

Good Bones  
By [Maggie Smith](#)

Life is short, though I keep this from my children.  
Life is short, and I've shortened mine  
in a thousand delicious, ill-advised ways,  
a thousand deliciously ill-advised ways  
I'll keep from my children. The world is at least  
fifty percent terrible, and that's a conservative  
estimate, though I keep this from my children.  
For every bird there is a stone thrown at a bird.  
For every loved child, a child broken, bagged,  
sunk in a lake. Life is short and the world  
is at least half terrible, and for every kind  
stranger, there is one who would break you,  
though I keep this from my children. I am trying  
to sell them the world. Any decent realtor,  
walking you through a real shithole, chirps on  
about good bones: This place could be beautiful,  
right? You could make this place beautiful.

# WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE

was how horses simply give birth to other horses. Not a baby by any means, not a creature of liminal spaces, but already a four-legged beast hellbent on walking, scrambling after the mother. A horse gives way to another horse and then suddenly there are two horses, just like that. That's how I loved you. You, off the long train from Red Bank carrying a coffee as big as your arm, a bag with two computers swinging in it unwieldily at your side. I remember we broke into laughter when we saw each other. What was between us wasn't a fragile thing to be coddled, cooed over. It came out fully formed, ready to run.

--Ada Limon