When the duo **Sylvan Esso** released their album “Ow ∞” this September featuring a mesmerizing single “Flood Zone,” I commented on one of their social media posts thanking them for including songs about the climate crisis. Singer Amelia Meath replied to my comment, saying “lol you are very welcome, I can’t stop writing about it.”

They are not alone. The amount of new music in 2026 that touches on climate breakdown and other environmental themes is remarkable and could point to a cultural inflection point. The more climate-fueled disasters we experience (from sea level rise to melting glaciers to wildfires), the more artists are writing songs to process the experience. This is important because music is a powerful form of communication that can touch people’s lives in a way that news and policy just doesn’t.

A few more examples: Irish band **Fontaines D.C.** recently released a critically acclaimed album *Dopamine Chamber* about what they call our “glorious age of distraction.” It’s a lovely yet dystopian collection of songs about digital isolation and environmental collapse. (Sample lyric: *“Dopamine chamber, just tryna kill the pain, you can’t escape the feeling once you’ve given it a name, dirty red sky, feeling that sting”*). Fontaines D.C., who are now playing big stadiums, has spoken out on climate causes. “The only way in which things can really change is collective action,” bassist Conor Deegan told NME. “If we don’t unite and work together to convince our politicians to legislate against climate change, that is, to actually represent the views of the people they were elected to, then we won’t have a world to argue in, never mind anything else.”

Chloe Slater, a young UK singer-songwriter, has been writing eco-conscious, political indie-pop anthems and recently released her first full-length album “Riot Youth.” She took her song “Mother Nature’s Killing Spree” to the corporate offices of Shell Oil. In a nod to Bob Dylan’s infamous video for “Subterranean Homesick Blues” where he holds up provocative cue cards, Slater filmed a short video where she holds up cards with lyrics like “the sky’s turning orange” and “how did we get here, we let it happen.” She posted the video with the caption “I took my signs to the Shell tower i think they need to hear what i have to say xxx.”

Last week, a music collective called **Flow** released an album of songs all about water and environmental degradation timed to the COP31 UN climate conference, where several of the artists are performing to draw attention to the importance of climate art and music.

And out today is a new single called “Feel It All” from **Raine Stern**, an artist who gained some prominence on NBC’s *The Voice*. The track is based on climate data, using ascending, increasingly distorted notes to represent rising CO2 levels which then resolve into descending patterns when the lyrics touch on climate solutions. It’ a collaboration between Stern and ClimateMusic, which pairs climate scientists with recording artists and storytellers.

Below are 50+ new songs in this genre. These tracks, which are all on my 620-song climate playlist, include electronic dance music, indie rock, bedroom folk and Top 40 pop. That last genre is crucial. Even if Taylor Swift has thus far declined to use her platform to talk about climate change, other global superstars are doing so. That includes **Billie Eilish**, who has partnered with the organization Reverb to make her tour more sustainable (TIME produced a mini documentary about Reverb).

Making the playlist is **Gracie Abrams**, whose new album “Daughter from Hell,” includes a haunting and anthemic ballad that is apparently about the Palisades Fire, resilience, and the heaviness of coming of age in an era of climate catastrophe. Abrams, who lives in LA and grew up in the Pacific Palisades, sings:

> *“Every kid I grew up with has lost their childhood house / No way to make sense of it, it’s why I’m making sound / Let me wake up from this horrible dream / Where what feels true is nothing. And there’s no at the top to believe in / What a way to feel in your twenties / Do we stay numb? But you can’t when you’ve seen how they all get off on our grieving / I don’t know, love, how to live in extremes. But we’re made to try, through humming.”*

Note these lyrics don’t include “climate change,” or any other variation on the phrase. So, does it belong on a climate playlist? Absolutely. I have published a lot of writing and research on the importance of journalists connecting the dots in news coverage to climate science. The same standards don’t really apply to songwriting. As cultural critics and media researchers study this area, I think they should take an

expansive view. Many of the songs on my Climate Playlist, like “Humming,” would be excluded from any scientific review of lyrics even though they are important to the genre. In fact, some of the most important climate anthems of the last decade don’t utter the word. These are songs that deal in metaphor and emotional storytelling, not technical scientific terms. (Just try to rhyme “climate change” with something and see what you come up with.)

This winter, Abrams is hitting the road to tour the new album and the week of December 14, she plays several Los Angeles shows. I’d expect “Humming” to hit particularly hard with the hometown crowd still grappling with the Eaton and Palisades fires that devastated the region two years ago.

You can explore the videos for each song and scroll below for some sample lyrics. Let me know if I’ve missed something.

“Intimate,” Fontaines D.C (XL Recordings)

The lyrics to the last song on Fontaines D.C’s new album offer images of billionaires colonizing Mars while the rest of Earth’s humans are left behind in “the ruins of the human dream,” which one reviewer compared to a last-ditch benediction.

