

Zombie Preparedness Plan

My daughter has discussed at length
the safest place to hole up
in the event of an attack.
She takes her living-dead seriously,
seriously considering the necessary
accoutrement for survival:
the basement room where we could hold out
the longest, the handy placement
of the baseball bat—how you can
protect yourself yet still maintain distance.
She stresses the availability
of food and water
in case of a long siege.

I used to plan how we'd survive
a tornado. I used to check out
the closest exit in case of fire.
I practiced defensive driving.
And when I taught poetry in schools near
crack houses, I carried pepper spray—
because sometimes there are no words.
Because like my daughter I believed
I could be prepared. But what she's saying is,
it comes for you from unseen corners,
arms reaching, eyes red, vacant. Every day
drops of dew shimmer on the spider's web,
every day a scarab or a monarch
who didn't see it coming struggles.

Frost said, "Provide, provide!" Let me
tell it to you straight—prepare,
but it will not be what you expect.
There will be no rabid dog, no alien vessel,
no pandemic. There will be garbled sounds,
and then the slack mouth. Against all reason, I say
we need floodlights and a backup generator.