



Firebreaks

JODY KEISNER

WILDFIRES BURN THROUGHOUT Eastern Washington on the day that my plane touches down in Spokane. One count has fifteen active fires, igniting in coniferous forests, on rolling hills, in grasslands, near state parks and in a handful of backyards. A few of the fires jump rivers and roads; others cross human-made firebreaks. Bone-dry grasses and unusually hot temperatures are to blame. So are people. It's early July, and even in counties that have banned fireworks, residents persist in shooting them skyward for their Independence Day celebrations. The largest fire this year, the Rail Canyon fire, spreads across 880 acres of timber, brush, and homesteads only forty miles northwest of my parents' new home. A woman on the news recalls watching the fire from her living room window: "I got into a state of panic because you never know what's going to happen." What she feared happening, I imagine, is that the fire would engulf her house (it did) and burn her family (it didn't). Families evacuate homes. An emergency shelter opens at Mary Walker High School. Farmers and ranch hands move cattle, chickens, and pigs to rodeo grounds. Several families are left homeless. Nobody has died yet.

I ask my parents if they're afraid.

"Washington burns every summer," my mother says matter-of-factly. She sits in the passenger seat of a diesel pickup truck, next to my father. Her short hair has been white for the last twenty-five years, but it's thinner now, showing patches of her pink scalp. My father, 68, an intimidating figure with his scraggly, long ZZ Top beard, black motorcycle T-shirt and jeans, looks more

solid, younger than my mother though he's older by a year. They've picked us up—my daughter and me—at the airport, my mother crying at the sight of Lily, who she last saw nearly a year ago, right before they moved from Nebraska to the west side of the country. I tried not to scowl at my mother's airport tears. Hadn't I begged her to stay? Hadn't I told her how hard this would be?

"Washington burns every summer?" I repeat. I sit in the back next to Lily, dozing in her car seat. My husband Jon will join us in two days.

"Oh, you know what I mean." She sniffs and looks out the passenger side window.

I do know what she means: fires are common in the West. The Rail Canyon fire would have to blaze through thousands of acres to be considered a major fire. Its presence is not entirely unexpected for this region, though global warming accounts for the uptick in numbers.

"June was unusually dry. We hardly had any rain," my mother adds.

We? Already my mother sounds like she's from Washington. I remember the summer day that she and my father surprised us on our suburban Omaha lawn with the news that they had sold their farmhouse in Fremont, a forty-five minute drive from the prickly square of grass where we stood. They hadn't told us they were thinking about moving. I was stunned. During their brief visit I kept my composure, but as soon as their truck disappeared around the corner of our street, I took off in my car for a vacant lot behind a nearby elementary school, rolled down the windows, and wailed with my whole body, like a baby—or like an abandoned child. I raged at the empty lot. *How can my mother do this to me? To Lily? Doesn't she understand how this will change things?* There weren't any other living Keisners—my sister hadn't kept our family name when she remarried—and now Lily wouldn't know any of them but me. *Mom. I sobbed. Don't leave me. Don't go.*

"Besides, the fires aren't near us," my mother says, drawing me out of my memory. "There's nothing to be afraid of."

Maybe she's right. I don't see any evidence of fires. We leave downtown Spokane and drive past a neighborhood of two-bedroom starter homes. Several of the lawns are as patchy as my mother's hair; toys and trash litter the grass and broken sidewalks, screen doors and blinds are ragged, every flaw illuminated by the bright Spokane sun. We lived in a similar home when I was an infant. "A cracker box house," my father described it: a small box-shaped house with poor, white people living a hardscrabble existence inside. We sail right by these

homes without my father saying anything, and I wonder whether it's a good or bad sign of the distance between us and our past.

Twenty minutes later and outside of town, I spot the first one through the windshield of the truck. There, on the east side of the highway, among the pine trees and native grasses on the rolling hills of Riverside State Park, is a smoke as thick as fog. I don't see any flames, just smoke. A helicopter makes an aerial drop, carrying water retrieved from the Nine Mile Falls dam on the Spokane River in a helicopter bucket, a giant red container that hangs several feet below.

As we round the bend and draw nearer, I barely make out the orange-tipped, yellow dancing flames of a minor fire, par for the course of Spokane living for the Spokane people. Spokane means "children of the sun," named after the Spokane tribe who first settled the area more than eight thousand years ago.

