

First Rain of the New Year

by Gary Hardaway

Cold and small, it
fligrees the window panes.
Open your umbrella wide

and fetch the morning news.
Though warmer than ice,
the air still penetrates like fangs

fashioned from the clouds
that dome the world
a dimly luminous gray.

The black clay ground plumps up
and twists the doorways out of square.
Opened, the front door deadbolt

will not clear the strike again,
will not hold what is outside, out
or what is inside, in.

Compartments trickle together
in light diffuse and unreliable.
Fortify yourself against the day.

Drink coffee, strong and frequent.
Set the thermostat to sixty-five and wear
your thickest socks and sweater.

Scent the air with bacon
and blood oranges. Sear
then braise the cheap-cut beef

with yellow onions, clean
but unpeeled carrots, bay leaf,
rough chopped cloves of garlic,

burgundy, and consommé.
Bake cookies and potatoes.
Set ceramic logs aflame.

Settle in to hear the rain
as old cracks close and new ones open
in drywall patched and re-patched.

