

Notes on the End of the World

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Privitello



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Notes on the End of the World

Cold rainy days say *Do it, lie in bed with a stranger.*

Even if a house is on fire, and a dog is inside burning, do not leave.

I could almost believe the world planned for itself to fail.

Then a wasp burrows in a fig. Then a baby is perfect
in its inability to remember.

If you are a stranger, I am a stranger.

Things are funny that way.

Chameleons trying to blend into chameleons
until the way to go unnoticed is to disappear completely.

And when the Deep South seems empty except for dead peaches
and sallow fields, it is actually full of men and women lying in bed
asking how much closer they have to get in order to define love.
It is actually bustling with elbows and knees.

There are abandoned playthings everywhere you look.

Under the bed where you lie, a tin horse on wheels eats the carpet.

Underneath your bodies, the metallic neigh weighs on you.

You could tell the man next to you about it if you knew his name.



The hives are closing their doors.
The neighborhoods are liquidating.
The birds are going out of business.
There is an apocalypse of starlings
before they are all replaced with blips.
Binary codes cost little to maintain.
Look at the little 0010 painting
an outline of a house. It is so 1001.
The spider crawling across my head
turned out to only be a small idea.



A family has taken over my old house.
They could be wolves or Smiths or a tight swarm of bees.
The asbestos siding is a hologram in the leftover sun.
At once, it is a dollhouse made of bones.
I can see through to the basement and the walls are wet
like a toe that lost its nail.
A mute boy in the room with blood on his face is not ashamed
of being a mute boy with blood on his face.
My old bedroom has become a museum of dust.
Where I used to sleep, dead skin hovers in its own trembling universe.
The sun is covered by the shadow of another wreckage.
The clothes on the clothesline motion to run away fast or to come closer,
depending on the direction of the storm.



DAY I

In 1913, the first highway across the country was built.
From an airplane, the country was presumptuous in its tearing apart
of fields.

I want to be a dark road.
To say: Nest, your eggs will be crushed and cooked here.

I am no place to settle.

But then one of the pigs begins to look like a man.
When it asks to cross me I don't know whether to marry it
or cook it.

I mean, there are families to be fed.
There are wedding dresses disintegrating.
There are empty beds where children used to rest.
Now they are out trying to invent a gimmicky balloon that promises
less walking
and constant ethereal sleep—a two for one bail out.

In 1913, there were nearly one hundred years left to live.
Every house from New York to California was a shrine
to the oven, the robe, the gold-rimmed teacup.

For the beetle's armor, can you believe in falling asleep
without the television on?

For the porcupine's knives, could you believe for a second
we used to fall in love with each other for free?

Steal what weaponry you can from the animals.

From the road, I see armies of us dressed as ghosts trying to cross.



Meghan Privitello is the author of *A New Language for Falling Out of Love* (YesYes Books, 2015). Poems have appeared in *Gulf Coast*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *Boston Review*, *A Public Space*, *Please Excuse This Poem: 100 New Poets for the Next Generation*, and elsewhere. She is the recipient of a 2014 NJ State Council of the Arts Fellowship in Poetry.