

Weather Report for Fayette County, Kentucky

by Devin Brown

It's been dry, even for August.
 After supper I sit at the kitchen table,
 black coffee and cigarettes at the ready,
 and work through the first essays of the term.
 At nine-thirty, heat still radiates from the French doors
 that look out on the deck.

Beyond the warm glass, the scorched lawn
 stretches away into shadow,
 gray green and stiff, as lifeless as the hay bales
 which stand like tombstones
 in our neighbor's pasture.

Across the empty creek bed,
 I always look for his horses,
 and I love it best if they are running,
 shooting stars, a comet tail of dust behind.

Schooled in equestrian matters,
 when my wife sees horses in motion,
 she sees gait-trot, gallop, and canter.
 I can see none of this.
 In them I glimpse the rapture Shelley heard
 in the skylark's song
 and Hardy in the music of the darkling thrush
 —*some hope whereof he knew, and I was unaware.*

It is there too in my brother's son—
 who cannot walk three steps without hopping two.
 I do not end it
 in the essays piled before me
 nor in the dry comments
 I scratch along the margins.

A sudden flash of lightning
 reflects in the dust-coated panes,
 too faint and distant to tell if it brings rain,
 or simply more heat.