

Back in the past

“Edinburgh is expected to experience heavy rainfalls,” the weatherman reported. I shove the fork-full of vegetarian Bolognese into my mouth. Only a fraction of the British population still eat meat. I’ve learned that our lives would have been drastically different twenty-five years ago. Apparently, we’d still have petrol and diesel cars. Who could imagine that? They didn’t all switch over to electric cars until 2030, and after that came green aeroplanes.

I cleaned up my dishes and put them in the dishwasher, sighing. Out of the window, I can see the ocean lapping at the shore. My government notice to relocate came through yesterday, if the ocean rises any further, I must move to a new house. I am glad my ancestors managed to do enough to slow Global Warming down. I couldn’t imagine a world where we were helpless beings, being tossed around by a force of our own creation. Our first step was to shut down all the coal mines and send the workers to renewable energy sources instead. Other countries followed suit, and soon the whole of Europe was working toward a net-zero future. Solar-panel roof tiles line my compact apartment, and half the block’s electricity is from offshore windfarms.

The radio is playing a lo-fi beat whilst I study for my environmental history class. Beams of harsh sunlight streak through the lambent window. Clouds whirl in a flurry of colours. Reds and pinks infect the sky, giving it an ethereal glow. I wonder how different the earth was fifty years ago. Did they know what changes they were about to cause with their greenhouse gasses? The harsh, but mandatory LED lights switch on automatically as stars scatter the night sky and dye it black. Yet another feature to stop the problem of our ever-changing planet. No more light than necessary. Squinting, I open another e-book to study from. They once were paper.

A conference video from 2021 is playing on my browser. It infuriates me that the politicians were prioritising economic matters over the future of the planet. Fake promises littered the news like an infection. It took an age for action to sprout, but by then global warming had already begun to manipulate our earth. The whole situation leaves me thinking – would we as humans do anything differently if we were back in the past again?