

Katherine Smith

HEART MONITOR

Red leaves on the pin oak tree flip
from their dull brown backs,
toss and turn in the breeze, catching light
and movement.

Nothing is easier than to walk straight past the trees
like the minor poem of a minor poet,
easy to ignore, then suddenly visible,
shimmering, miraculous,
before the attention like so much wind
wanders from the light struck

and goes back
to where it was, an emptiness ordinary as ink
or a row of trees in your neighborhood.
So too you have seen the ordinary oak
of your own heart. Its aorta branches
from the ventricle, beats
on the screen. No ordinary thing,

the way those thin branches jut
across the lawn of your childhood
home, bow towards the dead
grass, lift silver twigs
like an offering, and scatter
their spinning husks.