

We Did It!
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Volume 1
October 2050

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We Did It!?

Volume 1
October 2050

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A Word From the Editors

October 2050

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *We Did It!?* Longtime subscribers may be confused, but rest assured this is still the same quality reporting and storytelling you've come to expect for the last 25 years from *Can We Do It?* The name has changed, but the mission remains. We began this journey in 2025, setting out to chronicle Canada's aspirational journey to Net Zero. Frankly, it's been a circuitous path. But here we are. It's 2050. We had some doubts along the way, not a few setbacks, and too many tragedies. But when Prime Minister Rathmaran triumphantly announced in August that Canada had done it, proclaiming that we had joined the sorority of net zero nations, the editorial team met the news with joy, and the realization that a name change was in order for the labour of love that is our little zine.

It has been a long road, filled as much with missteps, conflict, and surprise as it has with progress planned and hoped for. What Canada has accomplished is no small feat:

- After much debate, forays into biofuels, and an unfortunately extended dalliance with large scale carbon capture, in the 2030s we zeroed in on an all-out push to renewable energy. The result is that today we're approaching 80% emissions reductions from 2005 levels. Revolutions in macro and microgrids are bringing this energy coast to coast to coast.
- Carbon capture as a way to keep the fossil sector going was largely abandoned in the 2030s and 2040s but remains a key element of our Net Zero accomplishment—especially direct air capture to deep sea mineralization.
- The once impossible dream of Federal-Provincial alignment on Net Zero and climate change goals has never been fully realized. Still, breakthroughs in the 2030s centered on the goals of a Just Transition, economic reforms aimed at more equitable income distribution, and Energy Aid policies made Net Zero a national project in a way few thought possible.
- Culturally, Canada has seen a revolution almost as stark as the technological one. We are becoming less meat dependent and less focused on consumption, with an ethos of circular economy. Our cities have been transformed, we get around differently, and our young people's dreams and aspirations are more pro social than when rampant individualism permeated our society at the turn of the century.

Yet, even amidst the triumphalism emanating from Ottawa and capitals around the world, our victory is incomplete. The overshoot past 1.5 degrees remains an enormous global concern, even if the two degree cap seems to be holding. Navigating ongoing climate disasters means vigilantly maintaining the quest for equity and justice, not only moving forward, but also redressing the ills that 'progress' produced in the last 25 years:

- Progress towards Net Zero in Canada and abroad helped address some inequalities and injustices of the late 20th and early 21st century, but certainly not all. It has also deepened others, and even generated some new sources of inequality and injustice with which this generation must now contend.
- Indigenous-Settler reconciliation is progressing, but more slowly than it should.
- While the global community may have acted quickly enough to avoid utter catastrophe, we live in a far more uncertain, dangerous, and precarious world than we had hoped. The new normal of nearly constant deadly heat waves and flooding in South Asia are but one stressor on the global Loss and Damage fund that is now the biggest source of foreign aid flows.

So, *We Did It* is both a triumphant cry (!) and a source of uncertainty (?). A celebration and an agenda for the work to come. Join us on this ride as our stories provide a retrospective look at how we got here, explore where we are, and imagine where we might go.

In our inaugural issue we have kept the familiar format that long time readers have come to expect. In **Life**, we have five stories about the people, places, and happenings around Net Zero Canada. **Culture** explores Net Zero in the world of film and books. In **Lives Lived** we again showcase our reader-submitted stories of their lives and memories. **Poetry Corner** has made a triumphant return with one classic poem from 2035 and the winner and runner up from our Net Zero poetry competition.

We hope you enjoy reading *We Did It!?* as much as you have loved reading *Can We Do It?* Remember to support us on Facenet and spread the word!



Life

The People of Net Zero Canada

We Did It!? Staff

“The People of a Transitioning Canada” has always been among our readers’ favorite features in *Can We Do It?* We continue the tradition in *We Did It!?* with our new feature “The People of Net Zero Canada.” Who’s doing what in this new era and economy? This month our staff caught up with Jack Finney in Nova Scotia and Deepa Prakash in Ontario.

Jack Finney

Electrical Engineer, Halifax NS

Jack, 25, sits at a picnic table at the Halifax Seaport Farmer’s Market, a stone’s throw from the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. It was early so sitting outside, noshing on lobster eggs benny with a nice view of McNabs Island in the mouth of Halifax Harbour is still pleasant before the coming September noonday heat. Jack was off for a few days from his job as a renewable energy engineer in the wind fields when we met. The offshore wind farms have made Nova Scotia a growing renewable energy powerhouse thanks to abundant wind, the completion of the Atlantic Loop in 2030, and the new interties to the US power grid that were finalized in 2038.



Jack is new to Nova Scotia. He’s been working almost six months now at the latest wind farm developed by the Wskijnu’k Mtmo’taqnuow Agency—the Mi’kmaq economic development agency that has been overseeing wind projects since the 2020s. He is tall with a mop of disheveled brown hair and deep-set green eyes. He’s new enough to the Maritimes to still be fascinated by the movement of the water in the harbour.

“I never imagined I’d be way out at the edge of Canada when I was a kid growing up in Calgary. I’m used to mountains and wide-open spaces. Halifax is still surreal to me. I’m going to miss skiing this winter.” Hastily, as if worried his boss might read this profile and get the wrong impression, he added “of course it’s an amazing opportunity to be here...much harder to get this kind of work back home.”

Jack is one of thousands, one young man, one trajectory, in an internal migration to the coast that’s reversing the exodus from the Maritimes that took place 60 years ago when the cod fishery collapsed. The motivation is the same—find a good paying job elsewhere when they’re tapped out at home.

“Everyone is nervous in Calgary. The full collapse of the oil sands is clearly coming, some say it’s already happened. My parents worked in the industry their whole lives and now it’s hard to see it continuing. Dad has contracts for capping and remediating wells. Mom was a technician at the big CCS plant in Fort McMurray that closed in 2044. My parents are just hoping the pensions stay afloat long enough for them to retire.”

While Jack is a stranger to Nova Scotia, his family has roots in the Maritimes. His grandfather John Finney moved to Alberta in 1990 from Newfoundland. He was from a cod fishing family and left just before the fishing ban went into effect, a tough choice that was made time and again throughout Atlantic Canada in the 1990s as the fishery collapsed and the oil sands boomed.

“It’s been great to reconnect with some of the cousins I never met before and hear the stories about Grandpa that he certainly never told me. Seems like the 80s were a wild time, lots of sadness though too.”

Jack’s story is remarkably similar to his grandfather’s, a story of adapting to changing economic fortunes across the provinces. “Grandpa never quite got over the cod collapse and always missed living by the sea, though he built a good life in Alberta. The oil sands were good for my family. Kept us fed and clothed and housed and got me an education. I can’t say I’ll miss them—it’s been too obvious for far too long even to Albertans the damage oil’s done—but you won’t hear me or my family say a bad word about Fort Mac.”

Jack’s journey to the Nova Scotia wind fields wouldn’t have happened without the oil sands. After battling with the Federal government in the 2020s over just transition initiatives, the province itself saw the need to diversify and transition in a serious way after the high emissions oil demand collapse of the early 2030s. Jack benefited from Alberta’s Just Transitions Act of 2032 which provided children of oil patch workers access to discounted education at the province’s universities. He is a proud alum of the University of Calgary’s renowned renewable energy engineering program.

Some critics of the program complain that it’s paying to educate people who leave Alberta, just like Jack. “Yeah, I’ve heard the complaints, but it’s nonsense. I send money back to help my folks and my sister in Calgary. I’m hoping to buy a house there too eventually...if I can make enough here in the wind fields.”



Deepa Prakash

Farmer and Wind Co-op
Leader, Aylmer Ontario

Deepa disappears among the herd for a moment, easy to lose even in her bright yellow slicker as the mottled black and white Holsteins ramble in from the fields to the milking barn. Deepa arrived in Canada with her parents and siblings, some of the thousands of refugees fleeing the deadly South Asian heat wave of 2030. Now 42, she and her family have been running the New Hope farm since 2035.

“We were among the lucky ones in 2030,” Deepa recalled. “We had some financial resources and family here in Ontario already. My mother’s family had farmed for generations and I had just graduated from the Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya with degrees in Dairy Technology and Agricultural Science. When the farm came available, we jumped at it.”

The farm itself is a model of sustainability. On their 500 acres, the Prakash’s practice regenerative agriculture, receiving credits each year for retention of carbon in the soil, and they use the methane their 150 cows produce, in various ways not discussed in polite company, to run a small-scale combined heat/power plant on the farm—powering and heating the extensive greenhouses that provide year-round vegetables to local community markets. This is especially welcome since the collapse of California’s vegetable production in 2033.

“We’ve seen what climate catastrophes look like. We’ve felt it. We named our farm New Hope because that’s what the world needs and we’re going to do everything we can to show how it can be done.”

This drive for hope extends beyond growing food and producing dairy in sustainable ways. Deepa is also president of the Community Ontario Wind Co-op, a collection of wind turbines spread over 100 farms along the north coast of Lake Erie from Port Stanley to Port Rowan. The 1000 plus wind turbines each generate enough electricity to power around 1000 homes, a crucial resource after the widespread electrification of home heating and transportation completed in the 2030s significantly increased demand for electricity in the province.

“We supply power to a big chunk of Ontario and it’s something we take great pride in—especially since it’s our community providing power for our community.” That’s in fact COW’s motto, which took a page from the community-owned Danish wind co-ops pioneered back in the 1980s. “We make a small profit too, so we’re able to keep investing doing agriculture the right way and keep farms in the area viable.”

COW, established in 2030, found its origin story in two fights. The first, ironically, was against the enormously unpopular Green Energy Act of 2009. “Oh, the old timers still talk about that one,” Deepa says with a smile. This false start with catalyzing renewable energy in the province raised hackles in rural Ontario for taking away local autonomy over land and energy. “A lot of folks around here who supported climate action back then still hated the GEA.”

The second conflict came in response to the biofuel push in the late 2020s and early 2030s. The federal and provincial governments started heavily subsidizing biofuel production in the region in the teens and twenties, mostly ethanol from corn. Big oil saw an opportunity too, with Suncor making a big switchgrass play in the area, trying to buy up land when it looked like Canada’s path to Net Zero might rely significantly on biofuel replacing fossil energy.

“It was like the GEA all over again for our communities, except this time it was big business and the government joining forces for the land grab. This was all coming to a head just when we bought New Hope. There were already a couple of windmills on the property, and we jumped at the chance of getting more involved in the co-op.”

The small co-op grew steadily over the decade, with more and more farmers and community groups seeing it as a way to gain energy security and local control in an uncertain era. After the biofuel bubble burst in the late 2030s with Canada’s new renewable dominant Net Zero strategy, COW became one of the major energy players in the region. It remains so today.

“COW got started in 2030 as a way for communities and farmers to fight back, to keep some control over their lands and their futures. This is exactly what my family wanted too after fleeing all the uncertainty where my parents grew up. Now we can’t imagine life without New Hope and without COW. And neither can a lot of Ontarians. We’re proud of that.”

Being Climate Friendly Helps Beloved Bakery through Sticky Situations

We Did It!? Staff



Toronto—The sticky buns, my oh my, the sticky buns. When I walk in to Sweetums from a street filled with commuters of all stripes—walkers, bikers, scooters, streetcar riders—the hustle and bustle of the city evaporates. The glorious aroma of caramelized sugar immediately transports me. I’m once again that wide-eyed boy of 10 back in 2032 about to take a sublime bite of my first Sweetums Sticky. I’m happy to report that they taste just as good today.

Just as they were back then, the headline pastries are placed lovingly in their prominent window display promptly at eight every morning. This daily ritual at Sweetums has lured customers from the neighborhood around the Trinity Bellwoods bakery at 780 Queen Street and from across the city for 35 years now.

Sweetums opened in 2015 as a labour of love for a small family, Thomas Harbord, his partner Jaimie Blackbird, and their baby boy Oscar. Thomas has been the baker from day one and is still churning out the treats today. After working in commercial bakeries and restaurants in his 20s, Thomas used a small family inheritance to purchase a cozy corner shop adjacent to one of Toronto’s most popular parks.

“We didn’t know what we were doing business-wise when we started. We had a lot of fun though. I knew how to bake and being by the park seemed like a good idea.” Thomas says with a warm glow of recollection. Thomas baked while Jaimie worked the counter and the accounts, keeping the glass bakery display chockfull of muffins, cupcakes, pastries, and bread, and keeping a keen eye on the mischievous Oscar who delighted customers and exhausted his parents in about equal measure. The personal touch with the dough and the neighborhood was a recipe for success.

“A really friendly family baking really good stuff” is how one long-time customer, stopping by for a coffee and a scone on his way to work, gruffly described the Sweetums secret of neighborhood longevity.

