

## What Have You Lost Because of Climate Change? How do You Grieve?

*Java Street Community Garden*

Speaker 1:

Where I'm from, specifically, it's a village called, or a town, Buccoo, Tobago. It has a reef, just pretty sizeable reef. When I was younger, the reef, it was super vibrant, super colorful, lots of different coral, fan coral. Went back, I would say the past few years, and every year it's just more and more brown.

And as a parent, I'm taking her with me. She's been to Tobago a few times, but she hasn't been to the reef. The first time she's going to see the reef, it's going to look nothing like what I remember it looking like. So, that's concerning...

Speaker 2:

And so sad.

Speaker 1:

And that won't happen in her lifetime, because like I said, it takes a year for a piece of coral to grow a centimeter. It pains me a bit that she's not going to have some... I'm not going to be able to share some of the same experiences in nature with her.

Speaker 3:

I recently went back to California to a place that I used to fish when I was seven. It was on a delta and there was wildlife and marsh and cattails, and it was green everywhere. And now it's dry and not a fishing place. There's nobody around, there were no animals. You wouldn't have guessed that it was a wetland or a marsh.

Speaker 1:

The part that scares me the most is that we will have lost things that we don't even realize until they're gone.

Speaker 4:

My father used to take us [inaudible 00:01:45] in Ali Pond Park. There was a lake at one time, there were fish in there and now it's all gone. I remember in the winter used to freeze, so we used to ice skate on the pond. And years went on, they start drying and drying up until no more.

Speaker 2:

When you started to notice increased fire activity, what did that feel like? When did you kind of realize that there had been a shift and what did it feel like emotionally to experience that shift?

Speaker 5:

It feels confusing and it definitely feels like a grieving process because it feels like the place that I grew up in is becoming uninhabitable.

Speaker 1:

They call it mountaintop removal. You blow up the mountain, push the mountain into the valley, flatten it out, and then you take the coal off the top. Now you have, instead of the rolling mountains, you have just a big flat expanse because the mountain is gone. There's no mountain and valley. It's flat now.

Speaker 8:

It's still beautiful, but maybe a sense of emptiness. If you feel connected to the earth, it means that something was taken from you, that part of your childhood experience, you know what I mean?

Speaker 9:

That's probably rooted in childhood, in childhood memories, in many ways. So I think it's a feeling of a loss. That when you don't have the experiences that you can have on those...during those different seasonal changes,

Speaker 10:

Some days it's like super hot, that even when I wear t-shirts and shorts, I'm still burning.

Speaker 11:

It was tremendously hot. And nothing happened. I was very upset about it. It brought me to tears because I was thinking like, "Okay, this is a once-off." Then the next year, it wasn't a once-off

Speaker 12:

I feel like, is about the plants and the grocer, the vegetables. It's like, feel like you going to lose something.

Speaker 13:

Yeah. But see this tree right here? We need to talk about global warming. That's a red plum tree. When I first had it, the plums were this big, somehow some type of mite got to it and I can't get rid of it.

Speaker 11:

What hurt the most was getting rid of a lot of personal stuff, like pictures. My mom was a big letter writer and I kept all her letters to the family. And a lot of those got destroyed

Speaker 5:

Because they were in the basement?

Speaker 11:

Because they were in the basement.

Speaker 5:

Oh, that's heartbreaking.

Speaker 11:

And even though it was in a plastic container, somehow the water found a way into the plastic container.

Speaker 5:

Oh no.

Speaker 15:

I'm scared of just losing everything. Like all this, I'm scared of this leaving.

Speaker 5:

What is this?

Speaker 15:

Just Red Hook changing, the way it is. I hope it changes for the better. I wouldn't be scared if it changed for the better, but the fact that these things are changing and there's nothing I could do stop it. I could use my voice, but talking only goes so far.

Speaker 16:

Growing up, there was a sense of the world is just getting better. All the things are going to get better. We work hard. We strive hard. There's all these problems around us, but change is always towards the better. And this is sort of how I was raised. And I think there's just a sense of realizing sometimes change takes us in places that aren't necessarily for the better.

Speaker 17:

We used to think about the future as never-ending, just laid out in front of us forever. We could continue to reimagine it. And I think what the climate crisis has done is said, the future is not never-ending. There's an end to this.

Speaker 18:

The future is not secure and it's not stable. And the life that you live right now is not, there's no sort of like necessary permanence to it. In fact, actually the life that we live is kind of inherently... it has the seeds of its own destruction, I guess. So, there's like a grief to that and a grief that.... you can't reside in a simple life that, without this larger world, I'm feeling. There's this loss also, right? This sort of like future grief, future loss.

Speaker 19:

Yeah. I don't really think about the losses too much. Now that I think... Now that you say that, I feel like I try not to, in a way.

Speaker 5:

Why?

Speaker 19:

I feel like thinking about the loss is kind of like thinking at it as a loss in a way? I'm like, I'm going to do everything I can to not lose it in a way.

Speaker 5:

What are you going to do? How are you going to grow?

Speaker 20:

Well, what we're doing is we're observing and keeping track of what we are observing. So that next year we know what to expect and to cope with it better because there's nothing else we can do, but try to adapt to the changes as they come.

Speaker 21:

Well, just totally depressed now.

Speaker 22:

Oh, and it's a shame that we used to have the most beautiful flowers here that we can't grow anymore because it gets too hot.

Speaker 5:

Which flowers?

Speaker 22:

I'm trying to think of. Oh, can't grow primroses. Well for [inaudible 00:07:10], it doesn't get cold enough in winter. I really like to be able to grow primroses again. There are a ton of flowers. I just can't think of the, oh my irisium [inaudible 00:07:27] was super pretty, wallflower. You call it wallflower.