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At the End of the World

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At The End Of The World
Maeve Quinn

I don't want it to rain tonight.
My yard gets muddy,
a first-grader tells me,
her chubby fingers stuffed
inside blue safety scissors,
eyebrows knit.
And in the morning--
she hacks at a paper triangle--
my house will slide away.
I imagine the rain
soaking the earth's layers
to mud, 6371 kilometers deep,
and everything sinking and
sliding, melting off a molten core
into space.

When I was six,
I was afraid of being sucked
down the pool drains
and into dark pipes,
straight to the ocean.
The ocean always scared me.
That's where Nemo
lost his dad, and where

Japanese spider crabs grow
to leg spans of thirteen feet.
We are flimsy organisms
next to their shells, that
red, ruttled armour.
We are inside-out,
flesh exposed

and bruised. In the summers,
we flaunt fresh skin,
kissed and toasted
by the sun, peeking berry-brown,
between denim waistbands
and tight tanks,
shimmering beneath
hair-dusted arms, golden
in the sun. At the end of the world,
we don't want it to rain.
We want to feel the ground
firm beneath bare feet,
layer after layer
of strong, dry earth
against flesh.