

## **Rainy Morning at a Soccer Pitch**

*by Brad Reed*

The field is a plot of earth marked out from green sod with crisp lines.  
Pale white posts mark the ends like a pair of crosses missing their horizontal beams.  
Hard rubber cleats dig into the earth and leave behind muddy holes.

The players do not seem to notice the rain as I have—they are all game and purpose—  
focus only on the ball spinning at their feet like a small planet.  
They tread the wet earth into mountains at their heels.

I pull against the neck of my windbreaker—feel the hood close tight against my face like a shroud.  
In the distance, where two neat lines intersect at a perfect angle,  
Two defenders huddle close to a flapping orange flag.

They bend low over a fat earthworm just emerged and flick mud  
from his slick skin and he squirms to escape back down—down—down into earth.  
When the day comes that I too live in the earth, and am no longer able to shiver against this cold,

I would rather sleep beneath the tight thump of a child's foot connecting with a firm soccer ball  
on fields of wet grass and white posts flying nylon nets than beneath the silence  
of a field of small rectangular plots with cold stones at their heads.