

## The Ordinary Deja Vu of a Rainy Morning · *Jonathan Holden*

It must be this way, too,  
for the old men reading these pale  
zeroes the rain keeps typing,  
repeating perfectly in the pools—  
the old men who have learned years ago  
that weather is to be taken personally,  
and who, though they are weary,  
are today almost happy,  
pleased with the way the rain  
recites its adages,  
something they had said once or written down,  
as if the rain, by being so many,  
defined them  
as indefinite articles define a noun,  
making possible a while longer  
the singular.

And it must be here, surely,  
in the singular, witness again  
to that bitter green lacework in the elms,  
the gossip of grasses drinking  
this raw drizzle, adding  
the sum of the rain's digits,  
that we practice our aging  
like the young illicit lovers as they undress.  
On the border of the old country  
they remember, now, its climate—  
the hot monotony—  
that it has no nationality.  
And they know all that the old men  
coming awake this morning  
among the dark used furniture of a room  
that resembles their room  
on a day that resembles a forlorn April day  
could know of *deja vu*.

And they know where they are going  
they will be anonymous again.  
They know, already, how the mask  
they draw on is common  
as the masks on their children asleep,  
the eyes lifted, birds  
lost in the afternoon glare,  
leaving the face empty,  
a pure desertion.  
Like the old men listening  
to the rain's adages,  
the forsythia lit all this dark morning,  
they remember when they were plural.