

The Man At That Barrel

- Catherine Doty

*T*oday wears a football jersey — the number on his back might represent the nineteen ways he leaks out sound and smoke; he's richly home in his body, with cigarettes. That five-foot sumac spear is used to stab at his garbage, at what he's burning, at what he tends. The yelps and yells of neighbors mean someone got or did not get his check, hates hot dogs, or hates algebra, or hates, apparently, not to yelp and yell. The opposite of watering the lawn, as kite flying is the opposite of fishing, overhead a sky of sky-blue-pink, a lick of soot runs through like a simile runs through one's head before it is discarded. What smolders in the barrel is the same as what today we simply throw away, the opposite of suet nailed to a tree, or a pan of cold spaghetti for the squirrels. How rich we are, what glory we have to burn.