

## Father Returning Home

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My father travels on the late evening train  
Standing among silent commuters in the yellow light  
Suburbs slide past his unseeing eyes  
His shirt and pants are soggy and his black raincoat  
Stained with mud and his bag stuffed with books Is  
falling apart. His eyes dimmed by age  
fade homeward through the humid monsoon night.  
Now I can see him getting off the train d  
Like a word dropped from a long sentence.  
He hurries across the length of the grey platform,

Crosses the railway line, enters the lane,  
His chappals are sticky with mud, but he hurries onward.  
Home again, I see him drinking weak tea,  
Eating a stale chapati, reading a book.  
He goes into the toilet to contemplate  
Man's estrangement from a man-made world.  
Coming out he trembles at the sink,  
The cold water running over his brown hands, A few  
droplets cling to the greying hairs on his wrists. His  
sullen children have often refused to share

Jokes and secrets with him. He will now go to sleep  
Listening to the static on the radio, dreaming Of his  
ancestors and grandchildren, thinking Of nomads entering  
a subcontinent through a narrow pass.