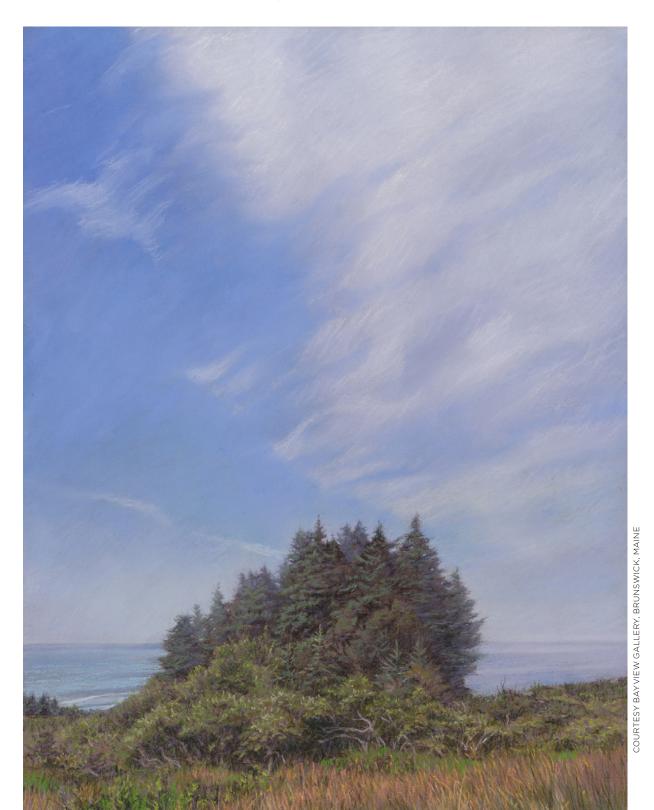
PHYLLIS PURVIS-SMITH

Ascension, 2015 Pastel, 23.5 x 18 in



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.