

The End of the World in a Day?

After Czesław Miłosz

by [Muriel Nelson](#) in the [January 2025](#) issue

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On this day a pup goes out to pee and decides to lift his leg.
Congress in business dress fights as usual over lies.
A squirrel pops snacks into its mouth, peers in a window,
and sees a crowd on TV waving antique flags and weapons.
They're watching a man who shouts, raises a fist to raise a rumpus,
and then goes inside to see it on TV. On TV. On TV.
On this day it snows—softly, without strange signs.
There's a war or two or three while cars head home
from an army base and clog traffic. Cement sets, jelly jells,
a forest burns, a river floods. Elsewhere a bass with his low C
lets it rumble on and on like a bullfrog all alone in cattails echoing
over dark water. Melons ripen. Leaves fall.
The world wobbles a bit, but few are alarmed.
Buds swell. Worms rise. Other worms burrow down.
At boring jobs, the pious count their days. They plan prayer
lists for later, maybe tonight, maybe next Sabbath or Sunday.
Only a woman in hospice who could be Cassandra
mutters on and on and then says Amen. Again
she mutters while caregivers make lunches. Again Amen.
It takes all her strength, all that muttering, all those amens
as caregivers walk past her, back and forth.
She shuts her mouth. She buries her head. Amen. Amen. And amen.