

## IS IT NOW

By Murray Mednick

--She puts up with the old man's pattering and muttering and gasping as he goes around with his walker -wagon. He seems to think he's in touch with something higher.

--He wasn't saying what we thought he was saying.

--What did you think he was saying?

-- I'm not sure what I heard there.

--He was saying something. His little tummy sticking out. A little Buddha staring at the rug in front of him.

--Yeah. God knows what was going on in there.

--No more speeches or recitations or memories. Little vignettes in the mind.

--As if there was no such thing as a vocation.

--I never said that.

--Where you were born and how you were raised.

--Not all that I said.

--You kind of wake up and do your day. You hope it will be a good day. That you don't go nuts or kill somebody. Ah, good day today. People breathing down your neck and you don't strike out.

--Did you see? Refrigerated trucks bringing the dead. Mass graves. No one will ever know who these people are. You are one lucky sonofabitch.

--I'm ashamed thinking these thoughts, as though I don't deserve the thoughts.

--You can't see yourself.

--No.

--What you are.

--Time passing. Gonzo arthritis. Bone on bone. Severe tortures and hundreds of commandments.

--Regress?

--No regrets. I did my job.

--And now?

--Trouble staying silent at the meeting.

--You're allowed to speak.

--Enough said.

--That fellow has no idea. None.

--Which one?

--Over there.

--I see him.

--He thinks he is a tough guy.

--Tender as a mouse.

--People must live their lives without interference.

--Laws that can't be obeyed.

--Like the National Guard.

--Laws to suffocate and intimidate.

--More like the bite of a small animal.

--Fear. Fear of the present.

--The National Guard.

--Oh, come on.

--Planes flying over. Fucking planes flying over us.

--Is there a question there? Emily?

--Making it hard for other people to survive.

--It's a competitive situation.

--I know that.

--What's the question?

--Fucking spics voting for the fathead dictator.

--It's moral disarray.

--They don't want to lose their jobs.

--The fucking blowhard lying sonofabitch.

--It means war as far as I'm concerned.

--Listen. Police helicopter overhead.

--More on the way.

--I'm trying to say --

--Yes, John?

--It means war.

--What does Uncle John have to say?

--In the old days they'd have left us behind near a rock or a tree. Some water, some fruit, a joint. A bag of heroin, an ounce of grass. They'd stop carrying you and lay you down on the hard scabble earth. To die.

--Look up. Fucking helicopter shaking the trees.

--Masked men attacking.

--Those who don't belong here. They should go back where they came from.

--It's better there in the first place.

--Nobody belongs here. We just took over. Bounty on Indians. You'd go out for a drink and shoot a few as you went on your way.

--Sounds like a storm gathering, or a tornado. A hurricane.

--Twenty-five bucks a scalp.

-- Is it now?

--A wildfire rages near the sea.

--Will they catch the perpetrator?

--I don't think so.

--People get away with it.

--Arson.

--Whatever.

--The lives they've lived.

--No consequences.  
--You should know.  
--I don't know.  
--I'd get on my horse and run if I were you.  
--Fuck you and the horse you rode in on.  
--Military Lorries coming down the pike.  
--Flags flying, Horns blowing.  
-- It's an immigration revolt.  
--Documented and undocumented.  
--The soldiers look like mushrooms.  
--Raiding Home Depot of all places.  
--Don't take advantage.  
--My love and care and good will and love all for nothing...  
--They bring terror.  
--I have lost my home.  
--They'd drop you near a burnt boulder with a sack of bones.  
--Or you'd go up in flames.  
--Correct you are.  
--All my savings are gone.  
--You'd pop like a jar.  
--I have nothing to look forward to.  
--Flee. If you have a chance. Sooner or later, they'll start to shoot. Don't be a mark.  
--You go, John.  
--No. I will stay right here where I am.  
--Don't be a target.  
--Joey?  
--Yeah.

--Get up and move on freely.

--You bet.

--Don't make a big deal out of it. Move away quietly. Like a mouse. Hair on fire.

--I knew the time would come.

--Of course you did.

--Pull myself together at last.

--You don't want to be left on the road, you can't run, you can't pray.

--The national guard is on its way.

--Could be a song right there.

--Is it time?

--People falling out of buildings.

--Sirens and migrant people yell and scream.

--Fighting in the streets.

--A citizen's revolt. Blackshirts with shields and poles.

--Here comes an armored car.

--Here comes a tank.

--Here comes a Chinese lady with a microphone.

--She is saying something, but I think she's lying.

--Give me a break.

--Give me my phone why don't you.

--It's all right here on the phone.

--This could be it.

--Listening to the News **you'd** never know.

--This could be it --the End of Days.

--It's a show.

--Is it now?

--I don't know. I'm only saying.

--Say what?

--Look: A giant cheeseburger. The largest cheeseburger ever made is now available for the patriots still living. A double decker. American cheese. Bacon and onions. Juicy as Hell. Crispy French fried potatoes on the side and a fresh tomato on a crispy sesame bun. A gallon of coca cola. Cole slaw or a salad.

--Jeez you could eat the smile on that broad's face.

--Mustard and ketchup.

--She's a beauty that one.

--They are unrelenting, and you can't get back. And what would you talk about?

--They got you Uncle John.

--They got me by the neck and by the eyes and by my balls.

--There you go.

--No revenge. Only helplessness and loss.

--Call this number and order now.

--Die later.

**End Is It Now**

