ODE ON INHERITANCE

KATE PARTRIDGE

It begins, as usual, with the narrative of water:
   a sudden
   spring on a dark slope,
   the ensuing drape of green. At the base, a kidney
lake
wrinkles in its skin. If this is a metaphor for faith, then
   it must be
   impacted by the
   next scene, where a great canyon weighs against cliffs cloaked in
fire,
perhaps a thick rain. I could describe the dense afternoon with
   the bicycle,
   the desert, the hail,
   the available tree, the decision: soak or wait.
In
this case, no one did. Would you believe me if I said, as I
watched pellets
   of hail melting in-
   to my shirt, that it changed me? And when, just past the ridge,
I
saw the burn crouching through the valley, when I saw the bore marks
   driving into
   the ridges, that was when
   I felt the pockmarked future, the balance shifting from
rock
to air. Remember, the water and its course have long ended.

The hills cling

in silence, while on

their ribs, the assiduous trees sculpt themselves from their own embers.