

Wildfire myths
Rico Moore
Willow Creek, 2020

I.

in lightest rain
beneath the sycamore-
shaped lightning
struck

a firestorm clouds rose
beyond the ridge
plumes pour the mountains from
the forests in

the chickadee calls *I sat atop*
a ridge and wept
dreams into the wind, flames erupting high above
the mountains of the lightning born

II.

we have no choice but smoke the sky
forest burning
tears the pines
apart in winds that storm the plumes

into a mass of red
and darkness
will it rain? the children
ask as they cough ash

from drought-parched throats
the wind inhales
for us as we walk toward
the river's edge and cleanse our hands

in river's dark
fire urn you course
through forests *hear*
me grandmother says

then fills a clay vessel with ash
the children drink cold
water from the sky
blue dark and deep against

smoke doesn't open
but disappears them
into the faces we hold
vigil for

watch us as they fall
through quaking aspen saplings
and pines braced
against the oncoming storm

and wings of ravens flying
eagle high above
below the storm plumes
toward the fire's source

III.

we stared into the storm
of flames which
rid us of our names
our eyes grew darker in the blaze

until we saw
light in the darkness of
the storm her skin the dark
void of her womb growing us

IV.

Rain on burgeoning
ashen river's flood
ed sky full of stormclouds drop
of rain inside the lightning

V. *dawn opens*

real azul of night oncoming day
cloth upon her body
cool mist hangs
on branches of the trees

appear to move without being
acted on by breeze
or breath a crow
caws a robin lilt another

crow responds to crickets—
blue spruce stills.
Awake beneath, I
wake to write,

her face upon
the clothesque layer of
her breath
exhaled across

my burial shroud.

VII. *against the emptiness*

warmth of her belly
in my palm as day's scent slows
the ceiling fan
to breath-speed of

a cell inside of breath
exhaled across her hair
soft windless air a cave inside
her breath exhales into

the ancient forest light
owl feathers fall from eyes
in silent circles raven circled through
and looked into the forest swept

by wind's reflection
feather resting in his palm