Surely Now Must Rain

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I stood a victor upon the battle ground,
a strip of earth that circled 'round
the relentless heat of day.
I stood there in sweat-wet shirt
with war-sword dragging in the dirt
and wished the sun away.

I stood there while the noon-flies buzzed,
and watched the filtering light
return the dust to earth
Stood and watched and thought that surely now must rain.

Looked skywards, wondered anew at the heat,
Watched, thought, anything but the ground at my feet.

Eyes half-closed, I squatted there
to strip the spoils of victory;
My hands slipped at their unseen task,
and I wiped the warmness on my knee,
knowing it but not thinking.

I rose and looked into the face
of one who'd had no face before;
Looked into his face
and thought but fleetingly of war.
Looked and turned and thought that surely now must rain.

D. H. GRAFF