



**How has Climate Change
Affected Your Life?**



Electronic Edition

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Some people respond to the question:
**How has climate change affected your
life?**

Terrifying. Maddening. These systems of evil,
ecocide, destroying everything. Hypocrisy,
everywhere. Bullshit, everywhere. Stupidity,
everywhere, at every level. Sometimes I am very
angry. Mostly it breaks my heart. It's like we're all
living in an alternate, pretend reality. It feels
like a childhood where you're pretending there's no
abuse. I love my children too much to have had them.
We have to hope, but I don't really believe what
we're hoping, but I act like there's hope anyway,
because what else can we do. I wrote this then looked
again at what you asked for and now I'm not sure this
is quite right but I suppose this is an attempt to
describe the feelings that affect my life.

Ok some people think the climate change activists have fed into the socialist agenda, um, that it is evidence of evil on earth.

Where we live is a question we wrestle with, in terms of both the long history of the land we live on and where we feel the most connection. For most of my life, I have always envisioned living on the west coast of Canada, in Vancouver or Victoria. One of the symptoms of climate change in that terrain is the dramatic rise of wildfires and the corresponding plummet of air quality. We breathe in my family, but alas with some difficulty. Consequently, our idea of place in the world has shifted, and what was once the happy elsewhere has become merely elsewhere. As we witness the increasing impacts of climate change, I think we are in for a long series of such recalibrations as we assess the particular vulnerabilities of everywhere.

There are now 5 seasons in the Canadian rocky mountains: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter and Fire. Fire season spreads across Spring, Summer and Fall, as the mountain parks emerge from winter, the snow melts and exposes the undergrowth. If rains don't come quick enough, and if heat gathers in the valleys, then fires start - frequently exacerbated by hot asphalt, careless cigarette disposal, lightning strikes, and general over-heated underbrush and brittle tree branches. Monumental fires bloom across the interior of British Columbia and Central to Northern Alberta, destroying homes, lives, and ecosystems - and presenting plumes of ashen clouds through the Bow Valley - the skies obscured by grey/orange clouds, the sun bleats red, and ash gathers across windows. Each breath is thick, the taste of ash and injury pervasive.

My life has not been affected much by the climate emergency except I do think about where would be the best place to be when things really start to get bad. However, I am astonished by non-action faced with what to me seems to be an acceleration in frequency of extreme weather.

Melancholia, the condition of having excess black bile, a feeling of 'dis-ease' that unbalances one's physiological and psychological equilibrium, is linked to seeking solitude. It will drive a deranged penguin in Antarctica to run off into the wild, away from the feeding grounds at the edge of the ice and away from the rest of his colony. That's a level of removal that I can't quite comprehend. But I have, on too many occasions, stayed in bed for the entire day and wished for a different world.

As I grow older and begin to think more about the end of my life, I feel the earth is doing the same.

I'm not sure I'm so optimistic anymore.

grieving, crying, the garden is dry, or drowning,
every plan made may change, the pleasure of travel is
something else now, a hypothetical, or not happening,
or enjoyed with that sick feeling that I shouldn't be
flying, or that this will be a memory that does not
recur. losing power means considering the cost of a
generator. trees, when flying through the air, are
the greatest danger in my climate. the care of the
tulip poplar trees. I installed a woodstove and threw
out the oil tank. rain barrels maybe next. too many
trees to install solar panels. thoughts about air and
water and soil as the most precious entities. and the
time it takes to assemble everything and ourselves,
again and again newly, now. climate migrants and
climate inequity. and the cost.

The climate emergency has made me reflect on death, and that everything will die - from the ephemeral flowers in my garden, to my friends and family, myself my progeny and eventually the planet. How can we care for ourselves and the planet in a compassionate way, that allows for both creation and destruction; that accepts the notions of birth and rebirth? The future may hold darkness - but it also holds light.

dry grasses. glimmer wet. after rain. but say:
we became drought. and now we are golden.

Flights to Spain are £100 return off-peak and then you have to hire a car! Or, going overland takes two nights by ferry, bus and train. I took an overnight ferry with a cabin (as I feel safer as a solo traveler). Cost; £1200 return! I love to travel by boat and land, but it causes debt.

Yesterday I joined in a tree planting. We planted 203 saplings.

Capitalism wants your despair and resignation. Nature wants your belief and love.

