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# Stoop

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## **STOOP**

by **Jim Davis**

Sitting on the front steps as the rain comes in. Call me one's demeanor through the doorway of a yurt, or entering a psychic's dojo through glow-string beads, or talking to a child, or sitting on the steps drinking Corona, listening to Duke Ellington play rain.

When I sit I wear a bag on my head, painted like my downstairs neighbor. Talking too much to a girl with a boyfriend, texting as the page stipples with hushed early drizzle, warp. I will map the brain someday. My childhood had a rooster put to sleep—now there's no way for me to wake.

Sometimes Sheila comes to sit, three hundred pounds soaking wet, and she is because she walked here from the bus. She brought baggies of honey baked ham, spiral cut. I like the smell of her neck, a mix of sweat and perfume. If I asked her to name every worm-eating animal, she'd forget me.

When we sit every color's terra cotta, every shape is butter lettuce fussing in the breeze. Someone else is living in my hand-me-down sneakers. My favorite pain is too much ginger. Tonight if I fall asleep standing up, there will be no noise to wake me. I am especially regretful, as Sheila is

incapable of love. Music begins in the teeth

of the piano I haven't bought but imagine hoisted up  
the building to a window, where I'd look out over the stoop,  
listening as it plays itself into the rhythm of the highway  
and dogs and birds and rain. They told me if you leave the city

you come back haunted. Deign. Stained with gallant imaginings.