

Words for Your World

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Envision yourself for a moment, you are an Indigenous person who has lived on your land for your entire life, like your parents and their parents and all generations before them. You are a parent to two young children who have grown up knowing that one day they will inherit the legacy of their ancestors, they are to cultivate and nourish the land and make it prosper. You work with the earth, farm its land, and gain spiritual renewal from it. And now word is about that the tides are rising. Your crops flood, the days become long and arduous – you cannot make a profit and nobody around you can help. You worry for your children, their futures and what will become of them and the island your bloodline has cherished for hundreds of years.

You ask around, desperate, but everyone is in the same treacherous boat: the oceans are rising and there is no immediate solution to stop it.

This is the reality that so many Indigenous communities are faced with in our modern world because of climate change. Communities who have lived sustainably for centuries are the ones who must face the terrible result of years of reckless use of earth's non-renewable energy sources: fossil fuels like petroleum which cause harmful gases to pollute our atmosphere and break down the ozone layer—a critical part of the Earth's atmosphere which absorbs most of the ultraviolet radiation reaching the earth from the sun.

Pollution also poses danger to the delicate ecosystems we have in our world, which threatens extinction to some of earth's animals. The deforestation of major woodlands displaces thousands of species each year; the destruction of our forests not only negatively impacts animals but also humans as cutting down trees and plants reduces the amount of oxygen in the air. Trees and plants are key to help reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere: helping to cool down our earth and keeping sea levels lower through photosynthesis. Deforestation only lines the pockets of huge corporate companies who care for nothing but how large their wallet is—I ask that you be on the right side of history, stand against the demolition of our forests, the displacement of native species and the wreckage of our ecosystems. It is not the ordinary people who has caused devastation in our natural world, it is the richest people in society who have for centuries abused our natural resources.

But the climate emergency does not end here, it has over the past decade taken many turns for the worst. An example of how dire the situation is that currently in the world there are more climate refugees than refugees fleeing war and conflict. If this fact alone does not arouse a great desire to fight against climate injustice, then I must ask—is it only when this man-made crisis begins to affect your day-to-day life, that you will finally seek change?