

Cli-Fi

Meggin Kitterman, Assistant Library Director

My heart goes out to people experiencing weather-related disasters. I can try to imagine but do not know how such devastation feels. Research suggests that fictional books may be empathy-building tools. (<https://bigthink.com/neuropsych/reading-fiction-empathy-better-person>) Climate fiction, or cli-fi, is a form of speculative fiction that features a changed or changing climate as a major plot device. Here is a small sampling of the titles and descriptions I found searching the New Ulm Public Library online catalog at www.newulmlibrary.org.

The “Parable of the Sower” by Octavia Butler was published in 1993 but did not hit the New York times best seller list until 2020. This well written book centers around the irreversible consequences of climate change. “In 2024 California, an fifteen-year-old girl, suffering from a hereditary trait that causes her to feel others' pain as well as her own, flees northward from her small community and its desperate savages.”

“The Light Pirate” by Lily Brooks-Dalton “mirrors the rhythms of the elements and the sometimes quick, sometimes slow dissolution of the world as we know it. It is a meditation on the changes we would rather not see, the future we would rather not greet, and a call back to the beauty and violence of an untamable wilderness”

“The Great Transition” by Nick Fuller Googins is “a hopeful climate crisis novel exploring the possibilities of our near future and humanity's capacity for change, about one family trying to protect each other and the place we all call home.”

In “Gold Fame Citrus” by Claire Vaye Watkins, “drought has transfigured Southern California into a surreal, phantasmagoric landscape. Most of the Southwest has been evacuated.”

“The Deluge” by Stephen Markle takes place in 2013 California where “environmental scientist Tony Pietrus, after receiving a death threat, is linked to a colorful cast of characters, including a brazen young activist who, in the mountains of Wyoming, begins a project that will alter the course of the decades to come.”

“A Winter Grave” by Peter May is set in the year 2051. “Warnings of climate catastrophe have been ignored, and vast areas of the planet are underwater or [too] hot. A quarter of the world's population has been displaced by hunger and flooding, and immigration wars are breaking out around the globe as refugees pour into neighboring countries.”

“Camp Zero” by Michelle Min Sterling is “an electrifying page-turner where nothing is as it seems, Camp Zero cleverly explores how the intersection of gender, class, and migration will impact who and what will survive in a warming world.”

“Walk the Vanished Earth” by Erin Swan is “a sweeping family epic, told over seven generations, as America changes and so does its dream. The author explores ancestry, legacy, motherhood, the trauma we inherit, and the power of connection in the face of our planet’s imminent collapse.

If any of these books caught your attention, visit www.newulmlibrary.org and choose Library Catalog to place your request. Otherwise stop by the library or give us a call at 507-359-8331. Library staff are happy to assist you.

The library is located at 17 N. Broadway and is open to the public Monday – Thursday from 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. and Friday – Saturday from 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. The library will be closed Monday, September 4th in observance of Labor Day.