

Reprise

I.

Flames lick the night, white
heat melting girders. Air
raid sirens bleat, their hollow whine
a mantra, a warning, a cry
for help. Papa—his face
bleached—wakes the others.
Gangly, limping, a queue
gathers on the sidewalk,
barricading strangers that hurl
Molotov cocktails at the blaze
beating like wet sheets
against a blackened sky.

II.

The peace man is dead; Papa runs
with the others, fighting torches
that surround us with bonfires.
Hate hangs heavy,
like the dust that burns lungs.
Hot iron tips glow like incandescent bulbs,
skeletal gates all that remain.
Cages of steel tear child from parent
as rifles are drawn and pistols
stuffed in pockets; shouts
blend to one voice slowly
winding down
like wind escaping a flue.

III.

Someone found the key,
rebound the Victrola,
reset the needle. Papa
watches from the park bench,
shoulders curled,
rocking in mute sorrow.
Thunder bellows, battleship gray clouds
race for control,
raining glass and bits of bone
as shards of re-bar
fold toward the ground.
The sun lies like a smudge.

(cont., break)

Reprise (cont., break)

A lone crooner whispers—
Pack up all my care and woe—
Light darts past window frames,
furtive, as if hovering
more than a moment signals
surrender—*Where somebody*
*waits for me—*Papa sleeps,
charcoal clay pasted in the folds
of his shirt, his face.
Earth-movers scour rubble—
Goliaths sifting, scrounging
for sunshine.
Blackbird, bye-bye.