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## The Old Pump

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# The Old Pump



David Lyttle is a professor of American literature at Syracuse University. He is the author of two books of poetry and a book of literary criticism.

*The rain is falling  
on the green boathouse  
and on the marsh outside  
and I am in the green  
boathouse working alone  
on the old black water pump  
that like a hard muscle  
has pumped up marsh water  
to the main house longer  
than the gibberish  
of private myth reveals.  
It needs new leathers  
like I need a new heart.  
What is my life coming to?  
I have grunted & sworn  
over these iron gears  
for forty odd years.  
But now it works again  
thumping up marsh water  
like blood thru lead pipes  
to cook food in, to wash  
dishes, faces, hands  
to flush the toilet.*

*And now the rain passes  
like some useless pain  
clarifying nothing;  
and in the light  
of evening  
white moths drift  
under the long pink anatomy  
of clouds  
& I stand  
by a golden boathouse  
among lilies & duck-weed  
singing to the totems  
of my simple life  
along the shore  
glancing  
thru leaves & shadows  
at the main house.*

—DAVID LYTTLE