

Casual Apocalypse Poems

By

Emma Lagno

WHY I LIKE IT: Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... *In Lagno's, 'ON A PRE-APOCALYPTIC NIGHT IN LEXINGTON,' Emma is raging and blazing with revelations. She is as relevant as impertinent, as fresh as inconvenient, light-years of zeitgeists ahead of me, "it is only Paul Revere on his midnight skateboard ride, / certified stoner-kid, Patriot of the latest American revolution," Footnotes for the hapless: "a kick-flip" is a skateboard trick and a "weed pen" is for vaping(?) marijuana oil. In my day, very respectfully, "VR" stood for voltage regulator, voice recorder, voter registration or vacant rentals. But you didn't need a helmet for most of those. "Sam Adams rolls up on a silver Razor scooter, John Hancock on the back" Thank god she references "Warner Bros and their Road Runner. . . splat." Good thing I'm wearing Tarmon's "magic wizard crown," In 'MINI GOLF GODS' he's some sort of sorcerer sufferin' from centuries-long agoraphobia. "At once, my real-world husk decays, / peels off like flesh-fish-scales," "to a wireless flypaper cloud / which catches digital souls / and holds them still." Get this, 'She currently studies the literature and religions of the ancient Mediterranean,' yikes. Yup, she mixes modern lingo, daddy-o, and make some really boss comparatives . . . Just wait 'til she learns, once you find your groove you just get stuck in a rut. I reckon you might just find Emma Lagno transfixin'. After some probing, I was both entranced as well as transported, but I'm back now. Almost wished I could have stayed--o', my rotary phones ringin', missed it, oh well, I'm sure they'll dial-back, never cared for de-vices that were more mobile than me. Don't miss 'DOGLAND' either, it might be the best, "...with your June-warm breath and your blackberry nose, / blink your pearly third eyelid if you hear me," "...old internet posts, like tin cans and rope," Well it's passed time for this ol' "zombie" to "[zoom out]," "we may be the last two living creatures on earth," movin' in opposite directions. (To maintain poet's spacing, each poem is on it's own page. Please scroll down.)*

ON A PRE-APOCALYPTIC NIGHT IN LEXINGTON

I hear gunshots in the concrete,
but from my window see
it is only Paul Revere on his midnight skateboard ride,
certified stoner-kid, Patriot of the latest American revolution,
donning a ski-cap and a warning for a new age:
something's coming,
but he can't remember what.

I poke my head out into the night,
Yo, Paul!
Will it come by land or sea?

He does a kick-flip,
It's the 21st century, you idiot:
It'll come by sky.

Just then, like the black silhouette of a phantom ship,
a massive cartoon anvil breaks into sight from above,
floats down in slow-motion with a rad gravity,
eclipses the moon and the stars and the ghostly summer clouds.

Is this what they hoped to prepare us for,
The Warner Bros and their Road Runner?
The thing that gets you in the end is not the thing
that we saw coming, but the thing that comes from nowhere and
falls on our heads, like *splat*.

I notice that Paul lingers in the yellow streetlamp glow outside
my window, waiting for a late-night Sons of Liberty rendezvous.
Sam Adams rolls up on a silver Razor scooter, John Hancock on the back
with his arms around his waist.

The three boys loiter, spit, and giggle,
as all young people laugh in the face of dark impending doom,
laugh and laugh and shiver in the heat.

Hancock, weed pen in hand, signs a new declaration in smoke,
We hold these truths to be self-evident,
that this shit is officially fucked,
and there's nothing we can do about it.

The anvil continues its descent, trailed by orange space dust.
Yo Paul, I call again,
How long until the lights go out?

But he can't hear me. Higher than the moon by now,
he is no longer concerned with earthy matters of fire or flesh.
In some milky upper atmosphere, he is safe and sound.

MINI GOLF GODS

I strap on my VR headset,
greasy pizza fingers
on my magic wizard crown.

At once, my real-world husk decays,
peels off like flesh-fish-scales,
junk on the floor.

I am a new body now,
a pneuma body now,
pixels in the wind.

Is this my spirit,
my essence, playing
neon-space-station mini golf?

I depart from death here,
make a hole-in-one here,
dodge purple laser shooters.

I ascend
from behind the smooth curved
glass of a computer screen,

to a wireless flypaper cloud
which catches digital souls
and holds them still.

I am a cyber-god
of sacred
simulated space.

[zoom out]

I am a zombie
in my darkened living room,

I bang my head into the wall.

DOGLAND

Dog, with your June-warm breath and your blackberry nose,
blink your pearly third eyelid if you hear me,
and close your eyes all the way if you understand.
We have been inside all day, and
 we may be the last two living creatures on earth.

Like old internet posts, like tin cans and rope,
I'm reaching out to you across
time and space into your dimension,
the Dog Dimension:
where one year is seven,
dreams are for running through tall grass.

Dog, if you hear me, don't move a muscle
but for the filling and releasing of your lungs,
the tremble of your heart against my side.
Your heartbeat used to make me squeamish.
When I felt it pressed into my body,
twitching like a half-dead beetle leg,
it made me think of all the bubbling, quaking,
vital parts of living which we cannot see,
which could at any moment sputter and stop.
Now, I consider it a comfort, see
 we may be the last two living creatures on earth.

Dog, if you understand, you don't have to say a thing.
Just give me a smile from your dreamland,
from the hillside you tear across,
chasing bunnies as a great wind spins around you.
Give me a smile and a twitch of your paw;
I'll take it as a cue to set the outside world on fire.
The night makes a threatening advance, and
 we may be the last two living creatures on earth.

If we're not, we will be soon.
We will sit inside all day,
watch the rain steam off the charred front lawn.

Dog, we will nod off and meet there on that windy hillside,
that halfway half-real paradise
between my dimension and yours.

THE POETS SPEAKS: *These poems are my love letter to 22-year-olds who feel like they're casually watching the world crumble, anyone who has questioned their humanity after spending three hours in a virtual reality headset, and to all dogs everywhere. I like to read poetry that has the bizarre vividness of early morning dreams and I write poetry to give homes to my strangest*

thoughts. My greatest influences are the kids who skateboard outside my window at night, and my massive yellow lab, Tucker.

AUTHOR BIO: Emma Lagno is a new writer from upstate New York. She recently had her first poem published in *Blue Marble Review*. She currently studies the literature and religions of the ancient Mediterranean at Harvard Divinity School.