

**sear me off**

anything coated black will smear  
when touched like resin  
caught deep in our lungs

we don't bleed anymore  
just kind of stare at the wounds

our dormant mouths ready  
to spit embers at the first  
tongue flicker inducing sparks

like two match sticks  
that have already been struck  
on the side of the box  
is where our heads went

we both know too well  
what it's like to hold a flame

**we tried to fill the silence with smoke and failed**

he couldn't remember the language  
of speaking when spoken to.

I was told to only speak when spoken to –  
that silence is a virtue.

if silence is a virtue,  
how can we hold our tongues over a flame?

he held his tongue over a flame.  
the tip sizzled into char.

our tips sizzled into char.  
we no longer know how to hold cigarettes.

he longed to hold a cigarette  
when his mouth asked for one in pain.

my mouth only knows how to ask for pain.  
I couldn't remember the language.

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**the day I blew away with the rest of the leaves**

every breeze was once someone else's muster  
now filled with blue jays  
thrashing at all the other birds

it's easy to surround yourself with bullies  
a misconception so soft  
until stored under branches

the fall is when trees hold hands the most  
where being naked  
doesn't make you vulnerable unless you're alone

there's no point in changing identities  
that photo of us from the future still looks the same  
if you frame it in something other than gold

I identify  
with everything forced to bend with the wind  
and then some

forgive me for not forgetting  
I could be mixed in with the rest of the foliage  
all barren  
reaching towards a moonlit sky