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This Old Metaphor

Andrew Brunton

St. John Fisher College

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Cover Page Footnote

This poem is available in The Angle: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2006/iss2/3
It's raining again  
These days filled with pain  
My stomach  
like a bucket  
gathering drops through  
the crack in my mouth  

This old metaphor has become self-aware  
like the splash from water  
poured into water  
like tires through a puddle  
and you on the sidewalk  
like a hose  
turned playfully on a friend  
Like a squirt gun  
on a hot day  
I want to spit.  

When I told you my father's story  
you said, how did you never tell me that?  
And I couldn't answer at first  
Because it did not feel real  
Like a screenplay I'd written  
about myself  

His life, his pain, my own are drops of water  
that resemble each other  
but not the clouds they fell from  
and certainly not  
puddles  

We share the pain in our stomachs  
like water balloons  
dropped on whoever walks under us  
And the drenching ruins their day  
to our satisfaction  

Pain is never original  
even when swallowed  

We spit out cliche  
a mixture of bile and water  
on our friends, on the audience  
Or whoever comes close enough  
to get wet  
We do it because to be dry is to be alone  
We use cliché because it's the same cloud  
For every person  
For every city  
And because  
no one carries umbrellas in L.A.