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EL SEGUNDO BLUE

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HIGH ART

PARIS

I sometimes drive down the coast and pass the El Segundo oil refinery. It occupies a large swath of beach front land, landscaped with palm trees and a carpet of bright green ice plant. The network of oil pipelines running along the ground is barely noticeable. Seagulls circle above the two large red and white striped smoke stacks. Oil storage tanks sit further up the hill out of view. Looking out to sea, there is always an oil tanker in various stages of unloading, marked by how low it sits in the water.

A chain link fence with barbed wire runs around the property with "NO TRESPASSING, NO LOITERING" signs bearing the Chevron logo placed at regular intervals. At one point a sign mentions a butterfly preserve, referring to a small corner of the 3.6 square kilometer property, where a grayish patch of native coastal buckwheat has been planted as food for the butterfly. The preserve uses a tenth of a percent of the available land, the rest of which is covered with the more picturesque ice plant, a native of South Africa.

250,000,000 BCE Most oil originated in the warm seas of the Mesozoic hot house Earth with high CO2 levels. Dead algae like the Cocolith and other microorganisms would accumulate on the ocean floor and without the oxygen needed to decompose normally. Their life energy was preserved, slowly covered up by sediment and concentrated over the millennia by pressure and heat.

1911 The El Segundo Refinery is given its name because it is the second one built by Standard Oil of California (SOCAL). The town of El Segundo takes its name from the refinery.

1933 SOCAL secures the first concession to drill for oil in Saudi Arabia. Together with the Texas Oil Company (Texaco) they form the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO).

1953 The first four level freeway interchange is built in Los Angeles.

1965 -2010 ARAMCO and Chevron represent the top two companies in carbon emissions, having produced 59 and 43 billion metric tons respectively since 1965.

1965 US President Lyndon Johnson receives a report on the environment from his science advisory council that states: "Within a few

generations (we have been) burning the fossil fuels that slowly accumulated in the earth over the past 500 million years... By the year 2000 the increase in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> will be close to 25%. This may be sufficient to produce measurable and perhaps marked changes in climate, and will almost certainly cause significant changes in the temperature and other properties of the stratosphere.

1983 A rare subspecies of butterfly is discovered in the dunes by the El Segundo refinery and named the El Segundo Blue.

1986 Chevron promotes its butterfly preserve in a print and television ad campaign entitled „People Do”. Setting up the preserve cost about 5,000 dollars while the ad campaign promoting it cost millions. 1986 is also the year Chevron is fined 1.5 million for dumping pollutants into the bay from the El Segundo refinery.

In Erwin Schrodinger's book "What is Life" he observed that life forms seem to contradict the second law of thermodynamics which states that entropy always increases; things fall apart. Living things exhibit a self organization and perpetuation of order throughout time that seems the opposite of entropy. Seeking an explanation, Schrodinger observed that "An organism's astonishing gift of concentrating a stream of order on itself and thus escaping the decay into atomic chaos – of drinking orderliness from a suitable environment". In oil we humans have found an intense concentration of orderliness.