

*Hymn to the Reckless*

*For Reed Fornoff, my brother*

Together we throw flame into orbit.  
The frantic patter, the volley, the hit-  
From afar it's just stars come down to flit.

We bend quick to the flame and pull coals into flight,  
A delirious slight of hand with a teaspoon of light.  
Once one caught between my fingers and seared,  
and that night I wrapped my aching hand around cold beer.

We're boozy folk heroes performing incredible feats,  
craft exquisite trajectories with arms full of heat.  
Look! the arc as he sends it hurdling toward me  
bending with some eccentric choreography-

We burn. Our power, to drag a new comet trail across the evening,  
a hymn to the reckless, so breathless it falls to earth, the air singeing--  
we smolder. Gods of our own solstice, and solace, there's solace  
in this insane game; in being the wild ones who manhandle coals  
from the flames and make them dance.

Oh! he catches behind the back, he's a one-man eclipse of the sun,  
lays cursive lines across your eyelids even once you've closed them  
With a tap-tap-tap it comes flying to me, oh God--I got it!  
Lightning quick layup, I shot it--always skyward.

We marvel at our savage skill, at what we've harnessed.  
Sleep hard with sooty hands, flames peel off the varnish.  
One night in the smoke with his throat full, he turned, stilled, confessed:  
You know, I always thought they loved you best.

How long has he held that pressed tight in his palm  
as it scorched him? Brave in the dim to de-clench that fist  
from the ember within; to admit what forges us.  
The gentle soul who can cast flame to the rim of the sky.

And the ember. Exposed to air it glows, it catches, it dies, it passes.  
Throw it here. We'll toss it back and forth until it's ashes.