

House of Ash

My house burnt down.

**I couldn't do a thing about it. I just sat there
looking out the window while it burned.**

**It started in the bedroom. The smell of smoke
had been around for months, years maybe,
but it didn't set alarm bells ringing.**

**Smoke clung to the curtains. The smouldering
mattress scorched the sheets. A sooty film
grimed the windows and the walls.**

**My skin paled with the slow drift of ash.
It brittled my hair. The taste of cinders
parched my mouth. Words began to blaze.**

**They flared up wantonly, igniting spotfires.
As fast as I put one out,
sparks flickered in another room.**

**Perhaps it was a fault in the wiring, or
the too-bright light through a magnifying lens, or
the piles of crumpled poems on the floor – good kindling.**

The sun was a crimson disc and the moon promised no rain.

**Tears couldn't stifle the flames.
They only drove them underground
where they devoured the foundations.**

**I kept looking out the window.
No firemen came with bright red engines and vanquishing hoses.
No water bombs dropped from above.**

**The house continues its long slow smoulder
until everything I touch crumbles
the heart hollowed right out of it.**

**Now I live in a house of ash
alert to the slightest wind.**