

ECO-SUITE

by Ingrid Rogers

ingridnrogers@gmail.com

Eco-Suite was written to encourage reflection and discussion about our threatened environment. The time for action is now. Theater can be such an inviting way to get people involved--emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Please spread the news about this play and use it in your community.

The play is available in a short version with five scenes or as the full-length play below. Both versions contain several scenes that can also be performed independently as discussion starters. The shorter play, production notes and the lyrics and music for the theme song in the long version are available by contacting the author at ingridnrogers@gmail.com. There is no fee for performances.

Very few props are required for the play--mainly crates that can be moved easily and serve as chairs or platforms that the actors can move at the end of each scene. If the play is performed in the theater, screens in the back can present photos related to climate change issues: environmental degradation or photos of activists engaged in protests, depending on the content of the scene. The minimal staging requirements will facilitate usage in multiple contexts, such as for high school plays, street theater, chancel drama, or performances in conjunction with an environmental vigil.

The play is currently set up for 10 actors but could be played with as few as 6, or even less if only a single scene is chosen. Actors can use their own names for their scenes. The names in the play are deliberately gender neutral and interchangeable.

The action takes place at a youth group meeting of a local environmental chapter like Sunrise or Extinction Rebellion. The youth are working on their plans for an environmental action event, going over climate-related quotes, developing skits, creating posters, and practicing what is to become their theme song.

Stage backdrop / Screen projection: Picture of the blue planet

Scene 1

Eddie is picking tunes on the guitar when his/her friend Carey enters.

Carey: Hey, Eddie, are you ready for the meeting?

Eddie: Maybe. I've been working on something.

Carey: You mean for the climate rally?

Eddie: Yeah, or for the youth group at church. I wrote a song. The tune and most of the lyrics are ready, but I'm nervous.

Carey: Nervous? Why?

Eddie: Well, maybe the others in our group will think it's too sentimental. Or too vague. Or too spiritual.

Carey (*laughs*): You are making me curious! Don't be shy. And don't worry, of course they'll like it.

Eddie: It would be nice if they'd be willing to sing along.

Carey: I am sure, no worries. Some of us have pretty good voices, you know! But things don't have to be perfect anyway. I wonder what the others have come up with for the rally.

Eddie: I know Blake and Kris have been working on posters. Alva has done some internet research on statements by eco-activists.

Carey: And Merrill, Tracy, and a few others have written short scenes about the environment that we could perform.

Eddie: At the rally?

Carey: Well, either there or maybe later. Like for meetings. Or church services. Or for a presentation to a group that wants to do something about climate change. We'll practice a little today. We'll have to see what they bring and what we can use.

(*Bell rings.*)

Carey: Oh, here they are already. They normally don't come this early. Wait a second.

(*Carey runs off stage to let them in. Eddie continues plucking his guitar. Group members chatter as they enter. Noel carries a stack of papers, Blake and Kris carry posters with slogans.*)

Merrill (*comes in with more posters*): Where do you want these?

Alva: Here, let me help you. Tracy is coming a little later today. (*They stash the posters in a corner.*)

Eddie *resumes plucking the guitar, experimenting with a song.*

Merrill: Hey, that sounds great. Did you compose something new?

Eddie: Yea, I think I am getting somewhere with a theme song for our group. Want to hear the refrain?

Noel: I hope you don't expect us to sing. I can't stay on key. Why don't you sing it for us.

Eddie: It's not hard. I'll sing the refrain for you once through, and then all of you can repeat it line by line. Here it goes.

"Sun lights up the morning; clouds wisp away.

Faith grows that this world will be here yet another day."

Eddie: Now you. Try it. Just repeat after me. (*Sings*) Sun lights up the morning

(*Group repeats*) Sun lights up the morning

Eddie: Clouds wisp away

(*Group repeats*). Clouds wisp away

Eddie: Faith grows that this world will be here yet another day.

(Group repeats). Faith grows that this world will be here yet another day.

Eddie: Great. Let's do the whole thing one more time, together.

(All sing.)

"Sun lights up the morning; clouds wisp away.
Faith grows that this world will be here yet another day."

Eddie: So here are the verses. I'll signal you when to come in with the refrain, okay?.

With crying hearts and trembling, all sisters of the earth
are wondering what might happen to life and love and birth.
We pray to rise in strength and warmth as does the blessed sun.
May hope replace despair and fear until the day is done.

(They sing the refrain.)

May we speak with courage for justice and for peace,
Defend creation's beauty, make exploitation cease,
Take steps right now to overcome all violence and greed,
Express our love for planet earth each day in word and deed.

(Repeat refrain in unison.)