"I've never seen a forest fire before," I say.

"It's a brush fire," my father corrects. A retired railroad electrician, he prides himself on his knowledge of concrete things.

A forest, grass, wildland, vegetation, hill, home, or brush fire—does it matter? If they're not contained, they're all wild. My heart beats faster in response, but not from fear, from witnessing the beauty in its wildness.



I'm not afraid of the brush fire that I see in the rolling hills a mere fifteen minute drive from my parents' new home because I wouldn't know *how* to be afraid of it. I've never seen a wildfire in Nebraska, original home to the Omaha tribe, the "flat water" people, where I was born and where I've lived for most of my life. We prepare for tornado season instead of fire season by building storm cellars and concrete basements that we stock with canned goods and battery-operated radios. Jon once said that it's hard to be afraid of something that you have no context for. When he said this he was holding infant-Lily in his arms while he reclined in a chair and watched Tony Montana's infamous machine gun scene in *Scarface*. *Say hello to my little friend*. He wasn't worried that the senseless violence and blood spatter on TV would affect her developing brain; her face was aglow in the light from the screen. I took her from his arms and fled upstairs with her. I'm not one to take any chances with what fears her brain can or cannot absorb. If it's true, as my husband also says, that to be brave one

must understand the risk, then I'm not fire-brave, I'm just unaware. The fires of my youth—flaming in a burn barrel, fireplace, campsite, or smoke pit—have always behaved, snuffed out easily by a few handfuls of sand and dirt.

There are other things that I fear, things that my mother knows but refuses to talk about, but wildfires aren't among them. When I was growing up, my parents sold one home after another. To be more precise, they gutted bathrooms, knocked down walls and kitchen cabinets, tore up flooring, repaired, remodeled, and *then* sold the six houses that I grew up in and the three houses that they've lived in since I moved out. They had their reasons: my father's lay-offs from the railroad, disagreeable neighborhood politics, neglected neighboring yards, boredom or, as was the case with our cracker box house, a desire for more space and a better life. With each new house purchased we had a renewed chance at happiness. But my father's job loss, laid-off not once but twice from working on the Union Pacific Railroad trains that he loved, and my parents' escalating arguments and threats of divorce made happiness difficult for any of us to achieve. When my father felt he was losing control over his job and all of us—my mother, younger sister, and me—he lost his temper. He yelled and punched walls. He said cruel things to us that he'd later regret. He kicked the family dog for digging holes in the yard while he wore his steel-toed work boots. He raised his arms in anger, once slapping my sister's face. Over the years I've learned that at the root of his anger was his fear of not being able to provide for his family. He was also terrified my mother would leave him, though he put on an angry front. I remember feeling afraid of him and what he might do—a fear that has never entirely left me.

When you live in the same house long enough, bad memories can be replaced with good memories happening around the same cluttered dining room table, near the same artificial Christmas tree, or on the same square of prickly suburban grass. But when you move frequently, as we did, sometimes the only memory you carry with you to the next house is the bad one. And everyone knows that if your new house isn't strong enough, then the wolf will blow it down. "Is he outside of *our* house?" Lily asks when I read fairytales to her at night. "Show me the wolf." I don't tell her that in some stories the wolf is already inside.

I fear that the widening geographical distance between us will widen the emotional distance that's been between us for most of my life. I thought of their Fremont farmhouse as a place of healing—a place for us to replace bad

memories with good. We'd only just begun that work when they told us that they'd sold it.



I once read that fear's purpose is to teach us how to handle situations that we identify as physically or psychologically unsafe. For my father, this psychologically unsafe situation is flying on an airplane. He won't step foot on one now, though he flew several times as a young Marine. That was before he learned about "metal fatigue"—the normal wear and tear on a plane—and began to suspect that some airplane mechanics were careless in their jobs. "You can do things to avoid a car accident," he says, "but in a plane you have surrendered that control to the pilot." With my father, it's always about his fear of losing control. Does he worry about the fate of Lily, Jon, or me in the air? Or does he trust that whichever plane we board will eventually land soundly on the ground? I don't ask.

My father handles his fear by traveling only by truck, car, or boat. I figured out the consequences of this during my parents' farewell dinner at Brother Sebastian's, a dimly-lit restaurant in Omaha decorated in the spirit of an "old world" monastery. We were all there, my parents, me with my family and my sister with her husband, when my mother began talking about the heavy snow along the three mountain passes that they would have to drive through to get from Spokane to the Midwest.

