“war in the time of commas”,
“grammar Nazis (post-apostrophe literature)” &
“like two lower-case pronouns”
By P. L. Thomas

war in the time of commas

so many of the wars
seemed senseless in retrospect

all of them in fact

but it was the war eliminating commas
that proved to be most ridiculous

all the lives and limbs lost
to settle a matter of mechanics

who manufactured all those land mines
who manufactured this maze of rules

do you recognize me standing here
like an oxford comma hidden in a fist

this one-armed human trying to pause
our never-ending apocalypse of grammar
grammar Nazis (post-apostrophe literature)

when they came for the apostrophes
its like someone took all the stars
turning the night sky flat black

we were left with isnt and wont
all our its were jumbled
and everyone lost their possessions

we began to bury dashes in the backyard
lock semicolons in chests in the attic
stuff commas by the handfuls in our pockets

sometimes in the inky darkness of night
exclamation points hidden like knives
under our pillows

we held hands or spooned whispering

i’ll be alright
they won’t win
they won’t win
like two lower-case pronouns

How did I know it had happened? Because of its absence now, because I still felt the loss of it...

_Borne_, Jeff VanderMeer

you&i
are sitting in the bathroom floor
sidebyside and facing one another

because this seems the most natural thing
you&i
exhausted and crying

like two lower-case pronouns
joined by an ampersand
i&you

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