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The Burning of the Trash Heap

for Marty Pops

Randy Prus

One seldom comes to a fire
without some understanding
of mortality, the clean lick
of flame, the awakened
night sky, the silhouette
of oak trees fully leafed
against drops of moon.

All this is true, yet one
naturally resists the
temptation to stare
the fire down, to look
elsewhere for answers
to a life that is
all too suddenly:
a trash heap, afire.

Tonight, while stepping
from the door, I was struck
by the all-too-familiar,
yet seldom seen, burning
of garbage, lying in a field
down the street, across
some stretch of land,
not distant, but near.
I had come to gaze at Orion,
maybe notch the full moon's
course across backyards,
& to smoke a cigarette.



One's life grows in increments
of petal'd light & smoke.
Flame is quickly engulfed
by the idea of flame, the
measurements of sky erode
in the orange-yellow light
of the burning trash heap.

If it were only fire, the night
would not contest its vigour:
but the burning of the possible,
a trash heap, one's life, calls
even moonlight accountable.