We stand near one another, together, arm in arm,
And thus we find protection from hatred and from harm.
And graciously, with tenderness, we're turning toward the light,
Convinced that love and trust again will break the force of night.

(Refrain is repeated one more time.)

Eddie: What do you think?

Alva: I love it. I think we should use it. If you teach it, the audience can join in.

Noel: Don't count on them doing that. Maybe they won't right away, but eventually ... at least a few ...

Carey: Of course they will. So, how about the rest of you? Did you get your projects finished?

Blake: Sort of. Good enough for rehearsal anyway.

Noel: Can Shawn, Merrill, and I go first, since we are still waiting for Tracy?

(All chime in. Voices overlap.) Sure. Go ahead. What have you got? Let's see it.

Noel: It's basically about three prophets pushing different attitudes toward the climate crisis. So, at the rally, we would climb on three soap boxes and address the audience. Some of you guys can take the part of the viewers. Just react to what you hear. Shawn is kind of the prophet of doom, saying "We are all screwed. It's over." Then Blake poo poos it all, sort of as a Pollyanna type, wanting to cheer everybody up and dismissing the concern. And then I come in and try for somewhat of a compromise position.

Blake: Noel always grabs the best part, you know! (Noel grins and shrugs.)

Shawn: So let's set it up. Here we go.

(Eddie strums the theme song while the group sets up the boxes.)

Scene 2

Spotlight on each speaker as they begin. Shawn climbs on a soap box, stage front right. The others sit around him, looking up. Over the course of the speech, the others mime their shock, get more and more repulsed and one by one stand up to withdraw from him. (Depending on the talents available, two actors could choreograph a dance or mime to illustrate what is being said during the three speeches.)

FIRST PROPHET, Shawn. [*The prophet of doom, in a slow, meditative voice*]

In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth. And God saw that it was good. So did we, since Heaven was a fit place to fly drones and bombers, and the Earth was a fit place to drop them on. God separated the land from the water. We drew from both without returning, depleting and polluting. We fought over both land and sea, craving to possess and rape which was not ours.

God created the animals and the plants. People were meant to be caretakers--but they began to slaughter and shoot, extinguishing species, one after another. Nature had to give way to highways and slums and clear-cut mountains. God formed people after God's own image, giving them the power to choose and to create. They used these powers to build weapon systems. They sucked resources from the ground and ruined soil and air. In the end, people destroyed Heaven and Earth, and the spirit of destruction lay upon the waters.

SECOND PROPHET, Merrill. [*S/He gets on the soap box stage front left, and begins to condemn the prophet.*]

Don't listen to him, the prophet of doom! We live for today! Do not worry. The human brain has always conceived of solutions. Everything will work out all right. We have the government and institutions to take care of things. Let it be! Why always emphasize the bad? Hasn't there been enough weeping? Let us enjoy life while we can! Let us laugh together! Carpe Diem! [*The others surround Merrill, cheering, smiling, Their relief is obvious. Noel takes the soap box in the center.*]

THIRD PROPHET, Noel.

See here, friends:

You don't have to make this kind of a choice. Both options will lead you astray. Don't lose your laughter in despair. It is not too late to prevent chaos. We can still contribute to the healing of the planet. Some things may be too far gone to be turned around. But others can be changed. We have the means. We have the passion for love and justice. Don't hang your heads in frustration and let your minds linger on dust rather than the tall trees. Let your grief and worry become the source for your visions! Aware of the crisis, work for solutions. Aware of evil, strive for a better world. Leave room for tears and laughter both. Respond, create, help hold the world together.

(Noel climbs down from the box.)

Jess: I like it. What's the rest of us going to do after that speech?

Noel: Well, maybe applause would be good here.

Blake: But maybe we should make gestures to dismiss the message and just walk away. At least some of us. That's just realistic. You can't win people over that quickly.

Kris: Why do you always have to be so negative, Blake?

Blake: I just don't like these pat and quick solutions. We are in a mess, remember? Our planet is going down the tubes.

(Bell rings again.)

Alva: That's probably Tracy. I'll get her.

Merrill: I have a scene in mind that sort of fits with what we just heard. It's short and sweet.

Blake: Short and sweet sounds good.

Merrill looks at him reproachfully: What I mean is that each person only has to remember one sentence. But it does fit with what you just said. It repeats the kind of excuses we always hear that keep people from addressing the climate crisis.

Scene 3

Merrill: I need 5 people to help out with this. *(5 volunteers raise their hands. She gives each of them a slip of paper with all five sentences.)* So this is what you say, right there on your piece of paper. Stand up in a semi-circle. Carey, you start. Then Kris with sentence 2, then Shawn, Noel, and Jess.

