

ROBERT DANA

This Time

A click. A bright wink. Lightning
out of a plain, grey midmorning sky,
as if the day had snapped its fingers.

Then how many long seconds of silence?
You realize you're not breathing.
"Jesus," you think, "they've got a nuke."

And in your mind's eye you see it,
swaying under its parachute as it floats
down. Then, the click, the twinkle.

You lower the half-read newspaper
to your lap, consider yellow autumn.
And then a roar like no other,

as if the earth itself had split open,
shuddering from its foundations.
You wait for the shock wave, the storm

of window glass, the firewind, that
microsecond before darkness blooms
simultaneously and everywhere.

But only blessed, ordinary rain
begins to fall. By lunch time, light
redeems the woods, the quiet street.

Your cat, Miss Futzy, emerges from
her shelter under your old desk.
Washed and preened now, she sits

upright and solid as a doorstep
or one of those classic Egyptian tomb
cats you see in the museums.

A black sun in the white sky of her
back, and an evening cloud coming on.
A black moon riding her right shoulder.

The calm regard of her green eyes.