

# There Have Come Soft Rains

*...but the war continues*



## CONNECT

What is the one thing you have waited for long to happen? And what is it you have waited for to end? Tell the class about both.

## REFLECT

What are some of the wars you know of? Why is history so full of wars? Discuss.

## IMAGINE

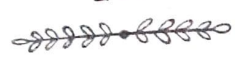
People are fighting and hiding all around you. Draw and describe what happens and what you do.

## BEFORE YOU READ



John Philip Johnson (b. 1958) is an American poet. He was born in Iowa and grew up in Illinois and Indiana. He studied at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His poems have appeared in several publications, including *Rattle*, *Asimov's Science Fiction*, *F&SF*, *Apex*, *Mythic Delirium*, *Strange Horizons*, *Pedestal*, *Phantom Drift*, *Mithila Review* and the *Poetry Foundation*. He has had Pushcart, Best of Web, and numerous Rhysling nominations. He has also written a book of graphic poetry called *Stairs Appear in a Hole Outside of Town*.

*There Have Come Soft Rains* was published in 2014. Johnson wrote this poem in 2013 after reading Ray Bradbury's story, *There Will Come Soft Rains*. The story is about an empty family home after everyone has died in a nuclear war. It made him think of his own childhood during the Cold War when fears of nuclear warfare were at their height. The poem is about love and loss and what time does to people.



IN KINDERGARTEN DURING THE COLD WAR,

READ



MID-DAY LATE BELLS JOLTED US,



SENDING US SINGLE FILE INTO THE HALLWAY,



WHERE WE SAT, PRESSING OUR HEADS  
BETWEEN OUR KNEES, WAITING.

DURING ONE OF THE BOMB DRILLS

ANNETTE WAS STANDING.



MY MOTHER SAID I WOULD TALK ON AND ON ABOUT HER, ABOUT HOW PRETTY SHE WAS.

I STILL REMEMBER HER THAT DAY, CURLY HAIR AND PRETTY DRESS,



LOOKING PERTURBED THE WAY LITTLE CHILDREN DO.



WHY ANNETTE? THERE'S NOTHING  
TO BE UPSET ABOUT—



THE BOMBS WON'T GET US,



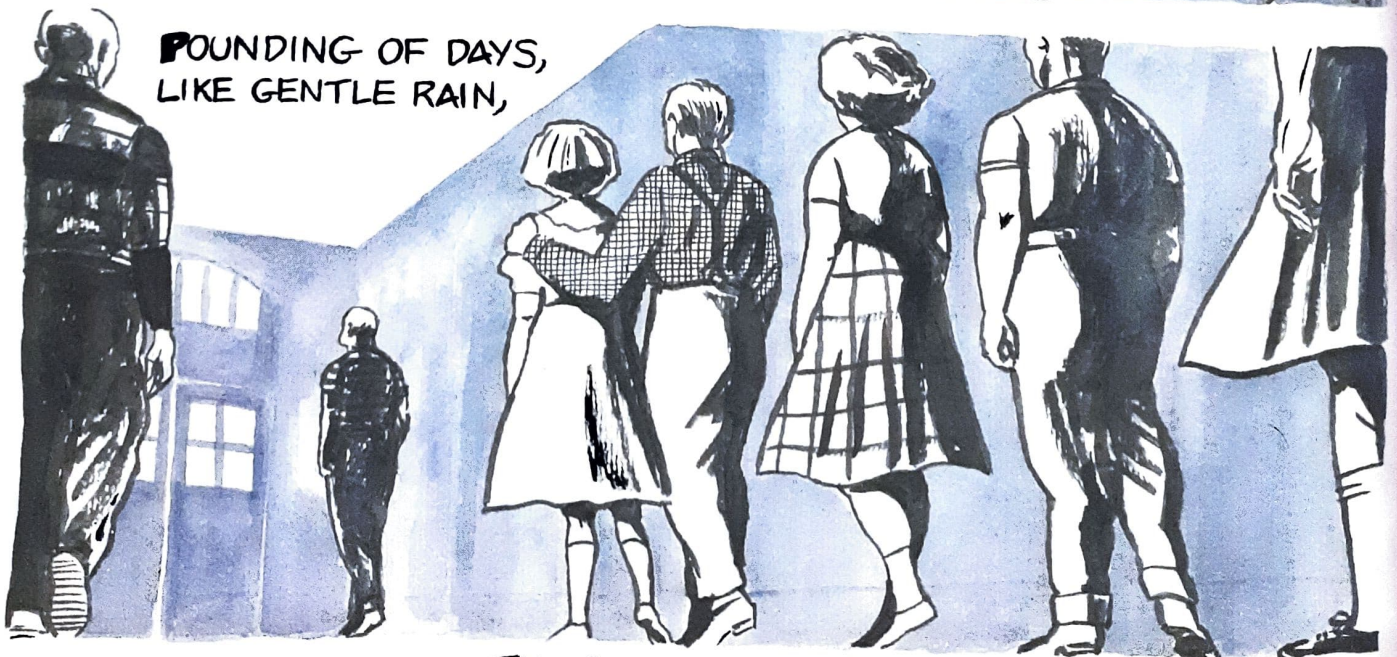
I'VE SEEN WHAT'S TO COME—



IT IS THE DAYS, THE STEADY



POUNDING OF DAYS,  
LIKE GENTLE RAIN,



THAT WILL BE OUR UNDOING.



## CONSOLIDATE

### A1. Answer these questions.

1. Why are the students sent into the hallway?
2. Why do they sit pressing their heads between their knees?
3. What does 'gentle rain' in the poem stand for?
4. What will be our undoing? How does the comic show you this visually?

### A2. Answer these questions with reference to the context.

1. *In kindergarten during the Cold War,  
Mid-day late bells jolted us...*
  - a. Who is the speaker?
  - b. Why do the mid-day bells jolt all and what were they for?
2. *Why Annette? There's nothing  
To be upset about...*
  - a. Who is the speaker?
  - b. Who is Annette? Why is she upset?
3. *I've seen what's to come —*
  - a. Who is the speaker? What is she/he talking about?
  - b. What has the speaker seen?

### A3. Think and answer.

Do you think *There Have Come Soft Rains* is a war poem? How can you tell?

### A4. Learn Interesting Terms

Free verse

**Free verse** means a poem written without any regular rhythm or rhyme. *There Have Come Soft Rains* is written in free verse.

List five poems that are written in free verse.

