

Fire (1)

by Tom Holmes

Smoke rises
through the hearth's cracks
like paintings
through a cave wall
or the dead
returning,

like flaring manure dollops
and mosquitoes fleeing,

like fires
stroking the high grass
and wolves
tracking flames

to sniff out cooked mice
and bobwhite quails
pecking charred grasshoppers,

I understand fire as paint—
it corrupts what it stains
and indicates life
once happened here.