"Crossing Montana and South Dakota in the winter months is too risky because of the snow and ice storms," my mother said. "You never know when the interstate will close."

I thought of winter holidays and my winter-born child. "You'll miss Christmases *and* Lily's birthdays, then?" I didn't care if I sounded insolent. I had been feeling resentful since they first told us they were moving, and I wanted them to know it. My mother looked at me sharply, sniffed, and then concentrated on cutting the fat from her prime rib. My father crossed his arms and leaned back in his chair, sighing deeply. Hadn't my mother already told me that they were moving to Spokane because she wanted to be closer to her two brothers and their families? They wanted to spend their last years with people whom they loved and who were closer to their own age. Why wouldn't I accept this rationale? There was an awkward silence. I wanted to know why I wasn't enough

to make them stay. I wouldn't offer any gesture or phrase to ease the tension though I understood then as I do now that some fears are illogical: my father was more likely to die driving his truck along the sharp bends of Highway 291 than in a fiery explosion in the sky. If I wanted to see them, I'd have to be the one to make the effort. So I did, planning a ten-day trip where we'd stay with my parents and begin anew the process of happy memory-making.



My mother's brothers—my uncles, both retired Spokane firefighters—counsel my parents on what's known in fire science as a "home ignition zone." To prevent or slow flame progression my mother and father trim low-hanging limbs of the evergreens near their two-story home. They plant Blue Spruce trees and White Berry bushes around the perimeter of their backyard. The home's previous owners laid sod around the periphery of the house and installed an underground sprinkler system, and the combination of this carefully plotted out landscape will reduce the risk of a fire spreading from the rolling hills in their backyard to an evergreen tree planted right by their bedroom window. A fire can jump easily from a tree to a rooftop. My parents create firebreaks on a miniature scale, reducing or halting the advancement of flames, limiting the violence of a future fire, controlling what they can.

Roads, canyons, cliffs, quarries, green vegetation, rivers, lakes, and other wetlands are natural firebreaks. People create firebreaks by plowing, stripping, and bulldozing land, plants, and trees, sometimes re-planting with fire-resistant vegetation that slows the progression of flames. One of the Spokane fire departments has a bulldozer that will become so popular in the coming months—it's so big! so loud!—that it will become a recognizable character in local newspaper headlines: *Spokane dozer digs fire lines this summer.*

Only once have we practiced a tornado drill with Lily at home: we grabbed blankets, pillows, and stuffed animals and moved calmly from her bedroom and down three small flights of stairs in our multi-level home. We brought a bag of potato chips and three juice boxes. Jon and I had located the safest spot in our basement: in the laundry room, under the stairs. My parents utilized a similar space in their Fremont farmhouse, except their level of preparedness was better: a roomy concrete basement cellar filled with a variety of canned goods,

blankets, battery-operated radio, books, and an electric generator. In comparison, Jon and I were preparing for a minor tornado inconvenience. We weren't worried about the worst-case scenario, so we didn't prepare for it.

One evening, after a pleasant meal in Spokane with my parents and my mother's two retired firefighting brothers and their families, I discover long metallic bars propped against my parents' bedroom and patio doorknobs. I recognize the Master Lock Security Bar as soon as I see it because I used one when I was in my twenties and living alone for the first time. Then, I feared that an intruder would break into my apartment with its unsecured front entrance and harm me. It was, perhaps, an irrational fear. I brought this fear with me when Jon and I married, though I eventually outgrew it. I no longer bar doors; instead I double-check locks, and sometimes when I'm home alone and have seen or heard something alarming on the news—Gunshots in North Omaha! Attempted robbery at the Kum n' Go!—I check underneath my bed. I've always understood my fear of intruders as my character flaw, one that I didn't think my parents and I shared.

"Why do you have those?" I point to the metallic bar propped up against my parents' bedroom door.

"To give us an edge on any burglar," my mother says. She stops folding the shorts and short-sleeved shirts that she's dumped onto her bed and turns to face me. She tells me that it would take some heavy hits to the door to break it down, giving my father time to be alert, enough time to grab his gun.

"I don't remember you using them in Fremont," I say.

