

Swimming – Last Days of the Polar Bear

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Small waves crash against its body while it bobs in the water. Swimming through an icy slurry, the polar bear searches for an ice sheet. The polar bear has been doing this for three days now, and is getting tired. It starts to fall asleep, but is determined to find an ice sheet to sleep for the night. As it swims he grows tired and wants to stop. He finally spots an ice sheet. One problem, it is already occupied. He growls to alert his enemy, who he is dealing with. His enemy in turn, growls harder and fiercer and scares the tired one away. Once again, he is swimming, swimming, swimming to death.

His body starts to deteriorate after five days of swimming. Growing ever weaker, he is beginning to get colder. Weaker, colder, tired, hungry, but is still swimming. Still searching in the arctic waters but can't find anything he starts to doze off. Weaker, colder, tired, hungry, but is still swimming. Now, growing so tired and weak he starts to sink deeper into the water. Suddenly, he can't breathe. He hurries up to the surface of the water. Glancing around, he sees nothing but ocean.

Six days and he is now sinking with no hope of ever coming back to the surface of the earth. The once tired and cold polar bear now rests in peace on the ocean floor. He is but one of hundreds of polar bears that failed to make it to a safe resting spot.

Global warming is like a vacuum suck. It sucks up all the ice in Antarctica and in the North Pole. Then it spreads death to the poor animals that live there. The shelf ice the polar bear had been on as he wandered further and further searching for food, was melting, was thin, but the search for food kept pushing him out farther and farther. In a few days time all of it had melted, leaving him stranded at sea.

This small essay written by my son for a writing prompt in grade 9, as the focus based school program was on Environmental Science, captures something that many researchers and policy advocates become frustrated with, reaching a larger audience, and influencing an audience to care and change behavior about Global Warming. While cleaning out his room, I was lucky to find it. Trained as an Environmental Economist, and having written two books, most of my audience is rather small and never reaches the mass public, and

much of my writing is technical-something the mass public would not relate to. It dawned on me many years ago, that the message about Global Warming, Climate Change, the Fate of Our Planet, is far more powerful and accessible to us when seen through the eyes and minds and words of our children. We, in turn, must do our part to in a unified effort in addressing these effects and in slowing or reversing these effects.