

RESERVOIR ROAD
Catherine Greenwood

Attar of seaweed. An autumnal pang
marks the August air of this one-castle town
the way a tom's spray lingers on a sill
then rises up at the hint of rain,
signature note of lost seasons. From behind
rusty gates that shield weed-grown yards
on this patched-up, post-war, sticking-plastered street
the cats pad out to greet you —

oh, Familiar! Sweet false reunions
as Evinrude head-bunts shins and purrs,
motor and fuzzy orange bobbles
miraculously intact. Smidgeon, over twenty
when she died and lighter than a pigeon,
is plump beneath a mackerel saddle
and puffed up to put dogs on the run.
She claims you with petulant black-lipped

demands. The days here are decoys,
the language of humans a near
approximation of your own. Like a string
of Christmas lights stuck mid-blink amid
dark leaves, a smothering vine on the fence
between two gardens is hung with fruits
that ripen at different rates: chartreuse nuts
aside imitation apricots that look fleshy

but to touch are rubbery and hollow.
At the end of the road is the reservoir,
paved over now, a square sunken parking
lot. You think you're recovered – then,
the rains. The space beneath the surface
fills until tanker trucks hunker
at the pump house, hulking yellow elephants
with corrugated trunks draining a watering hole

then bearing it away to spit out
in the ocean. You forget until Prudence
overtakes you, tail an antenna of joy,
and you stroke the orange patch on her belly
as she rolls at your feet. But the black swatch
dividing her face has migrated sides, trapped
behind the mirror. You can't quite locate yourself,
but the pavement and the postman do,

Poetry

Section Editors:
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and like the cuspal weather that clutches
your heart, you find yourself squeezing
a golden bulb as if it were the atomizer
for an old perfume with which mothers once
misted their hair. In the air is a sweet rotted
note of passion fruit, in that sunset-coloured pod
you've picked the sticky red seeds of a history
you sow with each step on the short stroll home.

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