

The Fire that Consumes All before it

Skin wilted, dying poppy,
curls of hair thinned and grayed,
I am sand on a dried shore.
Behind are trees once climbed,
scrapes of youth cherished.

Dust beckons to me,
a ghost, a hand pawing
for a body once covered
in satins and scarlets.
Now, I wear the dress of a deer
awaiting the hunter's call.

As the flames lick
through branches and weeds,
shudder through dunes,
and slither behind me, I find
a body beside mine remains.

Long-loved, old-bodied breaths
we breathe on this beach, my darling,
the fumes of our fantasies,
ashes as we soon will be.

I cup your face like water
in my hands; no rain can douse us,
no river flows for us to flee down.
Yet, gladness, like a gift, has not left me.
Let the flames lick at our feet.

All of our lives, we knew we'd burn,
and I am not afraid.
Even if I must be
a beta fish in a crimson sea,
I will have loved.

Note: This is an Ekphrastic poem inspired by Cy Twombly, *Fifty Days at Iliam: The Fire that Consumes All before It*, 1978.

