

joanne burns

INSTEAD

before the storm this part
of the city, the belly of asia
smells like a gorgeous broth of
duck and prawns then the sky
turns black as an old bible
cover the shopping blocks tense
as stockbrokers' umbrellas
merchants lick their chops the
sky thicker than moxa fumed
ceilings near the registry of births
deaths and marriages the logo
on the uts tower in the distance
clear as surprise for any jet
plane lost in the turn of the
century the thunder clapping
like a futurist opera and the
rain truly arrives — the whiff of
danger the thrill of a deluge a
quiver of history the usual clusters
of health fund workers taking a
smoko outside office buildings
are missing in action, streets
of vehicles begin to swerve as
disgruntled ghosts pour down

20