I became aware that there was nothing I as an individual could do. No matter how little resources I use, even if I could use zero resources no heat, no food, nothing. I'd be punishing myself for starters, and then in the end, 8 Billion other people would without any doubt still continue to use resources. Whether I live or die, makes no difference to the outcome.

My immediate response in thought to this question was what have I done in reaction to or in relation to my concern about climate change; and was a listing of actions and conversations I have taken part in or done ... no longer flying, considering the impact of most purchases, adjusting aspects of domestic and work life so that I travel less, use public transport, lower heating temperatures, buy different food ... and of course these are affects, are ways that climate change has affected my life, but I then reoriented the question to relate more to the impact of climate change, the actual specific particular ways in which it may have changed something in how I understand my living, how I live my life, not in my behaviour, but in my experience.

This then prompted another listing or a counting of affects ... the saving of water to irrigate the garden, the appreciation of the insects that are around me, the noticing of birds and small mammals, the low level resentment or irritation at the apparent disregard of other humans who appear to carry on regardless, who don't seem to be making the changes, the adaptations I am making. And through this the affect includes a recognition that my sense of loss of species, loss of diversity, stressed environments, diminishing resources, can at moments feel indulgent, because I am not at a point of crisis, my home is not immediately threatened by flooding, the food crops I

need to feed my family or sell to cover my necessities are not dying, I can choose to take ameliorating actions, and can advocate this to others, but I am still lucky or privileged or safe!

So the affects on me, on my life, of climate change are a mixed swirl of emotional churn ... a consciousness of loss, and of further loss and destruction to come, a wish and an effort to make positive changes that can impact in a small way in the face of this, and also some soup of feelings that combine resentment, anger, superiority, or vanity ... and in response to this a returning to my experience, my immediate surroundings, the impact and affect I can have on those I live with and work with and meet regularly. So, climate change has affected me in practical changes I have made in how I go about my day to day life, but also pushes me to think about how I can prepare for greater, more dramatic, tougher changes, and how I can help those around me to prepare.

Fire and flood. Flood and fire. Which came first? The River Gods got angry: flash floods hit the Yorkshire and Lancashire moors and glided in a torrent down the hills, choking up the valleys, submerging my house and filling it with silt. It was the day after Christmas. My house had never flooded, not even the cellar, whose cupboards were lined with paper from the 1950s. Then, half a year of homelessness, while the house was forced to breathe out the curse from the River Gods, who disliked the way we treated the planet and managed our waters. (The landlords who enjoy shooting grouse on the tops snigger as the Environment Agency throws money at flood prevention works in the vales; they burn the moors' vegetation so that the grouse have nowhere to hide, but this also means the rain has nothing to slow it down, so it rushes down the hills, unfettered, ready to drown us.) Down South, in my ancestral homeland in Northern Spain: Fire. The Forest Gods are immolated by arsonists. The land that was once green and rainy is now dry and thirsty. Summers of incessant rain recede back into memory. It is yellowed grass now, and dry leaves waiting for a spark, the spark that inexorably comes and scorches up mountains, sending smoke signals all the way to Heaven. A bit like the End of Days. Fire and flood. Flood and fire. Which came first? Which will come last?

There certainly is a lot of talk about it.

It's really hot. Now we look at the air quality number, not just the temp on the weather app. And when I go out in the morning, I smell the air for any changes. Both of these things are new for me.

Personally, climate change has affected how I face the ethics of family planning. On the one hand, I would like to have children, to share and expand consciousness through them (environmental consciousness included). However, the prospect of bringing life into this damaged world, to inevitable suffering, makes me hesitant. It is interesting how climate change not only prompts me to reflect on our own extinction but also in our generation of life.

Fear as default, theft of future -- but also the ethical challenge of change, present throughout human history -- how to err on the side of fighting the right fight. Stop believing. Don't stop believing. Don't stop.

We saw the smoky sky this summer. The sun looked like a setting orange ball only it was way up high. My throat hurt and I didn't know if that meant I had COVID or if it was from the smoke. October is warmer. Everything's warmer.

If it was not for the climate emergency, I would not have pulled up my bootstraps and said, "This is what I gotta do." It made me a dancer. I gotta dance. I'm gonna die tomorrow.

I've downgraded my opinion of homo sapiens. William S Burroughs called humans "bad animals." That was a generous assessment.

I'm just waiting for the shoe to drop.

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