

TORCH TOWN EULOGY

It had to burn.
Even without paper,
it was incendiary.
The numbers,
once subtracted,
only coughed,
unwilling to say their unbearable sum aloud.
The days were unstruck match heads.
The nights wheezed,
starved for air.

Afterward,
we sat in bed
and picked through the cinders.
There was a laminated map of Venice,
my grandfather's wedding ring,
a crescent of green glass
we found on a beach near Mykonos Town,
a horn concerto...
We had pawned everything else.

Across the street,
in the courtyard of a smoldering building
smoke still whispering from its roof,
a little boy flung
fistfuls of feathery ashes
toward a waning streetlight.