"Burglars aren't as uncommon out here," she says. She tells me a story about a man who lived in a property not unlike theirs, on several acres of land, some of it extending into hundreds of untouched acres of native grasses and coniferous trees, who came home after a long vacation to find squatters living inside. The squatters shot him dead. To listen to her explanation, one would think her fear is logical. Is it? I reconsider my bed-checking. No, it's still statistically improbable. We fear what hasn't happened yet, what we perceive as a terrible possibility for tomorrow—or the next hour. I remember the woman on the news. *I got into a state of panic because you never know what's going to happen.* Anything is possible.



If the opposite of fear is curiosity, then we're most curious in our childhood, reaching out to touch the red hourglass on the black widow's body, the

burning exhaust pipe of a just-parked motorcycle in the driveway, the man at the grocery store with the “Any Hole is a Goal” T-shirt. Or maybe closing our fingers around the striped, flying insect that’s landed on our palm because its body looks soft. Which is exactly what Lily does when Jon and I have pulled our bicycles off of the Route of the Hiawatha Trail, a fifteen-mile long rail-trail along the Bitterroot Mountains. Jon arrived in Spokane the day before, and with my parents’ encouragement, the three of us are enjoying two days along the Idaho-Montana border before we’ll return to their home. The trail passes over seven trestles and through ten train tunnels in the Bitterroot Mountains. Jon and I wear helmets with blinking lights and Lily holds her own light, but the visibility in the train tunnels is poor. I like adventures, as long as they are primarily safe for our daughter. Lily has been riding behind Jon, tethered to his bike in a rented bike trailer. I ride behind her. We’ve pulled our bicycles over to the side of the dirt road for a water break when she’s stung. She howls.

I scoop Lily into my arms. “I saw it fly into her hand,” I say. I press her body close to me. “Let me see.” She holds her left hand at the wrist with her right hand. I see the area on her palm where the blood is rushing, her skin swelling.

“Was she stung by a bee?” Jon asks.

Another bicyclist, resting nearby, has witnessed the incident. “It’s a yellow jacket,” he says. “A wasp.” He opens the first aid kit that he’s been carrying in his backpack and speaks to Lily in soothing tones. Jon and I look at each other: we didn’t think to bring one. We’re unprepared for what we did not know to fear. What if she’s allergic to the venom? How far away is help? An Epi-pen? I see her, in my mind’s eye, red-faced and unable to breathe: anaphylactic shock. These are the places my mind goes—and later, Jon, normally unfazed, confesses he worried through a similar scenario—but Lily’s breathing resumes its normal pattern as soon as she stops crying. She wants me to put her down so that she can explore. She’s perhaps a little wary, but she’s not afraid. Curiosity wins.

“Where are you from?” the bicyclist asks and when we tell him, he replies, “I lived in Nebraska once, for about three weeks, and then I got the hell out of there. Too small. Nothing to see or do. I live in Seattle now.” He’s helped our daughter, and so I let it go, his misunderstanding of a place that I love. His comment stings more because my mother recently said something similar. Her rejection of Nebraska felt like a rejection of me and of all my growing up years. I wondered: was it so easy to leave one’s past behind?

A yellow jacket stings Lily a second time on the wrist of her same hand

after we've finished the bike ride, while we're waiting in line with the thirty-plus other bicyclists for the bus that will deposit us at our cars. My stomach sinks with dread. Two stings on the same day will increase the likelihood of an allergic reaction. Jon picks her up. She cries, "Get me out of this place of bees!" Strangers approach us with kind words and anesthetic wipes to numb the pain. "The wasps are very aggressive here," says a white-haired woman in red spandex shorts. The woman waits in line with her grown son and his two children. She touches me on the shoulder, mother to mother, and I feel less panicked, though not less angry: on the bus the windows are open, and I swat at the yellow jackets that fly in and out of them and the small ventilation window overhead. I hate the yellow jackets, and in the moment, I hate that we've come to Spokane, too. Lily sits on my lap and closes her eyes. She's worn-out from the drama of the encounters with the yellow jackets, but she's not allergic to their venom.

When we return to Nebraska the following week, Lily will be afraid of the bumblebees that pollinate the Rhododendron bush by our backyard deck. She will scream and run away from them, toward the door, even when Jon or I assure her that these bees are gentle. Children learn *what* and *how* to fear through experience, when associations are formed between a stimuli and an unpleasant outcome. Will she now have a lifetime fear of bees and wasps?

