

What They Will Say About Us in Fifty Years

by Joan Mazza

People drove their own cars, only one person at a time, in vehicles big enough for six. Many lived alone in separate homes, each with its own washer, dryer, dishwasher. Some had great rooms, family and game rooms, entertainment centers, pools, hot tubs— hardly used by those who traveled and worked, at home only to sleep and never for long enough. They used paper dishes and plastic cups they threw away after one use, many never touched. They packed shipments in Styrofoam— a substance that doesn't break down for 500 years, mistaken by fish and birds as food, produces harmful gases when burned. They sprayed poisons on crops and ate them, called it food. They consumed products that rotted their teeth, destroyed their livers, caused birth defects, mental disorders and mood swings. And even when they were warned, they didn't stop, believing themselves enlightened because they talked about solar power, and didn't keep slaves inside their own country, but hid them far away.