

Red Admiral

*After Lauren Haldeman
In memory of Debra "Debster" Winegarten*

Slow drizzle
on shoulderless
asphalt, the verge
scent of rain and earthworms.
Vulnerable clay bodies come out
to breathe. An earthworm's body has
five hearts, though I have only two:
the one inside and the one outside
turned to birdsong.
Red-winged
blackbird and cardinal,
brief blood in the air. Last week,
before a storm, motionless red
admiral—my heedless mowing?
—though later it lit on metal,
the running machine.
Hello, Debster, I said
and it flew, also
my heart.

Shoulderless
drizzle slows.
The verge, asphalt
rain scent and earthworms,
clay bodies vulnerable. Breathe
outcome. The worm's ribbed
simple hearts, and mine
one and one, inside
turned outside
and birdsong.
A blackbird red-winged,
cardinal brief blood. Before
last week, the air a storm, motionless
red admiral. Heedless, my mowing,
though later on the running
machine metal it lit. I said
Hello, Debster
and my heart
flew also.

— Cindy Huyser