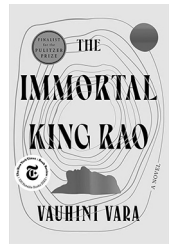
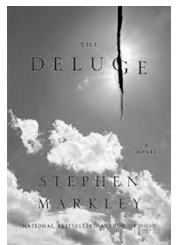


three books



two opinions



by Ron and Ben

Dear Reader,

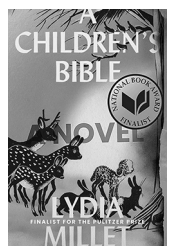
Consider this whole article a subtweet to the person on the group chat who asked to “is cli-fi a real genre??”

It is. By cli-fi, we mean fiction whose setting, plot or characters interact with a world gone climate changed. Any cli-fi definition also encompasses the speculative action planning or strategic campaign planning Earth First!ers engage in.

Bad news. The term “cli-fi” has formally entered the literary vernacular. Indeed, not only is cli-fi a real formulation, it’s likely to become one that you, principled reader, will have to say aloud. It is ironic, bitterly so, that just when society offers Earth First!ers a breakaway subgenre uniquely suited to our sensibilities, we have to compromise our no compromise stance, even make the dreaded “deal” with “assholes” by uttering the phrase “cli-fi”.

So, my authors of the future, behold this snapshot into what cli-fi has to offer.

Reviewed: The Immortal King Rao by Vauhini Vara
The Deluge by Stephen Markey
A Children’s Bible by Lidia Millet



The Immortal King Rao Vauhini Vara

reviewed by Bonj and Ron

Vauhini Vara's work successfully fires that li'l dystopian synapse: the world is divided between the Blanklands - small islands transformed into autonomous zones of languid anarchy - and the Shareholder Government, wherein the State's algorithm calculates everyone's value ensuring the masses remain peons of sterile capitalism. But is our title character the protagonist, or antagonist? Fathom a world where Bill Gates comes not from extreme wealth and privilege, but from a One Hundred Years of Solitude-esque Dalit village in India, and rather like Gates in his idyllic twilight years investing in green hydrogen and becoming a general shill for the military industrial complex, our King Rao is also an architect of annihilation. Just not his own; Rao's got a nonconsensual plan to live forever and yes, it involves AI (boooo)

The story sloppily lurches between three distinct periods of Rao's life. The scene changes tend towards poor timing/editing, with occasional filler episode vibes. Much of the story (the anarchy part) is told through the eyes of Athena, the daughter of King Rao, and the narrative pulls one to the conclusion that free markets are inherently built on slavery and exploitation so...er... if you were on the fence about that, this is a great book for you. **READ IF YOU LIKE:** coconuts, fraught father-daughter relationships, business tycoons behaving badly, Bainbridge Island turned into a pirate utopia (unlikely)

The Deluge Stephen Markey

reviewed by Bonj

This book is a commitment - it's a fan fiction of the next twenty years for various wings of the climate movement. Markey gives you what you want - a cell of Malmian pipeline saboteurs consumed by paranoia, an ideologically inconsistent riot grrrl leading a Sunrise -esque movement only to become disillusioned by electoral politics. A rescue mission into a Hollywood engulfed by wildfire, getting trapped in a K-hole during a polar vortex, a second storming of the Capitol led by an affinity group that's bad at processing poly drama. It's like climate apocalypse mad libs.

This book hooks you but you don't love being hooked. Like, I wanted to know what happens next, but I was mad about every choice the characters had and every decision they made. Only dumb and preventable things happened to my book friends. Stories don't need uplifting morals, or to illuminate the beautiful things in our broken world, but the best ones do. I found this book ... demobilizing. As in, I will not strike fiercer blows against my enemies after reading this. **READ IF YOU LIKE:** thirty open wikipedia tabs, good monkeywrenchers gone bad, baleful glee at unfathomable suffering.

A Children's Bible Lydia Millet

reviewed by Ron

Your parents are to blame. Climate apocalypse, societal collapse, liberalism, all of it. Lydia Millet launches a full-throated indictment of herself and all parents of the white middle/upper liberal establishment milieu with a satisfying depiction of sardonic Zoomers resorting to direct action and mutual aid to overcome an unfolding series of biblical disasters. Ugh, the fucking bible, yes dear reader there are endless allusions to bible stories, perhaps the whole novel is allegorical in that direction, with a Noah style flood playing a big role in the plot. To be fair, there is zero proselytizing along the way, and this is not a pro-christian novel. If you're like me and have never read or even seen a children's bible irl, then any number of metaphors and character/event references might be lost on you. I didn't mind, those stories probably suck ass anyhow (in a bad way).

Happily, the layered biblical symbolism is utilized mostly as a playful means of advancing the plot and not as an explanation for how the world works. To that end, Millet offers an analysis well aligned with biocentric and anticapitalist worldviews. Our youthful protagonists, who often narrate the book as a block utilizing the first person plural ("we"), are fully aware just how deeply their parents have abdicated their responsibilities as stewards of our collective future. No doubt the generational divide is a central theme of the novel, and these kids are alright.

A Children's Bible is at times both fantastical and on the nose realistic, an ideal combination for the cli-fi genre. Earth First!ers will have to stomach a few cringy lines, but overall this quick page turner will likely satisfy that smug liberal-bashing itch so close to your heart. **READ IF YOU LIKE:** wry humor, comeuppances, debauchery, sacrilege, based youth.

Just started counting methane clathrates? Curious about other types of catastrophic feedback loops? Here's a short list of some of the genres classics to get you started:

Parable of the Sower Octavia Butler
Psalm for the Wild Built Becky Chambers
The Ministry for the Future Kim Stanley Robinson
The Water Knife Paulo Bacigalupi
Hummingbird Salamander Jeff Vandermeer