It hasn’t been all sweetness and light these 35 years though. “We’ve seen our ups and downs for sure.” Jaimie says. The Covid pandemic of the early 20s was a rough patch, but the neighborhood rallied around their source for sweet treats and the bakery survived where many small businesses shuttered. Unfortunately, Covid was just a preview of trouble to come.

“The combination of the energy price hikes and recession of the mid 2030s was really challenging for families like us that depended on energy not only for home needs but also for our livelihood,” Jaimie says, recalling the uncertainty and vulnerability. “It was one hit after another.”

First came their house. A little bungalow in Little Italy that Thomas had grown up in. They had refinanced it in the early ‘30s to accommodate spending on the bakery and keep it afloat. But payments became too much, and they had to say goodbye to the family home in March 2035.

Thomas and Jaimie were determined to make the of best things. Like so many those days, they moved into a retrofitted development—an old high-rise tower touted as leading in energy efficiency and comfort with minimal costs needed for upkeep and maintaining comfort. The building was close to their previous house, and to the bakery. There were enough amenities close by and the proximity to other developments seemed great for re-building a community of friends and neighbours.

But the excitement of the move came to a sudden halt when, like so many in those days, Thomas and Jaimie realized how uncomfortable they were in their new place. “The building was most definitely a case of false advertising. We were constantly asking each other, how did this pass code?” Thomas says. Thomas and Jaimie took advantage of the Minimum Comfort Benefit (resulting from the passing of the Federal Wealth Distribution Tax in the early 2030s due to affordability and energy price hikes) to help with their energy costs but there was something so wrong with the design that it took a lot of money and energy to keep up with wild temperature

swings in the “urban jungle.”

“It was rough, and we almost lost the bakery once again,” Thomas says, noting “our 20th anniversary was almost a going out of business party.” But they stayed afloat and always gave back. “We gave out a lot of bread those days to those hurting in the neighborhood from the economic downturn and the bakery was a refuge for us in dark times.”

Being ahead of their time, even for an old-fashioned bakery, helped save them. Thomas and Jaimie staked their claim to being a “climate friendly” bakery already in 2025 switching to electric ovens, purchasing renewable energy, putting in an electric heat pump, sourcing local and organic ingredients.

“Treats for your Tummy and the Planet” reads a framed, faded construction paper poster that’s lost most of its glitter, the product of Oscar’s 5th grade art class. Customers loved the climate focus, but even more importantly those prescient decisions in the 20s unlocked significant government support during the recession and kept energy costs manageable for the business. They also were already ahead of the game when the retrofitting mandates came down.

“We kept baking and people kept coming and somehow, we made it. Owning the building really helped because we were able to make the changes we knew we needed for the business and for our son’s future. We also weren’t subject to the crazy rent hikes so many of our neighbors faced over the years.”

By 2040, the worst was behind them. The rest, as they say in the bakery business, was a piece of cake. The bakery has been humming along for the last decade and the Harbord-Blackbird’s found a certified climate positive building to move into. It’s a comfortable and energy wise home in the west end where Thomas and Jaimie plan to spend their retirement. Yes, after 35, they’ll be putting down their pans in January and enjoying the view through the large smart windows of their condo overlooking High Park, when they’re not pitching in at the Toronto West Food Cooperative farm.

Don’t panic though! Sweetums Stickies and all the other treats will still be there for anyone with a hankering. Oscar and his partner Mathilde are taking over, continuing the tradition.

Shrooms for the Climate

Unearthing the underground network of mushroom insulation suppliers in Ontario

We Did It!? Staff

Despite following a decade of rapid development in the renewables sector, by 2030, the fossil fuel industry contradictorily continued to obstruct energy autonomy for homeowners, renters, and business owners throughout Canada. Instead of accepting potential redundancy, the behemoth gas companies claimed more stakes in the energy game. As the implementing partner for the federal Greening Homes program, the gas company Enbridge began to consolidate its energy monopoly. It moved into and eventually controlled a large segment of the market for producing and installing energy efficient insulation, doors, and windowpanes. It also continued to oversee the grants needed to pay for these retrofits.

During that era of energy uncertainty, many folks struggled to decarbonize their homes while withstanding the pressures of inflation and renovation costs needed to secure a net zero future. A future that required rapid and calculated action. However, the outsourcing of policy to Enbridge and refusal to provide universal and direct support to households resulted in uneven retrofitting. Radical social and economic transformation happened across nearly all sectors because of repeated bouts of high inflation driven by wave after wave of supply chain disruptions from wars, floods, and heatwaves. But without enough guidance or support from governments to individuals and households buffeted by these changes, there was a lot of uncertainty about how to navigate the volatile world.

Who would have thought shrooms could be part of the solution to the country's stalemate with the fossil fuel industry? A few companies had started to develop the technology for mycelium insulation panels in the 2010s and early '20s, and a mycelium brick was featured at New York's famed MOMA already in 2014 in an exhibit on environmental design, but the real breakthrough in Canada came when underground suppliers started to fill the gap left by government inaction. Then, when mushroom insulation entered the market in a serious way, the folks that needed progress the most sat up and took note, and a mycelia-like network of justice-oriented trade emerged.

The suppliers for the booming mushroom insulation market included both industrial and not-for-profit producers. Industrial options served folks that were either ineligible or against purchasing retrofitting insulation using grants overseen by a fossil energy producer. Whereas not-for-profit producers served folks still unable to purchase the mushroom insulation at commercial pricing. The presence of several unnamed not-for-profit actors in a profitable market indicated net zero efforts could potentially depart from the normal impulses of capitalism.

Being unnamed didn't mean that the farmers, labourers, transporters, and facilitators involved in the network required anonymity in transactions. But remaining under the radar helped distribute limited product to those in most need.

Twenty years later, that discretion is no longer required. The network that made up the mushroom insulation industry thrived in the social and economic gaps of the 20s and 30s. It was an era of community organizing that marked major disruptions in the status quo of trade practices. And to stress the metaphor as far as it can go, it was magic.



KatAstrophy

Drag Performer, Toronto

The Shroom Room was called The Shroom Room long before we partnered with the farmers. Trust me, we never would've called it that had we known. It's so obvious, but I guess that added to the fun. We were a drag bar at night, and a storefront for mushroom insulation on the last Thursday of every other month. Farmers, usually different ones each time, would come in and sell their excess panels, bricks, and drywall to us city-dwellers. Whenever they came, the bartender projected this flier we made on the wall. I remember writing the slogan, it said "We're ending our toxic relationship with energy, no more HOT or COLD, and we're taking shrooms. Ask Saylor Thrift at the bar to hook you up." We had a lot of disappointed customers at first, but once the regulars caught on, it was kind of funny.

Enna Sharma

Residential Co-op Site Manager, Toronto

The co-op that I managed – still do, actually – didn't have enough money to update the insulation throughout the building and we had just gotten a grant to upgrade to solar panels and a heat pump, and we didn't have gas utilities anymore so we couldn't get the Enbridge grant for energy efficiency retrofits. I had heard about shroom insulation from my friend on the Volunteer Committee with me at StoryPlanet, and immediately got the contact for their Shroom Guy at Deeply Rooted Farmers' Market.

For an order as big as our co-op needed, he said that he'd be able to do pay-what-you-can if some folks would be able to help with the production. Everyone was super eager to volunteer, and I think some of them stayed on well after we had the panels. I went out a few weekends and it was honestly so nice. The train ride, then biking to the greenhouse, and sometimes the farmer would give us a few of his other veggies to take back to the city. It never felt transactional.

The "Shroom Guy"

Formerly with Deeply Rooted Farmers' Market, Toronto

My identity was never a secret, I was a legit shroom dealer. I dealt insulation, I was practically Home Depot. I produced it on such a small scale that I never needed to advertise; word of mouth was more than enough. I usually did pay-what-you-can or some sort of exchange which worked. I have a lot of pottery now though. There were a few other people in the market on such a local level which was cool.

I had a few friends who had tried denim insulation but shrooms, man! You can't beat them. Easy to grow, easy to sell.

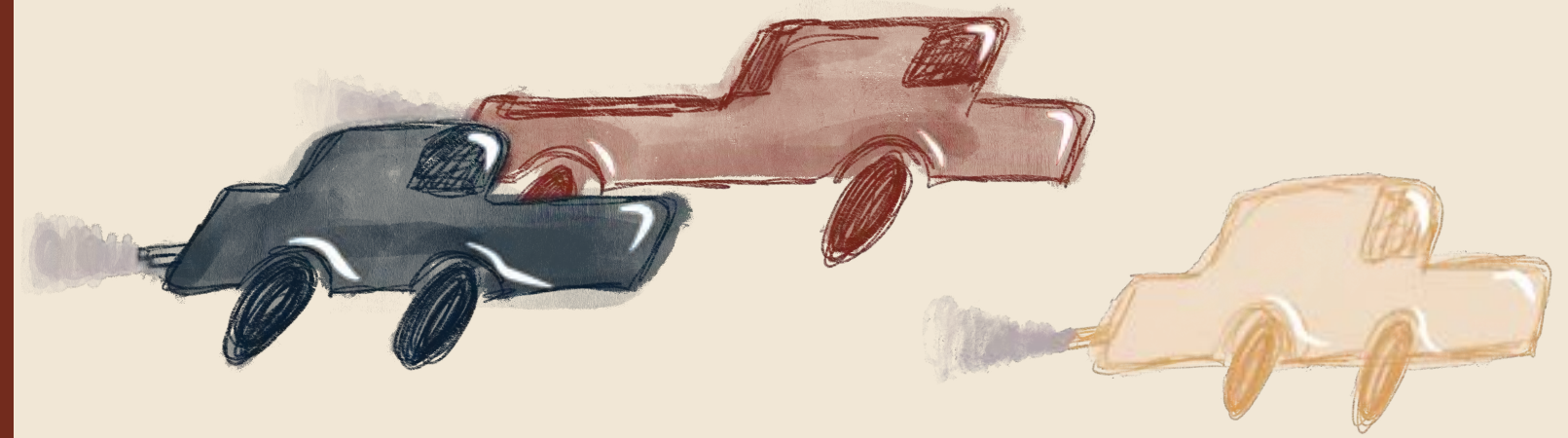
WORD OF THE YEAR 2040

From the Can We Do It? archives. An oldy but a goody as we wait for Merriam-Webster to unveil the 2050 word of the year in December.

We Did It!? Staff

NEW YORK —‘Fossauto’—a gasoline powered car or a slangy synonym for a cantankerous old man—is Merriam-Webster’s word of the year for 2040.

Lexicographers first noted the use of fossauto in the late 20s – early 30s when the large-scale internal combustion engine bans came online and the dominance of electric vehicles, now mostly just described as cars, expanded. Fossauto materialized as a shorthand version of “fossil fuel powered automobile” in car ads in the late 2020s when dealers and private sellers had to specify the source of fuel in their advertisements. The adjective ‘electric’ slowly disappeared as a modifier for car and vehicle in the 2030s. Simultaneously, a range of creative monikers for those cars still burning gasoline (gasser, smoker, fossauto, gcar) emerged, often used in a pejorative sense.



Fossauto caught the public’s imagination when a middle-aged Greta Thunberg, ever the firebrand, hurled the term as an insult at the CEO of Shexxon at the 2038 World Environment and Economic Forum.

“It was Greta’s ‘fossauto heard round the world’ that really propelled this new term into the lexicon,” said Juanita Olowke, Merriam Webster’s chief editor at a reception following the unveiling. “While fossauto is still used in ads for the dwindling number of gasoline powered cars, mostly for aficionados and car clubs, it has really exploded in the last two years as a way to mark generational divides, disdain for a fossil fuel past, and those still pining for it.”

“For those of us old enough to remember the 2020s,” she said, laughing, “fossauto has become the ‘okay boomer’ of this generation.”

Merriam-Webster chooses its words based on how often and in what way words are searched for on its Facenet page and how words trend in usage over time. At the unveiling, Olowke noted that climate related words have dominated their Facenet searches for the past few years. The top five this year included two additional climate-related words.

Merriam-Webster’s top five for 2040:

1. Fossauto
2. Tsunami — An evolution of the original term, now more often signifying overlapping climate crises, it was a popular search term after the deadly back-to-back fires and floods that hit the Pacific Northwest in May.
3. Worm — We all know why this one made it!
4. Clifugee — A neologism meaning climate refugee, this one has made the list for five straight years in the aftermath of the great climate migrations of the mid 2030s.
5. Cacao — The now debunked claim of a geneticist that he had developed a drought tolerant source of increasingly rare real chocolate caused a spike in searches for this word in June.

2050's Hottest Christmas Gift – Artisan Direct Air Capture Calcite Sculptures

We Did It!? Staff



Calgary – “Give the gift of being part of the solution” is the slogan splashed on Roy Archenova’s Facenet and it’s what he’s selling in his downtown Calgary store. Archenova, 63, is a sculptor working in calcite—but not just any calcite. The crystals he sculpts start as dull blocks of potential, conjured from his direct air capture CO₂ mineralization facility on the outskirts of town. In his skillful hands these blocks are transmogrified into striking geometric prisms all hard angles and color, languid, curving waveforms, or even fanciful creatures escaped from the latest fantasy epic.

