

ERIC NELSON

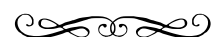
Drought

The clouds' lies are unforgivable.
Lakes gone, canoes aground, nothing
But cracked beds beneath bridges.
For once everyone knows exactly
What they want. I remember

A sound above me, pattering,
Like kisses, but sincere, rivering
Down the window, hanging
Like bells from the bird feeder.

The alarm chimes in the dark.
I rise and run ahead of the sun.
Outside the treatment center
The addicts are already waiting,
Smoking and pacing, grass
Crackling beneath them.

From somebody's pocket
A phone wails like a siren
Everyone pretends not to hear.
A cardinal redder than fire
Bathes in the dust.



ABOUT ERIC NELSON

Eric Nelson is the author of five collections of poetry, the most recent of which are *The Twins* (Split Oak Press) and *Terrestrials* (Texas Review Press). His work has appeared in *Poetry*, *Oxford American*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *The Sun*, and *The Cincinnati Review*, among other venues. He lives in Statesboro, Georgia, and teaches creative writing at Georgia Southern University.

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