First, I want each of you to say your sentence alone. I am trying to parody people who come up with all these excuses not to take action. So be dismissive as you talk. Add some gestures maybe. Go ahead.

Carey: "There is no climate change."

Kris: "There has always been climate change."

Shawn: "I won't be around to suffer the result of climate change."
Noel: "People aren't responsible for climate change."
Jess: "There are good aspects to climate change."

Merrill: Great job. Now try that again, and the remaining four repeat it for emphasis.

Carey: "There is no climate change."

(All repeat): THERE IS NO CLIMATE CHANGE.

Kris: "There has always been climate change." *(All repeat)*

Shawn: "I won't be around to suffer the result of climate change." *(All repeat)*

Noel: "People aren't responsible for climate change." *(All repeat)*

Jess: "There are good aspects to climate change." *(All repeat)*

Merrill: Okay. This time, one of you starts and the other one chimes in until all your voices blend. *(They proceed.)*

Merrill: Good. Now do it again, but this time you should get gradually louder, like you are insisting on your point of view. And then I step in at the end with a one-liner, saying, :
"How do we speak the truth in this cacophony of voices?" *(They proceed.)*

Merrill: "How do we speak the truth in this cacophony of voices?"

Merrill (after a short pause): What do you think?

Blake, after another pause: Not bad, Merrill. I'm impressed. I have heard all these arguments before. And I like the idea of people trying to drown each other out. It's a crazy world we live in.

Alva: Now that Tracy is here, can we go next? We put a little skit together. And we've already practiced it.

Tracy: So, you have to imagine two people, about middle age, at a center table, drinking coffee. One is working on a laptop computer, the other reading. *(Actors assemble boxes to stage the scene.)*

Carey: The stage is yours, Tracy! *(Remaining actors sit off to the side.)*

Scene 4

Alva: Hey, listen to this. I found this interesting website where they let you test your carbon footprint. Hey, LISTEN!

Tracy: Please don't interrupt me all the time. You know I can't hear you when my ears are plugged.

Alva: It's about your carbon footprint.

Tracy (impatient): I am listening to music! *(Takes out ear pods.)* My what? Footprint?
(Looks at the sole of his/her shoe)

Alva: No, not your real footprint. Carbon footprint. It shows what amount of carbon you put into the air. The things you do that cause global warming.

Tracy: I do? Why me?

Alva: Not you personally. We. Most of us. The stuff we should avoid doing.

Tracy sighs.: Like what? Give me some examples.

Alva: Well, here. Let's just try and see what they say online. It's kind of a questionnaire to show how we are implicated in climate change. (*He reads.*) They say the average carbon footprint for a person in the United States is 16 tons. Globally, it's closer to 4 tons. Sounds like we are the Number 1 polluters. Always US first, I guess.

Tracy: Somehow that doesn't surprise me. Then what do we have to do to get the number down?

Alva: So the goal is ... let's see (*he checks*) to avoid a 2 degree Celsius rise in global temperatures. For that we need to drop ...(*he looks up*) to under 2 tons--down from 16 tons-- by 2050.

Tracy: Sounds like a lot. But at least we have some time then.

Alva: Not really. Right now we are on track to make things worse, not better.

Tracy: Surely that's not all up to us? But okay, what do they want to know?

Alva: We have to enter how many miles we travel with our car, how often we fly, how much water we use, how we heat our house, what kind of things we eat, what our shopping habits are . . .

Tracy: Stop right there. I can already see that we are going to flunk this test.

Alva: If you want, we can make some changes in our lifestyle.

Tracy: Like what?

Alva: Get an electric vehicle. Or you can ride your bike to work.

Tracy: Why me? What about you? You need the exercise more than I do.

Alva: There are also a lot of ideas here on what to do around the house--like turning off the lights, installing low-flow showerheads, turning the heat down ...

Tracy (exasperated tone of voice): Turn the heat down??

Alva: ... use rechargeable batteries, plant trees, line-dry clothing, spend less money...

Tracy (claps her hands): Spend less money! Now there's an idea for you!

Alva: Well, do you want to save the planet or don't you?

Tracy: Ok, I agree that we can do better. And I'll work at it with you if you like. But I wonder whether this whole thing with the personal "footprint" just distracts from the fact that fossil fuel companies have been wrecking the earth for profits, and now they want us to take the blame.

Alva looks at her. After a pause: Well, you have a point there. We should probably also take a look at what these companies do. And what the politicians are up to. And what the banks are financing. And how other countries are ruining things. And ...

