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On Sorrow

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ON SORROW

The way certain people
run through rain at rest stops, the quiet ones
or the quick shrieking ones,
is the way I want
to think about sadness: brave flash
and the weedy grass too shiny in such light,
say, the middle of September
which is always at a slant, the kids
school-dogged, hitting
every puddle, that slow motion rush
from the car.

But it's the stranded ones there,
old guys with caps, a woman
with her hood up—I look at them
and hardly think at all.
They stand whistling for their genius dogs, dogs
who half-fly
through the dog walk zone. Two notes
to that whistling, or three.
Each has a rhythm I can't quite get.
They hunch down
into their nylon jackets, shoulders
already dark with rain.
I don't know
what it is—just what you do
if you have a dog, like
it's raining all day, regardless.

Half the time, I sit a few minutes
in my car before
I do anything. One of them is always trying
to light a cigarette
in the rain. Match after soggy match
flung down. This is hope.