

Rabbits on Enterprise

This is from a novel in progress about a young woman whose small town is literally ruined by an electrical utility.

With her hometown set to be obliterated by the demand for electricity, Rosie was determined to hold someone accountable. But first she was gathered with the rest of the town atop Tallblank Hill to observe the destruction. Like the landing gear of a plane extending, like the caged eating scraps in the park, to watch the spectacle unfold felt grimly necessary. And especially so from Tallblank, it being the usual gathering place for the town to hash out the problem of the day. This problem of impending annihilation, however, about which they'd met four times and to record attendance—even Rosie showed up twice—turned out to be irresolvable. “Out of our hands,” they were told. “It’s a damn shame, but it’s out of our hands.”

Rosie was so far beyond restless she was vibrating. She took a deep breath and started firing accusatory glances at those around her, incredulously, like she couldn't decide which of them was the bigger buffoon. How-ever were they so calm? The police chief was chatting up the mayor about his new cruiser. The Beniora kids were playing sparks without any eye protection. Old Mr. Eritrane was actually asleep, slumped over on his walker. She'd trusted these people, her elected officials and neighbours, but nobody had done a single thing about it.

Even now, no one seemed to care that this was supposed to have started hours ago. They're destroying our town and can't even stick to their schedule. That's what bothered Rosie the most, she decided. It was rude. Like the electrocutionist had shown up for work late, winded and frazzled, blaming traffic when in fact he'd simply overslept. It was this final, utter waste of time after months of workshops, letters, public notices in the papers, and presentations. And still no outrage? Well good riddance to this geriatric town. Good riddance to all of it, to all of them. Rosie never liked living here anyway. So why was she longing for the repulsive blended odour of papaya and molten steel that its now-shuttered factories used to pump into the air? Why was she crying?

Whenever she got this upset, Rosie had to fight the urge to lick the back of her wrists. Today, she failed. This was a trait whose inheritance she blamed on her grandmother, Gram being from a time when they didn't adequately warn you of a procedure's potential side effects. Disclosures were distinctly casual, a wave of the hand and an assurance that it'll probably be fine. That to the best of available knowledge, it hadn't happened before. So she supposed Gram deserved some slack.