“The final shape is already in the block,” Roy said. “I just need to get rid of the excess calcite so everyone can see it.” Each sculpture comes with a certificate specifying how much CO₂ is captured in it and they are showing up on Christmas wish lists across the country.

Archenova wasn’t always a sculptor. He spent most of his working life maintaining the massive direct air capture facility that Shexxon opened in 2031. “I was one of the process engineers working the rigs from day one. Everyone in the Sands was putting these in and it was a great time to be in Calgary—boom times again.”

Direct air capture technology development and deployment advanced at breakneck speed in the late ‘20s and early ‘30s. The powerful industry group Pathways Alliance (now defunct) championed various carbon capture technologies as public opinion and international markets began turning against the high-emission bitumen. They pushed for ‘net zero oil’ as a way to maintain the viability of the Oil Sands. Canada’s 2050 Net Zero commitment, legislated back in 2021, paved the way for the billions in federal subsidies that made direct air capture a reality, albeit an expensive one.

It was a short-lived victory. A 2040 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

report detailing requirements to recover from “overshoot” of the 1.5 degree temperature target undermined political support for these technologies. It detailed how using carbon capture for enhanced oil recovery and to keep high emissions oil in the market was delaying decarbonization significantly. Private capital fled first. The federal government, already under pressure from a public worried about accumulating climate impacts, distanced itself from the sector. It shut down federal subsidies programs for good in 2042.

“Like a lightswitch. That’s how fast the money folks pulled out and moved on to coastal operations and deep-sea mineralization. Our plant hung on for a while, but we closed shop in 2044 and shipped the useable tech to British Columbia.”

But Roy stayed when Shexxon left. “I’ve been in Calgary my whole life, through the booms and busts. I got too old to follow the money.”

With help from a grant financed by the Just Transition Act of 2032, Roy was able to scrape together the money to buy an abandoned direct air capture mineralization demonstration facility five years ago. “I always wanted to indulge my creative side and now I had the time to do it.” He showed his first calcite sculptures in galleries in 2047.

Elaine Benes, owner of the Aurora Gallery where Archenova’s sculptures were first displayed, recalls being smitten immediately when she visited his workshop. “They are at once familiar and exotic,” she said. “From the most delicate animal figurines you can hold in your hand to the massive outdoor garden pieces, Roy’s sculptures somehow embody the whimsy everyone longs for today while still capturing the seriousness of the zeitgeist.”

The demand has been so high that Archenova now employs six technicians and artisans and opened his own gallery last year. “People seem to like my trinkets. And they seem chuffed that they’re made from the problem. I guess they’re conversation starters.”

Roy’s sculptures are available at his shop in the recently re-furbished 17th Avenue Retail and Entertainment District in Calgary or on Facenet at Roy’s Artisan DAC Sculptures.

“People seem to like my trinkets. And they seem chuffed that they’re made from the problem. I guess they’re conversation starters.”

Culture

Thirsty

Hope Hunter

Hope Hunter recounts her research for the recent film "Energy Freedom," a documentary that traces the rise of community microgrids, and the portable batteries that helped consumers leap into renewables. This excerpt narrates her fieldwork in one of the sites that produces the raw materials for the technology that powers our lives.



What I remember most clearly is the dust. It got into my mouth and left a dry, choking feeling in my throat - no matter how much water I tried to drink throughout the day. Walking around with a bottle of water was a risky proposition. The miners, covered in white overalls and handkerchiefs tied to their faces, would glare to any one of us walking by as they shovelled piles of glistening white salts rich in lithium, potassium, and magnesium.

Although I clearly stood out as an outsider, I tried to be unobtrusive and sent my camera crew to gather B-roll while I collected impressions. I pulled my windbreaker over my face to sip from my aluminum insulated bottle that kept the water tasting cool and momentarily quenching. The sun and radiation at that altitude, in the northernmost desert of Argentina, burned my skin and blinded my eyes, even with next generation UV lens protection on my reliable Ray Bans.

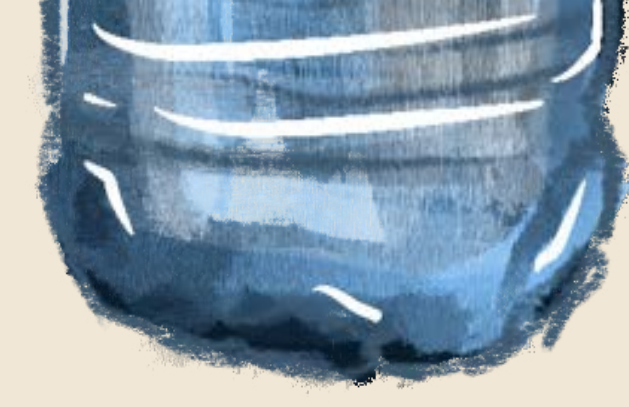
That day the place was buzzing with executives who were visiting for a few hours - it was all the time any of them were willing to spend at 4,200 meters above sea level and 50-degree temperatures. They talked with a mix of relief and anticipation about the amazing lithium harvest they expected from this year's production. Samsung had already sued them for breach of contract when they failed to deliver last year, but they asked each other what they could have done differently if their production targets got thrown off by all the road blockages local communities organized for the better part of the year? "How could these Indigenous people living at the edge of the world still be complaining when the company brought jobs to this empty desert devoid of any economic opportunities?" they said. The miners nearby studiously ignored the bits and pieces of the conversation they could probably make out when the execs switched from English to Spanish. The execs demanded more precision in quotas and timelines from the national project managers accompanying them on their short visit.

I followed the group a few steps back, while I took notes in my reporter's notebook.

I looked to the horizon lined by a volcanic mountain range and sharpened my hearing to catch as much of the conversation I could while remaining inconspicuous to these men and their offhanded comments. But I didn't need to worry. The year's bumper crop and predicted earnings held their rapt attention. They had good reason to be excited; the price per ton had continued to climb against predictions, despite the metal substitutes that had helped automakers market ethical batteries in the 2030s. As we know by now, the North American market has shown itself willing to pay only so much for sustainably sourced options. So, demand for lithium climbed and supply was concentrated in the hands of a handful of international mining companies that continued to push their slogan: "Mining for the Climate."

As for the locals, no one working that brine or living near the crackling white deserts producing the critical minerals that have fuelled our energy revolution wanted to hear any of it. It added too much insult to their injuries and desperation. What they wanted was water. The water that would quench their thirst, and would nurse their llamas, and the little vegetation left for them to forage on. They had even given up on their demands for electricity. The few that could had diesel generators to provide light, electric heating and internet to the worker's camps. The rest of these Indigenous Kollas, whose ancestors thrived in these lands since the 12th century, now lived to scratch whatever life they could out of a depleted moonscape. Over the last 50 years, since the boom of Teslas and the search for this white gold - this lithium fever - erupted in North America and Europe, the few remaining Indigenous and local communities had been hired to help bury and erase the last of their ancestral territory under roads, pipes, and evaporation pools. Each project a new erasure and a fresh wound.

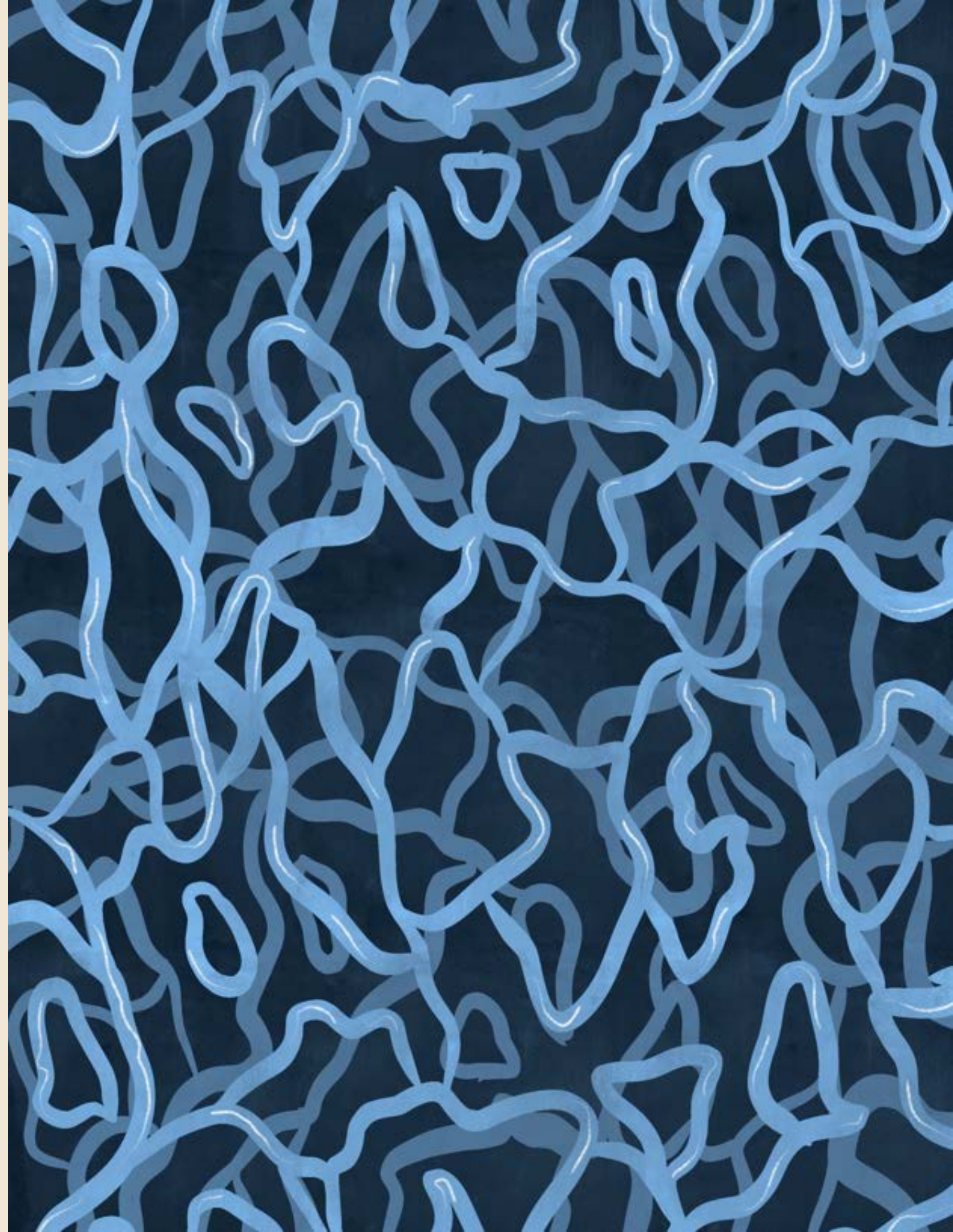
In an earnest attempt to remain faithful to my journalistic training, I was out there to get both sides of the story: the local fight against dispossession, along with the triumphant news from the execs who claimed that the renewable energy revolution and consumer



So, demand for lithium climbed and supply was concentrated in the hands of a handful of international mining companies that continued to push their slogan: "Mining for the Climate."

uptake of electric vehicles in the 2010s and 20s made the development of portable battery storage feasible and affordable for small neighbourhoods across Canada today. I knew this part of the story firsthand and enjoyed the results of affordable battery packs and dependable micro grids that give so many of us freedom from the outages that plague our cities. My own family and neighbours in North Toronto appreciate the autonomy and reliability of the batteries that support our community grid, without worrying about cloudy days when solar panels can't be counted on to power our homes. Still, it was impossible to ignore the conditions at the opposite side of the world.

But the Kollas who continue to make our so-called renewable energy revolution possible were not talking to anyone anymore. They were as tired of the mega mining projects as they were of all the visitors who originally made them feel visible and sparked some hope for a better life: the curious reporters, photojournalists, and documentarians; the well-intentioned academics; and the NGO activists. At the end of the day, we all visited and searched for our own extractive nugget - our story and rich visuals that make for a compelling scene, the data points, or the campaign slogan. Eventually, we all went back home to North America or Europe leaving nothing behind, not even a bottle of water.



Pride and Joy



This is an excerpt from Rose Fortune's explosive new memoir **Life ... in Transition**. In this passage, the recently named Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, widely seen as the Liberal leader in waiting, recounts a story from the tumultuous 2030s told to her by her father.

The photo was from 2012. The world was supposed to end that year, for fanatical reasons that escaped his memory now. Something to do with the Mayans. I'm eight in the photo, almost too heavy for piggy-back rides which is apparent in the slight grimace on his face, but a fact he won't let me know for at least another two years. Despite the discomfort, it's joy that radiates from the picture. That "those were the days" type happiness that stung him every now and then when stumbling upon the picture. The nostalgic pain was being overshadowed now with the distinct slice of glass across his heel as he stepped backwards onto the broken frame.

