

Quartet for the End of [His] Time: Vocalise, for the Angel who Announces the End of Time
For George

mother away

she
 anemic turns doesn't why is
 eyed from stretched frame understand this happening in, said
 Bleary- his skin to at once dying, took her this
 her all. uncle, not is home.
 or Her he ducks a
 the geriatric knows he who was, he but painful fect- he tells from truck.
 fighter where is, he how was manages tion how shot

reason
 no at
 for all
 laughing
 faces

sister away

young
 show
 pictures
 Flat-toned

she
 little turns doesn't why is
 faced from stretched frame understand this happening when
 Sour- his skin to at on slices and asks we
 her all. sucks orange can leave.
 or She

Los Angeles
 burns even in the
 winter. Of course
 it's all relative—
 the sun is blinding
 to those used to
 the dark indoors
 of the Midwest.

The
 man
 military

still
 laughs.
 California
 droughts.
 Acid-lipped,
 mild-mannered,
 narcoleptic,
 asymmetrical,
 tongue-dry,
 illiterations-
 oo, oh, oow,
 neurotic face

(fires swept across the ridge of the far off mountain, raging uncontrolled for several days as they burned up brittle, cracking dead brush and the set of dilapidated trailer homes that bloated like starved stomachs at the base of the mountain; they had been abandoned for years and had become something to refer to when talking about the misfortunate; those people who worked in such worldly allusions with such humanitarian intent felt really good and treated themselves to a bottle of wine in front of a fireplace; the trailers, it goes without saying, did not particularly care about these self-congratulatory dialogues, given their resignation over being abandoned and left behind by people who moved on to bigger and better trailers with in-wall televisions, pull-out couches, and satellite radio; the trailers knew they were just torturing themselves, since none of their former tenants could afford those; either way, it felt good to burn.)

his stick body shows all
 four cancers; eating itself;
 purple sores drain
 onto mottled bedsheets;
 ice water purifiers gurgle
 like something strangled,
 or maybe just a baby
 wanting attention; or
 anyone really.

The knows terms God—that capital-G them
family death in of with
only explanation.

The great brittle age, the manages slow ta- of family the about other day. rain eventually.
aunt, with grips railings, the tion ringing doorbell every *It'll*

wire
to mesh
stick screens.
ders
man-
a-
sal-

the flight
long back aches notion
crumps in heads—a vague of
our running
away.

His voice (highways solidify with impatient
cracks cars as people want to go some-
like where else than where they are; the
scrubbed (surprisingly, im- trees travel time stretches like saltwater
air sucks pending death split taffy, sagging, dripping, into half-
monitors my spittle-stick does not bring by melted smiles; the great aunt ex-
great-aunt's from the back the estranged lightning; posits to me; we are driving to
water usage rooves of daughter who I anonymous pick up expensive takeout; every-
They don't our mouths— know only through health thing is expensive here—costs
understand slap-slap. roundabout stories brought into my great aunt discusses the
that she's regretful sighs.) stark relief emotional journey; we don't
trying to keep something by
alive. damage.

From Home: shucked corn carcasses; we
thirty bare-branched trees; are
thousand winter's coming, scents later
feet of passing; crunching informed
I see curled leaves under soles; by
black cracks of atrophied sticks; email
circles twisted grass heads assaulted of
of by the his
tamed polar sun. passing.
dirt
pocking
the ground,
big
as cities.

throat; wear heavy outside I not what to
raw I my coat because do know else do;
my
burns
liquid
the
soup;
obligatory
the
down
choke and it will melt puddles, freeze panicked
I shee soon snow, to then in compromise;
chill; sweaty
fevered in
in bedridden
fluctuating me
unswaddle, leaving
and promiscuously,
swaddle creeps
I flu light;
blankets; the expecting
fleece highs; approached
by unnatural
coddled to
climbing
December,
in
sixty
now;
forgotten
Winter's

new futures brighter
and friends;
times
old
people a
street, around bonfire,
the circle
across

mirum sonum,
Tuba spargens

this planet
into will
the crash
day, sun
embracing one
fire in
after white
of an
unresolved eternity with
far flirtatious
apart dance nothing
kids like
dancing interior to
at
Prom say.