

Ellie O'Leary – Two Poems

At Least

Here's to all the plants I bought
and enjoyed until neither of us
was happy and at least
one of us was dead.
And to the books, so many
I have not read,
to those clothes I rarely wear,
not enough days in the year
to rotate through the collection
of all the things I have
that are too many, too much,
because I was once
one who did not have enough
or at least I saw myself that way.

Bumps in the Road

The gravel road, all ruts and puddles,
until the grader came along,
maybe twice a year
to dig and flatten,
to even out the surface.
Is that what we each need?
Or is it what I need?
A large piece of equipment
to smooth the top layer,
to take away the ridges
of a life lived hard
but lived on and on,
bumps in the road
and all.
No, I'll continue
with the scars
worn with a certain pride,
if I notice them
at all. I will resist being
smoothed over.

Ellie O'Leary is the Poet Laureate of Amesbury, Massachusetts, the author of *Breathe Here* (North Country Press, 2020), and co-founder of Fall Writerfest, a writing retreat in the Adirondacks.