Kumquats in Winter
Elaine McDermott

Traveling through scattered towns
ending again at a churchyard
in Monticello, I grow weary
watching spotted cows
fold into russet mounds,
and I curse the steel-grey clouds.

As I pass the old dairy farm,
the sagging loft
of the oaken barn
staggers beneath metallic shadows
of a silver water tower.

I remember
when we buried Daddy
on the land that the drought
had seared to sand,
you rode beside me
and spoke of a kinder God.

Traveling the autumn wind,
the wetwood scent
of promised rain
blends with freshly baled hay,
stirring memories of green peanuts,
of rain frogs and cricket songs,
smokehouses and wooden churns,
golden syrup in copper pans,
of strawberries in spring,
and kumquats in winter.