He cursed, under his breath at first and then louder after remembering he was alone. The glass didn't go deep, just scratched the surface of his calloused foot. Harmless but enough to piss him off more than he already was.

The generator had been down for almost 6 hours. When it first went out, he was only slightly

annoyed, believing that it would be an easy fix, that the mechanical skills he obtained during his first year of college at the car shop down the street from him would make this task a breeze. A part of him even looked forward to it, the thrill of working with his hands was not one he felt very often in his world of finance. After about fifteen minutes of tinkering the thrill was replaced with annoyance, and annoyance replaced shortly after with deep irritation. He pulled out his phone, typing the long name of his supposed state-of-the-art generator into the search bar and then stared at a blank screen, followed by *You are not connected to the internet*. Fuck, of course. An hour had gone by now and the heat seeping in from the summer day had drenched him in sweat. Every summer was the hottest summer on record now. He didn't know why they continued to make it a headline.

The salve for his heated frustration was waiting for him about twenty minutes away at

Malone's, the bar he frequented the most due to its dive-y theme and the fact that they were, "the only people in this god-damn city who can pour a Guinness properly," a quote I was accustomed to hearing and one that made me constantly roll my eyes when we used to drink together on Tuesdays after my classes. Malone's minimal customer base meant their generator could maintain the couple of regulars that hobbled in during the blackouts.

Climbing into the front seat, he was quickly reminded that the car was dead. An empty battery shape blinked at him slowly before he fully sat down behind the wheel. *Right*. He remembered now, thinking he would have time to charge the thing this morning before his 11 am staff meeting. Of course, this blackout had thrown a wrench in more than one plan. He was trapped. Sitting in the front seat of his now useless electric car, he took a moment to pity himself, and another to think of his daughter. He knew I would have so much to say right about now. About the consequences of the climate which led to this situation, about how he was so stuck in his ways, all the other arguments we used to lob back and forth between us until I told him not to contact me anymore. I had quoted similar ultimatums in the past, but this time I was serious. It had been 6 months since we spoke. Maybe, partially, because I was no longer dependent on his financial support. This was the fact he shot at me in the text messages I did not reply to, but he knew that it was more than that. He knew I was passionate. I believed in what I was doing, in the strikes, the protests, the violence, all for a cause he did not believe in and ridiculed me for. It was his fault, he would tell me later. He's the one who raised me to never put out that fire on my tongue. He could picture me now with that determined smirk on my face, crossing my arms and relishing in winning this round of arguments. He dragged his hand across his forehead in an attempt to prevent the droplets of sweat from burning his eyes. His hand was equally sweaty, causing a collision of moisture that made his discomfort even worse.

"Sucks, doesn't it?" he heard my voice in the back of his mind. Not that he would ever admit it, but I was right.

More and more moments like this had been happening to him lately. He recently turned off news notifications on his phone. The constant barrage of climate related deaths and various horror stories were getting harder to ignore. The worst was almost a year ago now when a young activist died outside his building. She had set herself on fire, protesting the company's most recent investment in a green initiative that was, according to the group occupying his lobby, contributing to early extinction. I had called him that morning, spewing the facts he had known about when he approved the board's decision to go through with the investment. I told him he had blood on his hands. He told me I was ungrateful and wrong. A few hours later, the distinct sound of shrieking interrupted his one on one with a new intern: a Rotman business school grad who was obviously very nervous, the shrieking only making him more so. The two of them rushed to the window and saw the flames, the height of his office likening the sight to a collection of ants swarming a tiny bush fire. His phone lit up with a text from his fellow exec. *We gotta get out of here*.

I had known the girl who died. I used to babysit her on Friday nights, her parents' fellow Rosedale neighbours. Scrolling through his phone that night

before bed, photos of the girl popped up on his feed, a memorial written by her father. Words like, “proud” suffixed “devastated.” One of the photos shared was from an old neighbourly get together. The little girl in the photo beamed beside her dad, and in the background, slightly out of focus was the distinct red of my hair. He put his phone down, feeling sick. He texted me, *I love you Rosie girl*. I didn’t answer, and he did not sleep for two days.

He was not a climate change denier. There weren’t many of those left, given the atrocities of the past decade. But he was not impressed with the lengths that activists like his beloved daughter had gone to. Certain systems could not simply be replaced, he would tell me. The government knows what they’re doing and amazing progress is being made. I would scoff, and tell him about the climate refugees I met at the shelter that day, recounting their nightmarish stories, their newfound health issues and watching their family homes disappear before their eyes. He would shake his head, “What do you want me to do?” He had an electric car; in fact he was one of the first in his company to make the investment back in 2023. He taught me how to drive in that same early model that wowed his peers. He was the head of the Green Energy Initiative at his office, pouring millions of dollars into remodeling low-income homes to use green energy. I didn’t care.

“Your company still invests in the oil sands, for fuck’s sake! Who is still investing in that shit?” I would say. At that point he would argue with me about how it is an ethical oil sands initiative unlike the previous industry. “Green Oil Sands” was the term for it. People still needed energy somehow. At this point the argument would devolve into unproductive anger. Shouting and door slamming. I even attempted to jump out of his car once, before he grabbed my arm and yanked me back in. A move he once pulled on his own father over some argument about differing opinions. He could only be so angry; he gave me the blueprint after all.

After pouring some ice water into a bucket to accompany him, he returned to the garage in an attempt to fix the generator again. He tinkered away, believing with each successful whirr and click that he was getting somewhere.

Hours went by with little success until what was ice water started to warm in the heat. He had spent the past unsuccessful hours wondering about his daughter, and where I was during the blackout. I used to stay with him sometimes when they happened. He would make smash burgers and we would re-watch *The Wire*, a habit that slowly morphed into smash veggie burgers paired with documentaries I chose that were deeply uncomfortable for him to sit through, and usually sparked a fight before they even finished.

It was at this point he found himself inside, trying to haul one of his coolers out of the closet to fill with ice and keep beside him while he refused to give up on the generator. It was in this quest that he knocked the photo of me and him off its resting place and onto the ground, the frame shattering and the glass slicing his foot. He cursed, quietly and then with anger.

He stood there and let himself bleed, staring down at the old picture, the urgency of having glass in his foot didn’t bother him. He crouched to pick up what was left of the frame, glass shards falling at his sides while he brought the image closer to his face, the tiny bits of battery powered light falling across the old print. He was not an emotional man, or at least, not in the way anyone would suspect. He was overwhelmed to feel his eyes well up, a feeling that was intensely unfamiliar. The little girl in the photo had grown up to be exactly who he raised her to be. Grounded in her values and unable to accept defeat. He had been fighting for her future through money, making so much that she would never have to worry about a thing, never have to grovel to abusive bosses or work a double or break her body just to make ends meet. But she was fighting for a different future. Money would mean nothing in a world where you couldn’t even breathe for God’s sake.

He was crying now, loudly, heaving deep sobs as his foot continued to bleed onto the hardwood. I was right, he knew I was, deep down, but to admit that would be to admit his own failure, acknowledge his complacency in the decay of the world he was leaving me with. He thought of the girl on fire outside his office. How the whole building went home, his colleagues muttering about what an

inconvenience her death was for them. He nodded along with them, bitched about the media flurry that would probably lose them a bundle in revenue as a result. He felt the shame overwhelm him, the wetness of the blood pooling around his foot.

Suddenly, the lights were on. He heard the whirr of the air conditioning, the buzzing of the fridge and the TV blared to life on CBC, he was watching some segment on the potential for a blackout this week given the heat levels when it happened.

In the light he could see the photo clearly, a few drops of blood had dripped onto the gloss, covering my little face. He felt breathless. He pulled himself up and ran across the living room back into the garage where his generator was sitting, useless, and grabbed his phone, the “how to fix your generator” page loading instantly. He dialed me and waited for my inevitable voicemail. His pride did not even occur to him.

“Rosie girl, you’re right.”



MOVIE REVIEW

Discredited

Exhilarating depiction of the rise and fall of Green Street brokerage firm is a rush.

Hannah Hoag



In the early 2030s, a troupe of executives from companies ranging from America Air to Musiqstream posed for a photo beneath the emerald canopy of rainforest deep in the Brazilian Amazon. They were there to celebrate a decade of “carbon neutral” operations, made possible through their investments in the voluntary carbon market. Alongside them was a beaming Lili Stone-Blackwell, the founder and CEO of CarboNil, the company that had made it all possible. It had found renewable energy projects and forests to create and sell carbon credits to clients so that they could remove planet-heating emissions from their balance sheets.

But the forest was a facade. The trees growing there weren’t under threat and never had been, and the offsets issued in their name had failed to meet their promise of decarbonization. Despite the nifty accounting trick, global temperatures kept rising.

These execs weren’t the only ones duped. In CarboNil’s decade dominating the voluntary carbon market, global companies dished out more than \$55 billion. They were heralded in the media for taking their emissions seriously, and Stone-Blackwell, once an idealistic whiz kid, quickly became the world’s most successful green-finance entrepreneur by selling what turned out to be an entirely ineffective solution.

Investigative journalists Samantha Parker and Zahra Khan chronicled Stone-Blackwell’s rollercoaster rise and downfall, from a freshly minted PhD with a new approach to quantifying the carbon-storing potential of forests to convicted fraudster. “Discredited,” which premium StreamFlix customers can watch now, is Nora Wood’s Hollywood adaptation of their book, and it is a white-knuckle, no-holds-barred, thrill-ride through Green Street’s murkiest tributaries.

CarboNil, in case you’ve forgotten, was the Vancouver-based firm that ruled the UN-run global carbon offset system in the mid-20s and 30s. In less than a decade, CarboNil’s valuation soared to \$18 billion from \$5 million, with offices in two-dozen countries. It even launched a “blue carbon” cryptocurrency called Oceanum, intended to remove carbon credits from the market, thereby raising the price of carbon and boosting a company’s desire to reduce emissions. (It did not.) And then CarboNil collapsed like a soufflé.

Daya Haas plays the now-disgraced carbon entrepreneur whose dishonesty triggered the beginning of the end of the global voluntary carbon market. Stone-Blackwell was 29 years old when she founded CarboNil, launching the brokerage in 2025, as part of the growing global offset market that emerged in response to the race to Net Zero. With new, albeit weak, rules in place, greenhouse gas emitters were desperate for ways to deduct megatonnes of planet-warming pollution from their carbon ledgers. Because companies found it cheaper to pay for offsets than invest in cutting emissions, the market ballooned to more than \$50 billion by 2030.

Stone-Blackwell seems to have meant well, initially selling offsets tied to forested swaths under threat from farming, dams and other development. Later, she expanded to the verified buildout of new

renewable energy projects in developing countries that had relied on coal or other fossil fuels to produce electricity. But she lost her way, and Parker and Khan pulled back the curtain on her largely make-believe company.

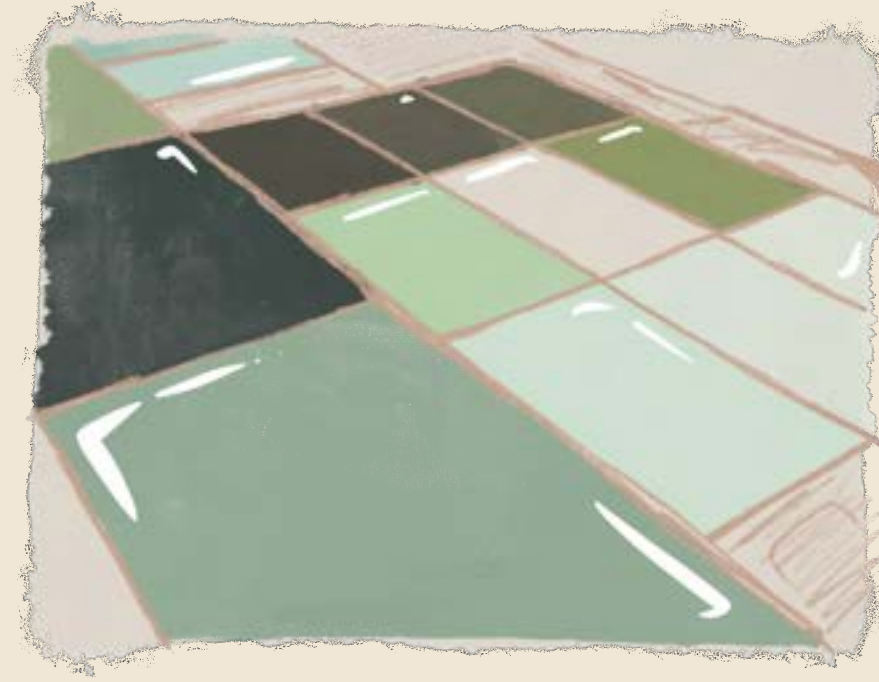
“Discredited” opens with CarboNil teetering on the edge of catastrophe. The ever-confident Stone-Blackwell is chairing a hastily called meeting in the expansive glass-walled conference room overlooking downtown Vancouver to address the board’s concerns over Parker and Khan’s eviscerating reports. The skyscraper gleams, but below its solar-harvesting glazing, sea-level rise has chewed into the city’s boardwalks and townhomes and frayed its edges. A thicket of sweating protestors has gathered outside, demanding to know whether any carbon has been averted, when an electric-carcade of Interpol climate enforcement agents swoops in to make the arrest.

