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In the Classroom

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the night slowly chokes the light
around us and she closes the book
her hand hovering above the cover
History Primer: A Short Guide

we look at each other
as if trying to remember
each other's face before it becomes
its own shadow

the building's roof's a charred skeleton
the classroom floor littered with textbooks
notebooks the village half burned
deserted except for one donkey

braying in the field as the two of us
came down the road two animals approaching
warily from the opposite direction
trying to sniff each other out

she placed two hand-grenades
on the desk that now look to me
like overgrown exotic pears
we are going to feast on

History is supposed to teach us
something but it never does she
almost yells I look at the blackboard
and make out its message

WE WILL BE BACK

a nauseous thought swells suddenly
in my stomach I was here
before she was here

before closed the same book
when I said It does not
because we never learn anything
from it or did I utter that

before or after
she reached into her coat pocket
and I shot her blindly
to blot out all memory

You fainted she explains
propping my head up her face coming
and going together with a wavering candle

that makes the walls ebb away
and school desks flung in the corner
advance like ghosts toward us
It's from hunger I whisper

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