

## **Rainy Day, New Orleans**

By Terri Kirby Erickson

*Don't you just love those long rainy afternoons in New Orleans when an hour isn't just an hour—but a little piece of eternity dropped into your hands—and who knows what to do with it?*

—Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

First, there is the lamplight, how it falls on your face  
As you lie there, sleeping—the empty glass once full  
Of wine, the rain-streaked windows. On the street out-

Side our room, a man soaked to the bone, his feet like  
Twin canoes in a sluice of rainwater, sings a mournful  
Song. His words are lost in the downpour, but his sad

Notes lift like a cloud of blackbirds from a dead man's  
Roof. Still, you and I are safe and dry, the crust of last  
Night's bread scattered across the table, the imprint of

Your body on the cushioned chair. How glorious it is  
To wake when the city is softened by this deluge, lines  
Blended and blurred, nothing too distinct—every sur-

Face as lustrous as pearls warmed by a woman's skin.  
Who cares if our lives are as fragile as porcelain cups  
Beautifully rendered, yet easy to break? We can make

Our way down Royal Street, hold umbrellas like tulle-  
Skirted dancers in mid-leap over our heads. This day,  
My love, is just an open mouth still waiting to be fed.