

TERRY HERMSEN

Carrying Water to the Trees

for C.J.W.

Carrying water all the dry evening
to the trees
you planted from seedling packets
this month of no rain. Across the field:

a red sun, a highway—
the burning cars in their long
motion, monotonously straight
lines. Spigot

rises three feet from its ground
like a wavering
cobra; 50 yards off, we pour the water
back. We are silent beside each other,

checking only “did you get this one,”
“here’s one torn out,” but belief
is forming on our tongues
like taste—of shadow,

of the well beneath us. And as we listen
for the water cracking
the dried roots, we speak the right word,
love, at this sudden moment.