

# Deluge

Even before the flood  
Noah's life capsized,  
his heart felled like a tree  
in the stiff wind of the spirit.  
Weathering the neighbors' complaints,  
scraping pitch from his feet,  
checking the groins of beasts  
whose names he didn't know yet—  
it was as if his world were  
already submerged in inanity.  
And in the end, when the riverbeds  
turned to seas, he longed to see  
dogs and horses swimming,  
fish leaping over treetops,  
anything but the stew of carcasses  
that would fill his eyes.

How could he have known  
what to expect from the  
requisite madness of following  
the foghorn voice in your head?  
Maybe we can never know,  
when the world falls upside down  
and we swim in the skies,  
holding our breath against tides of  
everyday sense. But we are still  
the living cargo of our dreams,  
trapped—two by two, if we are lucky—  
awaiting the creak of the tentative door,  
the splash of puddles, the odd  
mischief of starting over.  
Like doves to the ark,  
our hearts return to  
the only windows we know.

—Michael Hicks

This poem won first place in the *BYU Studies*  
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