

Having Driven Over to Swedesboro by John Repp

alone just to drive the back roads on a sunny,
bleak November afternoon to where it gets hilly
near the river, I realized not for the first time
I was alone, but this time the snapshots I took

of the leafless peach orchard would rest
beneath the counter at Forcinito's for me
to pay for & cradle in my spidery hands
in the parking lot before driving to Newfield

or Malaga or the Methodist camp where Ida
the egg-candler lived. I knew the precise culvert
near Gouldtown where the whole family would dip
for shiners just a few legendary years before

& where the eels grew fat in the brackish creeks
near Fortescue. Everyone had shrunk or gone,
but to breathe the damp cold & hear the crunch
of dead cornstalks & not have anyone to tell

filled me with joy. We buried our best dog
around here somewhere, so heavy & stiff
he lay in the wheelbarrow, the wind
riffing his fur as we trundled along.