

End of the World

by stephen hastings-king

We threw a party for the End of the World. We sent an invitation. It said: Dear End of the World. We're having a party. Stop by if you're in the neighborhood.

The acceptance arrived quickly. At first we were surprised but then not so much. It's likely there is always room on the End of the World's dance card.

We chose a place by the harbor and decorated it with inflatable periods and commas, colons and semi-colons. We imagined him looking around upon arrival and thinking: Now here is a group that understands pausing, stopping and ending.

When the time came, we had gathered by the inner harbor to look through frames made from wood wrapped in orchids past the colonies of rusting boats toward the channel. We must have decided he would arrive by water.

Soon there were doubts. We no longer knew where to look.

Perhaps the End of the World is fog-bound at sea.

Or maybe he drove and is caught in traffic.

Either way, you'd think he'd call.

Maybe his cell has no reception.

It was clear that the End of the World was not coming.

A bit dejected, the band played a processional they had made for the occasion. Those of us who had been waiting by the harbor entered to it. For a second I felt like we were him.

We ate all the meatballs and little exclamation point sandwiches.
Something must have come up. We didn't think he'd mind.

