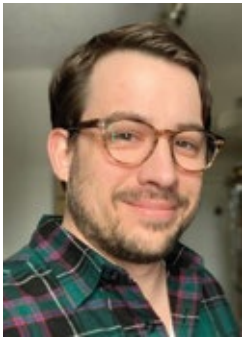


New Book Alert!

The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada

By Joël Laforest

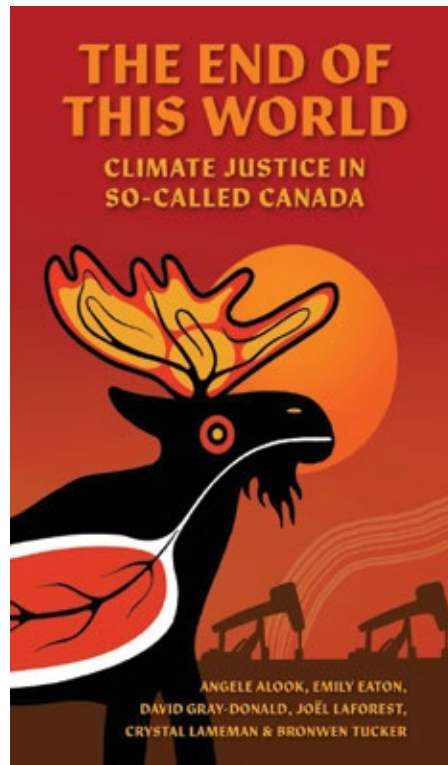


What would it look like if we were to collectively think through our pressing social, ecological and political problems, envision a world we might genuinely want to inhabit together, and sketch a roadmap of how we might actually get there?

My co-authors and I took on this challenge in *The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada*, paying particular attention to the roles of Indigenous rights, decarbonization, energy transition, systems of care, and political strategy.

The goal was to envision a departure from the strategies of co-optation and delay that have stalled the assertion of Indigenous rights, climate work and just transition for far too long. As readers are no doubt aware, the “new” denialism is not to deny the reality of anthropocentric climate change, but instead to downplay its risks, shirk any sense of urgency, and propose projects that are woefully inadequate to the task of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and keeping global heating below a 1.5°C pathway.

Similarly, the prominence of Indigenous rights and struggles has grown in Canada over recent years, and has been met to a large degree with a range of important symbolic and cultural recognition. What this recognition evades, however, is Indigenous peoples’ inherent rights, Treaty rights, and ultimately their sovereignty and relationship with ancestral land — particularly the right to say “no” and to propose economic development that aligns with their values. The implications are enormous when one considers how such



Look for *The End of this World* at your local bookstore.
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an approach might shape future mining, forestry and fossil fuel production.

The central injustice of the climate crisis is that those who are least responsible for it are set to be the most affected by it. Some very straightforward steps can be taken to address the outsized influence of the fossil fuel industry and its role in shaping our future. Supply-side restrictions (keeping it in the ground), ending fossil fuel subsidies, and insisting that polluters pay are among them. More generally, public ownership and a managed wind-down would allow for the redirection of profits to community needs and the launching of much-needed just transition programs for fossil fuel workers.

A buildout of green infrastructure and renewable energy is a necessary step on the road to decarbonization. This buildout presents an opportunity to coordinate with Indigenous nations as partners, and presents an opportunity to provide both jobs and affordable green energy. Most importantly, distributed electricity generation might avoid the pitfalls of large “green” megaprojects that — in addition to being wildly expensive — tend to have substantial ecological impacts and do not recognize Indigenous sovereignty.

Housing throughout the country and

in Indigenous communities is in urgent need of public investment and retrofits. With affordability quickly eroding and the postwar social housing stock quickly ageing, a buildout of high-quality public housing could provide both a jobs program and a long-term measure to increase energy efficiency and reduce emissions. The need to transform our transportation system is also a priority: while electric vehicles gain a great deal of public attention, we argue that a national intercity and rural bus/rail network, attentive to each Nation’s priorities and wishes, is the sensible solution to the decline of regional public transit services in the last decades. The need to prioritize public transportation and sensible land use within cities is also key.

The importance of care work was made evident in the COVID-19 pandemic. We argue that this work of social reproduction — often low-wage, gendered and highly racialized — should be prioritized as a critical part of a just transition. Universal public services, from mental health to education to eldercare and childcare, would not only provide popular services and jobs, but would afford greater social cohesion and solidarity. We need to design our systems of care so as to provide the time and resources necessary to foster relationships that provide safety and security.

Finally, we are well aware that these proposals cannot simply be summoned through good intentions. Our book concludes with an exploration of what might be necessary in terms of strategies, network-building, and campaigns to enact these ideas. Here the aim is not the immediate wholesale transformation of society (though that would be nice), but rather a thinking through of the best strategies that can shift the existing terrain in our favour for future campaigns and struggles.

Readers of the *Wild Lands Advocate* may take particular interest in the focus on Indigenous rights and land stewardship within the book. As potent sites of legal and social-movement struggle, efforts to restore right relations between peoples and their lands are simultaneously opportunities to further prevent the further erosion of ecosystems through economic rent and industrial extraction.