

Petunias

by Kathy Fish

People huddle in their basements like kittens. People laugh, darkly, saying they'd rather be surfing. People wonder if their batteries are charged. People never do get what they want. People grow tired of the sad dog following them around. People want you to know how disappointed they are. People, on their worst days, consider a length of rope. People worry their minds are no longer sharp. People long to distinguish themselves. People think *you're* ugly, too. People recall the taste of ice cream. People will tell you they never saw this coming. People, thankfully, no longer hunger for cows. People yearn for structure. (Their obsessions: street maps, road atlases, the lines of longitude and latitude.) People learn the importance of precision. People discover untapped veins of kindness. People walk the rows of corn. People sometimes kill their noblest instincts. People are here to remind you, that's somebody's sister. People slow down, finally become old. They stand in their backyards, by the petunias, at a loss.

