

# Bam!

BY ROB COOK

Ray's the kind of guy  
you'd want to know come the apocalypse.  
Survives off the land in northern Idaho  
hunting, fishing, panning for gold.  
Doesn't talk much.  
Not real fond of people.  
Lives out of an RV  
with Ruby his third wife,  
not on speaking terms  
with the other two  
or his children.

But at the Lolo Montana round dance,  
he loves her rockabilly skirt,  
how it swirls as she twirls.  
The cuer calls a double hitch.  
They're in the middle of it  
when the bomb goes off.

Ray hits the ground,  
pulls Ruby down  
to protect her.

He's in Iraq  
on patrol with  
his best friend Kyle  
when the IED takes him.

He opens his eyes.  
There's music playing,  
people standing over them.  
Someone breaks the tension with a laugh.  
*You OK there, buddy? Had us worried.*  
*That speaker pop damn near*  
*gave you a heart attack.*

Ruby takes his hand, helps him up.  
*It's OK, hon. Let's get you home.*