

PHYLLIS PURVIS-SMITH

Ascension, 2015
Pastel, 23.5 x 18 in



COURTESY BAYVIEW GALLERY, BRUNSWICK, MAINE

JEFF EWING

After the Drought

For too long the view's
been too wide, the eye ranging
too far out—past

desiccated rice fields
and cracked beds thick with
star thistle, clear

to the broken spine
of the Coast Range. When,
that is, the intervening

sky wasn't cut by
smoke or dust rising from
wind we liked to

think was the stirring
of long-gone herds or kids
kicking a ball around.

Dry thunder rumbled
occasionally, teasing from
the northern horizon.

We stopped soon
enough turning our heads.
Today the rain, and

I can't see beyond
the edge of the train yard.
This time I mistake

the nearing thunder
for a freight rolling through,
shaking the mirror of

water and dazzling
a skunk that's slipped under
the neighbor's fence

without asking
to drink at the hole where
a peach tree was.

Jeff Ewing's poems, stories, and essays have been published in *ZYZZYVA*, *Crazyhorse*, *Barrow Street*, *Ascent*, the *Chattahoochee Review*, *Utne Reader*, *Willow Springs*, *Arroyo*, the *St. Ann's Review*, and elsewhere. A graduate of the University of California, Santa Cruz, he lives in Sacramento, California, with his wife and daughter.