

## Sprinting

It takes months for me to hear about the fire.

I'm home and finding the ashes  
for myself. Mom keeps looking back  
to the banana leaves, thicket of tall green  
heads that held off flames spilling  
from their neighbor's camp.

These same broad leaves that line the imu,  
ovens built deep inside the earth itself.

Those days, I was nowhere.

I stumbled through winters too afraid  
to text back. My hands were deeply fucked,  
bleeding and useless stuffed  
in skinny jean pockets. I got drunk  
and challenged strangers to foot races  
down the middle of iced out streets.

I put my head down, bent under  
Elizabethan shadows, while my family went  
homeless, pushed to the western edges  
of O'ahu. Sergio lashed sheets of  
corrugated metal into walls, a roof.

When storms came, my brothers tied down  
everything they owned. At Vassar,  
I failed and failed. On Halloween, senior year,  
I borrowed a yellow sweatshirt, cut round  
ears from packing box cardboard, wore  
the glasses I should have worn daily.

I was Arthur the Aardvark and my face  
was bright red. I walked into that night  
an easy metaphor for rage, woke  
in the hospital hooked up to an IV.

My friends sat for hours in the waiting room  
to drive me back home. I had a home.

I didn't. Eventually, the fire brought the state  
along with it, down roads that dipped  
and sputtered with neglect. My family had to rush  
to leave. Their own hands destroying

what the burning could not. I was only  
there after. I was holding the match.