

SCENES FROM A BENCH
by Catherine Stanley

Reclining on a bench, Rodin - like,
A gentleman, strands whitened by years,
Waits quietly in rainfall,
For a bus he doesn't board.

Others regard him curiously,
The mobility of their lives
In sharp contrast to the stillness of his.

Reflections vie for space on glistening streets.
Lights, dance off rivers flowing toward the gutter.
Yet in perfect cadence, notes fall from the sky.

The night song of the storm rises.
He lifts his baton, guiding notes deftly over the crescendo,
And fades the percussion to earthy sounds of a viola.

Impatiently, he turns.
With shaking hands, he hushes traffic
To hear the final haunting strains.

Then in silent confusion
The maestro smiles, draws a newspaper over his shoulders
And sleeps.

A bus approaches, the driver with vacuous stare nodding.
His shift is over at five-o'clock.