

Sharon Olds contemplates the possibility of a coming Armageddon, as environmental artist **Anne de Carbuccia** mourns the destruction of our natural resources.

AGING WHEN THE END OF THE WORLD IS RAPIDLY APPROACHING

Near the end of the world, sound went,
well before sight. All around me
the visible—the black and white
markings of the downy woodpecker
like hieroglyphs, like characters
in Hebrew, or in Arabic, coming
in from the right side of the page
as if from the future.
When I walked I could not hear my footsteps,
or the leaves of the November trees,
something was shushing everything,
it was the end of the world, reaching back
like the silence when you leave a lover
who's impossible, but whom you love,
or the quiet the day before your best friend dies—
crows, crows, in the sky, not calling,
or the eerie absence of sound when you realize
you're smart, all along you've been smart, your ignorance
has been the knowledge that you don't know
what you don't know, like a form of intelligence,
and now near the end of the world you under-
stand things, you yourself
eschatological, you sense
the doctrine of final things. It is like
a religious conversion—from non-belief
in your own beauty and strength, to sudden
belief—the light on the road no longer
breaking out, blindingly,
covering the center of every dream, but
you yourself are a light—it's like
falling in love with yourself, the one
who had been the villain. When I understand
that the world will end, that we will have made it
unlivable for ourselves, the birds
look so smooth, the sloped grey shoulders of the
juvenile female red-bellied woodpecker
perches motionless on the mound of the suet
and sleeps, like a baby on the breast—head
up, eyes shut, she sleeps,
at peace, near the end of the world.

Shadow play. Anne de Carbuccia in jacket and pants, Stella McCartney.
See Where to Buy for shopping details. Artwork: *Beyond the Storm*, 2018

Photograph by Anne de Carbuccia



Anne de Carbuccia

The One Planet One Future founder has spent years circumnavigating the globe documenting the impact of humans on the environment via her TimeShrine photos, which are created in the style of 17th-century vanitas paintings. “We are deciding what the natural world will look like in the future,” says the artist, who wore an Econyl pantsuit made from recycled fishing nets and industrial plastics for this self-portrait. “Do we want it to turn to shadows and dust?” Support educational projects at oneplanetonefuture.org