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## How Madness Found My Mother

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## HOW MADNESS FOUND MY MOTHER

Suppose, careening this night across the Mojave,  
bounding through burroweed and creosote,  
these were not mere tumbleweeds.  
Say they have gone mad from wind.  
Glinting in their fierce red coats  
of dust, they straddle barbed fences  
to fall back unhurt and wheel in endless  
drills of duck and cover across the desert.

What if she had heard in time  
their tremblings, at first as faint  
as a dust devil through lace curtains  
strained yellow from sunlight—  
then louder, more persistent in their approach,  
the sound now a tornado of teacups and tennis shoes,  
would she then have run to her windows,  
flung each high in a flash, her arms lifted  
as if in praise of each open palm and glistening finger,  
thrown wide the screened porch door,  
the back door, the door leading to the white garage?

But she does not hear the commotion  
and sleeps through their caterwauling,  
their game of cutthroat leapfrog that darkens  
her panes and presses against her doors  
so that come morning, when she goes  
to pick up her newspaper, the door knobs  
don't turn and the windows won't open  
and in the cellar where she hides  
she hears them coaxing:  
*Don't call the fire department.*  
*Don't call the bulldozers.*  
*Your house is cast in darkness.*  
*Let your eyes adjust.*