

Birdhouse

For Blanche Katherine Clink

Your love of the land
keeps me close to it.

Your voice from the backseat:
Not here... Keep going... I don't like it...

The streets empty under dangerous skies,
I find a home in a remote part

of the suburbs with a pond in the back,
a large, gray birdhouse, the grass deep.

*I like birdhouses, you say,
See if there is any birdfeed around!*

I place you gently on the patio
so you don't tip over. There are no birds.

I break into a shed, find an old gas lawnmower.
I fill it up with gas, the smell of exhaust,

the loud, frightening sound it makes.
I cut the first row of lawn,

keeping an eye on the sky,
worried that something might hear it.

And I pour your ashes, mother, below
the birdhouse, with a view of the pond.

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