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The Formerly Loved

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THE FORMERLY LOVED

From a small prop plane
he dove into the smoke.
He had a shovel. Green boots.
Went down. The white sail
of him. Toward what?
Who could know, who
could see? He said the river
was a sound beyond the trees.

I was a woman on the road
by a water truck. Watching him
step from the smoke. Dragging
the shovel. A tree crashed
across the river. Halfway up
Halfmoon Ridge, the smoke of him
turned to me. I loved even
the green of those boots.

How to unmake a fire before
it unmakes a mountain.
How to unblacken the grasses
after his burn. Trenches of detour.
Wild-eyed, the moose comes tearing
out. Confusing the river sounds
with the crackling trees. Who
can see? From the road, more

smoke over the moose face.
I watch for a green. A man's kiss
in a freefall. The char on my lips.
An unmade time around
the space. A country in flames.
And then its smolder. A wind of him
blowing. Sounds. He said sounds
were rivers in the trees.