Tracy: Stop, I get the point. What you are saying is that we should do our part, regardless.

Alva: Exactly. It seems like it all hangs together, right? Our actions, our choices.

Tracy: Let's learn more about what we can do. Maybe we can talk to our friends about it.

Alva: Do you think they'd be interested?

Tracy: No idea. But it's easier to figure out what to do if you don't work at it alone. I'm going to try this. *(Picks up the phone.)* Lindy, are you busy next Saturday? I was wondering . . . *(Light fades out.)*

Scene 5

Actors regroup for discussion.

Noel: Wow, a nice cliffhanger at the end! I wonder whether she'll get somewhere with this Lindy person.

Shawn: That's the idea. You never know. The only way we'll get somewhere is to start talking to our neighbors.

Blake: I tried that and just ended up getting in a big argument. But I guess we have to keep trying.

Noel: I wrote something that emphasizes how we are all complicit in what is happening.

Blake: Is it short and sweet?

Noel: Oh, stop it, Blake. Yes, it's short. Not sweet though. It kind of picks up on Merrill's idea with the overlapping voices. We practiced it last night.

Blake: Let's hear it. *(Kris, Jess, Merrill, and Carey stand 4 feet apart in a half circle center stage, the rest watches.)*

Kris: There is a piece of coal and a drop of oil in each hurricane and in all of us.

Merrill: There is a piece of coal

Carey: and a drop of oil

Jess: in each hurricane

Kris: and in all of us.

Each speaker repeats their line, with increased speed.

Kris steps forward, repeats the whole line once more. Then the Chorus says it in unison.

Merrill and Carey step forward.

Merrill and Carey (alternating): Heat waves, plastic pollution, insecticide, floods, droughts, wildfires, tornados . . . *(Together):* Will we heed the warning signs?

Kris: Unfortunately . . . we are mostly preoccupied

Merrill: . . . with our gadgets

Carey: . . . or our next vacation.

Jess: Every second the earth changes. We humans influence what is to come.

Kris: Even if we stand at the end of an era, do we not also stand at its beginning?
All four in unison: Even if we stand at the end of an era, do we not also stand at its beginning?

(Eddie plays the melody of the theme song again. The group joins, quietly singing the refrain together.)

Scene 6

Blake: I think to make an impact, we have to start explaining how bad things really are. I mean, we have lived through decades of environmental degradation, and people still act like they can just go on as always. It drives me nuts.

Shawn: I agree with Blake. You know what we have left out so far? We haven't really shown how mad we are about the climate situation. So we have these skits and the prophecies, but what about expressing our anger?

Alva: You are right. Sometimes when I listen to politicians who talk about reducing fossil fuels by 2050, I feel rage. That's too late! Why are we not doing more right now? Why is everything happening so slowly?

Merrill: Remember what Greta Thunberg said to her adult audience? "You claim you love your children above all else and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes."

Noel: And she also said, "you all come to us young people for hope. HOW DARE YOU?" I feel that same outrage too. We need to put something out there that wakes people up.

(Center Stage is cleared for a series of presentations. Actors form a semi circle. The first line is spoken in unison, the other lines by single chorus members. Actors can stand wherever they want in the group.)

Chorus: Some day they will call them criminals

- Alva: Those who rob children of their future
- Jess: Those who deny them food and water
- Kris: Those who sicken them with poisons

Chorus: Some day they will call them criminals

- Eddie: Those who allowed the sea level to rise
- Tracy: Those who cut down the trees
- Merrill: Those dirtied the oceans with plastics

Chorus: Some day they will call them criminals

- Carey: Those who pursued their fossil fuel comforts

- Noel: Those who razed tropical forest for beef
- Shawn: Those who consumed relentlessly and blindly

Chorus: Some day they will call US criminals

- Alva: If we keep going the way we are
- Tracy: If we don't want to look at what is happening'
- Eddie: If we refuse to demand change

Chorus: Some day they will call US criminals.

Actors slowly move, spotlighted. They assume poses of despair. Masks or miming could be used to underscore what is being said. Individuals step forward, each speaking one line. Depending on the actors' talents, someone or several could dance to the message.

This is our future.

my city has been covered
glass roofs replace the sky
we no longer soak in rain

plastic flowers bloom in hallways
the temperature stays stable
no sun makes us sweat

we sit on plastic benches
in fully filtered air
no breeze ruins our hair

floors are wiped clean and polished
marble reflects us better than a faraway moon

all handles have been disinfected
sterile stuffed animals are on sale
machines produce pretty bird chirps

beyond the glass ceiling
behind the last door
grow bacteria, swept away

along with all we used to cherish:
a sign of life surviving
in the heat

Scene 7

Spotlight on two actors center front, playing on their Ipads. The rest sits in the background observing, then rising to joining in as the chorus, surrounding the two without being noticed by the players.

