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Pareschatology

*doctrine dealing with matters after death
but before the end of the world*

Most of the dead don't brood
on the manner of their leaving,
they don't hate or lust;
their lack of glands leaves them
content to float in the aether,
and drift like fallen leaves
in the wind. They are curious
about the passions of the living,
watch for a while when intensity
snags their attention but don't
consider the way empty jackets
hang, nor how it used to feel
to have sensitive fingers.
Time has no meaning for them,
they don't get bored but slowly
dissipate as the last vestige
of will fades.

The few who lived
in anticipation of Judgment Day
cling together, resist drifting,
made uneasy by a feeling
of something missing.

They don't know what.

Silverbacks at the Bar

*I look at their almost identical butts;
their buddy hunched shoulders,
Ruth Stone, 'Male Gorillas'*

They defend the territory.
Shoulders close gaps, signal
a collective no. They growl
and hoot at incursions, return
to grooming and grunting.
The waitress looks tired
of serving them, bares her teeth
at their jibes, makes it look
like a smile. Needs the work.
They lean in, slap and punch
each other, sway apart and shout
at the screen on the wall.
Pay attention: watch the faces
in the mirror, the tremble
in the long glass. You'll hear
the unvoiced cries:
*I don't know how to live
in this world
I'm lost*