

# Scorch

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## HEATWAVE

Every time I open a book, mayflies  
land between the pages—close the book,  
they are pressed poems.

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I am only at the beginning

of my life. Often, the lady slipper  
blooms before the tiger lily,  
and more often

there are things that open

but do not bloom. So many  
red cherries in a white bowl.  
This season moves its slow, hot

body across grasslands, orchards

and into my small kitchen. The rot  
of ripened fruit. At night, the spider  
who lives between the wardrobe

and the wall begins again.

A friend says  
she lessens her pain with cinnamon  
and prayer. I imagine

her kneeled at the foot

of the earth. She leaves her body  
in a fragrant rain. Far away, my aunt  
stands in front of the TV glow all night

because she has forgotten the way

back to bed. Neruda was right  
when he said, *we will never have  
any memory of dying.*

Dry pines crackle. Last night,

a whole village was engulfed  
in flames. I wonder what I would carry,  
what I would leave behind.

## A NEW LANGUAGE

The chestnut tree on the corner is dying  
and each leaf is a small print of a forest fire  
spreading towards the centre. You send  
your thoughts to me through your exhales,

a way of speaking from the inside out. Dry  
breath after dry breath. Drought crinkles  
around us. Pleasure is marigolds and velvety  
nasturtiums through the fence. Flecks

of yellow on bright petals in my mind.  
Somehow, we will endure this heat. Last night,  
we slept beneath a blaze. Pines caddled. Burnt  
themselves inwards, and then erupted. What I know

is only an approximation: I am nothing  
but a trace of a landscape scorching the dark.