am currently beginning to revise my first novel, which has taken me three years to complete...it was definitely easier to write than it is to edit!

I hope to continue writing in the future, although my career interests are not limited to writing alone; I have recently become involved in some newer fields of science, such as paleoclimatology...I guess I'll just have to see how it all fits in together!

In her Afterward Katherine writes: “The inspiration came from both in-class discussions and media information about the current issue of global warming. My science teacher explained to our class that the earth is an unequally heated system, one that is always trying to bring these inequalities into balance. Because of this, there are constant fluctuations in the different methods of energy transfer on our planet. I came to understand the thermohaline, or deep ocean circulation. Global warming causes the icecaps on the poles to melt, increasing the volume of the ocean and making this process more difficult. The melting of ice caps also slows the path of gyres like the Gulf Stream, which bring warm water northward to the British Isles, keeping them from becoming frozen like the other islands at their same latitude, for instance, Iceland or Greenland. It has been predicted that if Greenland were to melt entirely, global sea level would rise by as much as 20 feet.

All factors combined, I considered the logical situation at hand, both politically and scientifically. It is unlikely that the United States will reduce emissions, as they have consistently refused for decades to do, as well as burgeoning economies like that of Russia, China, and India. As illustrated by the film *The Day After Tomorrow* (which, funny enough, I hadn't even seen until after writing my story), it is uncertain, but interesting to imagine, the possibility and irony of a global ice age ensuing from global warming. It would take many decades, but if this sort of event were to occur, a chain of events would keep it from relenting. As the thermohaline slows and the gyres stop running, spreading ice over the northern hemisphere, sunlight would just be reflected, and not trapped by the greenhouse gases. This was the starting point for *Hielo y Mentiras, 2056*, during World War III, in a time where trees and forests had been forgotten and ice had consumed the globe.”