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For the Man in the Red Jacket

Tyler Chadwick

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For the Man in the Red Jacket

... *the waters are come in* . . .

—Psalm 69:1

His word, more than his face, remains,
trailing me as the rain that stuck
to my glasses and soaked my clothes,

seeping through
my windows, my façade into
the crawlspace of memory.

I see now he was serious: as we'd
passed on the street, each moving
the other way, he'd pulled off

his red jacket hood and tried
to make eye contact. *Have you
necessarily taken the time,*

he'd asked, *to find out
what grace is for?* Reluctant
to break the rhythm of my run,

I'd turned just enough to see him
in my periphery, standing alone
on the corner as the rain started,

and said nothing. If he'd asked for money
or the time, I might have slowed, at least
to tell him I didn't have any or

*It's six twenty-two. But grace, I
remember thinking. Get serious, brother,
and out of the rain. It's early. I'm*

*running. We're about to be wet
and our garments as heavy as Genesis.
Of course I've made time for grace.*

—Tyler Chadwick

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Poets* (El Cerrito, Calif.: Peculiar Pages, 2011), 105.