Eve Jones

On Catastrophe

Once you could fend off the gods’ rage with bare hands sunk

in harvest, the sleep of prayer, your own good heart better measure of turning

season than the sun, whose light diffused to weakness, to nothing, or else

sucked the roots to thirst. Tolerance as atmosphere, a blue willed only. Or so

it seemed. Still, the ice-slaked bridge waited over the midnight ravine, the black seed

notched in a neighborhood girl’s lung grew quietly through, and even this forgiven, fact

of mortality, a grand scheme. The cold machine of wisdom has no place here: a bullet arcing,

the black wall of a wave bobbing pastel umbrellas, the woman in the cab’s backseat

with a towel between her legs stunned by failure. When it happens it happens marvelously as fire. How else to explain the raw-knuckled grappling, the well and the rope, how it’s never simply loss, a sky bringing itself relentlessly, an open prairie through which the trains shriek.