Marya Summers

August Complex with Vehicular Homelessness

As fire progressed and ocean pounded
even in the heaving, glaring
terror of that night, I became a soft
lamp glowing inside. Ahead, fire
glowered at the ridge, the tree line ominous
orange-red; behind me, the black
tantrums of the Northern Pacific
crashed, shaking my little camper
where I'd taken refuge on a seaside
cliff from a convergence of lightning
fires that chased me, a wild animal

panic-driven, up the coast. Redwoods,
once shade, now fuel, burned hotter
than any fury, drove fear like electric
nails in flight. Normally quiet
so close to The Lost
Coast, the PCH was a whirring, white
ribbon of headlights all headed
south, so that I wondered
at the folly of staying put
in a fragile, metal capsule between rocks
and a hot place; the sickly glow
widening, a mouth wanting
more, gnashing through vegetation
to sear & swallow the meat

of me. There was something,
though, about having nowhere
else that drove serenity deep,
pulled me into the power
of my only choice:
give way to fear or hold on
to my own inexorable light.