A year earlier, a whistleblower, a climate scientist working for CarboNil, slips Khan a tip: The company’s credits don’t really lead to emissions reductions — the prevented deforestation was overestimated five-to-tenfold and recently declassified satellite images show that some so-called protected areas had been destroyed.

With a series of beautiful location shots, the movie follows the journalists’ investigation to uncover the wrong-doing. As CarboNil hosts a gala for the glitterati to celebrate the issue of its 10-billionth credit, Parker and Khan are hiking through never-threatened lush boreal forests that generated those offsets. They scuba dive along Iceland’s coastlines in search of carbon-slurping kelp forests, and find ragged, underperforming plantings.

Stone-Blackwell’s decisions added a billion tonnes to the global carbon ledger in a decade. Yet, despite the steep consequences of CarboNil’s misdeeds, (spoiler alert) the movie ends on a positive note. The final scenes of the movie take viewers through a whirlwind of quick takes featuring the aftermath of the Stone-Blackwell trial—protests, politicians lauding new legislation, perp walks from executives across the sector. “Discredited” leaves viewers relieved that the fraud was exposed and contributed to momentum behind massive investments in electrification and energy storage. The film is more than a chronicle — it takes us inside the scandal that ended the era of financial inputs into fossil fuel projects.

Lives Lived



Disaster

Cole Logan

A maintenance worker for Peterborough Public Transit Commission writes in remembrance of her father, John Logan, who succumbed to cancer in 2038.

Dad insisted on walking. Even though the lawyers said it would look better if he was in his wheelchair, having to be pushed to the stand by his caregiver. He refused. He still had pride, he said. That the jury would have to be clueless not to see the deterioration of his health with or without the chair. The lawyers relented. So when they called him to the stand, the room watched a thin, weary old man move each leg less than an inch at a time, scraping his wooden cane against the floor as he slowly but surely, dragged himself into the witness box. His voice was low and surprisingly steady when he took the oath. Despite the situation, I smiled. All our practice with the cane had paid off.



Dad had cancer. It started in his lungs and spread, without us knowing, to different organs. Bones and bowels, probably other places by now. His was worse than mine, my own at last in remission after over a year of treatments in the city. I tried to get him to come with me. I offered my apartment, my bed. I told him I would take the couch and he could have his own space. We could recover together. He refused. He said it was to do with the house, the town, not wanting to leave behind this place that made him. There was a whole speech he gave every time I brought up the subject. I think, deep down, he did not want to be away from Mom and my brother. Even for a few months. He couldn't stand the thought of being anywhere long term without them.

The defense lawyer was tall. His pants fit strangely high on his ankles. I could hear my mom's voice in my head. "Those pants are floods!" she would say, shocked that my brother had outgrown yet another

pair during his latest growth spurt. I could imagine her face now, staring at the lawyer with pursed lips. Only this man did not have puberty for an excuse. Mom would be horrified to know ill-fitting pants were in now, even in professional attire. His clothing made me respect the guy less than I already did, something I didn't think was possible.

I knew Dad was nervous, but it wasn't obvious. Despite the disease eating away at most of his body, he was operating off a well-fed ego after his successful (albeit laboured) walk to the stand.

Our lawyers encouraged us to refer to what happened as "The Disaster." This terminology made it sound devastating, and more concise. Terminology was key here. The disaster wasn't loud. It wasn't a spectacle. There were no photos to gawk at, visual cues to spark outrage that would elicit a small change after getting the south's attention and briefly horrifying them. It was a slow, insidious, destruction. Very few people were aware of it until the damage was impossible to reverse. "The Disaster" rolled off the tongue easier than "lethal poisoning as a result of long-term exposure to toxic chemicals introduced to the area thanks to a government initiative proposed under the guise of green mining for critical minerals."

I vaguely remember the town hall meeting. Dad came home later than normal with a small pamphlet, beautifully designed with different shades of green. "Green Mining" was sprawled across the front in serif. The same pamphlet was now secured in our lawyers' files, waiting to be brought out after the defendant's spiel.

The people who came to talk to my dad and other miners said there was a demand for specific materials to be made locally. Supply chains were in tatters thanks to unstable governments in Africa that were "constantly on the edge of civil war", while the Canadian government equally feared critical mineral supplies dominated by potentially unfriendly powers like China and Russia. According to the suits, our place in the mineral rich North – like many neighbouring communities in the nearby Ring of Fire proper – was an incredible opportunity. They wanted Cobalt to be the center of it all, to carry on the town's historic tradition of being an influence on the mining world. I rifled through the pamphlet my dad brought home out of curiosity as he and my mom talked.

Apparently, it wouldn't be all that different from what they were already doing, just introducing a few new systems and some new tech to the already established mines. A "Made in Ontario" critical mineral guaranteed access to a raw material that would power the windmills in the South. We would also be responsible for the creation of the lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles throughout North America. "Opportunity for massive economic growth, specific to local Northern economies" and "aligned with climate policies" were some of the boastful catchphrases in the pamphlet, phrases that are now seared into my mind given the dozens of times I've reread the thing since we all got sick.

It started out fine. The work was more or less the same for the first five years. I moved out to the city, and nothing was amiss. When I came home for Christmas seven years into the project, Dad seemed tired, barely able to keep his eyes open during breakfast. Mom was complaining about stomach pain. She assumed it was due to coffee in the morning and had switched to green tea. Back in the city, I was scrolling lazily on my phone when an article from Cobalt Today popped up, something about an alarming number of dead fish washing up on the beach on New Year's Day. Specialists were investigating.

It wasn't long after they discovered the arsenic and cyanide in the water, all connected to tailings from mining. The same substances found in the urine and blood of dozens of people hospitalized for debilitating stomach pain and budding tumours in various parts of their bodies. My brother went

first. Heart failure, which was unexpected given his age. About a week before him a toddler died as well. These two tangential tragedies are what sparked the outrage. Before, the deaths were all pushed as "old age" and "natural causes," but the children of miners, both of whom lived off the well water in the area, having sudden, fatal heart failure, was an undeniable problem. Mom was gone six months later.

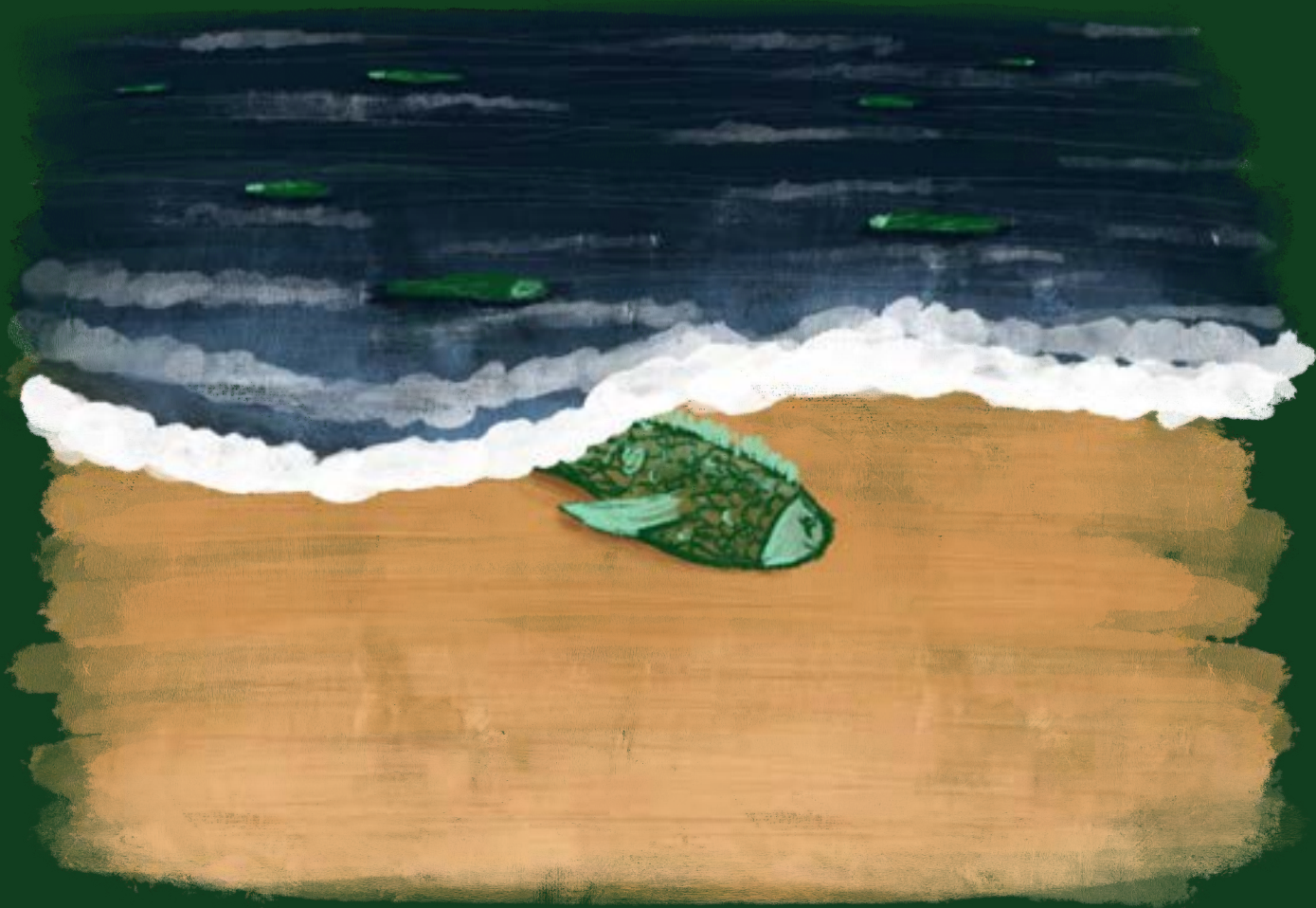
This was the story Dad recounted on the stand. No matter how many times the defense tried to turn the conversation away from the reality of their deaths, Dad kept reinforcing it, stoic and solemn. The defense lawyer finished, overcoming a few objections from our side, and without breaking my father. At this point, I didn't think anything would. I knew he had cried over my brother and Mom but never in front of me. Only when he assumed I was asleep and unable to hear the muffled sobs in his pillow.

Our lawyers had run over everything with me and my dad ahead of time. They encouraged us not to hold back. To mention the money that the company originally offered and the reasons why he took it. Mom's treatments and my brother's funeral bills. That it didn't occur to him that it was hush money about the water contamination, about the lack of regulation in the smelting and refining process. Mention that you're working class, the lawyer said, that you didn't graduate high school and you didn't know any better. Play up your ignorance, your Canadian heart of gold. The hard work you have done, the way you are the backbone of this nation. These affirmations floated around us. All these things were true in a way. Inspirational facts meant to win our case, inspirational facts that killed my mother, brother and will likely kill my father.

The jury was in discussion for hours. Dad and I both needed to be home. The room full of strangers was a massive threat to his non-existent immune systems now. We sat on the couch together and waited for the call to come back. After nearly a month of this, of hearing the same stories from our neighbours and friends who were navigating their own tragedies as well as ours, we were exhausted. Dad's caregiver made us both a grilled cheese and tomato soup. Dad took a few bites until he had to lay down again, the morning of interrogation had taken what little energy he had. We didn't end up going back. Dad fell asleep and I waited for the call to come through that we won. A massive public inquiry would begin shortly and we would be rewarded a significant amount of money for the suffering we had endured. I nodded along on the phone while our lawyers relayed this information to me, staring blankly ahead at the shelf where the urns sat.

Reporters came by a few days later to talk to me and Dad. I had read some of their articles before, about the catastrophe now synonymous with our town. The government had thrown money and resources at us to divert from the well water. The mines were shut down with pensions and compensation given to all the workers who were still alive. When the doorbell rang a second time, I opened the door. A sharply dressed duo stood patiently, a cloud of sympathy darkening their faces when they saw me.

Before, the deaths were all pushed as "old age" and "natural causes," but the children of miners, both of whom lived off the well water in the area, having sudden, fatal heart failure, was an undeniable problem. Mom was gone six months later.



I regurgitated the same information I had for the last few years. About grief, shock, and anger. They nodded with everything I said (most of them did that, their way of demonstrating solidarity with such a tragic figure). The article they were writing was focusing on the positive elements of The Disaster. How companies have been using the guise of ethics and “green” to commit heinous crimes. They mentioned Ontario’s Critical Minerals Strategy, that document of pretty, promising numbers once touted around like a new Bible, complete with Old Testament destruction. Parliament was drafting new bills as we spoke, with stricter laws, stricter inspections, and protocols to ensure nothing like this was to ever happen again.

