

SMOKE AND FOG

On one side of the road
was ice and fog,
on the other, smoke and fire.

We were driving by the river
while the fire burned above us
a quarter-mile away.

Cool on the driver's side,
and on the passenger's,
the closed window glass
was hot to the touch.

Suffocating smoke
billowed into the air,
suffusing the atmosphere
like waterless blood.

The river was clogged
with floes of ice
melting in a sudden thaw.

Drawn out of the snowmelt,
a hazy fog hung low
over the water.

Above our heads,
above the roof of the car,
the smoke from the fire
met the fog off the ice.

The road took us
straight up the middle,
as if that were a choice
we were free to make.