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Letter to Alice

by Jane Kenyon

Twilight. A few bats loop out of the barn,
dip and veer, feeding on flies and midges
in humid air. Before the storm
I top-dressed the perennials with manure,
ashes from the stove, and bonemeal.
The rain soaking through the black
and white makes a mad, elemental tea.

I bought the bonemeal up in New London,
where the streets are crowded for the summer
with stately Episcopalians, and I've noticed
that it hardly smells.

We made less than usual on the Church Fair Supper,
held this year in the Blazing Star Grange
because of rain. Down in the valley
we're land-rich but cash-poor, shorter,
stouter, and lower-church.

By now the blackflies are biting more out of habit
than desire, and graduation night is over.
I've picked up all the beercans
from the pond road to the bridge.

The fully-open Peonies seem overcome by rain
and carnality. I should stake them: white
doubles with a raspberry fleck
at the heart, blooming without restraint
in the moist summer night. I planted them
just last fall, and this is a good showing

for their first year. More flowers, more art.

Write!

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