

# We Dress for Armageddon

*for Shelley Turley*

*Elizabeth Visick*

When trouble—an earthquake, a heart—  
Comes to town, breaking dams,  
Leveling shops, clubs  
Restaurants, ringing out alarms  
Like bells at Christmas, my  
Best friend and I put on silk,  
Georgette, wear hose with seams  
Up the back. If the ground is still  
And planes drift over us, the sweaters  
Thin from wear and broken trousers  
Of the transient suit us. We stay inside.  
But when the earth and sky  
Lap at our ankles, when the street  
Cracks like a wound, we walk out  
With the maturity of satin, the  
Poise of slick shoes and pearls.  
Stones of all colors blink  
From our ears and fingers, from  
Our hair in smooth piles. Scarves  
Rest in soft folds at the neck.  
It is how we encounter death.

The morning I took my best friend  
To be changed with a knife and tough thread,  
I wore grey wool, blue cashmere with  
Rhinestone buttons. Stockings and  
Dark lipstick. I waited with magazines  
Glossy as life eternal, figures  
Immortalized in haute couture.  
I sat with my back straight,  
Legs crossed at the ankle until a woman  
Dressed like the blue angel  
I saw over a motel in Vegas  
Led me to Recovery. My friend  
Did not want her jacket.  
She was too much a vision: blood  
Collecting like the rarest jewels  
In clear bulbs at her sides, her face  
Wet and radiant with confusion. A sight  
To weep for, the very Age of Glamour.  
When the end, a jealous adversary,  
Strips us at last, we will appear  
Naked on the streets, hair of grace,  
Skin of mercy, bodies perfect  
As the lives of the saints. We will  
Glow with Armageddon, the sun  
Fading behind us, the great nations  
Struck blind, outdone.

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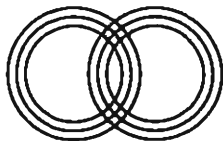
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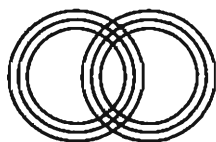
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