“Saw the sun fading out / All the people full of doubt / Beauty kings, beauty queens / Razor-faced, with private means / Dying and dying and dead / Dying and dying and dying and dead”

“Memory to the Soil,” Blind Yeo (Bongo Joe Records)

As far as I can tell, this Cornwall UK group may be the only band ever named after a human-made drainage channel to prevent flooding. This psychedelic song is a good reminder that the Earth will be fine — it’s us humans who are at risk from climate change.

“The sun keeps spinning and the worms give digging / The moon keeps drifting and the Earth keeps giving / You’re nothing but a memory to the soil.”

“Flood Season,” Sylvan Esso

This is one of two environmental songs on the album, along with “Sledge.”

“Look at the hills, how they light up the sky now / Moon is full, family gotta fly now / Grab everything that you can while you can, run for the street again / Just keeps on being flood season.”

“Cahokia,” Greg Freeman

This song is a real banger. If you’re not familiar with Cahokia, it is a Native American UNESCO World Heritage site in Illinois and refers to the largest and most influential pre-Columbian city north of Mexico, which developed advanced societies across much of what is now the Central and the Southeastern United States, beginning around 1000 AD.

“Time to join the world you fucked up / Time to wake your girls and boys up / Silences that rise to the heaven / Will define the hell we live in”

“Full Spectrum Dominance,” Dummy

Dummy is a Los Angeles band with several climate-themed songs, including another great track “Soonish.”

“The rarest flowers get plucked from the ground at first sight / You wanna reap the seeds we sow / Gonna be no lawn left to mow / You just take everything that you like but you won’t be satisfied”

“Humming,” Gracie Abrams

Here Abrams sings with Justin Vernon of Bon Iver (also on the Climate Playlist):

“I’m convinced our sinking ship will sing as it goes down / Haunting hymns keep echoing after we’re in the ground / And they’ll wake up to this horrible scene where they left us out here for drowning, and it’s our blood on their hands, never clean, never clean, never…”

“Nothing Left,” the Linda Lindas

This Los Angeles Gen-Z quartet came on the scene during the pandemic. This is

perhaps the perfect 2026 climate punk anthem, calling out Big Oil and Big Tech in the same chorus.

“Aren’t you tired of the heat waves, cars melting on the freeway? Can you feel it, can you feel it? Burning down the street, there’s a fire in the front yard / the people on the TV shout.”

“Mother Nature’s Killing Spree,” Chloe Slater

Slater is partnering with Music Declares Emergency to table at her upcoming shows to educate concert goers.

“Painting the logos, they swore it was greener / Invest in a future to make your world cleaner / Preaching on billboards, burning the bookshops / like they didn’t notice her heating up, but she’s there in the wildfires, deep in the water, she’s swimming in your eyes.”

“Coyote,” Westside Cowboy

This Manchester band have written the most incredible environmental indie rock anthem. They also refuse to use smartphones in a rejection of Big Tech.

“This is the most beautiful place on Planet Earth / Everybody has to see it / We’ll make it so easy for them and put a road straight down through it / What a man of the people / Progress like this was due / Oh mister coyote, I think you’d better move”

“Creature,” Chat Pile

This noise-rock 4-piece is quite literal. “Chat Pile” refers to the mining byproduct that litter their home state of Oklahoma.

“Every creature led to slaughter / Every city underwater / Or covered in ash or covered in dust or buried in ash / Complete fucked up / Please don’t say we couldn’t stop this”

“earth is turning,” horsegiirL

The debut album “*Nature Is Healing*” has been described by horsegiirL as a “love letter to our beautiful planet” and a reminder that humans are part of nature, not

observers from the outside.

“The earth is turning / Turning all the time / The sun is shining / Shining all the time / The moon is glowing / Glowing all the time / And love is winning / winning every time”

Begging for Change,” Pulp & War Child Records

Jarvis Cocker of Pulp loves to use double entendre and here the word “change” means lots of things.

“I wanna change my shoes, I wanna change my car / I wanna change my way of life, the temperature, the way things are”

“Educate,” Mirby

The Danish pop singer Mirby has put out multiple funk tracks with climate messages. In this early 2026 release, she tells a prospective partner that if they wanna hook up they’ve got to “talk about the real stuff,” like climate solutions.

“Over compensation, climate dysfunction / Oh boy let’s talk about the world cause we could save it, and then get naked”

“While the Flood Rages,” Max Richter

Oscar-nominated composer Max Richter wrote this instrumental album as a three-act score for orchestra and choir, with ambient field recordings and electronics, and it’s inspired by a 2024 ballet based on a Margaret Atwood trilogy of dystopian novels about an environmental apocalypse. This title track forms the heart of the album.