

# *plum rains* (梅雨)

CLAIRE KUO, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Tissue paper petals  
wilt under the weight  
of rain.

A snail  
is an eggshell  
crunch  
beneath soiled shoes,  
a belated “sorry”  
whispered in  
mist-veiled nights.

Mud combs through tree roots,  
enveloping a tribe leader  
with a soft sigh  
while his wife watches  
their village of squat  
huts sink, holding  
his hand-stitched coat.

On the road,  
squelched  
by visored motorcyclists  
and left for soggy  
stray dogs, tails drooping  
from heartbreak,  
heavy plums,  
relieving strained branches,  
fall. Unpicked.