Jess: I found this neat new app.

Carey: Not another one with guns, I hope? I am kind of sick of gunning everyone down.

Jess: You are weird. It's just a game!

Carey: It's only a game until we have the next school shooting. Did you watch the news yesterday?

Jess: Okay, okay. I get it. But here's another one.

Carey: What's it called?

Jess: It's called (*checks*) "Life points."

Carey: Hmm. What is it about?

Jess: It looks like fun. You can accumulate all sorts of stuff. You know, the latest gadgets you see on TV. And the ones my friend Al talked to me about on Instagram.

Carey: Really? All right, let's try it. At least it's not violent this time, right?

Jess: Correct. And it's pretty simple.

The chorus surrounds them, cheering them on, watching and commenting. The chorus voices overlap.

Jess: You have to press the arrow keys. Get the goods when they come. Quick. Oops! You missed one. Now! There you go! Hey, good deal!

Carey: I have to keep holding down the consumer button, right?

Jess: Yes. Over there. Take as much as you can get!

Chorus: Move more quickly. More often. More stuff. (*Voices overlapping*) More quickly. More often. More stuff.

Carey: Got it! (*She beams with delight.*)

Jess: Great job! Okay! (*Applause. Chorus echoes "Great Job! Okay!"*)

Carey: Here's another bonus to collect. Let's play again. (*Jess nods.*)
I won! I won!

Chorus: You won! You won! Go again! Get some more! (*Voices overlapping*)

Carey: I'm getting warm. Do you feel warm? Why is it so warm? And what's this on the screen's upper left?

Jess (looks at the Ipad): It's a . . .counter. It counts your life points.

Carey: But look at that! My life points are shrinking. How come my life points are shrinking? I want another chance. Where is my next chance?

Jess: There it is, flashing red. Hit it! Grab it!

Carey (loud, excited): I got it! I got it again! *(More quietly)*: But . . .Why is it so hot?

Chorus: Hot, hot, hot, hot *(They create a wave, with increasing speed and loudness.)*

Jess: Did you see that bargain? It pops up so fast. You should take it while you can.

Carey: I have only a few life points left.

Jess: Whow, look at that! Just press it. Go on. Just take what you can get.

Carey: Success! Fantastic. Let's play another round. Great game! *(Beams at Jess.)*

Jess: Okay, let's start over and get some competition going. See who of us can get more stuff. *(Carey sits down at his own Ipad and joins in the game.)*

Carey: I love these moves. All these opportunities. More stuff, I mean. *(Moves as if itchy.)* I feel sweaty though. Gosh, it's hot. Why am I breaking into a sweat? How can you stand it? Did someone turn up the heat?

Jess (surprised): Gee, I feel it too. And now for some reason my escape key is malfunctioning. Stuff just keeps coming. Weird!

Carey: Mine too. I want to stop. I can't stop! It won't let me! Why can't I stop? Now what?

Jess: Seems like it's out of control. It continues . . . all on its own! The game just continues!

(Wave / Chorus): The game continues!

All: WHAT GAME IS THIS?

Intermission

Act 2

Jess: Okay, I think at some point we should also bring in a spiritual element into our presentations.

Shawn: What do you mean?

Jess: I mean creation is at stake. It's not all up to us. Or maybe it is up to us--I don't know. I feel like we should pay attention to what God has to say.

Tracy: God? You want to put God on stage?

Jess: Well, if I had created this world and humans were about to destroy the planet, I'd want to have some say in the matter.

Merrill: Actually, Eddie's song talks about faith, too. About our pain, our fears, our hope, and our willingness to act. That's all spiritual.

Shawn: Anyway, what do you have in mind, Jess.

Jess: A conversation. Between God and Satan. No, not Satan. Lucifer. The Angel of Light. I always thought our image of Satan is too extreme--too easy to dismiss--like Lucifer never stands a chance to win. But these days, it's not that clear to me any more who will win. Take a look.

Scene 8

"Lucifer" and "God" (played by Kris and Eddie) each step on a spotlighted soap box or behind a podium, stage front left and right. Kris puts on a gray or orange/ red T-Shirt; Eddie a blue or green one. The others fade into the background, seated and listening.

G: How are you today, Lucifer?

L: Okay. Thanks, God! A bit bored.

G: Why is that?

L: I'm running out of work. It seems like ... everything has already been decided.

G: Really? I don't feel that way.

