



Image from Green View Fertilizer

David James

Theories of the End

he man thought he would live forever,  
the way the sky lives, or the night, the way  
a lake stays put,  
decade after decade.

He never imagined himself dying, his last day  
leaking under the door, out of his hands, sliding like a snake  
into the weeds of the future,  
which he will not see.

The moment comes in a dream or vision,  
and there's no denying the black hearse  
at the front door. He will stop, his heart freed  
from its beating chains.

Then silence. Or perhaps a rising into air.  
Maybe God takes his hand, lifts him up into paradise.  
Maybe his body lies there while outside it begins to rain.

## The Heart of the Matter

The man knew early on that his heart was meat. It pulsed and sent blood throughout his body like a regular heart, but his organ mostly consisted of steak. Or pork. He could feel when it changed into another type of meat. When he was scared, his heart would become chicken, sometimes turkey. If he swam, his heart transformed into a piece of fish, sometimes cod, sometimes shark. Several times in his life, after a relationship had gone badly, his heart turned into ground beef, breaking apart and crumbling at the bottom of his chest cavity.

He found it interesting that his heart was never an onion or potato, never an apple or beet. And it was never cooked; it was always raw and fleshy. Finally, it stopped and lay there in his chest like a fistful of beef on a plate, starting to dry out and stiffen.

If you grabbed his heart now and fried it, even in butter and a little oil, it would burn. It would be bitter and tasteless in your stunned mouth.

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David James has published three books (including his most recent book, *My Torn Dance Card*, which was a finalist in the 2017 Book Excellence Awards), and six chapbooks and has had over thirty one-act plays produced; most recently, his play "Make-a-Mate, Inc." was produced at the Red Door Theatre in Thomastown, Ireland.