

the weather past where roads end

by strannikov

that clamor from Prospero's abbey

a soft wooden clatter, wind-battered reeds
bound to the banks of ditches rank,
ill-purposed waters slide into low swamps
whose waters into rivers seep and crawl.

topography here is concave and flat,
many of these waters fester in place:
small ponds can be born in one storm,
deep enough to stagnate to help breed pests.

the Siberian mosquitos are worse,
more numerous, thirsty enough to leave
eyes bitten red enough to bleed—
but these can bite with Zika or West Nile.

benefits of place begin to elude:
reliably, you can only evade
one plague at a time (maybe two)—
plagues you've never numbered wait to greet you.

(plagues also are said not to discern

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white-flickering moon slides through sleep-standing clouds:
shaded and lit they stand in their dirts of night,
these places where visitors never arrive.

quiet boasts its repellant force: it dissuades
eager occupants off from remote frontiers,
from vacant homes and rooms, grottos in their holes.

roads play out before they get here: hard-packed dirt
the foe of every effort to leave a trace
that any pilgrimage to silence occurred.

the wind raises itself to an instant gale,
its tender-toothed snarling intended to soothe.

