

The Great Displacement

author: Jake Bittle

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Synopsis

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Shortlisted for the 2024 Carnegie Medal for Excellence

The “closely observed, compassionate, and far-sighted” (Elizabeth Kolbert, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Under a White Sky*) story of climate migration in the United States—the personal stories of those experiencing displacement, the portraits of communities torn apart by disaster, and the implications for all of us as we confront a changing future.

Even as climate change dominates the headlines, many of us still think about it in the future tense—we imagine that as global warming worsens over the coming decades, millions of people will scatter around the world, fleeing famine and rising seas. What we often don’t realize is that the consequences of climate change are already visible, right here in the United States. In communities across the country, climate disasters are pushing thousands of people away from their homes.

A human-centered narrative with national scope, *The Great Displacement* is “a vivid tour of the new human geography just coming into view” (David Wallace-Wells, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Uninhabitable Earth*). From half-drowned Louisiana to fire-scorched California, from the dried-up cotton fields of Arizona to the soaked watersheds of inland North Carolina, people are moving. In the last few decades, the federal government has moved tens of thousands of families away from flood zones, and tens of thousands more have moved of their own accord in the aftermath of natural disasters. Insurance and mortgage markets are already shifting to reflect mounting climate risk, pricing people out of risky areas.

Over the next fifty years, millions of Americans will be caught up in this churn of displacement, forced inland and northward in what will be the largest migration in our country’s history. Jake Bittle is “an empathetic writer” (NPR) who compassionately tells the stories of those who are already experiencing life on the move, while detailing just how radically climate change will transform our lives—erasing historic towns and villages, pushing

people toward new areas, and reshaping the geography of the United States.

Reader's comments

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