

# Albuquerque, Your Ashes in Midair

Your brown empty city. The desert's out  
of flower. Nothing holds it, grain

on grain. Light as sky in my palm,  
in a blue ice cream carton, I hold the gray

soft feathers of your ash. Which will be set  
in the brass pan against the other brass pan

that holds the feather of truth. Weighing,  
nothing on nothing—I'm wrong, it's the heart

that's weighed. Your dust doesn't balance  
anything; it hangs a long time in the heat,

lifts on an updraft. In storm season once  
I flew through desert thunderheads rising

in giant chimneys, miles above  
the plane. I don't understand weightlessness

or perfect balance, the boy hired to take out  
my half-uprooted, leaning pine, how

he roped himself to it, walked upright its tilting  
height. Left-handed, he chain-sawed

a branch on the left, then right-handed, one  
on the other side, stood on their stumps and slashed

limbs, one hand and one hand, and balanced  
on *those* stumps, and the dust

didn't fall at all, it seemed, sand-colored,  
only hover and lift, until I couldn't watch him

step onto sky, how he swung himself  
out on his rope and glided to earth, in three

strokes brought down the armless trunk.  
The sky had no clouds, and the limbs

were slow and brown, but the ground shuddered  
each time one came down on the tattered

chrysanthemums. The boy hung in the air  
like his weight was nothing up there.

I don't understand how the body can be burnt  
into nothing, this little plume I let go.

When I dreamed of Suzanne come back,  
she had no more weight than you, but she glowed

and her milk-blind eyes had turned  
to aquamarines. I want you radiant like her,

not dust hovering in brown summer air.