

# Burning

Sarah Hill

The sound was dim at first, a hum in sleep  
like hundreds of mosquitoes tuning wings  
but it was voices on the street.

Today

they're burning that abandoned house, the one  
behind the mill — the mill is shut up too  
but it's the landmark of the town — it took  
them only half a day to do, the doors  
were almost off, but how they rose and warped  
before they burst to ash, the windows sprang  
from sills — no one had tried to save the glass —  
and when the ceiling dropped (a silent dis-  
appearing into rush of flame) the voice  
of every watcher leaped, the reddened face  
of every child turned dark — they threw their sticks  
upon the fading fire and cried to see  
the house collapse again—

the voices climbed

up to the window where I'd stood, unmoved,  
since I rose to their call (I wake so late).