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Untitled for Christopher Burawa

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Dubie: Untitled for Christopher Burawa

UNTITLED FOR CHRISTOPHER BURAWA

Norman Dubie

I told my friend
that hundreds are now dead
from cholera in West Africa

and he asked is that rats
or water— my grandfather
went out to his barns
in Iceland in the early dark
and if he had rats he would have placed basins
of sweet bourbon
at every third stanchion
and then from lamplight
he'd pull the unconscious rats out of straw
and into copper pails
of ammonia and water. With the yellow-gloved hand
he would drown them.

This world grows to be too terrible,
he says— I know it can't last— take the weather
by example . . .