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The End is Nigh: A Story for Joel

Casey James

So this is it. The last days are passing. I can't imagine we're going to be OK now. John says it's over. The world is ending.

My name is Rupert, I am told. It's raining right now, can't shake it from my coat. He reaches down to scratch my head. These are our baths now. John's devoted all our remaining hours to preaching. The people seem afraid. John screams for their salvation. Some try to leave money at our feet. John shakes his hands at them. We won't need money, he says. The rain water pools up around us. I lap it up. I'm not even thirsty.

In the beginning, I remember a girl. She was nice. We had a few rooms to move around in. They would sleep all morning and I'd wake them. The bowl was always full of food. The house smelled like food. I remember many meals. John was happy, I think. He loved her and he loved this world. He did not want it to be over. I don't think John knows how much I love him. That's OK.

The girl, now, I liked her. She played ball the right way. I am low to the ground but I'm fast. I should say I used to be fast. She'd take me to parks and let me run. That was a very long time ago. I watched her swallow a razor blade. She let it rip open her insides and died in John's arms. I don't know why she would do that.

John is dying. I can smell it on him. It's coming for all of us, he says, it's coming for every man, every woman; every delusional sinner who thinks he will be spared at the rapture. I don't know what he means. He holds up a wooden sign like the one he calls Christ. It cuts into his hands. It wears away the skin. I don't know what it says.

He might be sick or maybe he's been sick but now he can't stand it. We never went for this many walks before. We haven't been inside a house since it was warm. It's been cold for a very long time. I am hungry. That's OK.

John's going to bed soon. Maybe it's tonight. Maybe a few nights from now. But he will sleep and that will be it. He won't wake up. I will not know what to do. So this is it. The last days are passing.

I look up at him and I can see it in his eyes. The truth.

I cannot speak to him but I would say that I'm sorry and that I liked him. He says, good dog and buys me a biscuit.

The rain starts to fall harder. No one is left on the street but us. I am ready. John is too, I think. He has loved me for a very long time. I am just glad to be here with him at the end.