Strange Flowers

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Strange Flowers

Her brain is
scorched terrain.

Today rain will fall on the dust
and steam will rise from the
blackened slopes.

Spring 1976, Eau Claire, WI
Inpatient Unit B

Insistent light:
she pulls the covers over her face and
tells the men to please please please,
for the love of God,
leave.

She has suffered and survived
her first break.
Tectonic plates converged,
and suddenly her thoughts,
once nimble and purposeful,
were encased in ash.

*Did the bodies casted in Pompeii
ever shake their natural shackles?*

No says Alice, no no no.

Alice, the doctor is being
so very patient,
won't you just answer his questions?
Won't you just eat your toast?
Won't you at least show us your face?

It's a beautiful day.
The land is raw and singed,
but the high clouds have gathered again
and will soon open over the ridge.

Alice,
show us your face.

Today rivers of soot
will snake between the bare trees,
and in time,
lichen will form on the rocks,
strange flowers
will dot the scape.

Uncover your face, Alice.
Let the light fall upon the
mountainside,

give the blooms
a fighting chance.

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