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## What Happened to Fire

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# Gomez: What Happened to Fire

## WHAT HAPPENED TO FIRE

Rodney Gomez

1.

In the alley, a boy  
would fly  
a fish-shaped kite

its nylon mouth  
and feathery anus open  
to air.

What held him there—  
a single red fin

along a row of withering  
gray spine, like a flame  
still flickering  
in ash.

In those days  
you expected fires

wind that could calm  
every thrumming nerve

even among ruins  
even in the sky.

2.

By the berm  
where someone was stabbed  
in Garden Park

every Sunday  
a pair of black-bellied ducks

would beg for crumbs

and though a mile north  
they could have fattened

themselves on throwaways  
they remained.

They would waddle  
in the shade  
of a lime tree

shape rinds into scythes  
in their brown beaks  
for the sparring.

3.

What everyone remembered:  
monkey bars, whirligig  
and steel pigs stuck

with coils a super  
clairvoyantly thought  
to paint yellow

since what happened  
only exists now  
in newsprint.

We were offered a wisp  
of devil there  
and when we said no  
we were beaten until

all that remained  
of our wormhole vision

was the blue cupola

of the movie  
theater, smoldering  
in its own shadow.

The last thing I said  
before going under  
was a treatise on fire  
so near my tongue.