POETRY

How My Body Becomes an Abacus Machine

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"Fire Rings" by Sarah Schneider

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Maami, my body reeks of grief.
Like a child dragged out of a burning
building, my skin sweat tastes

of petty smoke, of how hope breeds
thistle in June. That was ‘93 and hope
was a scarce gift, for pigeons flapped

their wings and left their holes just
beneath our rooftop — our home on fire, spilling.
This grief is a door

that has its worn-out hinges fixed
to the memorial of skeletal wreckage,
of how spraying bullets on lonely streets

dug holes in my body,
becoming an abacus machine for counting loss
that quietly invades the soul without leaving

a cracked mirror on the face, without leaving
a map to find the genesis of loss,
without budding hope in a bag full of a broken home.

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