

Drought

KASEY JUEDS

The grass doesn't save it,
the earth doesn't: the moisture
finally arrived from the sky, returning
the dust-colored hills
to green. This
is what stuns me: the one
small rain that appeared
and vanished
two days ago has
proved enough to press,
from fissured ground, so many
slender wildflowers whose names
I can't recall, flickering
like the words of the friend
I follow along the red-dirt whip
of trail, the ones I breathe
into some damp, imagined organ
where I try to hold them
against the day that says
forget, forget.
Passing the reservoir, we see
the line where, in other, lusher
years, the water reached, high
on its dry, concrete side.

We watch and the parched
hills don't watch back,
too intent on their desire
to bloom themselves
into oblivion. What do I do
with this nameless sadness
I must have watered
just enough:
never quite flowering
nor ever sufficiently tindery
to set alight.

