

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.