

ROSALIND PACE

*Extra Socks, With the Water Rising*

Not even God says how deep the water will be,  
just ask Noah, who at least had time to build his ark.  
No warning bells, no sirens, no loud voice  
thundering out of the clouds, just the water rising

as if the earth itself were being dissolved by tears.  
For the trek to higher ground we take  
a few raisins, a pair of extra socks, a piece of bread,

and join the others, who are traveling  
with no passports and no luggage.  
We cross rickety bridges of sticks. Rivers  
overflow their bloody banks, armored cars  
run each other off the road, everyone  
is accused of disloyalty, and we are bewildered  
about whether or not kneeling  
is prayer or suffering.

And what does it mean  
to lie face down as the dead do, or face up  
as the buried do. Oh Noah, Noah, slogging  
patiently back and forth in the slops

as your boat rode out the storm, what  
can you say to us now as we seek shelter  
and hunker among broken chairs  
and share our raisins and our stories.

Maybe all we can do is curl up  
against a wall, pull on dry socks,  
and remember, for a few hours of sleep,  
what it once felt like to be comfortable and safe.