

J. K. Durick

Work in Progress

Someone is sawing out back somewhere.
A neighbor, I can hear the whole story of it:

He cuts a bit, then pauses, adjusts a bit,
Measures his progress, goes on with it.

Everyone knows him – it's a perfect day,
Perfect sawing weather, calculated, then

Played out, this limb needed to go, that
Bush needed trimming. He knows how

Things work, what can stay, and what
Needs to go. He cuts away the weight of

His day. The saw bites deep, follows his
Line of sight, his plan works perfectly,

Row after row must go, give way to his
Need to act, something to do with time.

We do this: plan and act, use our allotted
Time up, disturb the neighborhood quiet

With the sound of our saws buzzing on and
On, and then we pause, adjust, measure,

Continue on as if each limb were a serious
Concern, each overgrown bush a disaster

Worthy of heroic effort, our contribution
To the common good; as if quiet inaction

Were treasonous, almost unimaginable.
We work on that's what we do, for now.

My neighbor will finally stop, move on,
Go on to other more pressing things, and

The silence he fills will be left, and I'll be
Sitting here trying to fill it with something.

J. K. Durick is a writing teacher at the Community College of Vermont and an online writing tutor. His recent poems have appeared in *Write Room*, *Orange Room Review*, *Third Wednesday*, and *Up the River*.