

## 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.