

Jeff Burt

Then Turn Left

Remembrance is not like rain that falls and pummels soil
and runs pell-mell to an arroyo seco finding the lowest point
nor like a salmon imprinted with the slope of the river
of birth and the call to hurdle cascades to the still spawn pool.

I had not traveled the highway for twenty-one years
but remembered the climbing where the pines stopped
and the ridges bared, the left turn on the road
where once the red barn stood but now graying rafters
sagged like old ribs no longer gasping for air,
the next left turn on gravel with tires spitting rock
as if disliking the particular aggregate.

Then the last rise, through the oaks and butterwoods
thick as a blanket, over the twin channels of dirt
cut in the grass, braking just before the top of the knoll
and killing the engine, all this traveling by markers
instead of map, a kiosk of trees murmuring directions
just to hear the creek rush
like laughter over stones, the sun low
in the southern sky as November brings
and the loudened pulse of my blood rushing
by my ear's anvil and stirrup, stones caressed by water

Jeff Burt lives in Santa Cruz County, California. He has work in *Atticus Review*, *Across the Margins*, *The Nervous Breakdown* and forthcoming in *Clare Literary Journal* and *Per Contra*. He was the 2015 Summer Issue Special Poet of *Clerestory*.