

AN EX-HUSBAND FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

ALYSSE MCCANNA

We meet in our old burnt house
in a dream, skeleton of stairs, popcorn
ceilings inked with smoke like Rorschachs.

Holes you dug in the yard, elbowed
into corners. Ghosts of children's heights
run up the door frame like teeth on a comb.

Your hair parted down the middle like a boy
scout. Always handy with a pocket knife.
The famous mountain, whose name

we've forgotten, rattles snow and ash
onto the neighborhoods tucked
into its foothill folds. It's almost like

Christmas, but now you are siphoning
rainwater into containers you collected
just for this. Slipping bullets

from their neatly stacked boxes
into high-capacity magazines.
Positioning your flint, char cloth,

steel, ready for the spark to catch.
The bag you packed with old socks
and granola bars, still in my trunk,

made it easy to come. I loved you
best when you had a plan and you
plotted best when tyrants circled

big red buttons and weather broke
windows and viruses spread like
blood in the wrinkle of your wrist

the night you punished me by punishing
yourself. You slip a cigarette from its soft box.

Smoking again? You nod and light a match,
its reflection in your eye—fireworks.