

Linda Worden

Air Power

Grandma knows paprika could not stop NATO
because this is Pančevo, 1999,
and red dust is not in the exhaust
of rusted assembly lines, she pushes
the pedal, chokes on air
but who choked you?
did you kill yourself on
the assembly line? The horizon,
littered with Brutalist palaces
raw with liquid venom,
just folded by fire.

God bless America! Decimating
three factories, injecting air
with cancerous kisses. It holds
her in the night. Gently caressing her
lungs, for years it sits loyal. Her tumour
is love, I promise, it is love for democracy—
the rest is a rumour
to shatter the magic and wonder
of being a tragedy. Look, DAPL
was a story. Don't we all
wish to be stories?

Grandma's neighbourhood was
moustached Magyars: a milk minority
among milk majority.
God, bless the Magyars
to forget. The Serb
teacher held my mother's tongue
until the red dust disappeared. He

was hostile and hungry
for her shrinking borders.

You would think the injured
have less hate unfounded,
and yet I must tell Grandma:
Soros is just a man
and the Syrians did not bomb you.
We know like our own names:
civilians lived in Pančevo,
Clinton did not know them.
As we become stories,
we must narrate
the root of injustice: it grows
from games by the same
star-spangled banner.