L: That's right. You never do. Always the hopeful one. *(Exasperated sigh.)* My God! Look at these people! They can't seem to wait to destroy life on this planet. And they don't need me to give them ideas. They are figuring it all out on their own now.

G: It sounds like you are blaming *me* for your bad mood, and everyone else for what is happening.

L: No, that's not it. And I am not in a bad mood. I just think it's game over. You made a big mistake, and you won't own up to it. Just admit it. You lost. *(Looks at him, screams.)* YOU LOST!

G: And what big mistake would that be?

L: Day six of creation, of course. Before that, you did mostly okay, even from my perspective. Everything started out beautifully: The cosmos. The stars. The oceans. The plants. The animals. But you ... you couldn't ... stop yourself. You had to go on with this screwed-up "masterpiece" of yours. Why? Why risk all of creation by placing it in the hands of these ... these ... humanoids? And why couldn't you have just made them like the rest, happy with what they had?

G: You know the answer, Lucifer. I wanted a creature that would be in communion with me. And with others. I wanted them to be caretakers. I loved humans. I still do. And they are still capable of love. For me and for others as well.

L (*After a pause*): Have you looked at them lately?

G: Yes, I have. I grant you that some are making horrible choices.

L: That's putting it mildly. Why did you have to give them the power to choose? And what happens now? Are you not going to take a stand, now that the whole creation is at risk?

G: I have always taken a stand. They know what it is. I have sent them prophets. I have shown them love. I have empowered them to create ... to heal ... to share with one another ... to forgive ... and to be compassionate. I have given them options. It doesn't make sense to expect them to love me and all creation unless I give them the power to choose.

L: You should fight. You should punish them.

G: They are punishing themselves, and I suffer with them. But I will love them nonetheless, to the end.

L: So there you are. You are a loser. (*Makes the L sign on his forehead. Screams.*) A LOSER!

G: We'll see.

Scene 9

Kris and Eddie step down but stay behind their posters. The rest of the group takes center stage.

Blake (after a pause): I really think it's game over. We missed our chance somehow.

Merrill: But we can't sink into despair. We can't give up. Giving up is indefensible.

Blake: Remember Tim? He came to our group one time last year. And then he overdosed.

Merrill: Are you saying it was our fault?

Blake: No, of course not. But he was depressed. He didn't see any point to living in this world any more. He felt he couldn't do anything--like he was on a train that he couldn't stop. There are times when I feel like that too.

Noel: So let's put that on stage. Express it. We need to face the possibility of destruction and somehow seek to transform it.

Tracy: You mean like sinking into our grief? Wallowing in it?

Noel: Well, feeling pain for the world--that has to be the first step, before anything can get better. We need to be in touch with all we stand to lose. It's so much more than just climate change.

A/va: Let's see whether we can express that. (*She passes out gray T-Shirts*).

Actors put on the T-Shirts. Projected on a screen could be posters or scenes from Extinction Rebellion protests, alternating with pictures of endangered species, melting glaciers, and clear-cut forests. The emphasis is on bleakness and disastrous prospects for the future. Another backdrop could be Edvard Munch's painting, "The Scream."

Voices of Despair

Noel: We write our suicide notes
on paper from clear-cut forests.
We dip feathers of birds gone extinct
into ink from melted glaciers.

Tracy: With silent longing we paint
pictures of fish-free oceans.
Drowned islands. Burnt trees.
Landfills. Eroded hills.

Alva: We put the noose of unlimited
consumption around our necks
and like a greedy addict we push away
the chair of life below us.

Merrill: Let me paint you a picture of the far-away future.
The one we don't want. The one we dread.
Take a look at our planet, from outer space --
how small we are. So lost. So ... invisible.

Blake: We are invisible.
We walk on invisible streets,
drive through invisible cities,
live in invisible countries.

Tracy: Perhaps (although unlikely)
a future someone will surmise
that there must have been living beings
capable of building structures on the planet;

Jess: but why these beings tried
to poison their own home
will remain an unsolvable mystery

an obscure and bizarre detail --

Carey: a weird feature about a tiny place
in an otherwise not very hospitable immense galaxy.
We are invisible and (in all likelihood) will remain so
Forever.

(in unison, quietly:) Forever. (Louder:) FOREVER.

Scene 10

God / Lucifer continue their dialogue, facing straight forward. Spotlight on boxes right and left.

L: My God!!! Well, are you convinced yet?

G: You need to hear some more voices from my people. Bad news always tends to travel fast, and fear can spread quickly. I want you to listen to some modern day prophets.

L: Go ahead, if you must. But remember, I am in their hearts too. Power is an attractive goal. So is the drive to have more and more.

