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M. Earl Craig

Some Lilac From My Mother

*Lilac. I say lilac. I say
The lilac in the park
has nothing on me.*

It's raining and the wet lilac
has overtaken the park.
The lilac doesn't breathe
heavily, or sing to itself, or
stop to ponder park boundaries
for even a moment.
It moves noiselessly
through the chainlink fences
that keep the stunned children
from following. It rolls over
even the tallest trees
and pushes on down the streets,
stopping traffic everywhere,
the intersections choked
and people abandoning their cars.

I think I'm just frustrated
because the lilac knows
where I am; because the lilac
has everything to do
with the way I hold my hands.

I used to feel I knew
just where the lilac was,
and when. I used to feel
some sense of control, as if
that damned lilac in the park
had nothing on me.

But now the lilac is
coming. The thick trees
and the fences
and the traffic lights
are all weeping for me.
They are sorry they couldn't help.
Now the lilac is at the door,
a cool, quiet rustling
as it overtakes the porch,
and I'm remembering a time
when the lilac was in a small vase
on the kitchen table. I am trying
to understand, and no longer sure
if it was ever not like this:
me watching from my window, everything
slowly swallowed, one minute
my front yard filling up and now,
now this window
going dark.