Yet, Lily's ability to run away from the bees gives her hope: she hopes that she will escape pain. All fear is ultimately related to a fear of pain: physical or psychological. Pain, like fear and like death, is a universal and profound truth. We hope it away.



We want our children to have a healthy fear. But what or who should they fear? Will fear protect them or make them weak? What barriers should we build to protect them? What natural barriers should we put between us and our fears? Are heavy snow and three mountain passes enough? I've been thinking more about this as Lily becomes more observant, more intuitive of my actions. It's one of the reasons why I've stopped looking underneath my bed at night before getting into it, and in this way, my child has given me hope. She has healed me.

During our Spokane mornings, after the two of us have climbed the steps the lead from the downstairs guest bedroom to my parents' living room, I watch

Lily clamber onto my father's lap. He tickles her cheeks with his long, scraggly beard. He reads her books where a family of raccoons make discoveries narrated in large block letters. He shows her how to carefully place a biscuit on the tip of his sitting black Labrador's nose—a test of patience and love for both the dog and Lily. Lily adores her grandfather. When he walks outside to tinker in his work shed, she follows, just as my sister and I did when we were children. I follow, too.

One morning my mother serves breakfast on the back patio: scrambled eggs, last night's baked potatoes now sliced and fried, and hot-to-the-touch bacon. Jon has gone into town to gas up my mother's car, so it's just my parents, Lily, and me. My mother wears a floral, snap-down-the-front housecoat and hasn't yet stuck her dentures to her bare gums. I try not to notice how much older she looks in the mornings and how many pills she swallows, while my father has managed to keep all of his teeth and muscle and has grown hairier.

We have a view of the rolling hills extending from their backyard, where my father says he heard a coyote howling the night before. He was afraid to let the dog go outside to pee. "The coyotes around here will rip a dog to shreds," he says. It's a near-perfect morning, except for the smell of the smoke from the fires that we cannot see and the fact that Lily is cranky from the two-hour time zone difference. She interrupts whoever is talking. She whines. I try redirecting her and my father grimaces and stands, slams his open hand down hard on the table, rattling our plates and silverware, tipping over a glass of orange juice. "Be quiet!" he shouts. "Enough! Stop it!" His face is red, his cheeks puffed out. It's not his words that bother me—though he has yelled them—but the look on his face. It's a warning of rage-to-come that I know and remember well. If my childhood or teenage self were sitting here, I wouldn't say anything. I would retreat into silence and my own anger, wanting him to leave me alone, even if what followed was worse, and it often was. It took little to provoke him then, and I feared setting him off the way one hiking these rolling hills fears upsetting an underground nest of yellow jackets. I treaded carefully.

Now someone else's perception of the moment is at stake. Lily has never before had her grandfather's anger directed at her. She starts to cry. My father has stung her, but it won't cause the same fear response as the yellow jackets. She will forgive him, as I used to do. "Everyone calm down," I say, standing up—though I don't mean *everyone*, I mean only my father. "Don't yell at her." I speak firmly though I'm shaking. My mother looks uncomfortable. Quietly,

she says, “Now. Now. Now.” It isn’t like me to stand up to my father, though it is like my mother to accept his behavior. I scoop Lily out of her chair and carry her downstairs to our guest bedroom. I sit next to her on the bed and look directly into her eyes. “Grandpa shouldn’t have yelled at you,” I say to her. “It’s not okay. Adults make mistakes, too. He loves you.” These are words that I wish someone would have spoken to me when I was young. I wonder why I don’t confront my mother with her complacency. Am I a coward? No, but I know what my mother’s reaction will be if I ask her, and I don’t want her to move any further away from our past than she already has.



The month after my parents sold their Fremont farmhouse but before they moved to Spokane, my mother confessed to me over the phone: “We’re lonely in Nebraska. There’s not enough to do.” I didn’t understand. I ran through a list of self-centered questions: Didn’t we see them every week? Couldn’t they visit whenever they wanted? Why didn’t they move closer to us, not farther away, if they were lonely? Didn’t she want to see Lily?

