

Many Returns, Ray Bradbury

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Incredibly, what went up had to come down.

In a blizzard of darkness all over the world, the winds blew backward, and what stormed up hesitated on the verge of the horizon and then fell back upon the continent of America.

All over upper Illinois storm clouds gathered and began to rain, and they rained souls and they rained departed wings and they rained tears from people who had to give up traveling and return to the Homecoming and were sad instead of glad.

All over the skies of Europe and the skies of America what had been a happy occasion was now melancholy, driven back by clouds of oppression and prejudice and disbelief. The inhabitants of the Homecoming returned to the threshold of the House and slid in through the windows, the garrets, the cellars, and hid away fast to astound the Family who wondered, how come? A second Homecoming? Was the world coming to an end? And yes, it was, their world, anyway.

This rain of souls, this storm of lost people, clustered on the roof, brimmed the basement among the wine kegs, and waited for some sort of revelation, which then caused the members of the Family to decide to meet in council and welcome one by one those people who needed to be hidden from the world.

And the first of these strange lost souls was in a train traveling north through Europe, traveling north toward fogs and mists and to fine and nourishing rains ...

The End