

## Species by Tishani Doshi

When it is time, we will herd into the bunker of the earth  
to join the lost animals – pig-footed bandicoot, giant sea  
snail, woolly mammoth. No sound of chainsaws, only  
the soft swish swish of dead forests, pressing our heads  
to the lake's floor, a blanket of leaves to make fossils  
of our femurs and last suppers. In a million years  
they will find and restore us to jungles of kapok.  
Their children will rally to stare at ancestors.  
Neanderthals in caves with paintings of the gnu  
period. Papa Homo erectus forever squatting over  
the thrill of fire. Their bastard offspring with prairie-size  
mandibles, stuttering over the beginnings of speech. And finally,  
us – diminutive species of Homo, not so wise, with our weak necks  
and robo lovers, our cobalt-speckled lungs. Will it be for them  
as it was for us, impossible to imagine oceans where there are now  
mountains? Will they recognize their own story in the feather-tailed  
dinosaur, stepping out of a wave of extinction to tread over blooms  
of algae, never once thinking about asteroids or microbial stew?  
If we could communicate, would we admit that intergalactic  
colonization was never a sound plan? We should have learned  
from the grass, humble in its abundance, offering food and shelter  
wherever it spread. Instead, we stamped our feet like gods,  
marveling at the life we made, imagining all of it to be ours.