

That Which Goes up in Smoke 1

When you used tools
that the Old Men left
for you – and you alone –
you drew English from Hebrew,
italicized and crosswised
as you spelled out
the telling of *olah*
in your newest journal.
Over your shoulder
leaning, learning that you still
scrawled with the lateral quadrupod
of which they tried to cure you
when we were still children in school,
I mispronounced the word, yet again.
Stretching the O long, into the romantic
“hello” of my *abuello’s* outstretched arms
“Like *hola?*” I repeated to your umbrage,
because the “burning” word you had learned
was an open mouthed “ah” with the lips
unpursed, wide, almost saying
a name of God as fire eats both syllables,
one after the other,
and the ashes of offering
begin to ascend.