

## Hold For Release Till End of the World Confirmed

When he launched CNN in 1980, Ted Turner  
made this promise—when *it* happens, *We'll be on,*  
& *that will be our last event.*

The original TURNER DOOMSDAY VIDEO  
only recently surfaced, long lodged & lost  
in a CNN archive, sign-off segment still  
slated for release upon confirmation  
of Armageddon.

It's among us, now. Loose. Ready to view on  
a weeknight. Any day I desire the comfort  
of knowing The End will have a timetable.  
Showmanship. Stellar Nielsen ratings.

But when I think of the tape playing,  
the Last Day's primetime slot, I never  
imagine the crash-spectacular such  
a production deserves—the movie

where we trace the city-sized comet cracking  
the exosphere, or the warheads lifting up-out  
of their heartland silos, dusk laced  
with contrail foam.

No, I think of the ways The End can sidle up  
beside us. The soft catastrophes that leave  
tomorrow empty & museumed, everything  
still in its original packaging.

Extinction at glacial pace. Superflu, maybe.  
Gamma burst. Or the Rapture. Civilization  
politely winding down, until there is one,  
just *one* End Times Survivor, Heir  
Apparent of the Anthropocene.

& here the script calls for indulgence,  
glam & camp. In a depeopled world,  
The Wanderer shacks up in Graceland.  
Fishes for dinner at Shedd Aquarium.

& why not surf those trafficless twelve lanes  
 in “The” DeLorean? An Abrams?  
 Bonnie & Clydes’ death-car retrofitted  
 with nitro & spoilers?

In The Big Alone, there is time for plunder.  
 Pools filled with Fiji Water. Lunch eaten off  
 The Constitution’s temperature-controlled  
 frame. Tee time atop the Space Needle.

But eventually, they know what must be done.  
 After calling every number they remember  
 & receiving no answer,

after skipping the radio dial across a day’s  
 worth of deadened air—when it’s certain  
 they are the last, the final, the now—

they’ll pillage CNN Center, find the master  
 DOOMSDAY tape & hear the *whir & chunk*  
 as it’s fed to the national emergency broadcast  
 system, signal rippling across sky  
 to everyone, & none.

It is done out of instinct. Posterity. The finesse  
 of finale, someone hitting the barroom lights.

Here is the scene: a billion television sets  
 filled with a little military band on a mansion  
 lawn. They perform “Nearer My God To Thee,”  
 same as the *Titanic*’s deck musicians.

It is impossible to see their faces—glitched  
 in low resolution, a broadcast ratio fit only  
 for the cathode-ray displays of yesteryear.

But it does not matter. As long as there is proof  
 we bowed, instead of stumbled. That we  
 knew enough to play ourselves out.