

# There They Are! Here They Come!

*by* Nick Antosca

Walking now, surrounded by houses, egg-yellow and Kool-Aid-blue to all sides.

I don't see any people. Everyone dissolved, disappeared into the atmosphere. I'm breathing people.

The sky is ragged gray blankets layered and overlapping.

Hours pass like clouds.

My shoes slap the sidewalk. Ahead is the park, the playground, the lopsided seesaw, hangdog swings. I hear voices. Children. As I come closer, I see they are not playing, just milling around. As if confused, as if looking for an adult.

I come closer. They are crying. The nearest child, a small boy, sees me. A fresh red bite stands out like a smashed rose under his eye.

"Help us," he says.

The others have bite marks, too. Red, inflamed.

Now they all see me and put their arms out, needing help. It's like *Night of the Living Dead*.

I back away.

"Help us, help us," the children are saying. "They'll come back. Help us. They bite."

It's a trick, I tell myself. They've bitten each other.

Seeing me retreat, their cries become louder, voices panicked, high with fear. "Help us!

Help us! They'll be back! Here they come now!"

I look around and don't see anything. "Who-" I say.

"All our dogs! There they are!" the children cry. "Here they come! The dogs! The dogs!"

I look around and still don't see anything. My fear says run but it doesn't say what to run from, and my mind just trips over itself trying to decide what wants to hurt me the worst.

