

## Josh Kline

*Climate Change: Part One*  
April 27 – June 9, 2019

Part one of a calamity in progress. The year is 2050 or 2060. Or 2040. A mid-century turning point. A tipping point. Everyone who was alive at the turn of the century is middle-aged, elderly, or dead. The west Antarctic ice sheet has come unmoored and slipped into the ocean. Sudden catastrophic sea-level rise. New York, San Francisco, Washington, Miami, Houston, Seattle. All gone. London, Amsterdam, Venice, Shanghai, Seoul, Rio, Lagos, Mumbai, Capetown, Dubai. All of Bangladesh. Lost beneath the filthy waves along with all the world's beaches.

American global hegemony unraveling in the surf. The military, industrial, and commercial ties that bind soaked in seawater, frayed, rotten. Dissolving in our world's most abundant chemical solvent. Water. The global web of trade in physical material and physical goods and physical food unraveled. Replaced by a desperate scramble over scarce real world resources. The last commercial airplane flights have flown. The early 21st Century was a soft dystopia - misery unequally distributed across the Earth. Middle-class consumer normalcy for the few, civil conflict, mosquito-born plagues, or grinding poverty for everyone else. Climate change produces a hard dystopia. Suffering for all. How much, a question of degrees. 2°C. 3°C. 5°C. 8°C.

The 21st Century is a collection of historical singularities. Beyond these epochal turning points, most predictions break down. On the other side of these doorways, the world and its inhabitants' needs and drives are so different that it's impossible to conceive of them until passing beyond the threshold. Except that a world of refugees, human pain, hunger, and disease is nothing new. It's the story of every human civilization for the last ten thousand years.

While the varieties of human misery are nothing new, the shape of the societies that suffer in this sweltering world is less clear. Climate change is a singularity. So is the end of capitalism. Another is the end of Western political, economic, and military hegemony over the globe. What does the world look like after white supremacy melts down?

Melting is a physical process. Solid matter melting into a liquid state in response to heat. Heat is energy coursing through atoms and molecules, causing them to pick up speed. The application of enough energy can cause matter to transform. Solid matter appears motionless, its particles locked together. The addition of energy allows the bonds between particles to loosen, allowing them to flow as a liquid. Disintegration is a related physical process. Given time and wind and water, rocks can disintegrate into sand. The strongest and most rigid nation-states can also disintegrate. Water washes everything away.

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