

## Hill of Fire

“whenever cane is ripe  
there is deep red flame—  
flame like a smouldering hill of fire . . .”

MARTIN CARTER

Old thunders silenced so rapidly  
there isn't any time for grieving.  
Now we understand the equanimity of undertakers;  
those two gravediggers  
sitting on a nearby tomb  
and sipping rum straight from the flatty:  
the pandit uttering mantras,  
performing last rites, some  
relative or adult familyfriend  
offering a clump of wet earth  
to pelt on your coffin sliding  
into a septic tank looking cell.

Nothing meant anything  
to eighty year olds, mommy; little  
yogis or that Indian conditioning  
to control—much more control  
than those legendary British lips  
blubbering outside Buckingham palace!  
I didn't weep. Not a single tear  
not even in private—not then not  
now as these poets' bodies shrink  
inevitably; worms or rather, fire.

So no cementflesh graves today  
but blazing pyres—from afar in  
snowed in Toronto—celebrating  
the crackle of coconut shells  
on these seashores of those worlds  
buried behind and yet baggaged in  
those verses of Resistance  
and Affinity and Succession  
and Mortality dipped  
in that Ponce's Fountain—  
(the heat the heat the heat!)  
that Florida Fountain of unold.

SASENARINE PERSAUD