

Whetstone Tunisia

It wanted to explode me
that gob of spit on my cheek,
insult to my father,
not the fine—I pressed ten dinars
into her deaf hands but
big with authority the police
woman grabbed the cart
smacked my face cracked
me open

Before the arched windows of provincial headquarters
I cradled my complaints
like an ailing child
felt my mind

detonate

fuel drenched me, quenched
all indignities
I drank and drank
struck the match
flames leapt smelting me down

Bouazizi voices called
but I was already far away
from mother and the others in our cramped
rooms
so far I could barely hear

Bouazizi
sounds sharpened on the flint
ribs of my rage.