

02/2025

Dear World,

I write to you with a heart full of sorrow and rage,
but also full of love and determination.

I write in the name of those who can no longer speak: the
many lives lost to the climate crisis they did not create.
In 2021, I lost my friend Rosa to the floods. I tried to save
her, but the monster was too strong. She was fifteen. That same
catastrophe took 39 lives in Belgium and 180 in Germany.

Since then, I have been keeping count. Thousands have drowned,
entire villages washed away, forests burned, and cities choked
under deadly heat. Glaciers are melting, feeding rising seas that
swallow coastlines. These are not "natural disasters" - they are catastrophes
caused by those who value profit over life.

It is not only human lives we are losing. The Amazon and the Congo Basin, the lungs
of our planet, are being destroyed. Awesome animals - orangutans, sea turtles,
snow leopards - are vanishing. Coral reefs, once full of life, are turning into graveyards.
Our oceans suffer too: destructive fishing practices devastate seafloor habitats, eliminating
marine ecosystems in pursuit of even more profit.

But I am writing to you because I still believe in us. More and more people are standing up, across
continents and cultures. Whether we have witnessed the destruction firsthand or refuse to ignore it, we
are bound not only by grief but by love for this world and the determination to defend it. We refuse to let
those responsible get away with it. We will hold them accountable.

We have created a day to honor climate victims, not just to mourn, but to remember, to take
action, to love. July 15, the day of the floods where Rosa died, is now the EU day for the victims
of the global climate crisis. A reminder that the climate crisis isn't a distant threat,
it is here.

This cannot be my letter alone. If you are reading this, I invite you to write your own.
Tell the world what you love. Tell it what you refuse to lose. Tell it why you
will never stop pushing for change. Because the love we have for this world is
stronger than the greed of those destroying it. And love, too, is an act of resistance.
We will not stop standing up for what matters.

For Rosa. For the lives lost. For the living world still worth saving

Benjamin Van Buren Reberchts

Climate Justice for Rosa