Fall 1975

The Day Before the Rains and Then Some

Robert Lietz
WE WAKE.

Twelve hours later
the sky still looks the same,
only now
it's turned backwards,
over-exposed and red,
the sun
like a burned hand
dipped into its back pocket
looking for a billfold—

Tomorrow,
it will rain as predicted.

It is already raining
on towns
with strange names
hundreds of miles
to the west.
The rain is as delicate
as deer's breath
or it approaches in warm folds
like the scarves
of daughters
we have not fathered.

Everything in this life
becomes a search for milk.
The moon spreads gauze sheets
on windows closed
for evening
and steam lifts
from pavement
we have never seen,
like the loose sleeves
of Chinese dancers:

We know the chimneys
will collapse;
the undercover police
will toss off their disguises;
a plane will drop
into the lecture-hall
after brilliant maneuvers—

And rain ten days straight
must quit:

We have been sleeping on our hands.
We are closer
than we think,
closer than we would like to be,
without knowing,
where things seem to work
because of our ignorance,
like a slide
we have held up
to the light for a moment,
and seen through...