

After Eleanor Adam's "Though Much is Taken, Much Abides"

The Burning that Feeds You Like Hunger

now he runs toward the bonfire
crying out to flakes of ash, to sparks that spiral upward

toward whatever it is
that flickers out there—

lights a mother left on
one thousand years ago

you don't need to know
if stars are real, if they're dead

nothing that sustains us
is entirely an illusion

as for the man running, crying out
he could be you

I think he *is* you
everything you see speeding through the dimensions

belongs to you
which is why you feel it so

those fragments of Sappho's verse
like birdshot flung into the failing light

continued →

finally found you, didn't they—
your lips, your fingertips, the pulse in your wrist

you've known them forever
and the burning that feeds you like hunger

you can't sleep, can't sleep, can't
until you swallow some kind of magic

your consumption just another way
to touch the doorknob three times, a kind of slumber

that evaporates when the crows
in their dark jackets perch on piles of dirty snow

shrieking at the wind, collecting
scraps of feeling to hold onto in a world made of smoke

before flying off beyond you
like the fire's brilliant, untouchable sparks

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First Prize