

WRITING THE
CLIMATE

LETTERS TO THE EARTH

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CLIMATE
READING GROUP

Letters to the Earth is a selection from nearly a thousand submissions to a call-out to write a 'letter in response to climate and ecological emergency. The letter could be to or from the earth, to future or past generations, those who hold positions of power and influence, to other species.' The book is arranged in five sections: Love, Loss, Emergence, Hope and Action. The editors suggest you can dip into whatever you feel you need at any time; they add:

We encourage you, too, to read the book from start to finish, but if you do so you will see that this is not a simple journey from Love to Action: love also contains fear and anger, hope contains despair. This is not comfortable reading. It is not comfortable to read the words of teenagers who fear they will have no future, of children begging for change. Of adults horrified by the world they are complicit in creating. Of mothers who despair for their children. Of those stricken by grief at the daily, catastrophic loss of the living world they hold so dear.

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It may not be comfortable reading, but it is compelling, rousing reading. And hopeful – here are 'Voices that dare to imagine a more beautiful, equitable, generous way of being with ourselves, each other and all those who share this living, interdependent, planet that we call home.' In her introduction, Emma Thompson writes that reading it might help 'Convert your rage to action and your grief to love.'

Do we agree? How might we be transformed by reading these letters to the earth? Do some of us feel inspired to write our own? Or become more involved in campaigning or environmental forums in our local communities?

Some of the boldest voices speaking to us through this collection are those from the Global South, in countries where ecological and climate catastrophe are a lived reality...As climate breakdown arrives on the doorstep of those living in the north, it is important to remember this wider reality, one in which people of colour and people living in poverty have long been disproportionately affected by ecological breakdown.

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What can we do to transform our ecological awareness into system change and climate justice? What can reading and/or writing do to help?

We will discuss whatever comes up at our session, but if you don't have time to read the whole book before we meet, a good place to start would be one or two letters from each section:

<i>But the Greatest of These is Love</i> by Mary Annaïse Heglar	p. 29
<i>A Break Up Poem</i> by Niamh McCarthy	p. 46
<i>False Alarm</i> by Stefan Rahmstorf	p. 71
<i>Letter to an Endling</i> by Jay Griffiths	p. 118
<i>Emergence</i> by Polly Higgins	p. 125
<i>Trusting the Spiral</i> by Joanna Macy	p. 137
<i>Sleeping in the Forest</i> by Mary Oliver	p. 151
<i>I Believe in You</i> by Molly Wingate	p. 163
<i>A Failure of Imagination</i> by Caroline Lucas	p. 214
<i>Samaúma</i> by Bishop Marinez Rosa dos Santos Bassotto with the Artisan Indigenous Women Association, Alto Rio Negro	p. 229

You can find more information and readings on the book's website:
<https://www.letterstotheearth.com>