

# Burning in the Rain

By Richard Blanco

Someday compassion would demand  
I set myself free of my desire to recreate  
my father, indulge in my mother's losses,  
strangle lovers with words, forcing them  
to confess for me and take the blame.  
Today was that day: I tossed them, sheet  
by sheet on the patio and gathered them  
into a pyre. I wanted to let them go  
in a blaze, tiny white dwarfs imploding  
beside the azaleas and ficus bushes,  
let them crackle, burst like winged seeds,  
let them smolder into gossamer embers—  
a thousand gray butterflies in the wind.  
Today was that day, but it rained, kept  
raining. Instead of fire, water—drops  
knocking on doors, wetting windows  
into mirrors reflecting me in the oaks.  
The garden walls and stones swelling  
into ghostlier shades of themselves,  
the wind chimes giggling in the storm,  
a coffee cup left overflowing with rain.  
Instead of burning, my pages turned  
into water lilies floating over puddles,  
then tiny white cliffs as the sun set,  
finally drying all night under the moon  
into papier-mâché souvenirs. Today  
the rain would not let their lives burn.

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