G: Be quiet, Lucifer.

(Actors enter with a large sign saying, Peace on Earth, Good Will to All.)

L: Who are they? A bunch of Eco-Activists?

G: Just listen.

The group sits. Someone starts humming the theme song. The group sings the refrain quietly, then the last stanza in unison.

Voices of Admonishment and Hope

Eddie: We must give up our habit of fighting and seeing people with other opinions as enemies. We have to look for ways to heal the situation. When we stop blaming, we can start looking for the deeper conditions that make people feel betrayed. And then we have to reach for our power to become agents of change.

Carey: To achieve change, we need to do three things:

1. Share a big idea.
2. Work together.
3. Take action.

Whatever we have to offer, our better future needs it.

Noel: There is a lot to do, but everyone can help. Our movement needs investigators, communicators, builders, resisters, nurturers, & networkers. Let's put your skills alongside thousands of others.

Blake: Maybe you are right. Community is key. And maybe focusing on the process rather than only the possibility of a happy ending. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "Faith is taking the first step even though you don't see the whole staircase." Another time he said, "It really boils down to this, that all life is interrelated, we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied into a single garment of destiny, whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

Merrill (reads from a paper): Listen to this from cultural historian Thomas Berry. "We need to make a radical shift from being a species that is a destructive presence on this planet to a species that's grounded in building a mutually enhancing Human-Earth relationship. We see the world as separate from ourselves, something to be used. There is violence and objectification built into that way of seeing the world. And all of our institutions reinforce that. The work for us to do is to provide a different context – the context of wholeness, completeness, and connectivity."

Jess: And here is a word from Pope Francis. He reminds us that "the time for seeking global solutions is running out. We can find suitable solutions only if we act together and in agreement."

Scene 10

Kris: So let's talk about the posters we were working on? Did you come up with some good slogans? Let me see what we have.

(Several actors go and pick up the posters. They pose with their designs and read the slogans. Possible examples for posters: Preserve the Earth. Celebrate Nature. Sun & Wind Power. Regenerative Agriculture. No More Fossil Fuels, Protect our Planet. Environmental Health.)

Alva: I think we are ready to go. *(Distributes the remaining posters to the group until each person has one.)*

Shawn: (Optional for street theater performances or groups wanting to take direct action): I have a list of local initiatives people can participate in. Here are leaflets we could distribute. *(Each takes a stack. Actors proceed through the audience--in theater aisles or past church pews or through the crowd of a street gathering--each reading their slogan out loud and, if desired, passing out leaflets.)*

Eddie: Can you think of anything else we can do?

Blake: I have put together a collection of messages that would be worth quoting. Maybe we can read them from a podium. (*Distributes pages with the quotes. Actors, one by one, stand up and read. The list below can be updated or shortened or lengthened as desired.*)

Eddie: That's great, Blake! Here, let me read mine. "The story we've told ourselves until now is that we're victims of something; that it's all happening to us; that global warming and climate change is beyond our control. And when we relate to it that way, that stops us from taking actions. It makes us feel impotent and keeps us numb. But when we wake up to the fact that we can change that conversation in a way that we can author the world we want, everything changes. We generate possibilities."

Carey: Mine says, "We are on Spaceship Earth. What we do, whatever action we take, affects everyone else on the spaceship. The best decisions for humanity will be made by everyone participating."

Shawn: "The truth is that once basic needs are met, happiness doesn't come from buying more stuff. It comes from our communities, our health, and a sense of purpose."

Noel: "So much can be done for a better life. How about collaborative consumption? What I mean is giving people access to stuff they could otherwise not afford,...like bike-share programs ... online platforms for sharing cars, homes, tools, camping gear. We can create substitutes for disposable products ... find new uses for discarded material ...' reclaim compost for the soil ..."

Kris: That's nicely concrete! Here is a good idea too. "A lot of people are maybe looking forward to going back to normal. But what is normal? To live every day with habits that destroy the Earth? With the tools that we have, and the capacity that we have to communicate through networks, this may be a big opportunity to tell people, hey, let's not go back to where we were before. Let's go to a new place."

Jess: This is one I identify with: "If we see ourselves as participants in a cosmic garden of life that has been developing patiently over billions of years, our regard for the universe shifts from indifference, fear, and cynicism to curiosity, love, and awe."

Merrill: I have a quote from Senator Bernie Sanders. "As the nation at last confronts global warming, it is no time for denial, greed, cynicism or pessimism."

