I Promised the Clouds a Wedding

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I PROMISED THE CLOUDS A WEDDING

In those days the dust would settle in like an unwelcome guest who plans to stay for a very inconvenient length of time. In those days I’d stand on the front porch with little Evey on my hip and hope at my heels like a faithful but old blind dog—one that you know you’re going to have to shoot soon, even though you’d like to keep it around for company—and I’d stare at the evasive wisps of clouds on the far edges of the horizon and I’d beg them to drift inward and down. I’d promise the clouds a proper wedding if only they’d consummate the marriage right then and there and give birth to a healthy litter of raindrops.

At night I would dream of showers and, like the parched earth, I reach up to the swollen clouds and hunger. And in the morning I’d awake to the echoes of drops thrown at my windowpane by my thirsty subconscious. The searing light of the morning would stream in through the window, uninterrupted by clouds, and my tongue would lick the dry air and taste the light. A small sigh slips through my lips and I covet the very moisture that I’ve expelled. I sip it back in one sudden breath and gather the water around me as a barrier, and then I pray.