

## AUGUST 2026

"There will come soft rains"

by Ray Bradbury

Adapted for Narrator, Vocoder and synthesiser

by Malcolm Clarke.

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### OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT

August two thousand and twenty-six "There will come soft rains" by Ray Bradbury.  
Adapted for Narrator, Vocoder and Synthesiser by Malcolm Clarke.

*SOUND LANDSCAPE: FLAT, ARID, STATIC.*

*(THIS SOUND TO BE DERIVED FROM THE OPENING AND  
CLOSING WORDS). OUT OF THIS, A DISTANT CENTRAL  
POINT SOURCE VOICE EMERGES AND WE MOVE TOWARDS IT.*

- 1 NARRATOR: The house is an altar with ten thousand attendants, big, small,  
servicing, attending. The ritual of the religion continues.
- 2 CALANDAR: "Today is August 4th 2026. Today is August 4th 2026."

*(AS WE MOVE TOWARDS THE VOICE THE LANDSCAPE SOUND IS  
LOST AND WE ARE JUST AWARE OF AN ELECTRONIC BACKGROUND  
OF SLOWLY CHANGING HUM).*

- 3 NARRATOR: The morning house stands empty. The clock ticks on, repeating its sounds into the emptiness.
- 4 CLOCK: "Seven nine; breakfast time: Seven nine; breakfast time:"  
*(COOKER)*
- 5 NARRATOR: In the kitchen the cooker gives a hissing sigh and ejects from its warm interior sixteen slices  
of bacon, two cool glasses of milk, eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs and  
two coffees.

- 1 CALENDAR: "Today is August 4th 2026.  
Today is August 4th 2026.  
Today is Mrs. Featherstone's birthday.  
Today is the anniversary of Tilita's marriage.  
Today Insurance is payable, as are the water, gas and electricity bills."  
*(COMPUTER TAPES)*
- 2 NARRATOR: Somewhere in the walls computer tapes are gliding under electronic eyes.
- 3 CLOCK : "It's after eight, tick tock, it's after eight, tick tock,  
off to school, tick tock, off to work, tick tock, don't be late,  
tick tock, it's after eight, tick tock."
- 4 NARRATOR: But no doors are slammed; no carpets take the soft tread of rubber heels.  
*(RAIN SOUND)*
- 5 BAROMETER: "Rain, Rain, go away; rubber boots and raincoats for today."  
*(GARAGE DOOR OUTSIDE, CHIMES AND OPENS)* **PAUSE**
- 6 NARRATOR: The garage door lifts and reveals a waiting car. **PAUSE**  
*(GARAGE DOOR DOWN)*

The door has swung down again.

It's eight thirty and the eggs are shrivelled and the toast is like stone. An Aluminium wedge scrapes them into the sink, where hot water whirls them down a metal throat which digests and flushes them away to the distant sea. The dirty dishes are washed and sterilised. They emerge twinkling dry.

- 1 CLOCK : "Nine-fifteen, time to clean,  
Nine-fifteen, time to clean."  
*(MICE)*
- 2 NARRATOR: Out of warrens in the wall dart tiny robot cleaning mice.  
All rubber and metal, they thud against chairs, whirling  
their moustached runners, suck at hidden dust.  
*(MICE GO)*
- 3 NARRATOR: They have popped back into their burrows.  
Their pink electric eyes fading. The house is clean.  
*(LANDSCAPE SOUND)*
- The sun has come out.  
The house stands alone in a city of rubble and ashes.  
This is the only house left standing.  
At night the city gives off a radioactive glow which can be seen for miles.  
*(SPRINKLERS)*
- The garden sprinklers fill the morning air with scatterings  
of brightness. The water-patted windowpanes on the charred  
west side of the house have been burned evenly free of their white paint.  
*(SPRINKLERS OUT) (LANDSCAPE OUT)*
- PAUSE SILENCE
- The entire west face of the house is black,  
save for five places.

I NARRATOR:

Here the silhouette in paint of a man mowing the lawn.  
Here, as if in a photograph, a woman is bent to pick flowers.  
Still further over, their images etched onto the wall in  
one titanic instant, a small boy, hands flung up into the air,  
higher up, the image of a thrown ball and opposite him,  
a girl, hands raised to catch a ball which never came down.

Five spots of paint remain - the man, the woman,  
The children, the ball - The rest is a thin charcoal layer.  
*(SPRINKLERS)*

The gentle sprinkler rain fills the garden with falling light.  
Until this day, how well the house has kept its peace.  
How carefully it inquired "Who goes there?  
What's the password?" and getting no answer from lonely  
foxes and whining cats, it has shut up its windows and  
drawn its curtains in an old-maidenly pre-occupation with  
self-protection which borders on a kind of mechanical paranoia.

The house quivers at each sound. If a sparrow should  
brush a window the blinds snap up. The bird startled  
flies off.

*(SPRINKLERS OUT)*

Not even a bird must touch the house!



