

## RINGS AROUND US

JENNIFER MET

the ring of fire—just a thought—  
it sounds like something from high fantasy  
magical jewelry forged deep in the magma  
heart of Middle Earth—an ancient artifact  
of more violent times—fiction—but it is real—  
the name given to the Earth's Pacific Rim—rife  
with seismic activity—with volcanic eruptions  
and earthquakes—with the collision of many  
tectonic plates—a place I have never been—  
a place I have not even seen on television  
recently—it has been months since the reports  
of earthquake and tsunami damage—the area  
again shrouded in invisibility—just a thought  
as I sit in the emergency room lobby waiting  
for the final paperwork—the scare is over  
and for a brief moment I even heard the baby  
heartbeat materialize—fast and strong—under  
my own steady rhythm—so now it is faith  
on which I live—belief that that ancient moment  
was real—not just high fantasy—and as I walk  
the forest next to my home these months later  
I see a black bear—a cub huffing from high  
up a yellow pine—where is the mother—just

a thought—but I know she is there—invisible—  
but there—as sure as the Pacific Rim—as sure  
as a wedding ring merging two souls across  
time and place—as sure as my jogging heartbeat  
or the life growing inside me—as sure as the  
Japanese aftershocks were real—not just fiction—  
somewhere—and for the first time I feel like a mother  
my heart reaching to overlap the baby I can't keep  
secret—theoretical—safe—fiction—just a thought