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At Long Last the Rain

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At long last the rain over T'ai-chung City.
Would the grey greyness never end?
Would what white fog does to us at dusk
When we come home from tending the fields,
Alleys and arcane lanes of Pachinko parlors and sweetshops,
Filled with the smoky iron of lotus and coarse oolong tea,
Summoned afar to suburbs like spirits from abroad,
Wrapped in iceblue slickers, moist with the first wet
winter frost,
Unlocking our blue doors, enflesh us men and women,
Clearing the City of selling, buying, and bought?

Neil Smith is among the most prolific and visible critical geographers. He has written on a wide-variety of topics—such as gentrification, international capitalist development, the continuing importance of class, and the role of academics in public life—for which his texts are considered foundational, including *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (2003), *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (1996), and *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (1991). Smith received a Ph.D. in Geography from John Hopkins in 1982, and currently holds the position of distinguished professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center, where he teaches in the Anthropology Department and directs the Center for Place, Culture and Politics.

This interview with Neil Smith was conducted in late January 2003, by three University of Kentucky Geography graduate students—Jamie Gillen, Ben Smith and David Walker. Support for a then-possible invasion of Iraq was falling even among the American populace and Neil Smith’s latest book, *American Empire*, was about to be released. In the interview, the topics covered included many of those central to Neil Smith’s corpus: the assertion that foci traditionally associated with both Marxism—such as class and production—and the discipline of geography—such as space and scale—must not be written out of discussions of globalization; the changing role of the urban scale in terms of glo-