

Beach Reads to Finish Before the Ocean Rises: Intro to Cli-Fi | Earth911.com

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They say the popularity of zombie movies is linked to a growing unease with the state of the world. But some authors are addressing the problem more directly. The term “cli-fi” was coined around 2006 by journalist Dan Bloom to refer to any work of fiction in which climate change and its effects are central to the plot. As genres go, it’s relatively new, but it may have hit a tipping point last year, with roughly 200 books tagged cli-fi on Goodreads. Here are five climate fiction beach reads to finish while there’s still a beach to read on.

Flight Behavior

Barbara Kingsolver, 2012

[Flight Behavior](#), about a young woman on a who discovers displaced monarch butterflies on her failing farm in rural Tennessee, is a bit of a cli-fi outlier. Rather than focusing on the impacts of climate change, it explores the very human reasons that we deny the obvious and avoid taking the steps that could protect us from outcomes too scary to consider.

American War

Omar El Akkad, 2017

Omar El Akkad’s [American War](#) is the first foray into cli-fi for many readers, and exemplifies the genre. Beginning with a map of the United States in which coastal states are mostly submerged, American War imagines the future if climate change continues unchecked. Set in 2074, it tells the story of an American climate refugee and her role in the second civil war, this one fought over scarce resources.

Earthseed Duology

Octavia Butler, 1993-1998

Octavia Butler's [Earthseed](#) series comprises [Parable of the Sower](#) and [Parable of the Talents](#). The two books follow Lauren Olamina from her suburban youth through the devastation of American society. The story focuses on her fight for survival and quest for meaning in a world of constant change. But the environmental change (primarily a lack of fresh water) that accelerated social dissolution is ever-present in the background.

Future Home of the Living God

Louise Erdrich, 2017

Erdrich presents a chilling dystopia in [Future Home of the Living God](#), addressing female agency, self-determination, biology, and natural rights. In this story about a pregnant Ojibwe woman, evolution is accelerating — in reverse. Meanwhile, civil rights erode under a government determined to maintain control even as humanity may be facing its last days.

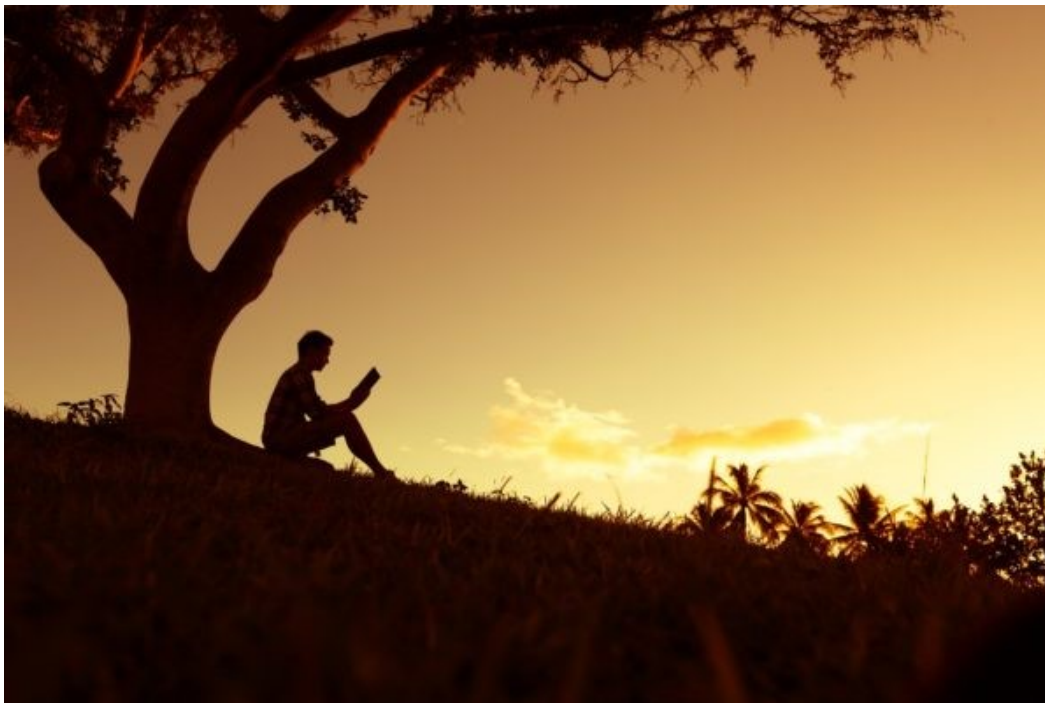
Tentacle

Rita Indiana, Translated by Achy Obejas, 2019

Dominican writer and musician Rita Indiana plunges boldly into questions of climate change, technology, Yoruba ritual, queer politics, poverty, sex, colonialism, and contemporary art in [Tentacle](#). Now translated from the Spanish, *Tentacle* presents a maid in a post-apocalyptic Caribbean where the ocean runs black with pollution. She discovers that only she can travel back in time and save the ocean — and humanity — from disaster.

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