The Judgment Funk

A Macon Weather Report

On the peculiar meteorological habits of Macon, Georgia

Before the thunder finds its voice,
before the clouds convene,
before the first fat raindrop falls
upon the Georgia green,

There comes a certain warning
that no weather map can show—
a fragrance most unlawful
from the streets and ditches below.

It rises near the highway,
it wanders through the town,
it settles over Macon
like the Lord is coming down.

Not with trumpets.

Not with angels.

Not with fire upon the plain.

But with a smell so damn peculiar
that the neighbors mutter,

“Rain.”

Grandma stands upon the porch,
her ancient wisdom stirred.
She sniffs the evening atmosphere
and speaks a solemn word:

“Judgment.”

The children look bewildered.
The dog retreats inside.
A passing motorist rolls up his windows
and questions his decision to reside.

The paper mill denies involvement.
The sewers plead the Fifth.
The Department of Public Works declares
the evidence a myth.

An unnamed drainage culvert
has retained a legal team.
The city clerk is weeping.
The mayor has left the scene.

And somewhere in the distance,
beneath the gathering gray,
the National Weather Service
has absolutely nothing useful to say.

For Macon needs no Doppler,
no satellite, no chart.
The forecast comes by nostril
and a deeply troubled heart.

Then thunder strikes the heavens.
The wind begins to wail.
The clouds produce their evidence
in buckets, sheets, and hail.

And when the storm has passed us,
and the streets are washed again,
the air smells sweet of Georgia clay,
of leaves, and summer rain.

The neighbors nod approvingly.
The children cease their fright.
The sewers are acquitted.
The mayor returns that night.

But Grandma knows the secret,
and her wisdom shall remain:

When Macon smells like judgment,
the Lord is fixing to make it rain.