

Planting Season

Thawed, we walk the long rows looking for winter stumps,
site of saw and timber, where from that decapitated ground

a new spine will grow. The buckets are green, filled with dirtwater,
and the saplings are tied in bushels, ready for groundswell,

for the red-winged blackbirds to bring the news of spring
to my father, who woke with the morning dark as coffee grounds

to fasten his overalls, to knot the laces of his boots before
waking me, his oblong obsession, his reason to stay above ground.

The older trees look like equidistant prisms, and I carry buckets
of saplings through the rows, I put the babies in the ground

and the wet mud slurps them home, gobbles the shy roots and there,
life, the Christmas tree farm gifts us another start, another year to groan

through and my father scans his prairie, and the dogs lose their tails,
and between the pines, the sun miracles light upon the ground.

I pull sapling after sapling from their bound and they tremble
like any child does when they are confronted with sky, blue ground

turned black, soon to be planted with stars. We work until the waning moment,
where day topples into dusk, where the peepers, having just come to ground,

begin tuning their violins, where as darkness settles and my father tucks me
into sleep, that prairiesong rises, rises, then full blooms in the background.