One of the reporters, a bright-eyed woman, let me know that she had attended a protest last week against what they had done here. About the environmental destruction that had taken place under our noses. She said there were over ten thousand people in Queen’s Park, swarming the outside. The Premier even came, going so far as to light a candle for the lives lost. I thanked her because I didn’t know what else to say.

When they left, I wandered into the room where Dad was. The TV was on some documentary about an animal that had long since been extinct. The narrator’s captivating voice told the audience about the impact this extinction had had. The ways the world rallied around the mass death of such a beloved creature. A photo of it flashed on the screen. The last one, sitting in a big, beautiful enclosure while the world waited to mourn, waited to act. Dad was asleep, his breathing long and shallow. I sat at the foot of his bed and cried.

The Tragic Resilience of Humanity

August Riordan — is a foreign service officer for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Canada. He recounts for us his personal reflections on the climate diplomacy front in the first half of 2050.



January 2050 – Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Ottawa

“Human,” I said. As though I was not, as though the word was a complication. “They’re so very human.”

“What do you mean?” Yaga asked.

Nothing in particular. Only that I wished they weren’t. Only that everything would be easier if they weren’t.

I sat across from Yaga in his office, forlorn files laid out on the table. The air smelled of winter. Snow covered windows offering slivering views of an impermeable grey sky. The whir of a heater in the corner of the room. Two coffee cups on the surface of the table, one was a steaming black coffee and the other an iced cappuccino.

Yaga’s days were steady in the winter. As climate policy director, he attended to strategy for the Ministry and ensured our team operated within the palm of steady management.

I was not as steady. I sat across from Yaga now, tapping my shoes against the table legs.

“What’s your favourite coffee?” I asked. “What’s your favourite country? Last time you smoked?” They were inane questions, born of a bored mind. My drink reminded me of confectionery sweets. A delicacy in some other place, some other cuisine. Bonn, perhaps.

Yaga did not care for such trivialities. He was a steady man. “Go to work, August.”

“I haven’t received a new assignment.” I said

“There are reports to be filled, some dating back two weeks. The funding can only be allocated after you account for property damage, casualties, medical fees, and the like. Do your job.”

I tapped my shoe. As I did, I watched the small puddle of melted snow grow at the foot of the table. It, too, smelled like winter.

“August.” He was a steady man. I admired him for it. The heater whirred, melting my drink into a pool of snow in my cup, while Yaga’s coffee steamed and steamed. In the end, he relented and answered my questions. “Dark roast. Pakistan -- it’s where I grew up. I’m trying to quit.”



February 2050 – Ottawa, Canada

There were upsides and downsides to every sort of work in every sort of industry. In all senses, I was ahead of the curve. I came home to a glass-enclosed high-rise and a number-plated penthouse apartment in Canada's capital. I came home to a night sky with no stars yet illuminated by the city lights that expanded miles upon miles.

However, I also felt that I was so far ahead of the curve that I was actually behind. At a loss. At some point, all my fortunes had arched into a sphere, and I was falling off a spectrum I'd failed to realise I was on the precipice of.

My mind was somewhere far away from me. It was buried in the snowbanks of my childhood home, and more recently, clinging to the night stars so, so far away from the balcony of my beautiful home. I remembered a time, so many years ago, a time of night stars, when the first snowfall of the season was to be expected, not something to pray for. I was one of the lucky ones -- our prayers had been answered, and the Canadian soil was covered in a layer of white. Yet I also knew, across the seas, down south, there were others drowning in their own oceans and suffering from claustrophobic heat waves.

The news didn't lie. My last mission abroad resulted in tragedy -- Pakistan had been struck with the third 1000-year flood within the past twenty years. A novelty, a grievous one that left the nation debilitated with property damage and casualties. As one of the foreign service officers on site, delegated by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to meet with Pakistan's leaders regarding Loss and Damages responses, it had been my team's responsibility to assess the damages and help create fiscal structures for Canada and the rest of the world to help rebuild their infrastructure.

I'd never had trouble with my work before. I suppose it is easier to be efficient when you're less affected. But not everyone was as fortunate. It's a collective endeavour to try and achieve global net zero and help other countries approach our level of prosperity. It shouldn't be hard to do my part, but all I could remember were those broken, crumbling homes and the bodies afloat in waters that once fed and nourished them. What was the point, I couldn't help but wonder, of doing a singular deed if another fifty had to die before anyone looked?

March 2050 – Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Ottawa

"You can't break into my office, August. It's against the rules."

I smiled and stood from Yaga's chair, catching the trace of tobacco that entered the room with him. "So is smoking, sir."

"What do you want?"

I offered a bribe of coffee.

"Dark roast," Yaga said pleasantly, as only bitter black coffee could evoke.

"I wanted to say salutations. I'm going to Bonn tonight -- you'd know, of course, since you were the one who sent the order, but it's the thought that counts, isn't it?"

"I'll see you all too soon, I'm sure," he said

"You couldn't get rid of me if you tried," I said cheerfully. "I hate goodbyes. But I thought I saw a bit of smoke by my window and figured I'd give you one last look at my face before I went off."

"Get out, August."

It wasn't so much that I hated goodbyes. It was more so that I could ensure the probability of how many of those goodbyes were temporary -- a condition, a promise, a tether to a return one day. How many goodbyes had I dealt over the course of my work?

However, I liked field work. I liked travelling, especially after my promotion to join Canada's delegation to the annual Conference of the Parties. I treasured my childhood memories of winter. With every year that went by, I was more and more determined to preserve those snowfalls for future generations to see. I wanted them to feel the bite of winter wind, to see the icicles on tree branches, to skate on Lake Ontario after a day downtown. I sought to conquer that persistent sense of boredom that accompanied peoples' acceptance of a false inevitability. I saw my dreams fulfilled with this year's first snowfall, and I used hope to suppress my despairing thoughts whenever I remembered tragedies abroad. Hope was what kept me from sinking into perpetual despair.

Yaga smoked because of his despair. He was not in field work. He watched his team go time and time again and read the reports that came back. If I quivered in the memory of tragedies, I would have surely assumed he would break. But Yaga was steady.

I caught him smoking on multiple occasions. For someone who was so well aware of what fossil fuels had done to the environment, who was so aware of how carbon emissions polluted the air, he never seemed to understand how tobacco polluted his ever-dying lungs. Yaga smelled like death. Steady, no matter how many times he promised to quit. But Yaga was human. Yaga despaired in a way I swore I wouldn't.

March 2050 – Bonn, Germany

I found politics to be a labyrinth of information and sentiments.

I considered this intimate balance dividing domed conference rooms and their echoing acoustics from the earth they dictated policies upon. I considered the diplomatic signatories who assumed ever moving positions, and the knowledge they wrought from all they had bore witness to. I considered how I thrived in this carnality, this space where humanity liberated itself of vulnerability and morality.

The annual Conference of the Parties was intended for countries to review national communications and emission inventories and, based upon this data, assess the effects of the measures taken by Parties. By doing so, COP identified the progress made in achieving net zero and the Paris goals. Some states' reports presented successful results, others demonstrated struggles in adapting to the worsening climate conditions. Over the past years, the familiar divide between the Global North and South closed but hasn't been eliminated. Of course, there was salvation in unity – or should be. Taking the long view, North-South relations had improved to better collectivize global efforts and implement green energy. Somehow, we had still managed to prevent the 2-degree cap from being breached.

In fact, the 2050 COP here in Bonn specifically set aside time to recognize how national governments had “successfully” stopped the temperature rise at 1.8 degrees in 2050. This acknowledgement was met with applause. I hated that, too. It was assuredly a celebratory feat -- we had narrowly evaded certain global despair. However, sitting in the room and hearing about India's successes in converting from a fossil fuel-powered society into solar powered one only reminded me of the catastrophes that had struck throughout South Asia.

Pakistan continued to drown. Surely, the other nations were aware. I was aware, and it gnawed away at me constantly. Since the Loss and Damage agreement established during COP27 in 2022, there has been a greater global effort in addressing crises and bridging fiscal gaps. I myself am part of Canada's delegation to the international team working to address the details of Loss and Damage responses to particular disasters. Pakistan is my main mission -- it's been my focus for years, making its crises particularly painful. The threat against an entire nation's welfare, one that I had grown up learning about and hearing in the news, was incomprehensible. The thought that one day, this nation might no longer exist, that future generations would have one less country on their world maps, struck me as horrifying. And yet, the COPs continued, celebrating the “victories” of net zero.

Politics were a thorny maze to navigate. During previous years, there had been numerous negotiations regarding certain countries' willingness -- or lack thereof -- to pay for losses and damages in affected nations. There were other conflicts regarding nations' disposition to accept climate refugees, and the implications of climate change for immigration processes. The irony.

I wondered if there was a point to this dreadful sentiment. I had done my part -- I represented my nation, I worked on the Loss and Damage accords. I submitted my reports to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change where Yaga and others continued the work of living with and fighting climate change. After this meeting, future conferences will go on, more plans will be made, and hopefully more countries will unite within this emerging, environmentally conscious global community.

However, what can be said for the losses along the way? What to do about the irreversible damages? Hope warred against apathy within me.

When the conference concluded, I walked out.

April 2050 – Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Ottawa

I dropped by Yaga's office. The smell of tobacco was thick, almost as though he wasn't trying to hide it anymore.

Your humanity is killing you, Yaga. The same humanity that's killing our planet.

“Politics are dark,” he said, looking down at the conference report, bright on his tablet.

“Almost as dark as your lungs.”

Yaga closed his eyes and leaned his face into worn palms. Steady palms, palms that the Ministry entrusted their morality in. “Pakistan again. The summer forecast is not good. You and the team will need to meet with officials there to negotiate Canada's role in what's coming. We're hoping to get ahead of it this time. Don't be late with the paperwork.”

Even as he spoke the words, Yaga began to cry. He cried with red-rimmed, polluted eyes and black lungs and the perfume of tobacco that had long become a constant in our interactions. As the tears fell, I recalled our earlier conversation where he mentioned Pakistan was where he grew up. I realized that, for all my trauma after witnessing Pakistan's sinking state, Yaga's sense of displacement must be infinitely worse.

He wasn't just losing a spot on the map. He was losing his memories, his identity, any number of family members still living on the country.

I thought about other nations around the world -- places like Pakistan, the South Pacific islands -- the ones less fortunate than Canada and fraught with environmental disasters. The COPs worked. Sort of. The world reacted, but not quickly enough to salvage all of what should not have been lost, only to lessen the damage. It was difficult to imagine a world before. It was even more difficult to imagine a world after.

Dismay engulfed my sense of reality.

June 2050 – Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Ottawa

“Ethics,” I told Yaga when I returned, “are a wall of morality that's thick enough to delay a bullet, but not stop it indefinitely. If those people before us had just acted a little quicker, we wouldn't be here, would we? These people don't deserve to die. You don't deserve to lose your memories of home.”

“That's why we keep working,” Yaga said, steadily as ever. “To stop these things from getting even worse in the future, to halt the steady spread of disaster.”

I knew he was right. I knew that if I stopped now, that if I relented because it seemed hopeless, I would be no better than my predecessors. Those despots who called themselves God and cast this burning, flooding fate upon us and expected us to make do.

I smelled the air and blinked in surprise. “You stopped smoking.”

“I did,” he said, “and you are only human, August. But that's enough. We must only keep trying.”



Travelogue: A Transportation Engineer Retraces Journey to Chicago, 50 Years Later

Vijay Balakrishnan

Vijay Balakrishnan is a retired engineer who worked for many years designing railway systems across North America. He now lives in Barrie, Ontario.

Anjali chortled with delight when I told her, “I’ll see you tonight!” I could be projecting a little but that does not diminish my joy of being a grandfather for the first time. Jyoti, my exhausted daughter, lives far away, in Chicago. She’s keen to have a few extra hands around, even if they are mildly arthritic and more accustomed to turning book pages than changing diapers.

I’ve been retired for a decade now. Despite my engineering degree from Northwestern University in Chicago and working across Canada and the United States on transportation projects, I am only now retracing the overland journey between my Toronto home and the Midwestern metropolis—all it took was a granddaughter!

Over the past 50 years, travelling by car has admittedly gotten much worse. The incrementalist thinking of just adding another few lanes made driving around Toronto an expensive and time-consuming proposition: extortionary congestion charges south of the 401, mind-numbing two-hour wait times at the Canada-U.S. border, and even more waiting for an available spot at public charging stations.

Meanwhile, travel by rail has transformed. Thanks to two solid decades of reinvestment in passenger rail—and the sweat and tears of all those clifugees participating in the government’s green jobs program—it is now faster, cheaper, and more reliable to travel by intercity rail than by car. Once this rail service was in place across North America, the U.S. and Canadian governments began banning short-haul flights, boosting the ridership

and quality of the passenger rail system. The commuter rail system was also revamped, with high-speed rail extending well beyond Toronto’s Greenbelt to offer a much more pleasant and reliable alternative than being twice daily stuck in traffic.

