

# Praying for Rain

By Jacob Sheetz-Willard

I keep using the word *definitive* in text messages.  
I keep standing outside at dusk to watch the way

days end. Last night, my mother sent a picture of a stone  
hanging from a chain somewhere in Scotland. *If the stone*

*is wet*, the placard says, *it's raining; if you see the stone's*  
*shadow, the sun is out*. It rains, or it doesn't. It is

or it isn't. *Definitively* I say, as if it were a catechism, a way  
to make myself believe in principles of demarcation, the line

set down between one thing and another. Last week,  
I sat in a park between two friends whose sudden love

for each other left old loves in its wake. The underside  
of the sweetbay silvered in the heat above our bench, and

each of us knew what not to say out loud—that every *clean*  
*break* is a two-part equation with a bit of breath still inside it.

The newsman says *the war is over*, but everywhere I look  
there are battles going on in both directions. Tonight

the sky can't seem to make up its mind—low clouds  
with a blue light filtered through. It's hedging its bets.