

After  
Barb Cole

shards of light waltz  
upon a splintered crucifix  
the altar crackles in the acrid air  
as it struggles to recognize  
the anonymous faces

a chill crosses the priest  
chanting the Lord's Prayer  
melted rainbow glass drips upon mothers  
wailing laments for burnt roasts  
and babies

they surrender  
to mushroom brown smoke  
and curse the rocket's escape  
into the jello sky

waves of mustard yellow  
weave through the pews  
and snake around the father  
as he forgives their sins