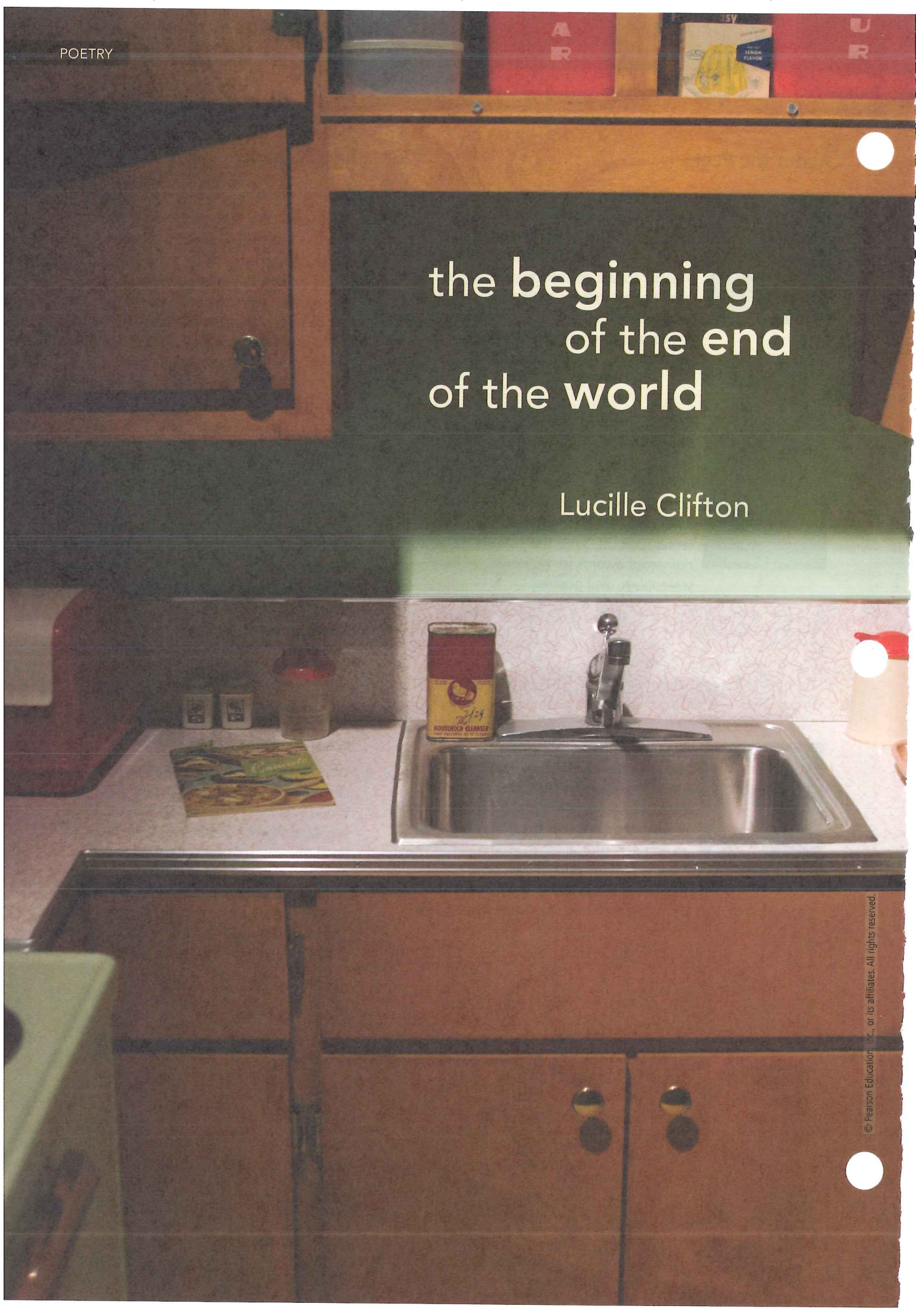


the beginning of the end of the world

Lucille Clifton



cockroach population possibly declining
—news report

maybe the morning the roaches
walked into the kitchen
bold with they bad selves
marching up out of the drains
5 not like soldiers like priests
grim and patient in the sink
and when we ran the water
trying to drown them as if they were
soldiers they seemed to bow their
10 sad heads for us not at us
and march single file away

maybe then the morning we rose
from our beds as always
listening for the bang of the end
15 of the world maybe then
when we heard only the tiny tapping
and saw them dark and **prayerful**
in the kitchen maybe then
when we watched them turn from us
20 **faithless** at last
and walk in a long line away

NOTES

Mark base words or indicate another strategy you used that helped you determine meaning.

