

Greenhouse

Christabel Yun

Santa Clarita Sister Cities

Santa Clarita, CA



There's an old saying—people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones—that reminds us to be wary of hypocrisy. But what happens when the very walls of our Earth are at stake, and each of us holds a pebble in our hands? While some mistakenly believe their actions have no lasting impact on the atmosphere's integrity, these seemingly insignificant pebbles, when aimed at the ozone layer, can transform into unstoppable boulders.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, bathing the streets of Santa Clarita with its golden light, Adam found himself confined to his room, tethered to the electric fan his parents bought over a decade ago. Outside was hot, oppressively so, and yet there was no relief in sight—no promised rainfall during what was supposed to be the monsoon season. Who came up with the phrase "April showers bring May flowers"? There had been neither showers nor flowers for what seemed like forever, ever since the seasons blurred into a constant oscillation between summer and fall. Perhaps the saying originated in a different time, from a different world, where lush rolling hills were draped with emerald fields and blanketed with wildflowers, not the current landscape of ashen trees and the dilapidated remains of cell towers.

In AP Environmental Science class, Adam would read articles about the melting ice caps. He saw images of polar bears stranded on shrinking icebergs and entire communities displaced due to rising sea levels. Assignment after assignment he would wonder the same thing: *Were we merely postponing the inevitable?* With commercial fishing vessels spewing over 200 million tons of carbon dioxide annually and artificial pumps growing more prominent than the natural habitats they replaced, Adam concluded that mankind is too apathetic, nonchalant about the genuine harm we have inflicted on the Earth.

Lately, something felt off-kilter. The summers were hotter, the winters milder. Storms seemed fiercer, and the news perpetually echoed the same sentiments: "CRISIS: Species Extinction Rates Soar," "ALARM: Ocean Acidification Is Accelerating Rapidly," "BREAKING NEWS: Extreme Heat Waves Are Sweeping Across Continents!" Adam rubbed his eyes and looked out his window when a thought struck him with sudden clarity:

“Did the climate change, or did we?”

In that moment, Adam realized that he, too, was part of this vast interconnected system. His choices and actions mattered. The world was evolving, and so was he. Adam knew that he couldn't change the world single-handedly, but he could change himself—and his complacent inaction.

Like Adam, many of us are waking up to the stark realities of climate change and our role in shaping its trajectory. The old saying about glass houses and stones takes on new significance when applied to our fragile planet. It's high time we take action. Transitioning to renewable energy, protecting ecosystems, promoting sustainable practices, advocating for policy changes, and raising awareness are crucial steps. By adopting these measures, we can collectively shift towards a more sustainable future and safeguard our planet—our home—for generations to come.