

ALZHEIMER'S ABCEDARIAN AND ERASURE

If it comes as an acrobat, you'll somersault on its teeterboard, trampoline off its walls.

If it comes as a bird, sit with it, its broken wings.

If it comes as a canteen, it will rattle *empty, empty, empty*.

If it comes as a dog, wag its tail and pat its head in a soothing voice; try not to yell.

If it comes as an elephant, it will be the only elephant in the room.

If it comes as a faultline, walk around it on egg shells.

If it comes greedily, it will take everything, leave you a pauper.

If it comes as a horse, turn its neck gently with the reins to lead it back to the barn.

If it comes as ice, remember that ice can burn even as it melts.

If it comes as a junkie, keep it from cracking its head on thunder.

If it comes as a kangaroo, you'll go everywhere in its pocket, you'll be its joey.

If it comes as laughter, it will have the last laugh.

If it comes as a mother, it will be a motherfucker.

If it comes as a nudist, you will see its bones.

If it comes as a once, it will overcome you with overtakelessness, that which cannot be overtaken.

If it comes as a prairie, it will take miles to cross; look for sweetgrass to nibble along the way.

If it comes quietly, creeping in like little cats' feet, coating your branches with the bare necessities, it will knock so softly you won't hear it for years.

If it comes as a rifle, it will shoot bee bees, the quiet way raindrops fall on a lake and disappear, becoming part of the lake, inseparable from what makes a lake a lake.

If it comes as a stadium, you'll fill it with tears.

If it comes as a tiger, you are its prey—so much of you to gnaw and gnaw away .

It will come unannounced, unbridled, uncircumcised, undeniably unearned, unforgivingly, ungraciously, unhindered, uninvited, unjustly, unkindly, and unlovingly, unmapped, unnervingly, unobtrusively-at-first, unpacified, unquenchably unraveling, unsigned, untiringly, unurged, unvaccinated and unwashed, unx-rayed, unyieldingly unzipped under everything, splintering every highway, road map, landing strip, waiting room, work zone, night work: exercise extreme caution.

It will come as vapor, hovering, shrouding, at first only as a mist mingling with days of bright sun, you'd barely notice, like the frame of a painting slightly off kilter.

It will come as waves, you will bob in its current for years, drifting into deeper water until you too are treading water just to stay afloat, rip tide trying to drag you both out. No, it comes as wind, stripping the notes from the score, the steps from the dance, the seed from the shell, the glue from the seal, the North from the South, the bees from the hive, the sheets from the bed, the pink from the dawn, the East from the West, the West from all the Rest.

It comes as a Xerox copy with its own irreplaceable toner running out, the copies getting fainter and fainter, ghostly impressions on a nearly blank page.

It comes as yeast, rising and rising, filling the whole bowl.

It comes as a zigzag and you will breathlessly chase its shadow across the grass, chase the shadow of the shadow, the zags of the zigs and the zigs of the zags.

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