The Last Day of Summer

Since snow melt, road crews have been out
pouring hot asphalt into winter’s potholes:
filling them up, smoothing them down,
dark dollops dropped onto the grey crumpled
surfaces of worn streets.
Now they are out with all their equipment:
excavators, dump trucks, pavers, rollers,

seal coaters, picking the worst of the streets
and starting over, raising clouds of dust,
all the hot noise of road works.
On the corner of Beechwood Boulevard
and Forbes Avenue, workmen have painted
messages to themselves: squiggles, half-arrows,
arrows, incomprehensible markings in blue,

orange, yellow, green and white.
In the middle of a white rectangle where
X marks the spot, they have left themselves
a message to ‘Dig Here’. No such messages
nearby on Dalzell Place where a crew
puts the finishing touches to repaving the street.
Away from the wet thick ruler of tar

by the curb, chalked in blue and white and pink
on the smooth shiny thundercloud of street –
amongst the names and drawings of love hearts,
spirals, figures and bicycles – are other messages:

*wake up and smell the asphalt and thank you*
and *We have been waiting years. Thanks* –
all to be washed away by the first rains of fall.

David Adès