

Second Verse First, Same as the First

years and years and years ago, schoolchildren learned to duck and cover if an atomic bomb
was dropped
A cheerful jingle reassures that a desk would shield from
dying by fiery blast.
Schoolchildren learn to hide and cower if a school shooting
was to occur
A peppy teacher tells them a locked door will shield them from
dying by gunfire.

“I was on the last plane out of Saigon.” An old Vietnamese-American man tells the reporter
right before
clips of Afghan refugees clinging to American planes roll.
Refugees stream out of
Bostia,
Syria,
Ukraine.
They can never go back home.
Their cities are ravaged.
Their houses are destroyed.
Their loved ones are dead.

“I promise this nation will not go to war.” says President Kenndey, Regan, Biden.
My grandfather practiced duck and cover drills.
My mother was told Russia could attack when she was a schoolchild.
I debate the possibility of war with Russia with my teacher.

When does the world end?
Does it end when Ulkraines’ houses are reduced to rubble?
Does it end when a Holocaust memorial is bombed?
Does it end when Ukrainian children die in the crossfire?