

Folding Centers

Ben Berman

In the movie, the lightning transformed
the sand into long thin strips of glass
and I thought of Jarrell and his thunderstorms,

how in a lifetime a man might be graced
with such streaks of clarity five or six
times—enough to make the hearing loss

feel like a sound trade, the wet, itchy socks—
mere SOP. But real fulgurites, I soon learned,
are root-like and hollow, about as sexy

as their name—which, for me, held the allure
of affirmation—even when lightning flashes,
the results are opaque and granular.

Not to trade what fuses for what confuses
or applaud the post-modern centerfold
who, instead of baring it all, confesses

to folding centers—but clarity has failed
us too many times—it is as clear
as glass, we say, then watch our patios fill

with dead sparrows. As water, we declare,
until we reach in and watch ripples form,
until we grow dizzy from chasing circles.