THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

Part of me is the rain,

falling

because its weight

is unbearable to the air,

falling.

Another part of me

builds shelter,

a hip roof

to keep the rain

that must fall

out.

Then I am the gutter

which has little to do

with protection,

or falling

(though it thinks about falling,

it has a slant).

gutters are about channelling

and foresight.

They ask to be painted.

However, what I really want to be

is the heavy metal

link chain hanging

from a hole in the gutter.

Water and the chain,

there's real freedom:

flow, to dive, scatter,

skip a few, spatter

blowzy all down

hitting the concrete cylinder

that weights the chain.

That's when I think

about responsibility —

you don't want this chain

whipping around, banging

against the house.

The rain

is now in the drain,

constrained.

I lead it down clay pipes

into the expectant earth,

where I tell it: now

you are water, free

to be drunk by my beetles,

to disperse

down to clay, aquifers.

Then you will be conducted

out

to the air

that will pull on you.

And I will tell both of us

you've gone down far enough.

And I will show myself the way up.