

*Trenching*  
Alice Azure

Unexpectedly they arrived  
by mail—baby saplings  
wrapped in woodsy moss  
ready to be planted, watered,  
nourished there and then—  
but we were packed  
to go away that day,  
headed south  
for a few weeks of fun.

I examined labels  
attached to tender stems—  
tiny rhododendrons  
mixed with wee azaleas  
destined to be  
all the spring colors I imagined—  
deep rose reds,  
bright, bright whites,  
pinks, lavender—

and as instructions read,  
a shallow trench I dug,  
laid the saplings on their sides,  
covered roots with coarse  
peat and dirt  
to hold them  
until my return. That was  
the best that I could do

like our mother—  
when she put us  
in the Cromwell  
Children's Home.