Blountstown

Lightsey Darst
Glorious in ash, phoenix
feathered, upheaval is now our queen: she spreads her reign
even to this little town you barely
stop to fill
your gas tank in: the man's on his ass,
wife sweeps their savings out the door,
sets a match-stick idol
up in place
of his mother's spotty photograph—
The pretty girls
get pox while the homely ones scratch
their names into the face
of Baldman Mountain—And
believe me, that teacher knows
her long year is over when
the students burn her down like a red barn
in a field nobody owns.
   Nobody owns these hands
or what they make or do: I rend,
I reform. I make the kings
kneel knee-deep in mud, stretch
to the beggars for a branch.