

Crash Landing in the Plaza of an Unknown City

I didn't know I was already here.

We've always been here like school children lined up for naps,
snow drifting in silent and sideways through windows.

If this is living, then what's left of the plane reminds me

I've grown used to the brutality of beauty,

how the bones of an exquisite face make me feel abashed

and how night snow filling the burned out fuselage makes sense.

It's as if I still believe in God.

Faith is the process by which we move through air, and all day long

the sparrows think nothing of lift, of thrust. The plane strikes the runway,

pirouettes, and sinks its clipped wing into mud.

A pageant of smoke blossoms toward the sun, and my mind is where I left
it—

perhaps there, the last time my mother knelt down

to kiss me on the lips. She taught me how to ration joy.

Suitcases in my grasp, I walk down a jetway to board a plane.

A woodpecker bores a hollow into the house of my childhood.

From my seat I can't stop watching.

Jia Oak Baker

*First appeared in *DMQ Review*