Alva: Here is one from climate activist Charles Eisenstein. He says, “What world do we want to live in? That’s the question. Not: Can we survive and can we continue to grow the economy. Our first priority is that the earth must be held sacred. Second: Repair, regenerate, and heal the earth’s organs that have been damaged. Practice regenerative agriculture. Stop poisoning all the tissues with chemicals and toxic waste. And of course reduce fossil fuel emissions. There are other ways to change the world besides dominating others by force.” For me, hope lies in these things.

Tracy: Let’s give the last word to Greta Thunberg. She said, “I have learned you are never too small to make a difference. Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming whether you like it or not. Everything needs to change – and it has to start today. Giving up is never an option. Together and united, we are unstoppable.”

Eddie: Great, guys. I think we are ready to do our climate action. Let’s try our theme song one more time. (*Verses again sung solo, refrain in unison.*)

Scene 11

In the stanzas following the initial narration below, the haikus are spoken by “God” (Eddie) at the podium on the right. Actors stand in a half circle. Then different solo readers step forward to present each day of creation.

Noel: In the biblical account of Genesis 1, we are put in charge of creation as caretakers. We have proven to be unreliable stewards, contributing much to destroy our planetary habitat. Now it is time to change and embrace our calling to take care of our earth home. The “beginning” is now. We have received the invitation to re-create and preserve the planet for future generations.

Like the morning sun
Breaking through pollution haze
Life springs out of death

Tracy: In the beginning, earth and its creatures
were plagued by droughts, storms, fires, floods,
starvation, injustice, and disease.
Confused, we search for solutions.

Alva: We noticed a ray of sunlight
break through the darkness
and saw the beauty of creation
we had been charged to take care of.

Both: And there was evening and there was morning,
the first day.

Watery blessing
Caresses of soft rain
From sky to deep sea

Merrill: We began to clean up the oceans,
removed dumped plastic,
passed laws against overfishing,
helped coral reefs renew themselves.

Jess: We limited greenhouse gas emissions
that hung over the land
like a suffocating cloak.
Blue skies returned, and we saw that it was good.

Both: And there was evening and there was morning,
The second day.

Growth on fruitful land
Vegetation yielding seed
Hyacinths in bloom

Kris: As allies of the earth, we planted trees,
prohibited deforestation, stopped poisoning
the land with chemicals, reused and recycled.

Shawn: We danced under redwoods
and prayed on holy mountains.
We drew strength from the land,
harvesting and sharing what we grew.
And we saw that it was good.

Both: And there was evening and there was morning,
The third day.

Day apart from night
Light in the dome of the sky
Days, years, and seasons

Noel: When it became clear that extracting fossil fuels would bring certain death to future generations, we explored alternative energy sources.

Carey: We sought the heat of the sun, the strength of the wind, and the steadiness of waves and rivers.

Noel: We knew energy as gift and birthright-- free, safe, and accessible to all.

Carey: And we saw that it was good.

Both: And there was evening and there was morning, The fourth day.

Filling earth and sky
Swarms of living creatures roam
Colors multiply

Blake: We recognized the interconnectedness of all living things, not just among humans. Animals, like us, deserved care and protection from abuse.

Eddie: We ceased to exploit the essence of living beings for selfish gain, stopped cruel practices, and admired the splendor of the species that co-inhabited our common planet.

Both: And there was evening and there was morning, The fifth day.

Made in God's image
Caretakers of the garden
Both male and female

Alva: We stood together in the fight against hunger, poverty, and injustice.

Jess: We recognized the treasure of diversity: Black, brown and white, all people together; humans, animals, plants, all of one substance.

Alva: We elected leaders who would protect creation. Replacing hatred with love, freed from greed and selfishness, confessing, we made the turn.

Both: And there was evening and there was morning,

The sixth day.

Earth's wellness restored
Blessings received and given
Time to celebrate

Blake: We looked at the now unpolluted sky,
Shawn: admired the brilliant stars,
Eddie: breathed the clean air,
Tracy: joined hands in a dance, rejoiced,
Merrill: and saw that keeping the garden was indeed very good
Carey: and that we were part of a Spirit that made it so.

All: We were part of a Spirit that made it so.

Carey steps forward, center stage, to recite: Listen to Amanda Gorman's poem.
(The poem can be read by the actor or projected on a screen in Amanda Gorman's own voice, as recorded here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBERVCT44J4>).

What was cursed, we will cure.
What was plagued, we will prove pure.
Where we tend to argue, we will try to agree,
Those fortunes we forswore, now the future we foresee,
Where we weren't aware, we're now awake;
Those moments we missed
Are now these moments we make,
The moments we meet,
And our hearts, once all together beaten,
Now all together beat."

Eddie steps forward: From Deuteronomy Chapter 30, verse 19. "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."

CURTAIN