

1980

Departure

Ben Howard

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Departure · *Ben Howard*

Rainwater streaks the bricks outside this window
 And pelts the tiles of the patio
As if to retaliate for acts
 Done or left undone. Spirit will have
Its say, though what the window-sills
 And glistening marble ledges will reply
Cannot be guessed, nor can this fresh
 Water upon transparent table-tops
Give back a word of gratitude
 Or warning. Something of every year
I've lived is in these silent urns,
 Which catch the water relentlessly,
Hiding it from the light. And something
 Hidden is urging me to turn
From here, as from a signature
 Which in my haste I've written furtively
On stone and empty vase, on waves
 Of water and air, and now cannot reclaim.