

[the waiters are all old and tired]

the waiters are all old and tired and the mood here hasn't been the same since the chef's wife left him for a busboy who told her something in broken English that she believed meant *you are more beautiful now than ever* and she was beautiful once upon a time walking through the bar like a soft-focus ingénue but that was how many years ago? and yet we still come here it's our favorite restaurant because of the one thing that never changes—a dish so simple we could make it at home but wouldn't dare—a bowl of rainwater and a spoon and even though we've ordered it nearly every time we've come all these years the waiter whom we've watched age from a boy to a man to a growing-old man still reminds us to eat it *immediately immediately* as if we would have the strength to resist for even a second if you ever decide to ignore the reviews and come here and I hope you do remember to come when it's raining or just after it's rained and remember the dish is best with a little black pepper and a torn-off hunk of stale country bread and sit if you can at a table near the kitchen so you can watch the chef preparing it fresh waiting for just the right moment to hold the bowl out the window to collect what falls—as it has for centuries no matter what—from the sky