

The End of the World

Laurie Anderson

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome back to London Laurie Anderson.

Oooooaaah!

Oooooaaah!

Hi. This evening I'll be reading from a book I just finished and since a lot of it is about the future, I'm going to start more or less on the last page, and tell you about my grandmother. Now she was a Southern Baptist Holy Ruler and she had a very clear idea about the future, and of how the world would end.

In fire.

In fire.

Like in Revelations.

Like in Revelations.

And when I was ten my grandmother told me the world would end in a year. So I spent the whole year praying and reading the Bible and alienating all my friends and relatives. And finally the big day came. And absolutely nothing happened. Just another day.

Oooooaaah!

Now my grandmother was a missionary and she had heard that the largest religion in the world was Buddhism.

So she decided to go to Japan to convert Buddhists.

And to inform them about the end of the world.

And to inform them about the end of the world.

And she didn't speak Japanese. So she tried to convert them with a combination of hand gestures, sign language and hymns, in English.

Oooooaaah!

The Japanese had absolutely no idea what she was trying to get at. And when she got back to the United States she was still talking about the end of the world. And I remember the day she died. She was very excited. She was like a small bird perched on the edge of her bed near the window in the hospital. Waiting to die. And she was wearing these pink nightgowns and combing her hair so she'd look pretty for the big moment when Christ came to get her.

Oooooaaah!

And she wasn't afraid but then, just at the very last minute something happened that changed everything. Because suddenly, at the very last minute she panicked. After a whole life of praying and predicting the end of the world, she panicked. And she panicked because she couldn't decide whether or not to wear a hat.

Oooooaaah!

And so when she died she went into the future in a panic with absolutely no idea of what would be next.

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