



Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic

By Marla Cone

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Traditionally thought of as the last great unspoiled territory on Earth, the Arctic is actually home to some of the most contaminated people and animals on the planet. Awarded a major grant to conduct an exhaustive study of the Arctic's deteriorating environment, Los Angeles Times environmental reporter Marla Cone traveled from Greenland to the Aleutian Islands to find out why the area is so toxic. What she discovered shocked her: Tons of dangerous chemicals and pesticides from the United States, Europe, and Asia are carried to the Arctic by northbound winds and waves. As a result, Inuit women who eat seal and whale meat have far higher concentrations of PCBs and mercury in their breast milk than women who live in the most industrialized areas of the world, and they pass these poisons to their infants, leaving them susceptible to disease. Silent Snow is not only a scientific journey, but also a personal one. Whether hunting giant bowhead whales with native Alaskans or tracking endangered polar bears in Norway, Cone reports with an insider's eye on the dangers of pollution to native peoples and ecosystems, how Arctic cultures are adapting, and what changes will prevent the crisis from getting worse.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In 1999, environmental journalist Cone was awarded a Pew fellowship to examine the Arctic paradox: "How," she wondered, "could the Arctic, so innocent, primitive, so natural... be home to the most contaminated people on the planet?" What she discovered is that pollution is as global as the economy, and that industrialized nations—with their "Save the whales!" movements—are poisoning those very whales with chemical drift. In clear, engaging prose, she explains how PCBs leaking from a Chicago electrical transformer accumulate dramatically in sea mammals and people thousands of miles away. Traveling from Greenland to Alaska, she quickly finds that Power Bars and a down parka are inadequate to the Arctic, and that Inuit and Inupiat peoples rely on whales and seals for food and clothing because "nothing else is perfectly suited to their environment." In this sparsely populated territory, scientists have documented the world's swiftest ecosystem crash and mother's milk so chemically contaminated that it "could be classified as hazardous waste." But solutions are hard to find: there are no alternatives to replace contaminated food, it has become harder to ban chemicals in the U.S., and new contaminants are being introduced. Cone's sympathy with the peoples of the Arctic and her admiration for the harsh, beautiful world in which they live make this an inspiring book. And we all carry some level of the same toxins; as one Inuit says, "The chemical threat is the ultimate threat... it reaches everywhere in the world."

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review When we think of the Arctic, we picture a realm as pristine as a diamond, but it has been poisoned with toxic chemicals carried north from the industrialized world via wind and water. So insidious is this invisible invasion, the animals and people of the Arctic "carry more mercury and PCBs in their bodies" than any other living beings on earth. Cone, an award-winning environmental reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, recounts her travels throughout the afflicted region in a riveting narrative as notable for its conversational fluency as for the clarity of its alarming information. As she vividly describes her experiences with Arctic hunters, she elucidates how the well-being of circumpolar people has resided for millennia in the animals they hunt and eat. She then chronicles the painstaking work of scientists who discovered that the toxins Arctic dwellers now ingest in traditional foods cause mental impairment, reproductive failure, and weakened immune systems. Cone's title is a variation on *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson's seminal 1962 book about the dangers of DDT. Tragically, the new matrix of pollutants is far more malignant, and there are no simple solutions in sight. Cone's superb and affecting delineation of the Arctic's chemical crisis and its consequences for us all is galvanizing and necessary. *Donna Seaman*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Andria Miguel:

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children right up until adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important usually. The book Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic ended up being making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The e-book Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic is not only giving you more new information but also being your friend when you sense bored. You can spend your

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Amanda Doss:

Reading can called head hangout, why? Because while you are reading a book specifically book entitled Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic the mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe mysterious for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging each word written in a guide then become one form conclusion and explanation which maybe you never get prior to. The Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic giving you one more experience more than blown away your mind but also giving you useful details for your better life in this era. So now let us show you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished reading through it, like winning an activity. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

George Privette:

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