

Two Poems
BRUCE BOND

A Tower in the Woods

Seasonal fires wherever they may find us,
here at the edge of the northern forest,
lit at point of origin by cloud, crash,
or high-voltage cable; they blaze a path
so remote our rangers watch and wait
atop their towers for the rain to break
and smoke to draw a curtain on the fury.
A curse to any one tree, but to the many
an angel's rage to liquidate the resin,
to scorch the cone and seedpod open.
Even as the dead wood falls and birds
wing the smoke in horrified numbers,
the sound you hear is the larger picture
that tears itself to pieces, that takes fear
and accident and animal cry and makes
of them a structure. Whatever the heartache
or careless cigarette, it hacks the lock
on some great secret, buried, banned, lost
on each, until, that is, we see the forest
in the tree. It is one thing to outlast

a reign of terror, another to require it,
to take its energy as yours. The sticks

and needles and crucibles of decay
trees need, they likewise need to clear away

Flames become one flame, the holler of fire
one terror across the crowded theater.

Each rain one rain, and because you listen,
the broken bits of sky that make it rain.

How this comforts, I do not understand,
but there it is, the sound of fracture that holds

a squall together, that polishes the glass
heart of each light sleeper, each forest guest

come to this. The crackle of these leaves,
this thunder, the fading of the long stampede.

Moth

When you left this room for another
to find what it was

you wanted, you found
a darkness and forgot,

and so returned to see
what you were seeing

when you thought to look,
as if the hunger

of your moment here
would light the attendant

candle. And you would know
your desire, why you left,

why you lift this needle
on the living phonograph

to place it slowly, slightly
back. You would hear

the voice of the missing
in this, your wilderness,

but not without that dark
context, that weight, that turns

a flame to diamond.
You would stand transfixed

listening to the music,
as music does, and did,

and will the moment you leave
this world, the walls flutter

with moths of shade, once
there and closing in behind you.