

Four Poems · *Matthew Rohrer*

FOUND IN THE MUSEUM OF OLD SCIENCE

Beyond the sky is a great river, along whose banks grow spectacular plants: the celestial peach, the moon rose, the lily-of-the-void. When the flowers drop into the river and sink to the bottom, the river becomes overcrowded and a drop of water is forced out of the bottom of the river into the sky. Finding itself all alone up there in that vast expanse, it falls.

Unlike snowflakes, there are only three types of raindrops.

A raindrop crowded out by a celestial peach blossom is the largest and falls the fastest. A raindrop crowded out by a moon rose falls at an angle and is nearly impossible to catch on the tongue. A raindrop crowded out by the lily can fall through the eye of a needle, if you hold it just right.

Unlike a tear, a raindrop has no parents. A raindrop has no idea why it has been born, and sadly, no one to ask, so it keeps quiet. Therefore one does not hear raindrops complain when they fall onto the clear roof of a greenhouse.

At the height of a raindrop's fall it reflects the whole world. A raindrop falling over Oklahoma seems evenly divided by roads. A raindrop falling onto a grove of aspens in a dark forest seems like it has left its lights on. A raindrop falling on one city holds a knife; on another, a tiny black pistol. A raindrop falling into your eye thinks it's you, watching a raindrop fall into its eye.

Famous Raindrops:

Obviously, the first raindrop to fall.

The lucky raindrop who fell down the open neck of Helen's dress.

The drop that tried to save the library at Alexandria.
The first raindrop to land on the ark, on the nose of the
figurehead that was Noah's wife.
Edison's favorite raindrop; the one he kept in a test tube.
The last drop Beethoven ever heard.

THE TOADS 1975

A boy told me his father had been eaten by toads,
a swarm of toads with foaming mouths and lidless eyes.

The war had just ended
and not everyone was home.
There was a dead pope.
Helicopters still practiced parting trees.

The boy's father did lie in a polluted puddle,
toads slept in his pockets,
I learned this later.

Our neighbor made home movies from his cockpit
and showed them to my father and me.
I liked the sound the popcorn made in my head
while a man on a bicycle hurried to cross
what was surely an unimportant bridge
on a simple river.