

**When the Bomb Drops**  
from [The Ballad of Ken and Emily: or, Tales from the Counterculture](#)

**Abstract:** A poem for the end of time.

When the bomb drops

We will achieve parity with the Russians  
Both sides will claim victory

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Jobs will be created in the private sector  
The budget will not balance

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Businesses will buy box seats and write it off  
Detroit will not look so bad  
James Watt will open D.C. for drilling  
Construction will be bullish on Wall Street

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Christian fundamentalists and bored housewives will picket  
for the rights of the unborn dead  
It will be the end of self-pity as we know it  
The Mideast will have peace on a scorched desert  
Divorce rates will fall like acid rain

When the bomb drops

Victims of Agent Orange will be justly compensated for their misery  
Thoreau will not pay his taxes  
It will be too late for poet intellectuals to add content to their form  
Social Security will show a surplus  
Students will raise their voices unless they have papers due  
Men will cry in grief because sadness will be manly  
Three will be company, four will not exist  
An apple a day will kill you

When the bomb drops

The other major party will sweep the off-year elections  
Mount Sinai will dissolve like S.A.L.T.  
Moses will kneel before many burning bushes

Nancy will need more china

When the bomb drops

We will mobilize the troops to install solar collectors

Ketchup will be the last remaining vegetable

Teachers will publish and perish

A cure will be found for good health

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Richard Nixon will analyze its impact on world affairs for Barbara Walters

The florist will sell withered roses

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Stallone will star in the movie version

The sixties will be fondly remembered

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Exxon will turn a tidy profit because of its foreign investments

The last Chanukah candle will go out

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