

Catharine Savage Brosman

Blue Norther

We used to watch blue northers blowing down
from the Glass and Davis Mountains,
occupying in the distance the full theater of sky,
with rain cascading hard in a dark scrim
behind the proscenium arch. Then,
as in courtyard drama, the vanguard edge of cloud—
its outline inked in strokes of black
and Prussian blue—would advance toward us,

pushing aside the warmer air and hanging almost
motionless, it seemed, its underside
exposed and caught along the ramparts and rocky
palisades that overlook the rangeland. A few
ragged threads would dangle from the laden
mass, as the front ranks stormed ahead,
baring their teeth.—This afternoon, we've come
out, happy, to our balcony, with perfect sunshine, sky

the hue of robin's egg, adorned by only cirrus
feathers and one great egret gliding
calmly to the bayou. But yesterday, commotion
reached us from the Panhandle, besieging
Houston with theatrical machinery—
curtains of rain, lightning exchanging charges,
thunder blustering, and clouds the blue
of angry waters, or mad eyes. It's déjà vu, the best

and worst together.—Demons will be with me
always, I believe: childhood apprehensions
lurking, dancing, eddying, marsh deities cavorting

in the darkness, flashing false light, or perhaps
real conflagrations. It is not enough
to say “How fortunate I am!”—books, music,
family, friends, and, foremost, love. Look
at Steiner in *La Dolce Vita*! One must exorcise, yes,

exorcise! “Oh, the horror of it all!” Where are
my parents now, who watched the storm with me?
Dead, of course, but that’s just pushing back
the question. Mexicans still celebrate
El Día de los Muertos by eating sugar skulls,
decorating graves, and carrying dark-eyed skeletons
in the streets, or visiting the mummies
on velvet cushions in the catacombs of Guanajuato,

“Hill of Frogs.” Somehow, demons must be changed
to daemons, those attendant spirits or powers
who guide us better than ourselves. It’s Halloween:
high above the city’s scenery, a small plane
pulls a sign proclaiming “Houston Haunted House.”
But I have ghosts enough; I’d prefer
herald winds, a dark assault of nimbostratus
cloud, memories: the words “Blue Norther on the Way.”