Now, on the morning that we make plans around the kitchen table to travel to Priest Lake, Idaho, for a boating day—to gaze at lake water that is “clear-blue-to-the-bottom” unlike the murky lake water my mother remembers in Nebraska—she says something new, something I haven’t thought of: “Who will take care of me if something happens to your father? You? Your sister?” She sniffs. “What if I’m unable to live on my own?” I imagine the question hanging in the air between us, along with the smoke particles described on the radio in the Smoke Advisory. The Air Quality Index ranges from Good to Hazardous, with four levels in between. Spokane is two levels away from Hazardous this morning, at Unhealthy for Some Groups, but my mother has opened the windows “to let in fresh air” and probably to save on the air conditioning bill. Deep in the lungs these particles do their damage, alongside the carbon monoxide found in smoke, making breathing more difficult. But whatever danger exists is invisible to our eyes, and so this morning my mother characteristically ignores it while I silently worry.

My mother has a point: neither Jon nor I are cut out to provide in-home care for an elderly mother while both of us work full-time and raise our child. My younger sister suffers from chronic migraines that often make it difficult for

her to care for herself. But I would visit my mother at an old folks' home. Every day. Well, at least every week. My intentions would be good, but ... We've had this talk before and my mother reads my mind: "I'd rather you take me out back and shoot me in the head than put me in a nursing home." My mother feels safer in Spokane. She has family who would look out for her if my father dies first. She has family who would provide her with daily caregiving. "I hope we'll be happy here," she says. I hope, too. I hope that my mother knows that, deep down, my bitterness toward their move is about my fear that our relationship is changing in ways that I'm not ready for. *She* is changing in ways that I'm not ready for; no child is ready for her mother to age. No child wants her mother to leave her.



We all try to halt the progression of something we perceive as dangerous, setting our firebreaks. My mother moves closer to her brothers. My father refuses to step foot on a plane. My parents bar their doorknobs. My husband checks his cholesterol levels. My daughter runs away from the bees in our backyard. I tell my father to "stay calm." I stand between him and Lily: I won't let him hurt her.

My father won't lose his temper during the remainder of our visit, no matter how badly Lily behaves. He'll laugh at her antics. He'll tell me how smart she is. When she does normal kid stuff, he says, "Isn't that amazing?" This is how I'll know that he's trying to be a gentler person, his hard edges worn away by disappointment and loss. The frequency and quality of his anger has subsided; he's four levels away from Hazardous, instead of his usual one or two. Maybe he is learning that he can't control everything. Maybe he is learning to let go of his fear. I'm trying to let go of mine. The landscape, the wildfires, the wildlife, and my parents are all different here from what I'm used to: me, the stranger. Perhaps we're all being reinvented, another new home, another new beginning, with the geographical distance between us preventing our past from becoming our present. My parents' bodies are changing and softening from aging, of course, but something else is different, something harder to pin down. But I wonder if it's something akin to happiness.



One month after Jon, Lily, and I fly home to Omaha, five fires join in Central Washington to burn over 256,000 acres in the course of several weeks. One of the five is the Nine Mile Fire, named for the community my parents live in. Three firefighters die while trying to outrun the flames in their fire truck, and several others are injured. President Barack Obama declares a state of emergency. Active duty military land from a base in Tacoma. Seventy firefighters from Australia and New Zealand arrive to help. Many of the natural and human-made firebreaks prove useless. Bulldozers create new firebreaks as what's dubbed the Okanogan Complex Fire grows, but sixty-mile per hour winds help the flames blast through them. One report states that together the fires spread over an area larger than Seattle, Portland, San Francisco and Los Angeles combined, making it the largest in Washington's history. Dozens of homes are burning to the ground, more than 5,000 others are threatened. It's still burning, already covering three times the amount of total land covered in 2014. And not done yet.

I ask my mother, over the phone, if she's afraid.

"I'd rather take my chances with a fire than a tornado!" my mother says.

She reminds me of the 1975 tornado that swept through Eastern Nebraska, killing three people and injuring over a hundred others, when we lived in our cracker box home in Bellevue. It's a story that I've heard before. "I had you in a playpen in the basement. I was six months pregnant with your sister. Upstairs, your Dad and uncle were watching for a funnel cloud from the living room window," she says. "A tornado can drop out of the sky and—poof!—everything you work for is gone. I could've lost all of you!" I hear what I think is fear in my mother's voice, but it isn't the end and it isn't even a beginning. It's dangerous work to love another human being. But we love anyway, knowing that we will fear for our children, parents, loved ones and for ourselves. Knowing that, as it is with all fears, this one too, burns.