

WILLIAM DORESKI

## WINE CELLAR, BROOKLYN BRIDGE



Beneath the Manhattan approach  
this arched vault features little  
if any temperature change  
so for years served a wine merchant

as champagne storage. Abandoned  
now, it suggests a tomb for  
someone shaped like King Farouk,  
Egyptian and post-Egyptian

as well. Can't even hear the cars  
commuting between two islands  
pass overhead or the rattle  
of heels on the long plank walkway.

I'd like to summer here if only  
I could lock the rats outside.  
The huge brick arch is dry, perfect  
in bond and symmetry. The stone

below, however, drips and sweats  
and conceals a million spiders  
competing for the single prey.  
Hart Crane wouldn't've slept here

even with a sailor to warm him  
against the shivering of creatures  
few of us want to know better.  
But I'll bet the champagne tasted good

on emerging from this chill.  
And when I emerge the city  
will taste better because I know  
this private and vacant space

lies waiting for something to fill it,  
something that like the best of wines  
thrills most when thickly costumed  
in dust of benign neglect.

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## HOW OFTEN IT COMES DOWN TO RAIN



How often it comes down to rain  
in the gutter, the Baptist church  
unroofed by the wind, a teacher screaming  
at a classroom of lazy students,

bodies torn in the street, the owl  
hooting in the sarcophagus,  
the comedian weeping  
over jokes he can't remember.

I watch a school bus unload,  
red lights blinking, the children raw  
as lengths of sausage. One day  
they'll remember their school bus rides

and won't be sure if they loved  
or hated those sweaty ordeals.  
I drive on, driving north, the only  
safe or sane direction. The houses

lean against each other. Towns rave  
until certain broadcasts silence them.  
Cities look into their basements  
and accept whatever they find.

I drive against the grain of storm  
so the paint peels from my car,  
and when I arrive wherever  
I expected to arrive the owl

is hooting but the classrooms  
have filled with cement, interring  
the persona I'd intended  
to abandon because too glib.