

POTATOES ARE IN THE DRYER

JIM REESE

The anonymous woman at our house
is dropping off a box of FFA potatoes—twenty six dollars
for about ninety russets.

*Guess where I put my potatoes, she says.
In the dryer. It's 50 degrees in there.*

In my mind I see her burrowing through a junk drawer
to find a thermometer that still works.
This junk drawer in the home of a family who is deeply apprehensive
with how hot or cold a room should be—how to appropriately insulate
and save—how to overheat and suffocate.

I imagine the anonymous woman placing the thermometer
in the dryer—waiting, re-checking again and again until
she is certain this is just as good as digging a big hole out back
or placing them in the cellar she no longer has.

*So are you trying to invent some kinda slow-cooker
or is this a new way to make mashed potatoes?*

The anonymous woman looks at me strangely,
but never tells me how incompetent she really thinks I am.