1 NARRATOR: At last, sensing decay, regiments of cleaning mice emerge,  
humming along as softly blown grey leaves in an electrical wind.  
*(CELLAR)*

2 CLOCK: "Two fifteen, all is clean. Two fifteen, all is clean."

3 NARRATOR: The dog has gone. In the cellar, the incinerator glows  
suddenly and a whirl of sparks leap up the chimney.

2 CLOCK : "Two thirty nine. Bridge time. Two thirty nine. Bridge time."  
*(MUSIC)*

5 NARRATOR: Bridge tables sprout from the patio walls. Playing cards  
flutter down into pads in a shower of pips. Music is playing.  
*(MUSIC)*

4 CLOCK : "Tick tock, four o'clock. Tick tock, four o'clock."

5 NARRATOR: The cards untouched, the tables fold like great  
butterflies back into the panelled walls.

6 CLOCK : "Four thirty. Into the Nursery. Four thirty. Into the Nursery."  
*(MUSIC)*

7 NARRATOR: In the nursery animals are taking shape. Yellow giraffes,  
blue lions, pink antelopes, lilac panthers cavorting in a  
crystal substance. The walls are glass. They look out on  
colour and fantasy. Butterflies of delicate tissue flutter  
among the sharp aroma of animal spoors. There is a sound like  
a great matted yellow hive of bees within a dark bellows,  
the lazy bumble of a purring lion.  
Now walls are dissolving into distances of parched weed,  
mile upon mile, a warm endless sky.  
*(MUSIC ENDS) PAUSE*

It was the children's hour.

1       CLOCK:       (       "Tick tock, six o'clock       )  
                          (       Tick tock, seven o'clock       )       *TIME LAPSE*  
                          (       Tick tock, eight o'clock"       )       *MONTAGE*

2    NARRATOR:       In the study on a metal stand opposite the hearth, a cigar  
                          is alight half an inch of soft grey ash on it, smoking, waiting.

5    CLOCK:       "Tick tock, nine o'clock.                    Tick tock, nine o'clock."

4    NARRATOR:       The beds are now warmed, the night is cold.

5    CALENDAR:       "Mrs. McClellan, which poem would you like this evening?"

*PAUSE*

                          "Since you express no preference, I shall select a poem at random."

*(SELECTION SOUND)*

                          "Sarah Teasdale. As I recall, your favourite ....."

*(MUSIC)*

                          "There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,

                          And swallows circling with their shimmering sound,

                          And frogs in the pools singing at night,

                          And wild plum trees in tremulous white;

                          Robins will wear their feathery fire,

                          Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

                          And not one will know of the war, not one

                          Will care at last when it is done,

                          Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,

                          If mankind perished utterly;

                          And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn

                          Would scarcely know that we were gone."       *(MUSIC OUT)*

- 1 CLOCK: "Tick tock, ten o'clock.  
Tick tock, ten o'clock.  
*(GLASS CRASH AND FIRE)*
- 2 NARRATOR: A falling tree has crashed through the kitchen window.  
Cleaning solvent, bottled, shatters over the stove.  
The room is ablaze in an instant!  
The house begins to die.
- 3 WARNING VOICES: "Fire!" "Fire, Fire!"
- 4 NARRATOR: The house is trying to save itself. Doors spring tightly shut but the windows broken by the heat allow the wind to suck upon the fire.  
The billion angry sparks move with flaming ease from room to room and then to the stairs.  
Water rats pistol their water and run for more. The wall sprays let down showers of mechanical rain.  
But too late. The reserve water supply which has filled baths and washed dishes for many quiet days has gone.  
The fire crackles up the stairs. It feeds upon Picassos and Matisses baking off the oily flesh, tenderly crisping the canvasses into black shavings. And now re-enforcement's. From the attic trap-doors, blind robot faces peer down with mouths gushing green chemical. But the fire is clever. It has sent flames outside the house, up through the attic to the pumps there.  
*(EXPLOSION)*  
The attic brain directing the pumps has shattered into bronze shrapnel.



- 1 NARRATOR: The house shudders, oak bone on bone, its bared skeleton cringing from the heat, its wire nerves revealed as if a surgeon had torn off the skin to let the red veins and capillaries quiver in the scalded air.
- 2 DISTRESSED FIRE ALARM VOICES: Help! Help! Fire! Run!
- 3 NARRATOR: Help! Help! Fire! Fire! Run! Run!  
In the nursery the jungle burns.  
Blue lions roar, giraffes bound off,  
Panthers run in circles changing colour,  
The animals running before the fire vanish off toward a distant steaming river.  
*(MANIA CONFUSION - VOICE READS POETRY)*  
***(THE CRASH)***  
*LONG PAUSE*  
*(DAWN SOUND)*
- 4 VOICE: "Today is August 5th 2026.  
Today is August 5th 2026 etc....."

THE VOICE REPEATS THE ABOVE. DURING EACH REPEAT THE SOUND QUALITY IS GRADUALLY CHANGED UNTIL ALL INTELLIGIBILITY IS LOST AND IT IS ABSORBED BACK INTO THE LANDSCAPE.

**CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT.**

August two thousand and twenty six "There will come soft rains".  
The voices were Eva Haddon and Jeffrey Segal. Narrator Garard Green.  
Adapted and realised from the short story by Ray Bradbury  
by Malcolm Clarke at the BBC Radiophonic Workshop.  
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