

JAMES GRINWIS

Bleak

I don't have an umbrella
crackling under the sun
or a cloud with a waitress
twirling on top of it.
A grandmother's wending
across the street to the pool
where she'll swim twenty laps
of empty dreams.
It's midnight and
lights are dead.
On the avenue of wolves,
the telephones are turning
into attic vases
and the voices inside,
brooms. The wilted stems
unfurl from the rails
while a famous actress
adds leeks to her soup. "Never let
your emotions show in public,
or in the presence of your children. . ."
a doctor of parenthood recites
to his group, though he
has slipped and said "never let
your *erections* show. . ."
on a weekend in January
when the beer gardens
have extinguished each candle,
when the Kalahari mudfish

are cracking into their shells
and dolphins tear through
frozen water.