

The Siege of the Sea

The neighborhood was quiet, stillness pulling at seconds, slowing them, as they crept past in steady clock ticks. No sound permeated the night save for the ticks of clocks and the whispers of wind through lofty branches.

Out, on a stretch of sand mere miles away, something was brewing. Nature was preparing her forces, ready at last to reclaim an area long colonized by others.

The storm-darkened clouds closed in fast, as growing waves began to inch further up the beach. Sand, pebbles, shells, all were held close and nestled back into the ocean's embrace as the tide's fluctuations sped.

All too soon, a loud crash shattered the tranquility of the neighborhood. The waves — which had increased in size and sound steadily over a few scant hours, yet not enough to alert the nearby houses to the coming crisis — had finally reached a street, gliding over smooth blacktop and rough pavement alike.

As though sensing the newly-found flat ground, the ocean began to send out its troops. A downpour came down, the wind making it swoop and dive like fighter jets, dropping bombs of lightning that reached Earth with a crack.

The ground troops, the cavalry, swept over sidewalks, sending tables careening into their cafes and toppling bikes and potted plants.

In the neighborhood, alarms began to cry; an incomprehensible symphony of waves, thunder, and flood alerts overtook the peace and replaced it with the dread of coming carnage.

The houses began, one after the other, to shut their doors, automatically lowering their floodblocks over openings and sealing windows. Preparing for the siege, they flashed on floodlights, setting basement leakage pumps to high and locking down cars.

The alarms continued to blare, screeching into a crescendo as the waves at last reached the outermost edge of the community. Almost tenderly now, as if in apology, the sea began to dance through the neighborhood, twirling through croquet sets and seeping through the gaps of white picket fences.

The houses tensed, doors and seals tightening in anticipation of the onslaught. At last, the confrontation would begin.

Quickly now, the excited waves slammed into doors and pounded on windows. Flowing over swimming pools, adding chlorine into the endless mesmerizing terror of the relentless barrage, the ocean's siege gained strength.

Pouring into basements, pressure-formed window cracks grew larger until the frames were left empty as the glass deserted. Doors now, seals and locks at last failing as the water pounded ever harder against the homes.

The pools, acting now as mercenaries against the houses they once served to enhance, turned on the street posts, the lamps, and the stop signs.

The neighborhood knew the futility of its struggle, defenseless against the age-old power of the sea. Giving in at last, the final defenses began to fall.

The alarms began to falter off, the lights stopped flashing in their cracked and shattered bulbs.

Slowly, reluctant in the face of defeat, the last of the storm doors and airtight seals allowed themselves to be pried open by the triumphant waves.

When the ocean at last returned to its beaches and bay, it brought with it the spoils of a battle long awaited, and already won from the moment of its beginning.

Nature always prospers over that which settles among it.

Table, car, stop sign. Bicycle, basketball, birdbath. None were left remaining, as the ocean celebrated victory.