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This Old Metaphor

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Cover Page Footnote

This poem is available in The Angle: https://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 cliché
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.