

Jeff Guess

DROUGHT YEAR

The last day of Autumn
and still it won't rain.
Two or three translucent
lime green leaves —
all that's left of May
flutter at a top of the fig
shine with a cold lemony light.
Behind them the grey leaden sky
is always shifting on
not keeping promise with the grass.
Hibernating snails and millipedes
impatient after dank wet
slippery dark
forage in the cold evening
just short of night
On the TV news at 6
an impatient weatherman
searches west of landfall for a front.
But blocking highs and empty isobars
slip across a million acres
of mapped paddocks
with only wind and dust.
On the iron fence
two thirsty sparrows lament the lot
of all wild things —
I get a beer and turn the sprinkler
gently onto dry cement.

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