

## Double Strike

Two times in six months they have put our bones in fire.  
Obliterating fire trammels our shaking hands  
into puffs of symbolism.

Now there are rooms in this house I can no longer visit,  
rooms cloistered at the end of the hall  
where memory holds them to be more true than mere facts.

There are old voices unthreaded from our story  
laughter and sighs taken over to the silent side  
opposite the unbelieving stranded in the bark of everyday.

For no apparent reason—  
a devil (or inscrutable plan?) or random quirk—  
has knocked two of us out of the frame.

*Twice!*  
So suddenly.  
A freak.

Yet the play goes on  
while no one is sure of what to say  
or why it is they who remain standing.

Twice in six months: lightning strips the same clawed tree,  
blows what little hope there was of growing a green shoot here,  
a taproot there.

Now four horses feint and balk, spooked by every shadow.  
Wary creatures, one shank turned toward the stable,  
the other twitching to bolt beneath sky of imminent gray.