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The Fence

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Ruef: The Fence

MILTON KESSLER MEMORIAL PRIZE

FINALIST

THE FENCE

Kerry Ruef

Yesterday,
at first light,
I turned off the highway,
hands buried in pockets,
fingers stiff from cold,
feet scrunching ice.

Between oak woods
and stubble field
I followed a dirt road,
tracing the curve of a hill.
Up and up
it led, lined
by a splintery fence,
with posts like old soldiers
leaning this way and that,
rails shagged with age and,
because of the morning ice,

bejeweled,
glittering,

as if stars had tumbled from the night
and reassembled there
above cheat grass and mud.

What do the astronomers know
of this—their eyes lost in the sky?

The light shifted.
The sun crested the hill
and spilled at my feet.
One by one, the galaxies disappeared,
which seemed just as marvelous
as finding them in the first place.