My journey begins at Toronto’s perpetually expanding Union Station. The Station buzzes with the energy of the thousands of commuters from across the Golden Horseshoe and thousands of newcomers to Canada. Most of the newcomers are migrants from the southern and western U.S. and Latin America, fleeing inhospitable conditions and hoping to find opportunity in Canada. During the most recent pandemic, the federal government converted half a dozen empty office towers around Union Station into welcome centres that provide crucial housing, health care, and training for these courageous and desperate travellers. While most Canadians welcome them, there are some who feel these immigrants are taking precious resources away from Canadian citizens going through hard times. As for me, my family wouldn’t even be here without Canada’s generous immigration system.

I seamlessly walk through U.S. border control as machines scan our biometrics and direct us to the platforms with Amtrak’s Peregrine-class bullet trains. Toronto’s Union Station is once again connected to most major cities in the American Midwest and Northeast. My business class ticket affords me good food and wine, a private compartment, and access to a glass-roofed observation car.

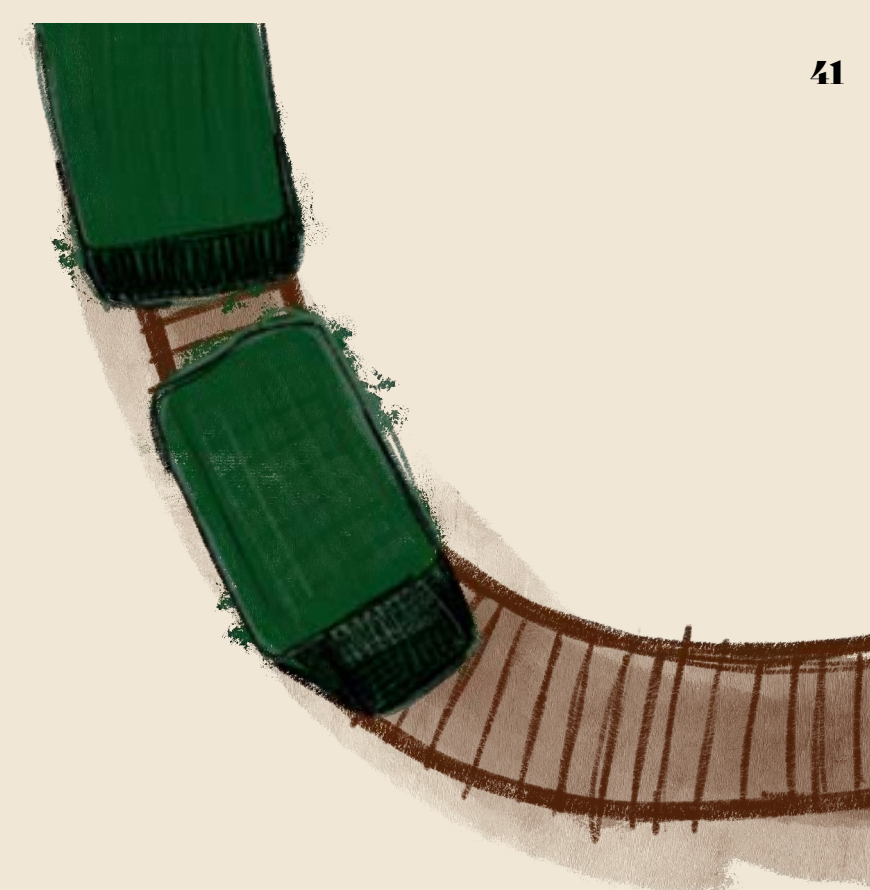
However, not all the train carriages are this comfortable. As the waves of migrations grew, more and more people once again sought to use the rails to come to Canada to start a new life. Many of these folks lacked the means to pay for even economy class tickets. So the U.S. government paid for one-way fares to Canada and built very rudimentary carriages, with barred windows and no seating—as if these people were to blame for their predicament.

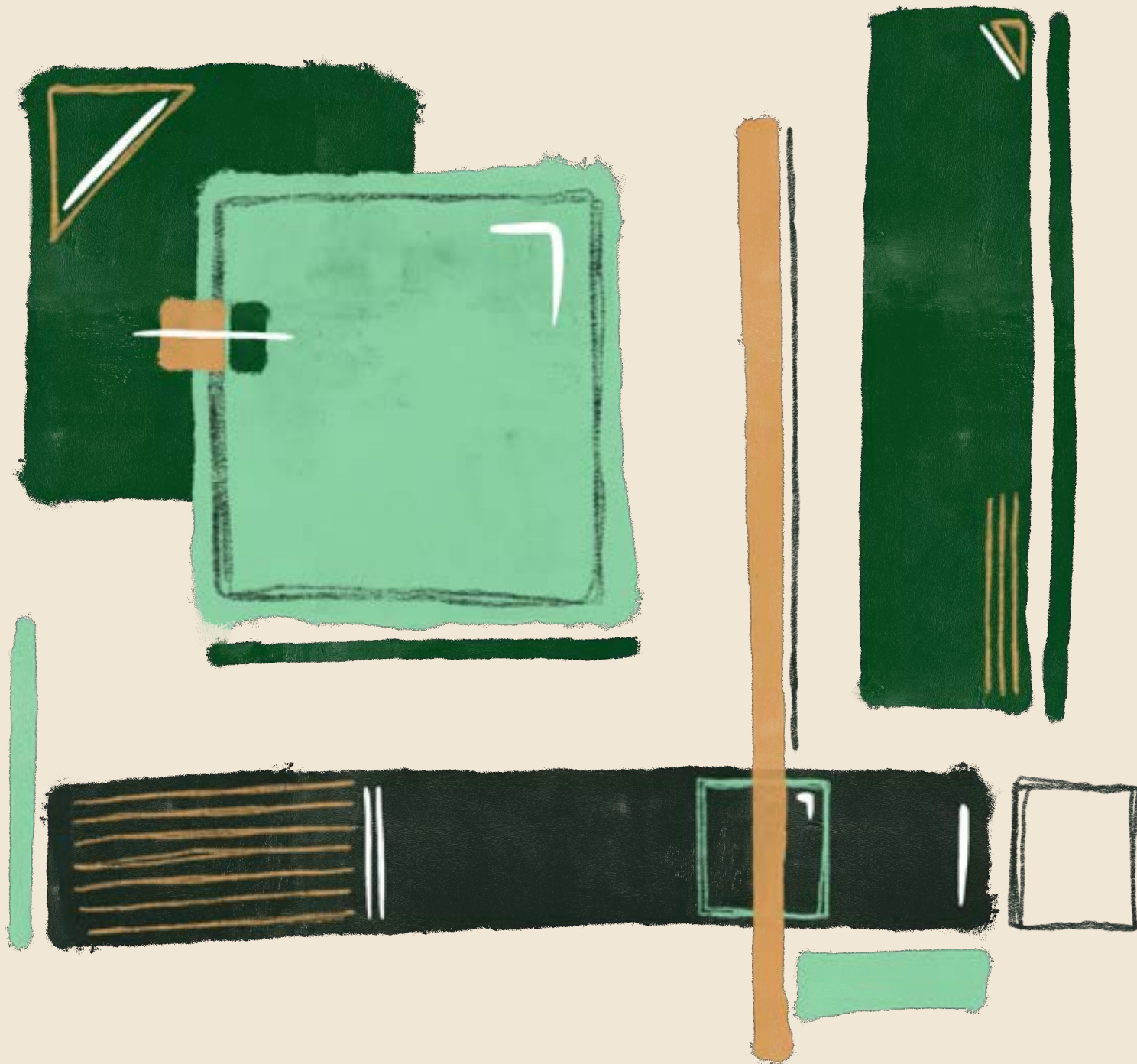
Just like when I was a boy, I go straight to the observation car. As the suburbs and exurbs of Toronto fly past, the train

accelerates, racing past the agricultural lands of Southwestern Ontario – former tobacco fields that now produce biofuels specifically for long-distance air travel, though many of the switchgrass fields from the 2030s’ push for a biofuel-based economy have transitioned back to producing food. With the demise of Californian agriculture, these fields are key to feeding Canada.

The train makes its only stop in Detroit’s fabled Michigan Central Station. The MCS fell into ruins after Amtrak closed their service in 1988. Ironically, Ford Motor Company bought the station in 2018 and redesigned much of the interior. But when Ford failed to make the switch to shared, electric vehicles, and the storied automaker went bankrupt, the MCS fell once again into disrepair. In 2035, Amtrak beautifully restored the MCS to service its rapidly expanding passenger rail system.

In rural Michigan, the train car’s display reaches 450 kilometres per hour as we fly past the endless fields of lentils that generate so many credits for soil carbon sequestration and so much protein for a world moving beyond meat. At this speed, the Toronto-Chicago journey only takes 2 hours—longer than it used to take to drive to Toronto’s Pearson





Airport and get through security.

Past Kalamazoo and onto the shores of Lake Michigan, I see thousands of offshore wind turbines spinning furiously. The lake has only gotten windier these days, but the gales are great news for our energy systems that use wind turbines to create electricity or recharge the massive battery that the Great Lakes have now become, thanks to a Canada-US treaty on pumped hydro.

As the train rolls into Chicago's Union Station, I can't help but think of how different the world is from when I was a young man. Undoubtedly, our impact on the planet is far less severe and our cities are more resilient. We grow more of our own food locally and build more of the products we use in North America. Yet we are also facing a world that is much more hostile. Back then, bomb cyclones, derechos, or atmospheric rivers weren't part of kitchen table talk. And now, Anjali has been born into a world with far greater instability, where no country is immune to the climate crisis. Certainly, the world has gotten smaller, partly from technology that makes everything feel more familiar and closer, but also in the opposite sense because we can't travel as freely as we could in my youth after the end of the Cold War.

But I try to be optimistic. My daughter needs the encouragement now more than ever.

In my lifetime, I've witnessed the transformation of how people move from place to place and seen how most countries rallied around and actually achieved their emission reduction goals despite all those who said, "slow down". I'm proud to have played my part.

As I don my mask and step off the train and into Union Station's Great Hall, I'm greeted by Jyoti and Anjali. Tears run down my cheeks, full of all sorts of emotions. Mostly the good kind.



Poetry Corner

We are delighted to publish this year's winning and runner-up entries to our annual poetry competition.



Winner: Relics

Furqan Mohamed

The Paris Agreement was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 on December 12, 2015, and came into force on November 4, 2016. Such international agreements and contrasting documents expressing climate change denialism have become bellwether relics to an entire generation. These matched poems use words from the introductory pages of the Paris Agreement and from a letter written by a climate denial organization to powerfully invoke justice in the pursuit of climate action.

PARIS AGREEMENT The Parties to this Agreement, Being Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”, Pursuant to the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action established by decision 1/CP.17 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its seventeenth session, In pursuit of the objective of the Convention, and **being guided** by its principles, including the principle of equity and common but differentiated **responsibilities and** respective capabilities, in **the light** of different national circumstances, Recognizing the need for an effective **and** progressive response to the urgent threat of climate change on the basis of the best available scientific **knowledge**, Also recognizing **the** specific needs and special circumstances of developing country Parties, especially those that are particularly **vulnerable** to the adverse effects of climate change, as provided for in the Convention, Taking full account of **the** specific **needs** and special situations **of the least** developed countries with regard to funding and transfer of technology, Recognizing that Parties may be affected not only by climate change, but also by the impacts of the measures taken in response to it, Emphasizing the intrinsic relationship that climate change actions, responses and impacts have **with** equitable access to sustainable development and eradication of poverty, Recognizing **the fundamental** priority of **safeguarding** food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change, Taking into account the imperatives **of a just transition** of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities, Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of **humankind**, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of **Indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities** and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of **women** and intergenerational equity, Recognizing the importance of the conservation and enhancement, as appropriate, of sinks and reservoirs of the greenhouse gases referred to in the Convention, Noting the importance of ensuring the integrity of **all ecosystems**, including **oceans, and** the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as **Mother Earth**, and noting the importance for some of the concept of “climate justice”, when taking action to address climate change, Affirming the importance of education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and cooperation at all levels on the matters addressed in this Agreement, Recognizing the importance of the engagements of all levels of government and various actors, in accordance with respective national legislations of Parties, in addressing climate change, Also recognizing that sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed country Parties taking the lead, play an important role in addressing climate change, **Have agreed** as follows

From: Professor Guus Berkhout guus.berkhout@clintel.org 23 September 2019

Sr. António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations, United Nations Headquarters, New York, NY 10017, United States of America.

