

May 18th, 1980

By Makenzie Shaw

Two peaks north of Mount St. Helens,
six geologists were consumed
by research since March, studying
the dawdling topography
as the mountain swelled till full bloom,

so that the north slope was displaced
over one hundred meters toward
the men. Unable to perceive
the tension budding, like growing
until you are grown, they waited

'til the underground heat melted
the rock, sending a landslide north,
and a lateral explosion,
slow moving enough to choose
to keep data safe, not bodies.

On the East, an acute pre-teen,
whose old parents divide her time
between Washington and UPenn,
demands to go home to see the column,
to watch it spread inland for miles,

watch pyroclasts precipitate
on the windshields of Seattle,
wet cement, glass instead of sand.
Bedridden with scabs on her lungs,
she stayed in bed till the shards dried.