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## A Parting of Ways

William Vincent

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## INVISIBLE INJURIES

AMY CARTER-ISHMAEL

## A Parting of Ways

WILLIAM VINCENT

Your mind is a room that smokes and burns,  
And tears the upholstery that your mother owned.  
With that dies the past, a taste thick and black,  
and forgotten in the aftermath.

My word is a match that sets the spark,  
And burns the brush, and signals the collapse.  
Igniting the means, warring on your ends,  
but both are forgotten in the aftermath.

## Compass

JOAN CANBY

At thirteen years old I balanced astride my  
3 speed Schwinn, stared towards the western  
horizon where wild radishes, Indian paint  
brush, lupine hid in carpets of yellow  
mustard and red-tailed blackbirds flew  
into the branches of Channel Island oaks.

Red smeared hashes of blood across his face  
were still fresh from the night's fall when I  
return home from school. Daddy took our  
black Retriever, lifted her up, put a forepaw  
into one of his cupped hands, pushed her,  
prodded her into a dance across our oak floor.

I stared at my father -- afraid of the bourbon  
on his breath, the scratch of his beard against my  
cheek, I ignored his words -- "Honey, dance with  
us," I leaned down on the living room floor, hugged  
the books to my chest and waited for a new life.

Chumash Indians once gathered here, lovingly  
laying Mariposa tulips and Shooting Star poppies  
onto the eyelids of their dead before burying their bones  
into the sacred meadows above the cliffs that  
looked out to the sea. Today I will put an orchid  
on his grave. I will set my compass for the meadow  
where once I saw mustard, blackbirds and lupine  
and face the evening's sunset and I'll dance for him.