

The Weather Today
by David Hilder
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(ANTHONY and DAVID, two middle-aged white gay guys – English and American, respectively – sit outside the Tate Modern art museum in London. It's September, cool, but the sun is strong, at least for the moment, and there's a freshness to the air that feels more like springtime than impending autumn. They look around, in the middle of a pause in the middle of their conversation, chewing their take-out sandwiches.)

DAVID

It's perfect.

ANTHONY

Yes. And the summer has not been nice here.

DAVID

No?

ANTHONY

July was lovely, but then August was cold and wet. Not very summery at all.

DAVID

I'm so glad I'm here. Like I said to a couple of friends the other day, "It'll be nice to think about all the things I'm thinking about someplace else!"

ANTHONY

Yes, exactly. It's so important to get into a new space.

DAVID

Once in a while, anyway.

ANTHONY

Gosh, when's the last time you were here?

DAVID

2008.

ANTHONY

Really!

DAVID

Yeah, for three weeks, when I was housesitting for Lucy? *(they chew)* I came to London twice in 2001 and felt like I had to apologize for George W. Bush being so awful, especially the second time, after he'd managed to take the world's goodwill after 9/11 and turn it into sour grapes. But now...man, I would kill for those simpler days.

ANTHONY

I mean, what is it like, living in it?

DAVID

Really bad, I guess? Sort of this constant state of feeling unnerved. I mean, all Trump is doing is proving he's the person he said he was throughout the entire campaign last year, I don't know why anyone is surprised. We knew he was an insecure narcissist who lashes out at anyone who suggests he take responsibility for his words, we knew he was a misogynist, a xenophobe, most of all irrational. I don't know what people expected.

ANTHONY

Yeah. He just seems really – I mean, I'm not living there.

DAVID

Right.

ANTHONY

But he just seems so...unstable.

DAVID

How is it over here with Brexit?

ANTHONY

Bad. It feels like there's all this stuff – that people thought they were voting, you know, for This One Thing, but they've actually voted for so many other things, austerity measures, that kind of thing, in order to compensate for the financial situation, and they weren't expecting to do that.

DAVID

I don't think that's what's going on in the States. I think a lot of people are irrationally psyched that they have an irrational president. Because he "does what he believes in" or whatever. But something's similar. I mean, look, America is a country built on the systemic oppression of people of color. Literally.

ANTHONY

Yes.

DAVID

So if there's anything good to come out of the fact that our actual president said what he said after Charlottesville, maybe it's finally acknowledging that fact. Shining a light on the racism that's as part of America as the stars and stripes.

ANTHONY

Gosh, I hope. I hope for that here, too. It's awful to see what's probably been underneath for such a long time on the surface.

DAVID

It feels – This does feel like the end of something, right?

ANTHONY
Hm.

DAVID
I mean the end of...not just civility, but the ability to have a conversation with someone who isn't one's own attitudinal twin. Right?

ANTHONY
That's a little...

DAVID
What?

ANTHONY
I want to finish my sandwich, it's good.

DAVID
(rolling his eyes) Oh, brother.

ANTHONY
(eating) I do!

(They eat. DAVID waits, not too patiently.)

I think we need to be careful about doomsday talk, is all.

DAVID
I didn't say "doomsday."

ANTHONY
Of course you did.

DAVID
Um, no I didn't!

ANTHONY
So you don't think saying this moment in time feels like the death of the human ability to hold an actual conversation is a bit of doomsday talk?

DAVID
I didn't mean doomsday.

ANTHONY
And now we need to stop using that word because it is starting not to sound like a word at all.

DAVID

Doomsday. Doomsday. Doomsday. Doomsday. Doomsday.

ANTHONY

Thank you.

DAVID

I'm sorry. You were saying?

ANTHONY

I think we think this is the, whatever, The End of Things because we're living now. We're egotists.

DAVID

About how bad things are?

ANTHONY

Absolutely, we are negativity egotists. Not just you and me.

DAVID

I understand.

ANTHONY

Everyone thinks of the age they're in as the important one. "Sure, there have been wars before, but THIS one is the WORST war!" Or worst politician. Or...celebrity meltdown story.

DAVID

I'm sure the middle ages were full of celebrity meltdown stories.

ANTHONY

You don't know! Some monk or other might have been caught behaving scandalously!

DAVID

"Might have been?"

ANTHONY

That is exactly what I'm saying. You see things through a lens of utter despair because, well, because you both can't imagine things getting any worse nor can you picture them getting much better. Right?

(DAVID's turn to chew thoughtfully. Actually, they both do, ANTHONY's last statement ringing between them until its vibration fades.)

DAVID

It doesn't feel like September. It feels like April.

ANTHONY

It does. And we just had a conversation. Two nice things.

(DAVID looks at ANTHONY, smiling. They look at the sky. DAVID starts to sing.)

DAVID

“A-April, come she will...da da da da da, da da-da dada dah...”

ANTHONY

I don’t know the words either.

(They hum that Simon and Garfunkel tune, togetherish.)

DAVID

So you’re saying maybe it’s not so bad.

ANTHONY

That’s not what I’m saying. Of course it’s bad. We know it’s bad. We know it’s bad because we feel it, we see its badness, we’re...witnesses to it.

DAVID

Oh. So...what are you saying, then?

ANTHONY

I’m saying nothing’s necessarily over.

DAVID

It doesn’t even feel like September.

ANTHONY

Exactly.

DAVID

Okay.

(Finished with their sandwiches, they gather their trash, pitch it in a bin, and walk off.)

(The End.)