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The Ordinary Deja Vu of a Rainy
Morning · *Jonathan Holden*

It must be this way, too,
for the old men reading these pale
zeroes the rain keeps typing,
repeating perfectly in the pools—
the old men who have learned years ago
that weather is to be taken personally,
and who, though they are weary,
are today almost happy,
pleased with the way the rain
recites its adages,
something they had said once or written down,
as if the rain, by being so many,
defined them
as indefinite articles define a noun,
making possible a while longer
the singular.

And it must be here, surely,
in the singular, witness again
to that bitter green lacework in the elms,
the gossip of grasses drinking
this raw drizzle, adding
the sum of the rain's digits,
that we practice our aging
like the young illicit lovers as they undress.
On the border of the old country
they remember, now, its climate—
the hot monotony—
that it has no nationality.
And they know all that the old men
coming awake this morning
among the dark used furniture of a room
that resembles their room
on a day that resembles a forlorn April day
could know of *deja vu*.

And they know where they are going
they will be anonymous again.
They know, already, how the mask
they draw on is common
as the masks on their children asleep,
the eyes lifted, birds
lost in the afternoon glare,
leaving the face empty,
a pure desertion.
Like the old men listening
to the rain's adages,
the forsythia lit all this dark morning,
they remember when they were plural.