

This Imperfect World
Ann Erickson



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the value of

the false life

"If only life could
be as smooth
as this coffee"

product placement
in my k-drama

I buy the coffee

4/17/2025

the northwest wind

amplifies

the invisible

bell of birds

the chevron osprey

up on high

clouds scudding

blue diamond sky

5/24/2025

weather report

the heat inland
has brought us

fog or a general mist

it's all pastel

2 hungry deer
hidden in long grass

sparrows trill
in white wildflowers

& the tide is coming in

6/1/2025

holiday

this is one of those days
the skies the color of abalone
the sea the color of steel
but all in gauze
low fallen clouds

elderly couples walk
holding hands
on the bluffs

Queen Anne's lace spread
on the dusty grass

a little warm no wind

the pale white cabbage moths
emerge from the dirt in my garden

9/1/2025

"Make an AI friend
Who truly gets you"

or more
like

an AI friend who only
talks about itself

& shows up late

slightly critical

always in crisis

& full of suggestions

yes.

9/5/2025

trench

the men digging the trench
with great difficulty
spared the vegetable gardens

the strawberries...
it is an island
across the deep trench

I realize

I can't walk around
the narrow cliff of dirt
at the staircase
to get to the house

the little plants smile at me
on the island
the strawberries
I will never eat

9/21/2025

too many things

dew weights
the spider webs
fairy canopies

but farther along
the white fog
envelopes the dog walkers

& then it
distances
the roaring white waves

& then
the arc
of the vulture's wings
rests on the low fog

it's too cold
one walker snaps

wonderful weather
say I
& another

9/21/2025

WAIT

the strawberries

I thought

I'd never eat

(because of the trench)

became completely ripe

(they filled in the trench)

& look!

I'm eating them now

9/25/2025



respiration

immobilized
in a small world

the plants have somehow
become a jungle
in the living room

& outside

the workmen in orange

brutal hours digging
hand holding tamping machines
that shake our small houses
mud
small backhoes
bit by bit
tearing up
pavement
deep earth

he apologizes
for not putting my stuff back
when my yard caved in

the rain

they had to do it all again

I walk away from
the digging

to the sea
& there
the waves are white
crashing high
all along the black rocks

the world is loud
& spinning

I am in the center of joy

10/2/2025

life gets lifey

& then quits

maybe if I lay low
the clocks won't notice me
drive my car only
a few miles

my mechanic fixes a worn out hose
quickly
& pretends

& Roberto has fixed
the board I broke
before I get home

10/25/2025

dreams are

a door to heaven

I am arriving
with Christmas presents
for Frank & Glenda

they are laughing

then
"oops" "i have to go to the bathroom"
"i'll be right back"

but then
i can't go back

11/22/2025

in our northern hemisphere

of planet earth
some people start
a countdown to spring

but the universe is dark
vastly dark

& beautiful

shimmering in her
black sequin gown

& she

she says

this
this is a taste
of darkness

& long night

12/21/2025

After the rain

it is warm &
the green grass

is a soft mantle
spread before the ocean

every thin blade
bent
&

filled with diamonds

1/28/2026

each night is

a voyage
to an unknown shore

I leave notes
for Ann of the future

"fill the espresso machine with water"

because I
Ann of the present
know

that tomorrow I
will return
from that long darkness

insomnia & pain
& dreams
("who knows what dreams may come")
more tired than now
in pain washed up on day's shore

& I won't know
there is no water
in the espresso machine

1/28/2026

there's no money in it

poets are the beggars
of the rag tag world

actors on the stage
of their own minds

imaginary spotlights
& applause

children & teenagers
lured in by the promises
of being understood
or by being not understood

the secret codes & languages
of the heart

buried in anthologies
& annoying coffee drinkers

a thousand colorful
parrots break
out of cages

2/12/2026

this imperfect life

like the pattern
of the clouds

not symmetrical

but subject to
innumerable forces

like dragons
horses

grey & dazzling

above an
unfathomable sea

2/17/2026

Death & the distances

Of the universe

Calling on the telephone
An old friend

Who does not remember
Who I am

Or perhaps remembers
My voice or not

She is polite
A trembling flame or

An astronaut
Lost in the black airlessness

As we both
Spin away
From each other

Thin memory

2/24/2026



Ann Erickson has written poetry since she was a child. She grew up in northern Indiana, went to college at Swarthmore and traveled in Europe and Africa. She came out to California in the late 1960s and lived on the Russian River for fifty years. In those years on the River, she published her poetry and short prose in over a hundred small press magazines and anthologies, edited tight magazine and performed in poetry readings. Ann is now in Fort Bragg on the Mendocino coast, painting seascapes and writing a little, still.