

Eleanor Lerman

STORM COUNTRY

Buckets of water, baby pails, tall golden glasses,
streams, oceans,
a wet world, wet tickets, wet white chalk
on streaky slate imagines that
we have a destination:
we are going north, we are going east,
we are going, we are going, in our rain hats,
in our difficult days. Medicine in our pockets,
books in our bags,
pens and paper and pictures of the time

when we first woke up in the gray light
with no more work to do
Thus are we off to the Maritimes, the Keys,
to Santa Fe or Vera Cruz. To the sun,
the pole or the equator, or maybe to the land
of our dreamy dreams.

But what if all that happens is we exhaust ourselves
by cleaning out the downspouts, jumping over
puddles before we manage even a single mile?

Still will I buy you oranges at the station
A magazine, an airmail stamp, the paperback
memoir of a spy
Why not? I always knew that this was dangerous,
that even if we put our heads down and made it
through the years,
finally, there would come a rainy summer
when we would have to shut up the house,

and follow the thunder and the lightning
into the storm country
where even lesser weather must be faced
with courage, and face it: love like a locket
tossed into a hurricane,
like the wind that travels everywhere,
that fights on, that holds out
Love like revolution in the air