

Hanoi October

Thomas CHAVES

My piano lies moot,
mugged from the deadweight.

There is no escape.

The felt pads are clogged,
water-logged as the wall
and floor that can trip
to a final call.

The keys play
to disembodied grunts, a
danse macabre or a trauermarsch
if at all and all the way.

What does one
do in such a flogged estate,
the sodden song to traffic dead
air? Why even touch is damp
the skin a sump of fetid sweat,
the breath the

thirteenth labor. Mush
rooms brew to burnish
rot and sludge in the mad under-
story of the wearying season,
where only plot is thick and
thud without reprieve, not
even character can live to hell
and back and tell, until end-

November when the cold jolts
like solid thunderbolts in the
bone and I begin to inch sky-
ward and rise to sing again.