

PHYLLIS PURVES-SMITH

Breaking Fog off Burnt Head, 2015
Oil on linen, 23 x 30 in



COURTESY BAYVIEW GALLERY, BRUNSWICK, MAINE

KIRK GLASER

A Leaf of Ash

deep in the woods: gray-white
paper holding a specter of ink,
hand-scribed black against gray
against yellow madrone leaves
where it has settled

brittle, broken, and gone.

The log walls stood the night
spiked together, oil-soaked pine
crackling into flames eighty feet high
licking oak branches that danced with light
as they writhed over the roof-beams
before those collapsed to the core, the household
of goods bursting, melting, shattering,
charging the air into a vortex of heat and smoke—
wind that billowed paper ash over treetops,
under the stars. What floated past all reason of flame?
A letter or scrap of journal, a child's drawing

to settle here by a circle of redwoods,
hundred-year-old children of the ones lost
to sweat and axe and the dream
of wealth, cut to burn limestone to dust,
hauled down these mountainsides
for the concrete mix that lifted
the walls of coastal cities.

Brittle, broken, and gone

indecipherable ash
rocking in the palm,
a morning, mid-wood breeze
as the August day grows hot and dry,
leaves ticking, the forest floor waiting
for its own fire to clear detritus of years, feed soil,
crack seeds to germinate, scar
the great trees which know
how to stand above it,
take the black sear up their trunks
the char that opens them to the pith,
and rise cell upon cell sunward
a thousand years or more.

Kirk Glaser's poetry has been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize and has appeared in *Nimrod*, the *Threepenny Review*, the *Main Street Rag*, *Sou'wester*, the *Alsop Review*, the *Cortland Review*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. Awards for his work include an American Academy of Poets Prize, C. H. Jones National Poetry Prize, University of California Poet Laureate Award, and Richard Eberhart Poetry Prize. Glaser earned his PhD in American poetry at the University of California, Berkeley, and his BA from Dartmouth College. He teaches writing and literature at Santa Clara University, where he serves as faculty advisor to the *Santa Clara Review*, and is coeditor of the anthology *New California Writing 2013*, (Heyday, 2013).