prayerful (PRAIR fuhl) *adj.*

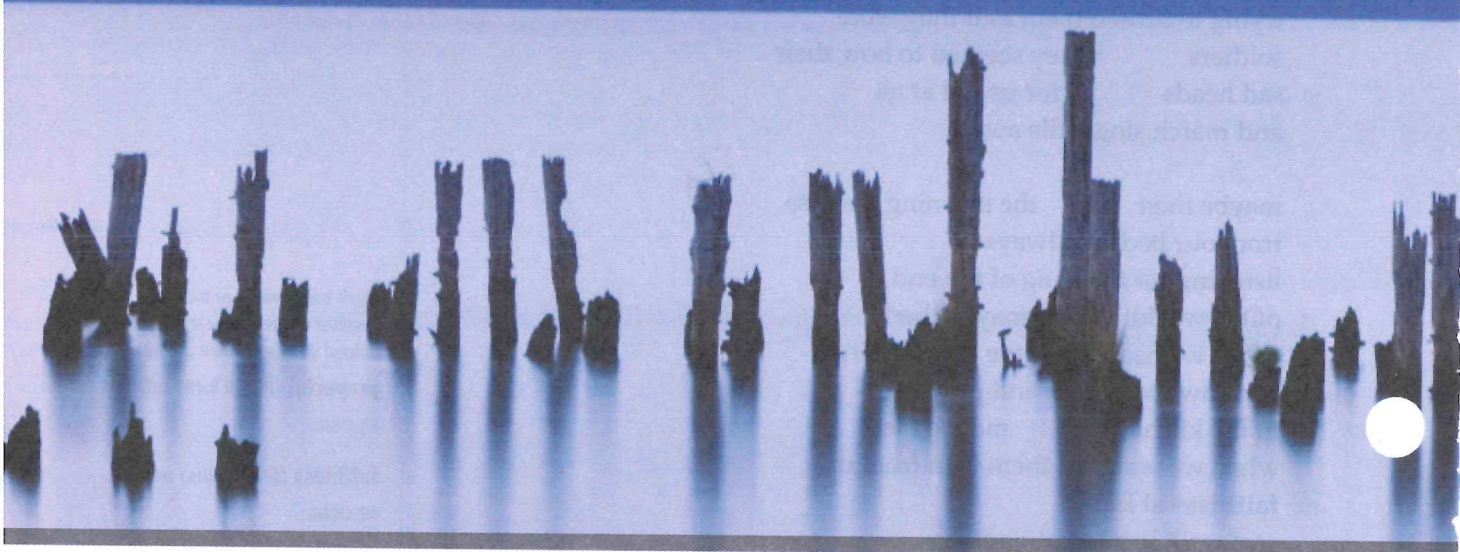
MEANING:

faithless (FAYTH lihs) *adj.*

MEANING:

The Powwow at the End of the World

Sherman Alexie



SCAN FOR
MULTIMEDIA

NOTES

I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall
after an Indian woman puts her shoulder to the Grand Coulee Dam
and topples it. I am told by many of you that I must forgive
and so I shall after the floodwaters burst each successive dam
5 downriver from the Grand Coulee. I am told by many of you
that I must forgive and so I shall after the floodwaters find
their way to the mouth of the Columbia River as it enters the Pacific
and causes all of it to rise. I am told by many of you that I must forgive
and so I shall after the first drop of floodwater is swallowed by that
salmon
10 waiting in the Pacific. I am told by many of you that I must forgive
and so I shall
after that salmon swims upstream, through the mouth of the Columbia
and then past the flooded cities, broken dams and abandoned reactors
of Hanford.* I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall

* **Hanford** nuclear production site in southeastern Washington State where the plutonium for the atomic bomb that ended World War II was made.



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15 after that salmon swims through the mouth of the Spokane River
as it meets the Columbia, then upstream, until it arrives
in the shallows of a secret bay on the reservation where I wait alone.
I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall after
that salmon leaps into the night air above the water, throws
a lightning bolt at the brush near my feet, and starts the fire
20 which will lead all of the lost Indians home. I am told
by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall
after we Indians have gathered around the fire with that salmon
who has three stories it must tell before sunrise: one story will teach us
how to pray; another story will make us laugh for hours;
25 the third story will give us reason to dance. I am told by many
of you that I must forgive and so I shall when I am dancing
with my tribe during the powwow at the end of the world.

NOTES

A Song on the End of the World

Czeslaw Milosz



SCAN FOR
MULTIMEDIA

NOTES

Mark base words or indicate another strategy you used that helped you determine meaning.

prophet (PROF iht) *n.*

MEANING:

On the day the world ends
A bee circles a clover,
A fisherman mends a glimmering net.
Happy porpoises jump in the sea,
5 By the rainspout young sparrows are playing
And the snake is gold-skinned as it should always be.

On the day the world ends
Women walk through the fields under their umbrellas,
A drunkard grows sleepy at the edge of a lawn,
10 Vegetable peddlers shout in the street
And a yellow-sailed boat comes nearer the island,
The voice of a violin lasts in the air
And leads into a starry night.

And those who expected lightning and thunder
15 Are disappointed.
And those who expected signs and archangels' trumps**
Do not believe it is happening now.
As long as the sun and the moon are above,
As long as the bumblebee visits a rose,
20 As long as rosy infants are born
No one believes it is happening now.

Only a white-haired old man, who would be a **prophet**
Yet is not a prophet, for he's much too busy,
Repeats while he binds his tomatoes:
25 There will be no other end of the world,
There will be no other end of the world.

Warsaw, 1944

* **trumps** trumpets.