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Commemorate

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Commemorate

By Nan Byrne

We learn by losing

The dead—first one becomes many
The truth we knew becomes the truth we suffered

The cause of falling comes not from desire
or destiny but merely accidental

and when we unleash the dogs
we do not go with them

I am older now than my mother when she died
In those last days when she inched toward oblivion

she moved in an unfamiliar gray aquarium
her clouded fish eyes damp lit and me

with my calf-like ways mooing at the moon
If I were to color loss I would color it arson

A touch from a match that brings destruction
Travel on a dark highway into a darker forest

I relaxed there in her house after she was gone
wrapped my feet under me on her blue couch

read through her papers and diaries
longing to see mention of my name

There were none and the days after
have been no more than a re-telling

How the flames licked and bit at my throat
never letting up even when the weather changed