

Rain man

He grew up in water,
toes wedded together.
I am a fish, he announced,
regretting this when nets went out,
barbeque on, the moment he arrived.

I was always popular at school,
he said, strong on the ironic hook,
especially on hot days.
People prayed I would fall,
or asked to drink me.

Water lifted something cool
on the shore of darkness.
Came the sleeping sound,
leading him further out,
footsteps on the fading sand.

He was in weather reports,
veins across countries.
Much was measured against him,
whether he would rise and fall,
last beyond a brief storm.

He grew moodier, earth cracking.
Some days he disappeared,
refusing to return. People changed,
developing a belief in his movement,
of rain, of water-registration.

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Gary Langford is the author of 24 books, including 12 works of fiction and 8 collections of poetry. His next book of poetry, *Rainwoman and Snake*, is due out this year in Wellington. In Christchurch over the summer he recorded poetry from his books for *The Poetry Archives* website in England. Currently he is the coordinator of NZ poets for *The Poetry Archives* (www.poetryarchives.org), wherein other NZ poets will have their work in a major recording.