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Simon Perchik

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zips quickly like a green thermometer reaching  
the boiling point as the message tumbles to  
Iraq. Then I put my head on my arms. I wish it  
was night and I could set up my telescope. Then  
everyone would be safe. My father, a Vietnam  
vet, told me once that sometimes in war, a  
soldier will run. They won't brag about it of  
course. And perhaps no one will know. There is  
so much going on, everyone just wants to save  
their lives, he says. But running away never  
makes them feel safe. War is in their brain and  
never goes away. War just never goes away once  
you've been in it.

\*

SIMON PERCHIK

This dishwasher –why not! cold  
flowing backward will be clean again  
though you rinse the cup

upside-down, slowly, wallowing  
and since you are left handed  
you have to reach across

till your skin tightens, grows  
scales and once on shore  
your jaws flatten, consoled

that the dead are drinking instead  
are already flowers and each evening  
becomes one more grateful hillside

waiting for rain the way all dirt  
holds back the dead as riverbanks  
–it makes sense! inside this sink

an overpowering thirst for under  
–what you call daylight  
was once eternal rain

and night after night you wash  
this same cup, over and over  
to start a simple fire.