Ms. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC Secretariat, UN Campus, Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1, 53113 Bonn, Germany

Your Excellencies,

There is no climate emergency

A global network of more than 500 knowledgeable and experienced scientists and professionals in climate and related fields have the **honor** to address to Your Excellencies the attached European Climate Declaration, for which the signatories to this letter are the national ambassadors.

The general-circulation models of climate on which international policy is at present founded are unfit for their purpose. Therefore, it is cruel as well as imprudent to advocate the squandering of trillions of dollars on the basis of **results from** such immature models. Current climate policies pointlessly **and** grievously undermine the economic system, putting **lives** at risk **in** countries denied access to affordable, reliable electrical energy.

We urge you to follow **a climate policy based on sound science**, realistic economics **and genuine concern for those harmed** by costly but unnecessary attempts at mitigation.

We ask you to place the Declaration on **the agenda** of your imminent New York session.

We also invite you **to organize** with us a constructive high-level meeting between world-class scientists on both sides of the climate debate early in 2020. Such a meeting would be consistent **with the historically proven principles** of sound science **and natural justice** that both sides should be fully and fairly heard. Audiatur et altera pars!

Please let us know your thoughts **how** we bring about such a **momentous** joint meeting,

Runner Up: Participation Award

Noah Easton

This piece was written in response to the historical, often painfully slow, reactions to man-made, carbon-related disasters. It expresses the ways that, eventually, humankind's concern and compassion for one another wins out and the role each of us has had in deciding to participate in the kind of collective care that governs our world today.

There were many ways
We were responsible for counting the dead.

Altars.
Every plant was a shrine.
Every outlet, a ghost.
Until one day, that old factory for shoes bore metal instead of brick. The place no longer haunted.
Instead, it catches the sun.

Like the children outside with that small yellow ball.

But there is no metaphor for

The report

Outlining a body A small boy.

Asthma attack, they said.
A bad cough.
Small lungs up against smoke, smog.

A simple shame. A small boy.

One person.
Then two.
Then ten.
Soon, the streets were full.

The factory was the first to go. It took many hands.
Brick was easier to forget than bone.



A LETTER TO HAMMERTOWN FROM KINGSTON AND MAIN

There are grids
we live among and to see them
is to know ourselves.

Walking into the
variable energy availability
of the city's
refracting densities,
my thoughts curve
to a more-deep occlusion,
squeezing hope from waste.

Maybe we'd imagine
the utility-led meshwork
of the neighbourhood's
integrated power networks
to be coeval with the lake,
but a question asked
by the rusty trace
of burnt-out topsoil
trips up my naturalizing:
where did all the rig-pigs go?

We still swallow them while
passing through the building's
battery room, or on
the wobbly streetcar line
at Kingston and Galloway,
ambient Walkman ghosts
wound through the causeway
of the cassette-slot
like air spun into
the shell-game procession
of mass-wind corridors.

I walk as far as I can
before the tape paces
my edge and I flip it.

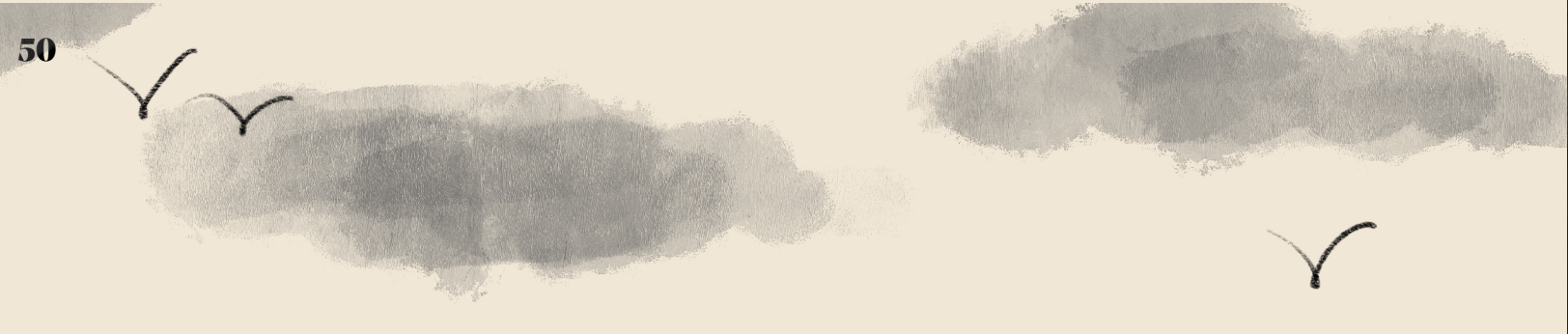
And even if the motion
of my sad perplexity
marrows the tangents
of our predation, did we
save the Earth through
de-emissioned logistics
or did we learn to better
broth the bones of what's left?

What do I do if I still
can't imagine a world without oil?

Where the Earth is most torn,
corpsing accounts dial mood
to a rolling brownout
as I thrift the corners
of my right to repair,
magnetic tape unspooled
against the deparked curb,
the dumpster and its
non-infinite series
of discrete marvels
like griped black plastic
peeled across a Hammertown ditch.

Is there clarity
found in the loose change
of things as they concatenate

- ryan fitzpatrick



When I was asked to contribute something to this zine about the legacy of Canada's struggle to reach net zero emissions, I thought of this poem that I wrote in 2035. Maybe it's the poem's expression of the deep cynicism I felt at that historical moment, when it wasn't clear whether the changes that governments and corporations were pursuing would make any real difference for the planet and our everyday lives. (I still feel some of that cynicism today, though am a little more hopeful in my old age). Maybe it was also the title's address to Kingston and Main, the two intersecting streets in The Beaches neighbourhood in Toronto nearby where I lived. Maybe it was also the time I was spending walking through the neighbourhood with a refurbished Walkman and a handful of vintage tapes, thinking about the way the past overlaps with the present and future.

In titling the poem "A Letter to Hammertown," I was cheekily addressing myself to Peter Culley, the Nanaimo, B.C. poet who wrote in a different moment about a different place, but who similarly expressed a kind of melancholy about the movements of capital across intimate spaces. The poem also takes cues and lines from George Oppen and William Wordsworth, laying out a palimpsest of writers. The poem's opening lines are lifted almost directly from Oppen's "Of Being Numerous," changing Oppen's "things" to the more expansive "grids." I wondered about the systems that cradle us and the ways, at that moment, they seemed to be constantly changing. The city seemed to be constantly shifting underfoot, sometimes for good and sometimes not so good reasons. I think I wanted to grapple with what it feels like to be in that moment of transition, where a lot is changing but it's unclear to what end.

ryan fitzpatrick



Community

Community Bulletin

URGENT: Coyotes On Site & Chicken Coop Repairs – Action Required

@TorontoWestFoodCooperative | October 1, 2050

Attention Toronto West Coop Members.

There are 15 chickens missing from the pen as of this morning. Few of the chickens' remains have been found, but with the large tracks in the surrounding soil and the damage to the pen and coop, it's clear that coyotes are the cause of this unfortunate incident. We anticipated attempted raccoon incursions, but it seems we should have reinforced for larger wildlife.

The coop board is actively engaged with other community groups to address to address the encroachment of larger animals into Toronto neighbourhoods. Years of newly introduced greenspace throughout the city has been immensely beneficial for walkability and carbon absorption while also providing the space for urban livestock farms like ours. However, it has come with some unexpected challenges. It seems that coyotes enjoy a greener Toronto as much as we do!

Repairs are needed immediately for the North-East fence and to the wire caging of the coop itself. The repairs will begin immediately, and the chickens have been moved to our UrbanHensTO partner farm until project completion.

Thanks for your understanding. We're deeply saddened by this whole ordeal, but so goes the nature of things.

@BuddysBreakfastTO

It'll be the egg-free breakfast menu at Buddy's until the hens are home! Will anything aside from the egg and poultry be unavailable during the repairs?

@TorontoWestFoodCooperative

Community gardens, pantries, fridges, & the greenhouses will remain open. There will be some decrease in the high protein vegetables usually reserved for restaurants as we reallocate to individual members for the time being.

@NicoleLashley99

I saw a coyote at a park in the West End last weekend. Has the city said if they'll be doing anything?

@TorontoWestFoodCooperative

Animal services said they've gotten more calls than usual recently but that no action has been decided on.

@juliaaatonato

there's a post going around on Facenet that says to avoid public parks

if you're out walking with a dog, especially at night :) be careful y'all

@Cris_Anderson

my daughter heard about the coyote attack and is demanding we take some chickens home where they'll be safe! don't be too worried if a few more go missing lol

@Dan.The.Man

I have lived in the city my whole life, and up until my 50s you only saw coyotes along the Humber... I wonder why they're near Dupont station, huh? STOP FEEDING THEM!

@NicoleLashley99

There's a petition here for stronger action from @TOAnimalServices about the coyote problem.

@rubytuesdays

ever think that the caged chickens might have attracted the coyotes? & you only want to push "for stronger action" because it's inconvenient for you.

@Dan.The.Man

They ate 15 chickens... It's not inconvenient, it's a waste.

@rubytuesdays

is there a reason you think you're more entitled to the chickens than an actual animal? maybe let nature take its course and do your part

@TOAnimalServices

Feeding coyotes is strictly prohibited. If you see someone feeding a coyote or if you need to report a coyote sighting, text 'REPORT' to PAWS (7297). It is also prohibited to kill, harm, or capture wildlife, including setting unauthorized traps. To participate in an animal services community cohabitation workshop or provide feedback during our virtual town halls, visit our events calendar [here](#).

Related Posts

Have we returned to an era of aestheticized great depression mayo cakes?

@oatmlkluvr | March 13, 2050

Should there be a red light on more green space?

@Letters4CityDwellers | March 27, 2050

Edible Equity: Cultural Consideration of Food Histories and Tastes

@ScarboroughFoodLab | June 18, 2050

Help Wanted

Revolution Recycling: Steel Recycling Lead

Meet Revolution Recycling

Join Canada's leading circular mining company. Providing the materials for the energy transition, Revolution Recycling has been mining landfills and decommissioning fossil energy infrastructure since 2028. Our people are our strength and the foundation of our success. We are a rewarding workplace composed of people with diverse identities, backgrounds, and abilities. Join our collaborative team working coast to coast to coast to provide the metal and material resources for the renewable energy sector. Revolution Recycling was a pioneer in the ethical mining sector and famously salvaged the partially built TransMountain oil pipeline in British Columbia during the steel shortages of the 2030s. Revolution Recycling prioritizes health, safety, and environmental justice, particularly by building reciprocal relationships with the communities where we operate.

The Opportunity

Revolution Recycling has an exciting opportunity to lead our Steel Recycling team. Based in Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton, Alberta), this position oversees the technical teams for our steel recycling division. This position oversees planning logistics for the responsible steel harvesting and decommissioning of abandoned oil and gas pipelines, offshore rigs, oil and liquified natural gas (LNG) tankers, and refineries. This position is also tasked with advising on projects in Revolution Recycling's proprietary and world leading landfill mining division.

What You Will Bring

- BSc or Technology Diploma in engineering or relevant field
- Senior engineer or similar with 10 years relevant experience, with an emphasis on the energy sector
- Demonstrated leadership and mentorship qualities and experience managing technical teams
- Personnel management skills with a focus on overseeing field operations
- Strong communication skills and experience interacting with regulatory agencies, particularly the Ministry for Labour Transitions and the Circular Economy and Resources Board (CERB)



How We Did

We Did It!?

Net Zero commitments have proliferated in the last few years and Canada is no exception. There are multiple reports now available that discuss what is required technically for Canada to achieve Net Zero by 2050 (i.e., the mix of energy technologies and patterns of use, speed of transition to renewables, timing for electric vehicles to replace internal combustion engines, sectoral goals for limiting emissions or producing negative emissions, etc.). There are far fewer discussions of the social and political conditions, decisions, levers, and critical junctures needed to make net zero by 2050 a reality. Still fewer are stories or ways to imagine how we might achieve and live in a Net Zero Canada.

The Environmental Governance Lab at University of Toronto is working to address this gap in our knowledge and in our imagination by producing a series of "We Did It!?" volumes from the perspective of writers in the year 2050 reflecting on the achievement of net zero in Canada. Through workshops with sectoral experts, writers, and stakeholders, this project develops stories to spark realistic, but hopeful conversations about imagining not just what the net zero future looks like, but also how to get there. Rather than exercises in forecasting or identification of technical requirements, these volumes focus especially on the political choices and social dynamics that lead from 2023 to a Net Zero Canada in 2050. In other words, they tell stories that imagine how social and political change might look and where it might take us. These stories also explore challenges and obstacles encountered and overcome (or not). The stories are filled with contingencies, surprises (good and bad), unanticipated consequences, and different pathways both to and away from the goal of net zero, just as we assume Canada's real path to net zero will be. They are also (we hope!) enjoyable reads.

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Learn more about the EGL and the project...



EGL Environmental
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We Did It!?

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 2050's Hottest Christmas Gift (Matthew Hoffmann)
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