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Tattoo

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Tattoo

He tells me how
he never got touched
by the flames, sitting there
eating lunch, in the truck,
the other men outside
trying to outrun
the explosion.

How he felt
only the heat wrapped around
him like a blanket, squeezing,
him off like a tourniquet,
searing the keys in his pocket
to his thigh and so much weight
he wanted to die.

His watch gripped
tight tattooing his wrist with time
and place he would never
forget— like his first kiss that, too,
had scorched his lips.

How his face turned
red, then bubbled in the places
he couldn't cover, heat burrowing under
skin, a fever no one could ever cure;
how he wanted to die like those men running
outside.

I just stand here as he tells me,
through bandages wrapped around seventy-
eight percent of his body, about the new
truck he'll get from the insurance
company; and I think,

what a lucky guy.

— Anonymous