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The Warning

John Haines

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THE WARNING

I

North of Windy,
where houses and people
come loose from the land. . .

Nothing human in a hundred miles
but the road we ran on;
the dumb soil speaking at last,
meltwater and snowlit air.

II

A shadow of stain high
on the mountain before us
grew denser and black,
drifting west against the sunlight. . .

Like a pail of soot spilled
from the sky,
or the cloud of an oily battle
building from a distant basin.

III

Over a rise in the silent land
we came on a single wreck,
a car pitched in the roadside
brush: smoke and arrows of flame.

Three men in fiery vests
stood by, tending the blaze
with a vacant, far off look.