

## Last Watering

Looking up I saw  
Kate at the window watching me  
and saw for a moment  
me standing there with the hose in my hand,  
water arcing down to the base  
of the rose bush in the garden  
we planted together, nurtured into green  
abundance over years  
that had to eventually end.

This was the last time  
I would step along the path  
trimmed with stones I put end to end,  
the last time I would hear above me  
those trees massaged by afternoon breeze.

The house is sold, the new owners  
will take over from here.  
To them I leave my efforts at stewardship,  
at improving the land I claimed  
to own, as if land could give itself  
completely to the hand that signed  
a small stack of papers.

If we are to find grace in this lifetime,  
it is in humbly tending to a piece of land  
like this, not for ourselves  
but to pass on to others,  
that they might tend it in their time,  
that they might pass it on in turn,  
each of us thankful, each of us  
understanding with a sort of  
awkward patience  
that in this way  
we, too, slowly grow.

—Michael Riedell

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Image info