

Bush Firestorm

for Toby Olson, his masterly chronicles



Nathaniel Tarn

Of the victims, which is the one
matters, the one must be
researched until the end of days
for end will come before result?

Who is the one
within the bush on fire, the bush
of unaccountable
surrounding walls of masks coming alive
again -- bewilders us to death?

The bush we cannot leave behind,
melding all movement
so that we go and do not go
at the same moment,
the very same occasion.

At some unutterably distant break
in time what did we then destroy,
to keep it from destroying us ---
though love forbade us to destroy
that which loved us?

No blessing great as sleep
as sleep and sleep again,
no waking moment worth a single sleep
 the dreamless, restful kind
of kindness day or night.

The road intolerably long
which must end soon or sooner.
Whom left behind in tears
the pure and the forgiving
abandoned to their destiny?

And whom behind that figure
did we abandon, whom in leaving
us did the bush firestorm
hide his or her visage forever --
who was the victim who the murderer?