

Wildfire Smoke

George did not want to breathe air he could see: orangey brown, a steady haze in the sky. It was a yellow alert, not the worst but people were advised to stay indoors, breathe through masks. The smoke was Covid, a spreading disease, a disease of fire. Wildfires start with lightening—a message from the Gods.

Poor forest maintenance and ignoring traditional methods have made it worse. George was born into a lengthy line in his tribe of forestry workers, frustrated for years, and now climate change brought droughts, longer, more intense fire seasons, previously never seen firestorms scorching all in its path. George evacuated his home as a wildfire advanced. His family house burned to grey ash, as did the surrounding ash trees.

The brownish air George did not want to breathe was homes and trees, lives and dreams.

City folk saw it as an annoyance.