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Hymn to Rain

Robert E. Sellers

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Then took the other, a steep road up,
And having perhaps less useful function,
Because it was rocky—just rocks showed up;
Though as for that both roads slowed up
Me and my double in conjunction.

And both, diverging, stretched my hopping
Parallel props. (One prop paced second.)
Oh, I split my Yankee underpropping!
Better more wood than logic chopping;
Better than two roads one unreckoned.

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
Two roads both taken make double sense.
As for keeping one for another day,
What counts, I figure, is does it pay?
It's that has made all the difference.

ROBERT STALLMAN

HYMN TO RAIN*

The dry god appears in Mexico.
Display your flag
And let no one cry.

"I, the dry god, have come,
Have come again to the dry land,
The land rich in sacrificial blood.
In the primitive dawn I was god."

God, your deeds are beyond knowing.
But among us, you,
You have entered our flesh
And made us of yourself.
Who, then, dares provoke the gods?

* Based on *Hymno a Tlaloc*, a Spanish translation of the Aztec Nahuatl.

"He who angers me
Finds no good of me.
My fathers took by the head
The tigers and the serpents."

If I could find a place
Where the clouds go in abundance,
Where clouds are space
And space is the cloudy mansion
Of the god of clouds, Tlaloc,
There would I arise from the dry ground
And cry with a strong voice.

ROBERT E. SELLERS

THE APPARITIONS

Under the rain the Capitol dome is white.
The old men's voices coldly drone and fall
Through corridors below this calm auroral light
That brightens like the borealis from the pole.

Through the wet haloes around the lights
The twigs of swaying saplings enter bare
And blackly glistening in the winter light
Seem to shatter frozen circles in the air.

Lightning flickers yellow in the western sky
And light and shadows cross the window pane
As water rippled slowly in the wind
Is swept by moving shadows of the rain.

Within the mansioned dome the laughter falls
As dying echoes fall when bells have tolled
Or ringing chimes that swell the New Year in
Have struck the autumn triumph of the Old.

PAUL B. NEWMAN