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In Two

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Hart: In Two

IN TWO

Heidi Hart

All up and down the street, the young men from the blue van
load new phone books on their shoulders, crunching snow

from porch to porch—one of them sings in Spanish, I wish
I could understand the words. I picture columns of inked

characters, hundreds of people with the same last name
and restaurants far easier to look up on the tiny screens

we pocket and flip open at red lights. Who uses phone books
anymore? My son's been practicing the art of tearing them

in half, a trick he learned on a TV show, how to break
the book invisibly from inside, ripping pages one by one,

as if with love. The shredded remnants he saves in a bag
for kindling in the house where we all lived as family

once. I don't have a fireplace where I live. I sit at the table
in my kitchen, candle burning with the scent of lemongrass

and coriander, watching my twelve-year-old son who sings
a song about the French king headed to the guillotine

as he works the book of names apart, shreds of newsprint
all over the floor and snow outside the window, light as dust.