“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 septictanklookingcell.

Nothing meant anything
to eightyearolds, 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
snowedin 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